



Reinaldo N. Togores

AutoCAD expert's Visual LISP



Covers 3D programming:
Solids, Meshes and Surfaces.
Updated for AutoCAD 2013.

Autodesk
Authorized Author

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Reinaldo N. Togores

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To Teté, with love.

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xiv</i>
<i>About the Author</i>	<i>xiv</i>
PART 1. INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter 1. AutoLISP/Visual LISP	3
1.1. <i>Visual LISP</i>	4
1.2. <i>New LISP functions</i>	5
1.3. <i>Summary</i>	7
Chapter 2. A Visual LISP Project, Step by Step	9
2.1. <i>Work Space and Project Structure</i>	10
2.2. <i>A custom dictionary</i>	13
2.3. <i>The calculus function</i>	15
2.4. <i>The drawing function</i>	16
2.5. <i>The user interface</i>	18
2.6. <i>Placing the labels</i>	19
2.7. <i>Updating the dictionary</i>	19
2.8. <i>On error</i>	21
2.9. <i>Compiling the program</i>	22
2.10. <i>Demand loading the program</i>	23
2.11. <i>Summary</i>	24
PART 2. THE LANGUAGE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT	27
Chapter 3. The Visual LISP IDE	29
3.1. <i>The Visual LISP IDE user interface</i>	30
3.2. <i>Interactivity: The Visual LISP Console</i>	30
3.3. <i>The Programming Editor</i>	33
3.4. <i>Interaction between the Editor and the Console</i>	40
3.5. <i>Summary</i>	40
Chapter 4. Evaluating expressions	41
4.1. <i>Data</i>	41
4.2. <i>Expressions</i>	42
4.3. <i>Symbols and assignment</i>	44
4.4. <i>Lists</i>	46
4.5. <i>Variables and data types</i>	49
4.6. <i>Manipulating the elements of a list</i>	52
4.7. <i>Lambda</i>	59
4.8. <i>Summary</i>	61

Chapter 5. User-defined functions	63
5.1. <i>Defun</i>	63
5.2. <i>Loading and executing user functions</i>	64
5.3. <i>Global and local variables</i>	65
5.4. <i>Predicates and Conditionals</i>	68
5.5. <i>Recursion</i>	77
5.6. <i>Iteration</i>	81
5.7. <i>Summary</i>	87
Chapter 6. ActiveX Data and Structures	89
6.1. <i>Safearrays</i>	89
6.2. <i>Variants</i>	97
6.3. <i>VLA Objects</i>	100
6.4. <i>Collections</i>	102
6.5. <i>Working with methods and properties</i>	105
6.6. <i>Collections Processing</i>	107
6.7. <i>Managing exceptions</i>	108
6.8. <i>Summary</i>	111
Chapter 7. Data Entry	113
7.1. <i>Integrated error control</i>	113
7.2. <i>Default Values</i>	114
7.3. <i>Prompting for data with options</i>	115
7.4. <i>Input control through INITGET</i>	118
7.5. <i>Data coded as binary values</i>	119
7.6. <i>File search dialog box</i>	126
7.7. <i>Summary</i>	128
Chapter 8. File Operations	129
8.1. <i>Opening files</i>	129
8.2. <i>File reading</i>	130
8.3. <i>Writing files</i>	131
8.4. <i>Files and Folders</i>	135
8.5. <i>Summary</i>	139
Chapter 9. Debugging Visual LISP code	141
9.1. <i>Finding the error's origin</i>	141
9.2. <i>The debugging session</i>	143
9.3. <i>Data inspection tools</i>	145
9.4. <i>Error Tracing</i>	149
9.5. <i>Summary</i>	150
PART 3. CONTROLLING AUTOCAD FROM VISUAL LISP	151
Chapter 10. Drawing with Visual LISP	153
10.1. <i>Three ways to draw</i>	153

