

Bluebeam PDF Revu Plug-in for Revit 2010



INTRODUCTION

This February, Bluebeam Software is offering a whole new world of PDF creation functionality to Revit 2010 users. With the launch of Bluebeam PDF Revu CAD Edition 8, they are integrating directly into Revit with a plug-in that provides one

button PDF creation, and a whole lot more.

I'm no stranger to Bluebeam and their PDF solutions for the architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) industry. In fact, I was an early beta tester of Bluebeam back in 2002 when the company first released a PDF plug-in for converting AutoCAD drawings to PDF. Although many designers have migrated from 2D AutoCAD drawings to 3D Revit files, PDF's value has not declined. After all almost everyone has a PDF reader. This makes it an ideal file format when distributing design data to project partners who do not have access to BIM and CAD applications and viewers. These days it certainly makes better economic and environmental sense to exchange PDF documents, whenever possible, than it does to print and ship large format drawings.

Having used Revit for many years, I was excited to hear that Bluebeam was releasing a PDF plug-in for Autodesk's BIM software. When I was presented with the opportunity to not only get an early glimpse at the new version but to also share my thoughts in this article, I gladly said yes. What follows are the first three impressions I had about their integration into Revit and the other features that Bluebeam PDF Revu provides for an entire project team, from design to bid to build.

IMPRESSION #1 - IT'S SMART TO TRUST A PLUG-IN INSTEAD OF USING A PRINTER DRIVER

Creating a PDF document with Revit via a printer driver works, but has drawbacks. For example, Revit's Print to PDF option will create PDF files of individual sheets in the same order as they are listed in the project browser. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to print sheets into a PDF file in any order that you wanted? Especially without having to resort to creating a custom sorting parameter for your project browser? Revu, now that it is tightly integrated into Revit via a plug-in, allows you to select the order that your sheets will be added to your final PDF, in advance! Opening files and manually sorting sheets is a thing of the past!

There are also times when you want added security in a PDF through the use of digital signatures. The majority of PDF printer drivers do not allow for the use of digital signatures. However, Revu allows you to easily add digital signature fields and sign PDFs, either by entering in X and Y coordinates upon PDF conversion, or adding them after PDF creation in the program's PDF editor.

Digital signatures will become increasingly important as electronic submittal gains acceptance by plan check agencies.

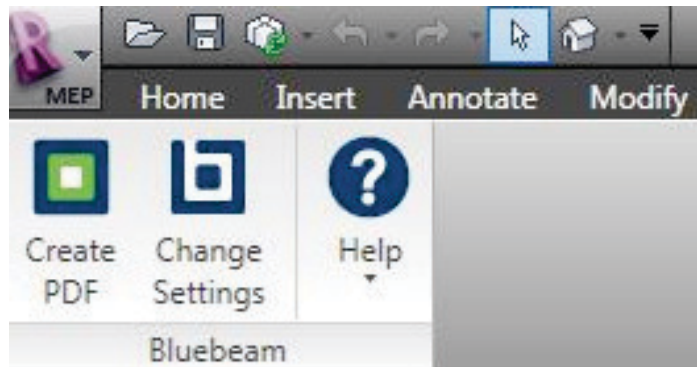


Figure 1-Bluebeam PDF Revu CAD Edition now provides a direct plug-in to Revit for one button PDF creation

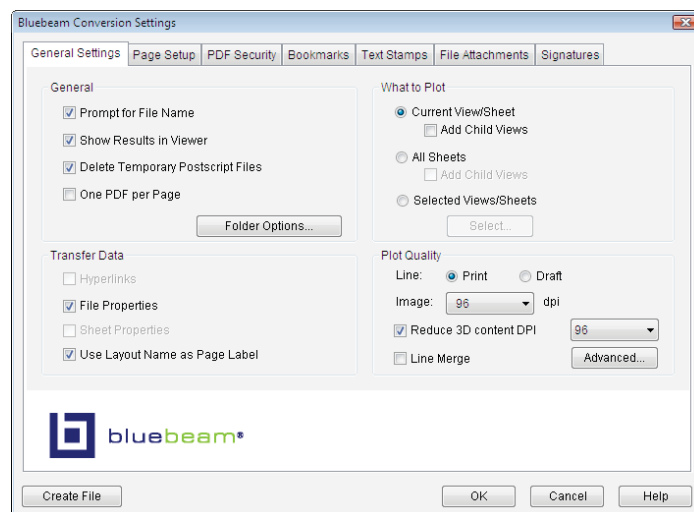


Figure 2-Bluebeam provides Revit users with a lot of control in configuring PDF conversion options

IMPRESSION #2 - MORE FLEXIBILITY THAN REVIT USERS HAVE SEEN BEFORE

Everyone likes to use software in different ways. Some people like to have a lot of options – the more buttons and toolbars, the better. Other people are intimidated when faced with too many choices. Revu caters to everyone by making it incredibly easy to create a perfectly usable PDF with the touch of a single button, but still providing enough options and advanced features to satisfy even the most diehard techie.

As I mentioned before, you can imagine how excited I was when I saw that Revu allows you to sort your sheet or view order before ever

making the final PDF. By doing this I can place all of the sheets in the set (did I mention that I can do this in the order I want?) and make sure that everything is exactly how I want it before sending the file to our reprographics company for printing to hard copy. It is so much quicker than opening up a large PDF, waiting for the previews to generate, and then manually dragging each sheet into position. In my opinion, this feature alone is worth the cost of the software.

