

Recover a .dwg file after a crash

Autodesk AutoCAD

Introduction

We have all been in a situation when using AutoCAD, where we are drawing away and suddenly AutoCAD produces a “Fatal Error” message and closes. This is what is referred to as a crash.

The cause of an AutoCAD fatal error can be for various reasons, usually though it is either down to a system configuration problem (a clash/corruption of some kind) OR the contents of the drawing. But sometimes it can feel as though AutoCAD somehow new you had a deadline and you have several drawings to get out by the end of the day!

Using this guide you will be able to quickly check for and if found, easily recover any work lost.

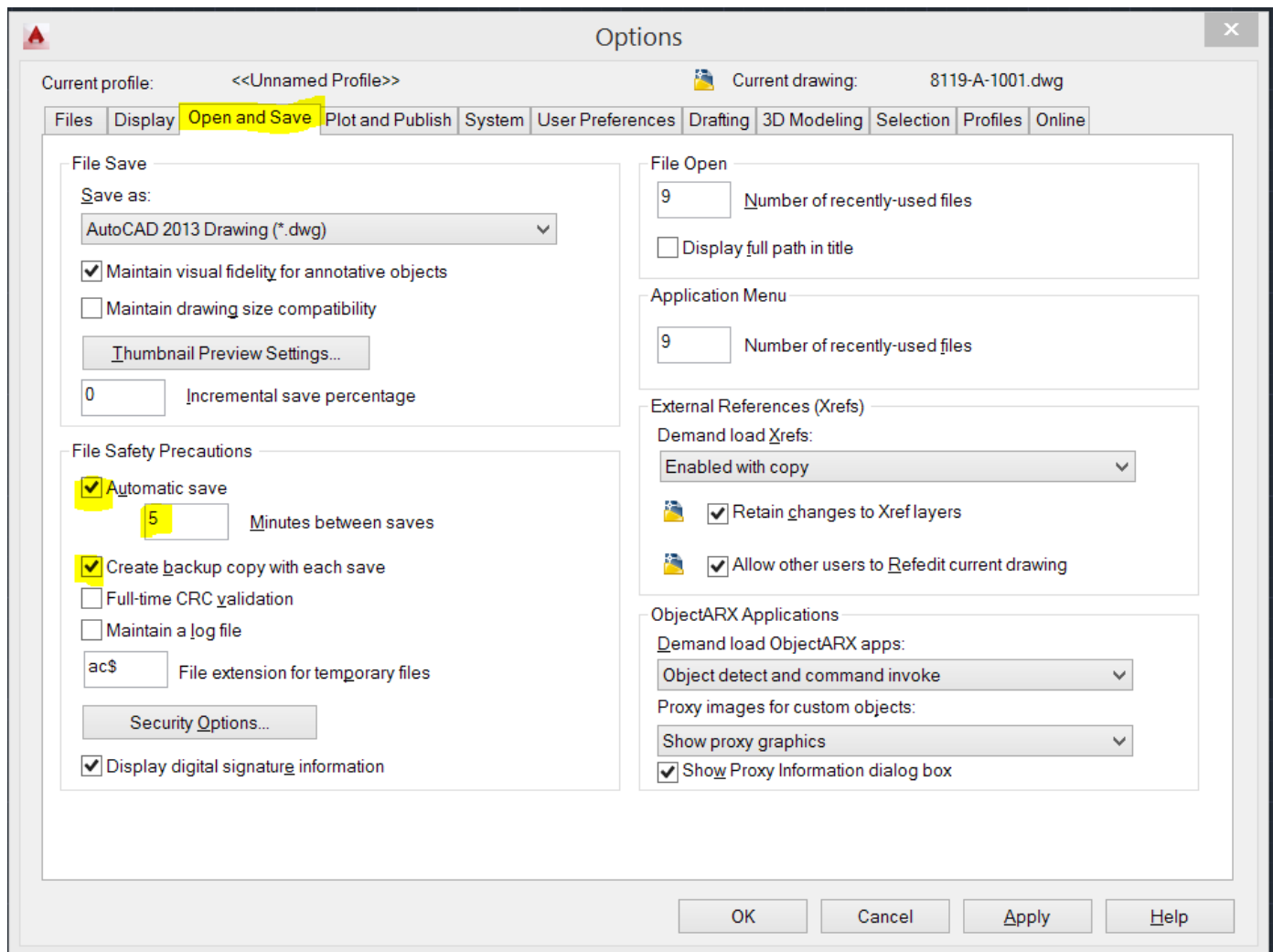
Check the drawing

The first step after a crash is to open the drawing, make sure it can be opened without error. Then check to see if any work is lost, and if so how much work is lost. If only a minor amount of work has been lost, you may well consider re-drawing the elements to save time. However if more work has been lost, read on.