10.2.	<i>The COMMAND/VL-CMDF interface.</i>	154
10.3.	<i>Creating entities with ENTMAKE.</i>	162
10.4.	<i>Creating complex entities with entmake</i>	173
10.5.	<i>Sample Program: Defining a Block with ENTMAKE.</i>	175
10.6.	<i>Using Visual LISP in the Block Editor.</i>	178
10.7.	<i>The ActiveX interface.</i>	179
10.8.	<i>Complex objects with ActiveX methods.</i>	186
10.9.	<i>Non-graphic objects.</i>	190
10.10.	<i>Non-graphic objects from ActiveX extensions.</i>	198
10.11.	<i>VLA-Objects and the use of available memory.</i>	201
10.12.	<i>Summary.</i>	201
Chapter 11. Selecting Entities		205
11.1.	<i>Selection sets.</i>	205
11.2.	<i>Creating selection sets.</i>	207
11.3.	<i>Preselected sets.</i>	218
11.4.	<i>Modifying selection sets.</i>	219
11.5.	<i>ActiveX selection sets.</i>	221
11.6.	<i>Groups.</i>	226
11.7.	<i>Summary.</i>	235
Chapter 12. Modifying entities		237
12.1.	<i>Modifying properties using COMMAND/VL-CMDF.</i>	237
12.2.	<i>Sample Program: Editing Geometry.</i>	240
12.3.	<i>The ENTMOD function.</i>	244
12.4.	<i>Differences between 2D and 3D entities.</i>	248
12.5.	<i>Modifying entities through the ActiveX extensions.</i>	249
12.6.	<i>Creating a Hyperlink.</i>	253
12.7.	<i>Lineweight assignment.</i>	254
12.8.	<i>Setting the TrueColor property.</i>	255
12.9.	<i>Sample Program: Color scales.</i>	261
12.10.	<i>Object Properties and Methods.</i>	265
12.11.	<i>AutoLISP non-ActiveX property modification functions.</i>	272
12.12.	<i>Summary.</i>	277
PART 4. 3D PROGRAMMING		279
Chapter 13. 3D objects		281
13.1.	<i>Programming options from Visual LISP.</i>	282
13.2.	<i>How does AutoCAD work in 3D?</i>	283
13.3.	<i>Transformation matrices.</i>	292
13.4.	<i>Sample Program: Scaling transformation specifying the base point.</i>	297
13.5.	<i>Transformation between Coordinate Systems.</i>	299
13.6.	<i>Viewpoint and Visual Style.</i>	301
13.7.	<i>Summary.</i>	306

Chapter 14. NURBS curves: The Spline entity	307
14.1 <i>Creating SPLINE entities.</i>	308
14.2 <i>Spline Methods and Properties.</i>	315
14.3 <i>Creating a Helix shaped Spline by Control Vertices.</i>	320
14.4 <i>Sample Program: Creating a HELIX.</i>	322
14.5 <i>Summary.</i>	326
Chapter 15. VLAX-CURVE... measuring curves and something else	329
15.1 <i>Visual LISP's VLAX-CURVE Extensions.</i>	329
15.2 <i>Common arguments.</i>	330
15.3 <i>Determining a curve's length.</i>	331
15.4 <i>Distance between points along a curve.</i>	332
15.5 <i>Measuring Areas</i>	334
15.6 <i>Calculating the first and second derivatives.</i>	336
15.7 <i>Sample Program: Drawing tangents to a curve.</i>	336
15.8 <i>Sample Program: UCS perpendicular to a curve at a selected point.</i>	339
15.9 <i>Determining points on a curve.</i>	342
15.10 <i>Sample Program: Breaking a curve into equal segments.</i>	342
15.11 <i>Determining intersections.</i>	344
15.12 <i>Summary.</i>	346
Chapter 16. Legacy Polygon and Polyface Meshes	347
16.1 <i>Mesh building procedures.</i>	347
16.2 <i>PolygonMesh.</i>	348
16.3 <i>Smoothing the PolygonMesh.</i>	350
16.4 <i>Sample Program: Creating a PolygonMesh.</i>	351
16.5 <i>PolyfaceMesh.</i>	357
16.6 <i>Sample Program: Creating a PolyfaceMesh.</i>	362
16.7 <i>Modifying Polygon and Polyface Meshes.</i>	365
16.8 <i>Summary.</i>	370
Chapter 17. Solid Modeling	371
17.1 <i>3DSolid Primitives.</i>	371
17.2 <i>Creating a Primitive using ActiveX.</i>	373
17.3 <i>Creating 3DSolids from 2D or 3D objects.</i>	374
17.4 <i>Creating Regions.</i>	375
17.5 <i>Sample Program: Complex Regions.</i>	378
17.6 <i>Properties and Methods of the 3DSolid object.</i>	381
17.7 <i>Sample Program: Extruded Solid.</i>	381
17.8 <i>Sample Program: Solid by Sweeping along a path.</i>	384
17.9 <i>Sample Program: Sweeping along a Helix.</i>	388
17.10 <i>AddRevolvedSolid: Solids of Revolution.</i>	394
17.11 <i>Sample Program: Creating a Solid of Revolution.</i>	394
17.12 <i>Physical and Geometric Properties.</i>	397
17.13 <i>Summary.</i>	401

