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Styles in Inventor for CAD Administrators

This is a quick guide to help CAD Administrators and Advanced Inventor users to set up their Styles in Inventor MS2011069.

System Administrators, Advanced CAD users

What are Styles in Inventor?

Each Inventor file needs to be assigned various Styles to define its characteristics. The styles used by each file type are as follows;

Part File (ipt) or Assembly File (iam) – Materials, Colours, Lighting Options.
Sheet Metal Part File (ipt) – As above, also Sheet metal rules.
Drawing File (dwg or idw) – Drawing Standards (ISO, ANSI etc).

These styles are defined by xml text files – e.g. the xml file for materials might contain 60 material definitions.

What is a Style Library?

A Style Library is a collection of these xml files. From 2012 onwards, instead of having the option of storing this data inside each file (which creates large file sizes), only the Styles used by (or created within) that file are stored (cached) inside the file, and all Styles are stored only in the Library. The Style Library is therefore the Master copy of Styles for your company/site, NOT your templates. You can only point each project file at one Style Library for each (ipj) project file in Inventor. The 2012 default Inventor Style Library includes 70 materials, 200 colours and 10 drawing standards, but these can be added to, modified or deleted as required.

Where Should the Style Library be Kept?

Generally the Style Library should be kept in a shared location so that all Inventor users are accessing the same design data. Your templates should also be in this location. If you are using Vault, you may want to consider using the Vault Server as a location for these folders. (Note, it is not necessary to load your templates into Vault itself)

How are New Styles Created?

New Styles can be created in any Inventor file (as modified copies of existing Styles – Manage, Styles and Standards, Styles Editor, right click on any Style and click New). If the active project file Style Library is set to 'read/write' then the new Style can be saved back to the Style Library using the 'Manage, Styles and Standards, Save button. If not, the user will only be able to save it locally within that document. This won't be accessible for any other files.

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How Can New Styles be Added to the Style Library for a Given Site?

Assuming you have a Style Library 'read only' setting in your project file. A new Style can be added to the Style Library as follows;

1) The CAD administrator sets the project file to 'read/write' (either by checking the project file out of Vault, or by logging off all other Inventor users), then opens the file(s) in question and saves the Style(s) back to the Style Library (using the 'Manage, Styles and Standards, Save button). Following this he resets the project file to 'read only'.

2) The CAD administrator has a second project file (stored locally on his/her machine) which is identical to the company project file, except that the Style Library is 'read/write'. Having been notified of the Inventor files that contain new Styles, the Administrator can then open these files one by one and save the Styles back to the Style Library.

3) The user can export the new Style as a styxml file. This can then be manually inserted into the Design Data folder (in the correct sub-folder for that particular Style). This is user-error prone and *not recommended*.

How Can Style Libraries be Synced Between Sites?

Once the Style Library for a particular site has been updated with new Styles: Use the Style Library Manager (Start Menu, All Programs, Autodesk, Autodesk Inventor 20XX, Tools, Style Library Manager). This will show a simple view of the Styles that are mismatched, or unique to each site's Style Library, and allow easy copying between sites for these Styles. Note that each Style type (Colour, Material, Dimension etc) will need to be examined in turn.

Can You Keep New Styles in Single Documents (or Templates)

It's not recommended but yes you can. If you don't explicitly save any new Styles you create back to the Style Library then they will remain saved only in that document. However as this is not recommended practice this will create a 'Style Conflict' message every time you open that document (or use the template). If a Style of the same name exists in the Style Library, that definition will be used instead of the document version.

So Should I Keep all my Styles in my Templates or in my Style Library

It is generally best practice *not* to use your templates to control your Styles. You will get a conflict message every time you open a file (unless you create an empty Style Library) and very importantly, your file sizes will be much larger than necessary. This is the reason that Autodesk made the permanent move away from document controlled Styles to Style Library controlled styles in 2012.

Do my Users Need to Purge Their Files?

Not normally. Inventor purges any styles that match the Style Library automatically on file open. However if a large number of unwanted new Styles have been created in any file (when experimenting with a new colour type for instance), the purge option (Manage, Styles and Standards, Purge) can be useful to trim it back down to size (remove any unused Styles). Templates should also be purged of non-required Styles (ONLY after saving all required Styles back to the Style Library!) as otherwise these Styles will be propagated through all your new files.

How Can I Rename or Delete Existing Styles?

If the Style exists only within an open Inventor file, (i.e. it hasn't been saved back to the Style Library) then it can be renamed or deleted in the Styles Editor within that document, by right clicking on the Style. If it has been saved back to the Style Library then the Style Library Manager must be used to rename or delete.

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What Happens to my Styles when I Install a New Inventor Release?

When you install a new release of Inventor (e.g. 2012 to 2013), the Design Data folder (Style Library) in the default location on each workstation will be overwritten with the new Design Data (e.g. 2013). If you are using Design Data in a shared location then this must be manually migrated to the new release (along with your templates), using Style Library Manager. Navigate to your local Style Library and to the shared Style Library and do the following:

1) Migrate the shared Style Library.
2) Copy from the default to the shared location any Styles that may have been added in the new release of Inventor (if desired).

See the link below;

http://usa.autodesk.com/adsk/servlet/ps/dl/item?siteID=123112&id=17427166&linkID=11272926

Should I create Regular Backups of the Style Library?

Yes. Just like any other design data you want to protect.

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