Options

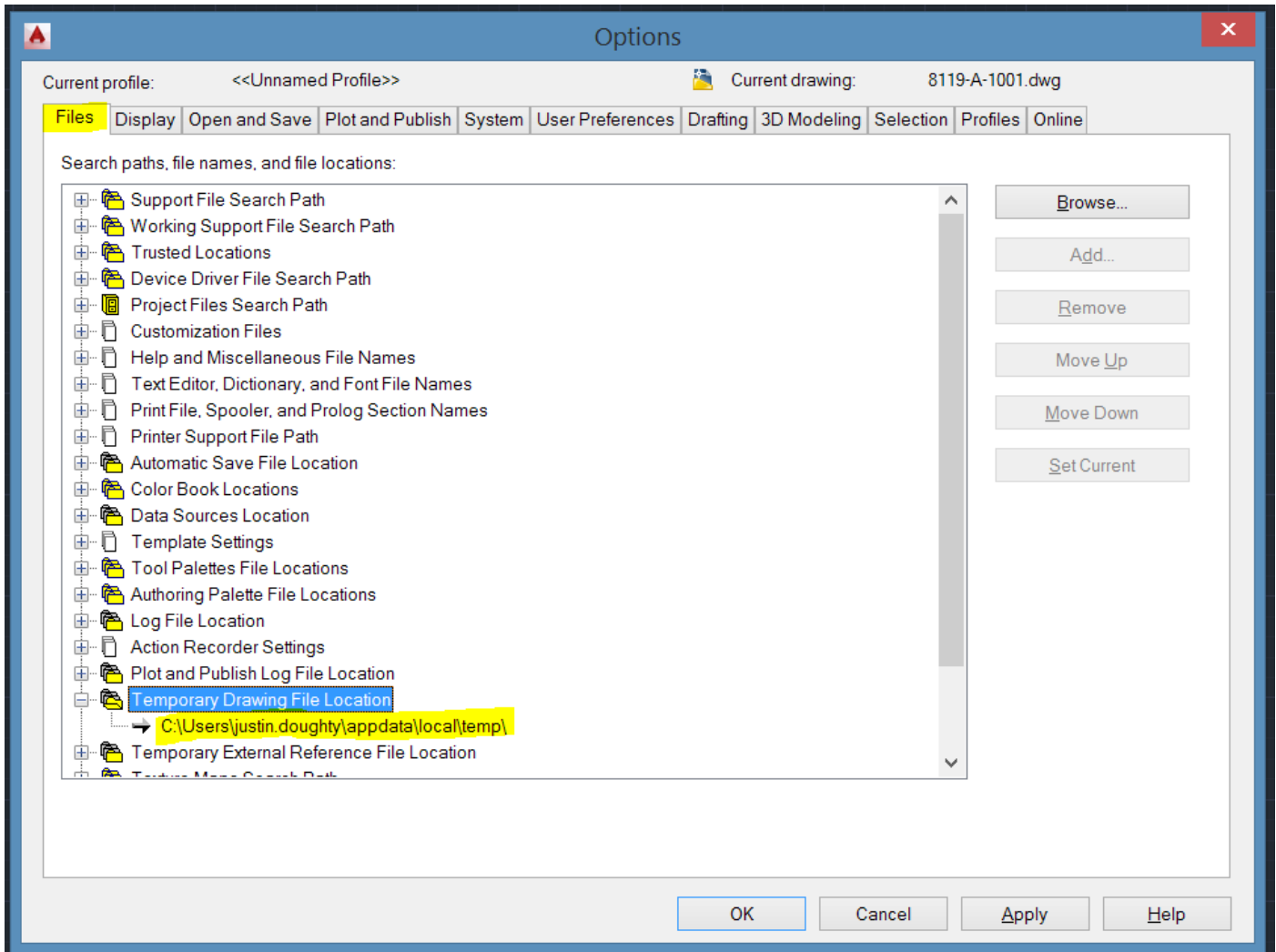
Go to the Options menu in AutoCAD (command: OPTIONS), and the “Open and Save” tab. Here you will find the Automatic save options.