Chapter 18. Editing 3DSolids	403
18.1 Slicing Solids.	403
18.2 Sample Program: Polyhedra obtained by slicing 3DSolids.	405
18.3 Sectioning 3DSolids.	406
18.4 Sample Program: Sections of a Sphere.	407
18.5 Boolean operations on 3DSolids.	408
18.6 Sample Program: UNION and SUBTRACTION operations.	408
18.7 Sample Program: Part created by INTERSECTION.	414
18.8 CheckInterference: Interference operations.	417
18.9 Sample programs: 3DSolid TRIM and SPLIT commands.	418
18.10 Section objects.	423
18.11 Sample program C:SOL-SECT.	431
18.12 Summary.	434
Chapter 19. Subdivision surfaces	435
19.1 Programming MESH objects with Visual LISP.	436
19.2 Creating MESH entities with ENTMAKE.	436
19.3 Sample Program: Polyhedral MESH.	438
19.4 Sample Program: MESH approximating mathematical functions.	441
19.5 Creating meshes using command/vl-cmdf.	446
19.6 Modifying Subdivision Surfaces.	451
19.7 Sample Program: Modifying MESH objects.	454
19.8 Generalizing MESH transformations.	458
19.9 Sample Program: Shape up a MESH object.	460
19.10 Meshes created from 2D entities.	460
19.11 Summary.	465
Chapter 20. Procedural and NURBS Surfaces	467
20.1 Creating surfaces.	467
20.2 Properties exposed by Surfaces.	468
20.3 Sample Program: NURBS surfaces.	472
20.4 Creating a Procedural surface.	476
20.5 Sample Program: Associative Surface with Parametric Profiles.	480
20.6 Modifying the cross-section's constraint parameters.	486
20.7 Creating a dynamic block from the associative surface.	488
20.8 Summary.	493
PART 5. ADVANCED PROGRAMMING	495
Chapter 21. Reacting to Events: Reactors	497
21.1 The VLR functions.	497
21.2 Events that trigger a reactor.	498
21.3 Actions.	504
21.4 Tutorial: An application using Reactors.	508
21.5 Enabling persistent reactors functionality.	515

21.6	Summary.	516
Chapter 22. DCL: The Graphical User Interface		521
22.1	The DCL language.	521
22.2	Programming a dialog in the Visual LISP Editor.	523
22.3	Tutorial: Dialog box for generating Parametric models.	524
22.4	Controlling the dialog.	531
22.5	Event callback functions.	533
22.6	Assignment of the callback functions.	541
22.7	Activating the Dialog Box.	542
22.8	Generating the Model.	543
22.9	Summary.	546
Chapter 23. Associating information to Graphic Objects		549
23.1	Blocks with attributes.	550
23.2	Extended Entity Data (XDATA).	557
23.3	XRECORD objects and Dictionaries.	560
23.4	Sample Program: Data in Dictionaries.	565
23.5	LDATA Dictionaries.	568
23.6	Access to external databases.	572
23.7	Summary.	575
Chapter 24. Tables		577
24.1	Fundamental Methods for working with TABLES.	577
24.2	Sample Program: Block attributes Table.	583
24.3	Summary.	588
Chapter 25. Visual LISP as ActiveX client		589
25.1	Tutorial: From AutoCAD to Excel.	589
25.2	Writing in the Worksheet.	593
25.3	The Dialog box.	596
25.4	Project Structure.	602
25.5	Summary.	604
Chapter 26. VLX: The Visual LISP Executable		605
26.1	Managing an Application.	605
26.2	The VLISP Project Manager.	606
26.3	Namespaces.	610
26.4	Creating the Application Module.	612
26.5	Summary.	615
Chapter 27. OpenDCL		617
27.1	The OpenDCL project.	617
27.2	The OpenDCL development environment.	619
27.3	Form Types.	621
27.4	Control Property Wizard.	625

27.5	<i>Tutorial: An application developed with OpenDCL.....</i>	627
27.6	<i>Adding the necessary controls.</i>	631
27.7	<i>Distributing the Application..</i>	653
27.8	<i>Summary</i>	653

Preface

This book is the product of eighteen years teaching Computer Aided Design to Civil and Industrial Engineering students at the University of Cantabria. During this time I have published two books about Visual LISP programming for AutoCAD. Back in 2003 the book *Programación en AutoCAD con Visual LISP*¹ which I wrote in collaboration with Professor César Otero was the first one dealing with this subject in Spanish. For ten years it has been the main resource in Spanish for Visual LISP programming. I still receive messages asking me where to buy it. It is impossible, since it is now out of print. A couple of years ago I undertook the task of preparing an updated version. The new functionalities added since 2003 to AutoCAD required a thorough revision and rewriting of the text. The new book *Experto AutoCAD con Visual LISP* is updated to Release 2012. But being written in Spanish limits this kind of book's readers. My English speaking friends have encouraged me to prepare an English version which may reach a wider audience. During this time AutoCAD 2013 has been released, so the English edition has been updated to cover the few changes introduced from 2012 to 2013.

