CHAPTER 4
IMPORTING IMAGES

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- Using a scanner to scan images
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Importing Files

From the **File** menu, the **Import** command is used to load line art and/or bitmap images from a variety of file formats.

Set the **Files of type** drop-list to the type of file that will be loaded. For example, there is an AutoCAD (DWG) file extension, which is not to be confused with GraphicCAD (DWG), GenericCAD (DWG), and MonuCAD (DWG).

SignLab does not include an import filter for the AutoCAD (DWG) file format. Instead, export from AutoCAD using the DXF format, and then use the "AutoCAD DXF" format when importing into SignLab.

Sign Clip-Art

From the **Layout** menu, choose the **Clip Art Viewer** to browse the clip-art that was installed from the CADlink Fonts & Sign Clip-Art CD. Either bitmap (.BMP) or CADlink Drawing files (.CDL) are valid formats that may be imported as clip art.

Exporting Files

From the **File** menu, there are two commands for exporting files from SignLab: **Export** and **Export Image**.

The **Export** command is mainly used to export line art shapes. However, for file formats that are capable of storing both line art and bitmap shapes (i.e. combination files), the **Export** command will export bitmap data as well.

The **Export Image** command is used to export bitmap (raster) images.

Linking to External Files

From the **File** menu, the **Link** command is used to create a "placeholder" for an external image file. The external image will be visible on the SignLab workspace, but the image data will remain stored in a separate file on your hard drive.

The benefit of linking an image is that the size of the workspace (CDL) file will not include the

image file. In addition, the image file can be edited in a third-party graphics software application, and such edits will be visible when the CDL file is loaded into SignLab.

Example of editing a linked bitmap file

1. In SignLab, link to a bitmap file
2. Save and close the SignLab CDL file
3. Open and edit the bitmap file in a third-party graphic software application
4. Back in SignLab, open the previously saved CDL file and observe that the bitmap object has been updated

If you change your mind and want to save the workspace (CDL) file without links, then use the **Save Embedded File** command that is under the **File** menu. The entire data of the linked files will be stored within the CDL file, such that the CDL file can be sent to another workstation without worrying about broken links.

Scanning Artwork

From the **File** menu, the **Acquire Image** command is used to scan images from an attached scanner. Before using this command, the scanner and scan software must already have been installed. For more information about using the scanner software, consult the scanner software documentation.

As a suggestion, set your scanning software to scale the artwork by a large amount, such as an increase of 1000% (one thousand percent). This will provide a more detailed image that is easier to work with in SignLab.

If the scanned artwork is of low quality, then it may be desirable to use a low dpi when scanning (say 75 dpi). Otherwise, a high dpi will merely magnify any mistakes that are in the artwork.

Where there is more than one scanner, the **Select Source** command is used to choose between the available scanners.

The **Acquire** command will activate the scanner software in preparation for scanning the artwork that is on the scanner bed.

The **Acquire Vector** command is similar to the **Acquire** command, except that the former will load the artwork into SignLab as vector artwork.

The **Scan and Trace Wizard** provides a series of wizard steps that guide you through the process of bringing an image into SignLab and then tracing that image into vector artwork.

When tracing scanned artwork, use a low Tolerance setting to avoid creating a large number of nodes.

After tracing is complete, the resulting shapes are grouped. To node edit these shapes, perform an **Ungroup** command, and then apply a **Make Path**

operation. The resulting shape can then be node edited.

Under the **Arrange** menu, the **Convert to Curves** command is used to convert line art into bézier curves. Once converted into béziers, the line art should scale more smoothly. When converting, set the **Allowable Error** to one-hundredth (1/100) of the smallest dimension of the shape.

Setting the Allowable Error:

1. Suppose the line art measures 8 by 14 inches
2. Units do not matter, so just take the smaller value (8), and divide by 100
3. Therefore, the error should be 0.08

Align To Baseline

From the **Layout** menu, the **Align To Baseline** command is available from the **Arrange and Distribute** flyout.

For images that are scanned into SignLab, it may be the case that the objects are slightly misaligned with the sign blank. The **Align to Baseline** feature allows these objects to be aligned to either the horizontal or vertical plane. In addition, images can be aligned to a 45 degree angle, or a custom angle may be set.

Before performing the alignment, a line must be defined along the edge the image. To define this

line, two points must be set. Clicking within the workspace will set the first point (the point of rotation), and clicking again will set the second point (the snap point). When a snap angle is applied, the line will be aligned to match the indicated angle, and the image will remain aligned with the line.

Digitizing Tablets

From the **Edit** menu, the **Digitizing Setup…** command is used to configure a digitizing tablet.

Though no other intermediary software drivers are required for the tablet to be used with SignLab, please ensure that the tablet is correctly connected to the computer, according to the manufacturer instructions.

The **Enable Digitizer** option is used to enable and disable the digitizer. In order to reduce the load on the system, it is recommended that the digitizer be disabled when not in use. This will prevent SignLab from polling the tablet, and therefore free up system resources.

The **Track Pen** option is used to enable and disable the tracking of the digitizing pen. In order to reduce the load on the system, it is recommended that the pen be disabled when not in use.

The **Reset Baseline** option is used when starting a new drawing, or if the original angle and position of the tablet baseline need to be restored. The baseline of the tablet will be reset to match that of the material.

The **Set Baseline** option is used to align the baseline in SignLab with that of the artwork. This avoids the requirement that the artwork be precisely aligned with the bottom of the tablet.