Here we can check the options, see that automatic saves are set and check the interval time.

To understand the file extensions, its good to know a brief description of how each of them work. So most people know .bak files are created when you press SAVE on a drawing. AutoCAD actually renames your old .dwg to .bak and creates a new dwg file with the same name. Ac\$ files are temporary save files, they do not contain any drawing data. These are used to temporarily remember a set of information while in AutoCAD, such as the list of commands in the UNDO function. Sv\$ file are the Automatic saves, at the set interval, or before certain commands, you may see the command line automatically save the drawing you are working on to the temporary location. This will not save it over your existing drawing until you press SAVE.

Go to the “Files” tab in Options. Expand the “Temporary Drawing File Location” and check the path to this folder:

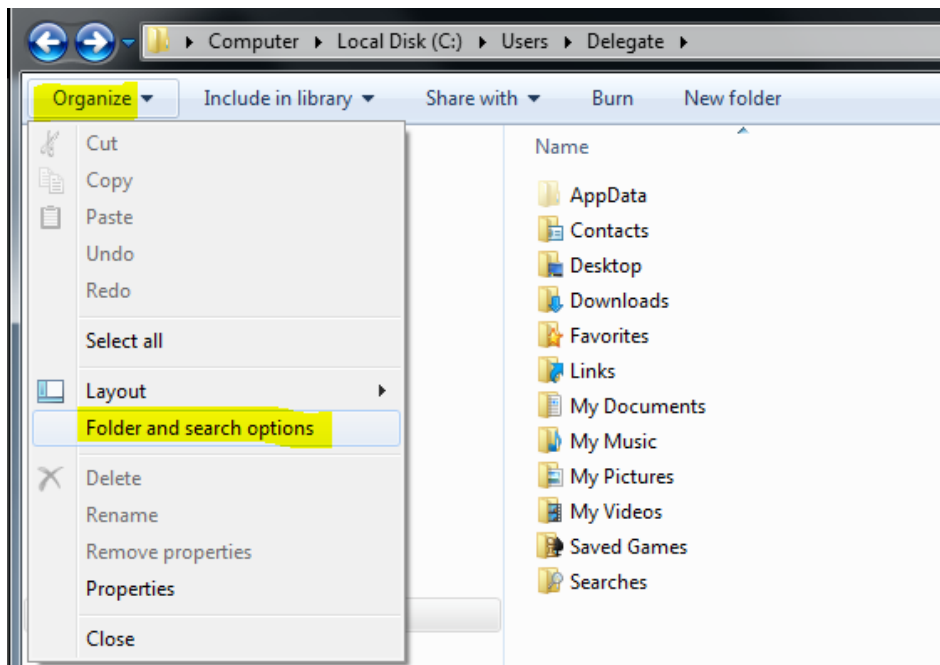


The default location is usually C:\Users\\AppData\Local\temp

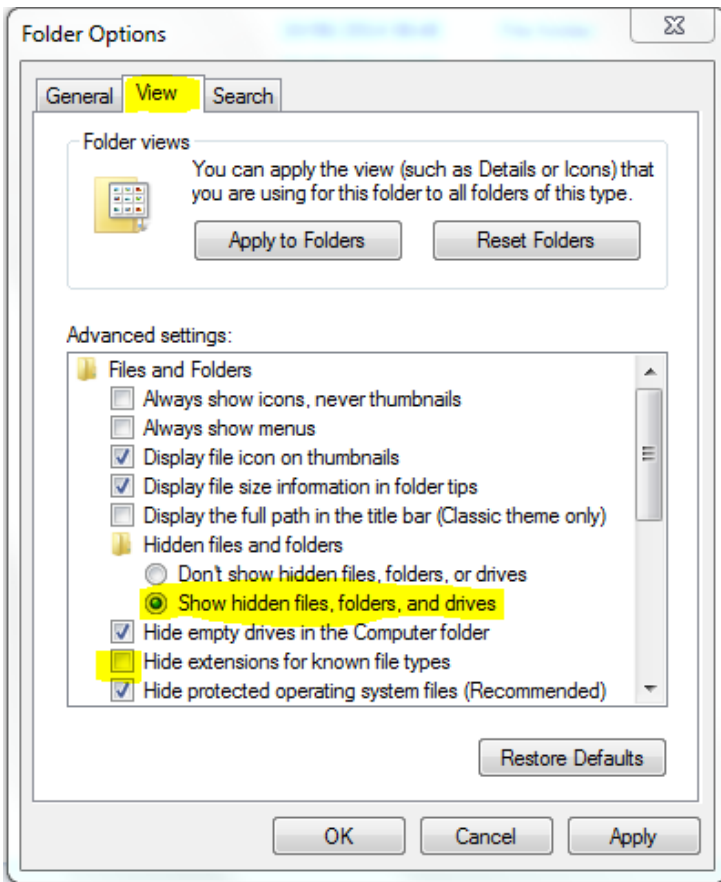
Use Windows Explorer to browse to that same location.