Back in 2003 when the first book was published, AutoLISP was not "in fashion". Not even with Visual LISP's new contributions. Fashion followers then bet on the novelty represented by VBA. But fashion is not always rationally justified. In that book we aimed to demonstrate that the availability of other Windows dialog box modalities was not reason enough to forgo what had been our way of customizing AutoCAD for more than 15 years. That's why we ended our book with a chapter devoted to Chad Wanless's ObjectDCL, a plug-in which allowed the use of this kind of Graphic User Interface with AutoLISP.

VBA, like all fashions, passed away. It's over and those who opted for it are now hastily rewriting their applications². But AutoLISP/Visual LISP is still here. And ObjectDCL, now OpenDCL, has become an open source project which we can use free of charge. And once more it deserved the new book's last chapter.

I wish this book will guide he who uses AutoCAD in becoming a real expert. That kind of AutoCAD expert that is acquainted with, understands and can manipulate the program's inner workings to achieve the desired output in a fast and efficient way. He who is not satisfied with what comes out of the box, but demands more.

Among the most significant new contributions of recent versions we have 3D modeling, including surfaces associativity. To them, and other advanced techniques, including parameterization, reactors, user graphic interfaces and compiling applications, more than half of this new book is devoted.

The contents are updated to AutoCAD 2013. Source code has been tested with the Windows 32 and 64 bit versions. Although much of the above also applies to previous versions there is

¹ *Togores, R. and Otero, C.; Programación en AutoCAD con Visual LISP. McGraw-Hill Interamericana de España, S.A.U. ISBN: 84-481-3694-2. Madrid, 2003.*

² *On August 6, 2012 Autodesk announced that due to Microsoft's recent renewed investment in VBA, it has become possible for Autodesk to upgrade the VBA engine (in those products that support VBA) from version 6.3 to 7.1. It will be available as a separate download for AutoCAD® and AutoCAD verticals, and as part of the standard installation for Autodesk® Inventor® as of the next release. However, while this means VBA code will not become immediately obsolete, Autodesk does not recommend using VBA for professional application development.*

no excuse not to study it using the latest release. Autodesk offers student versions of most of its software completely free of charge. To obtain them, simply register in the Autodesk Education Community website (*students.autodesk.com*) or in the Autodesk Students Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Autodeskedcommunity>).

The source code for all the examples included in the book can be freely downloaded from my website: <http://www.togores.net/autocadexpert/>, where I have published other materials related to computer-aided design developed during the last twenty years. I hope that you will not only learn from this book, but that you will enjoy doing it.

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First of all, I wish to recognize the support received from the Developers Assistance Services of the Autodesk Developer Network with their answers to my many questions when preparing the chapters devoted to the new Mesh and Surface entities. Without this information it would have been difficult to attain the goals I had set myself.

To this I have to add the contribution of the participants to the many AutoLISP forums in the Internet, in particular Autodesk's *Visual LISP, AutoLISP and General Customization* group and the forum at www.theswamp.org. A special mention is deserved by Owen Wengerd and the group of enthusiasts that keep alive the OpenDCL project.

Many of the ideas developed in this book have been tested in exercises proposed during my 18 years as a teacher in the *Geographic Engineering and Graphic Expression Techniques Department* at the *University of Cantabria* (Spain). I want to recognize the contribution of my colleagues and in particular of Professor César Otero, director of my doctoral thesis on *Computational Geometry Methods Applied to the Design of Space Structures*. It was during the work in this thesis that I could investigate in depth some of the procedures for transformations in 3D space proposed in this book. From the University's *Applied Mathematics and Computational Sciences Department* I wish to express my debt with Professors Andrés Iglesias and Jaime Puig-Pey for their research on NURBS curves and surfaces from which I have profited for the preparation of these themes.

No doubt many are the names missing here, but I must not leave out that of Nikolas Bokisch, former Autodesk EMEA Education Program Manager, for his interest in our work and the help that he has always provided.

About the Author.

Reinaldo N. Togores has been using AutoCAD for about 25 years in his work as an Architect and Industrial Designer. For the past eighteen years he has taught AutoLISP programming to Civil and Industrial Engineering Students at the University of Cantabria, in Northern Spain. As a researcher on Computer Aided Design topics he has worked with several research groups at the University of Cantabria and has been a member of the Autodesk Developers Network since the late '90s. He has authored two books about Visual LISP programming.