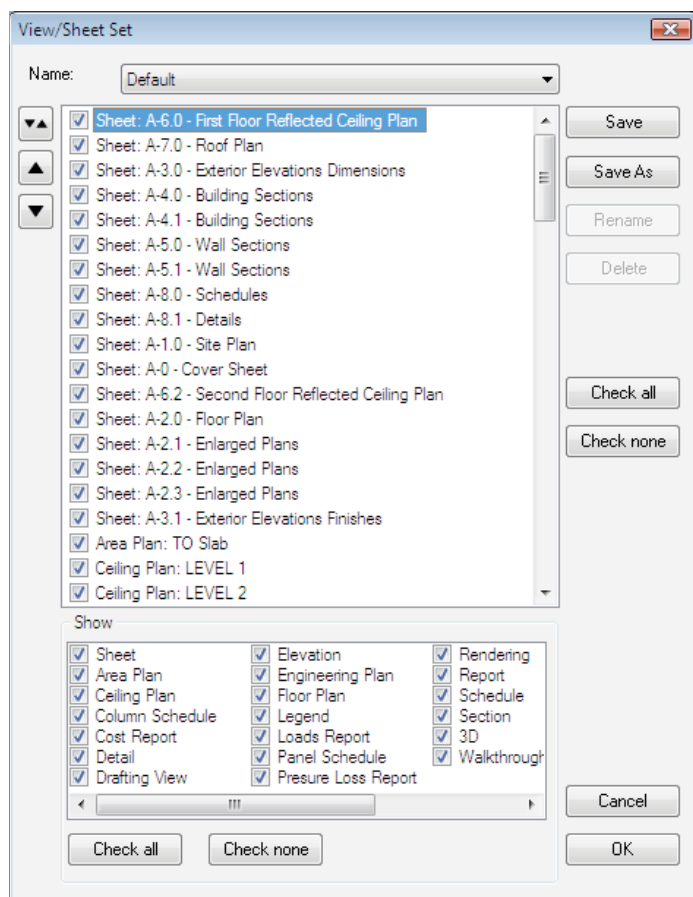


Figure 3-The ability to order your sheets before converting to PDF is a great, time-saving feature

MEMORY LANE

I must digress for a moment, do you remember back to the days before Revit 2010, and what an enjoyable experience it was to batch plot individual PDFs from Revit? You probably do, but if you don't recall, it was a fun guessing game called Name that File (sarcasm intended). Revit would be happily creating PDF files in the background while you had the daunting task of determining which sheet was being printed and how to name the resulting PDF. Thankfully, Revit 2010 now automatically names individual PDFs by sheet or view name. However, Bluebeam takes it one step further by allowing you to add uniform revision numbers or dates to each file name as it is being created.

IMPRESSION #3 - MORE THAN JUST PDF CREATION

While my impressions of this new Bluebeam PDF Revu have been heavily influenced by the great plotting control found in its new Revit plug-in, I should point out that Revu offers AEC firms much

more than just PDF creation. Bluebeam PDF Revu is a complete PDF editing and markup tool, optimized for viewing large format drawings. This includes features that are already familiar to AutoCAD users like the ability to password protect PDFs, apply text stamps, and create bookmarks upon PDF creation that can be configured to jump to specific views in a PDF, a website and more. Among its compelling markup/redlining tools are callouts, CAD symbols, shapes and takeoffs. Coupled with these features are its Tool Chest for storing custom markup tools, its Markups list for tracking, sorting, filtering and summarizing all comments, its new File Access tab for managing PDF files and integration into popular document management systems such as Microsoft SharePoint. Together, these tools provide firms with a solid platform for taking a variety of workflows to digital and paperless, from design reviews, to bid, to RFIs and submittals to punch lists and more.

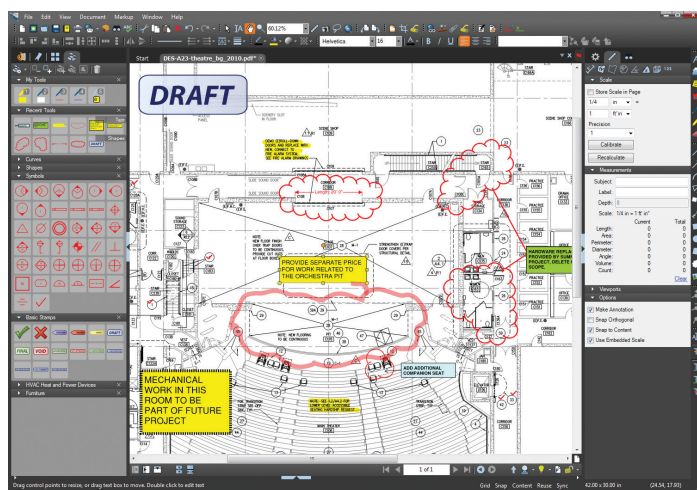


Figure 4-In addition to PDF creation, Revu includes a complete PDF editor built for AEC for redlining PDF drawings and other project documents

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

While Bluebeam PDF Revu CAD Edition certainly isn't new to AEC, it IS new to Revit. I look forward to taking my test drive of Revu 8 to full speed, and getting to use it throughout an entire project. My overall impression is that it is definitely a good value, especially given Bluebeam's eight-year track record for providing high quality PDFs from AutoCAD. Now they are bringing their experience and quality to Revit 2010 users. Bluebeam PDF Revu CAD Edition sells for \$199 per seat as of this writing. Considering how it is custom tailored for CAD and Revit it is priced competitively against other PDF options. I encourage you to take advantage of their free 30-day trial. It is available at their website (www.bluebeam.com).

David received his Bachelor's of Architecture degree from the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in 1990. Since then, he has been working for various firms specializing in the design and construction of high-tech research and manufacturing facilities as well as upper educational facilities. He currently works in the upper education division of Gkkworks in Irvine, California.