Please note: at this point you may experience problems finding the AppData folder, and cannot see the file types. This is because they may be set to hidden.

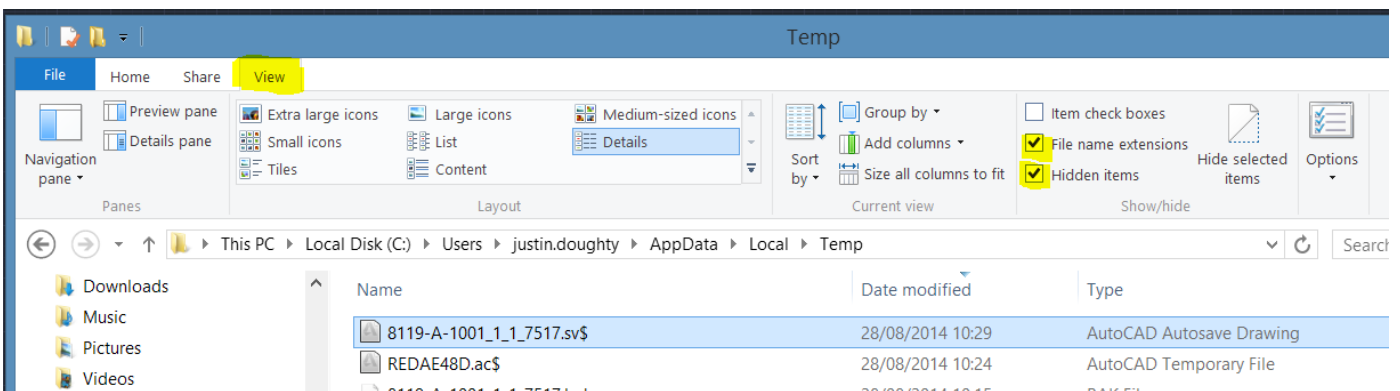
To resolve this in Windows 7, go to the “Organize” drop down, “Folder and search options”:



Then in the Folder Options Menu, go to the View Tab. Check “Show hidden files, folders and drives” and Untick “Hide extensions for known file types”:

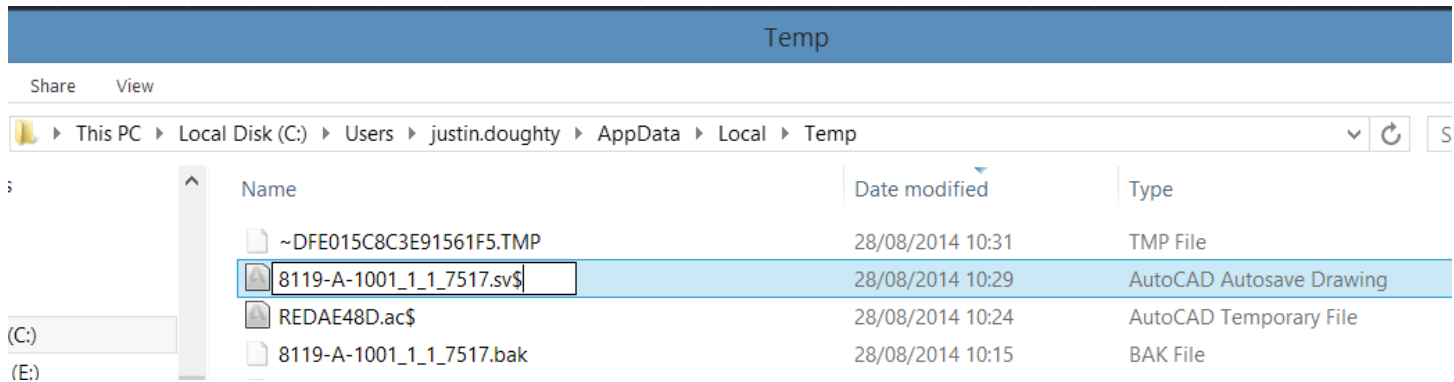


In Windows 8 this is located under the View tab, Show/Hide Panel:



Restore the Automatic Save File

Now you are in the correct location, start to look for a .sv\$ file dated around the time of the crash. However the file name may not exactly match your original drawing. Rename the extension (the part after the dot) from sv\$ to dwg:

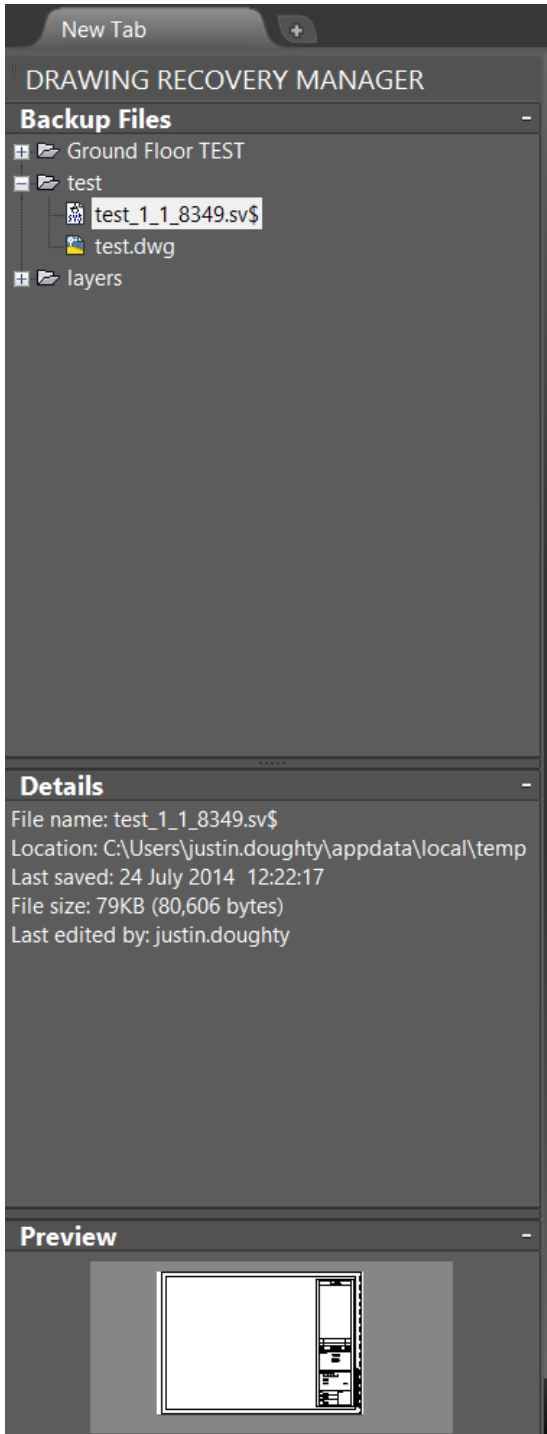


Test opening this new dwg file in AutoCAD, check to see if this drawing contains newer information/work than the original dwg.

Once you are sure, re-save the file back to the original location and continue working as normal.

Drawing Recovery Manager

AutoCAD also has a built in function to recover drawings, called the Drawing Recovery Manager, this should display on the first run of AutoCAD after a crash. This shows all of the same information as above, however it is better to know the manual process.



If no automatic save is found

There may be a few reasons why no automatic save is found or created, maybe the drawing crashed before the automatic save time, or the tick box for automatic save was not checked. The most common reason is that AutoCAD did not crash, and was closed in error. There is no way to recover a drawing when a user says “No” to the question “Save changes to”?

The first thing to think of, if time is critical on a file, is to assess the time for a re-draw, if you have a lot of re-usable content, xrefs, blocks, and a template file with all of your sheets in, it may be quicker to redraw the lost information.

If the lost information is over a longer period, so days, weeks or months, you may consider checking and renaming the .bak file. If that fails, possibly a manual recover from an incremental IT or physical backup.

The main prevention is very simple, click SAVE. We all know this, but we have to be very disciplined with using it. I find the simplest way to do this is to implement one of the keyboard shortcuts into your routine. CTRL+S or Q ENTER/SPACE by default will run the QSAVE command. Even at the end of your drafting chain of clicks, at each pause, click the save “disk” icon at the top of the screen.

Hopefully some of these steps will reduce the time looking for automatic saves, and maybe even save some of your lost work!

