Autodesk *Skill Builders*

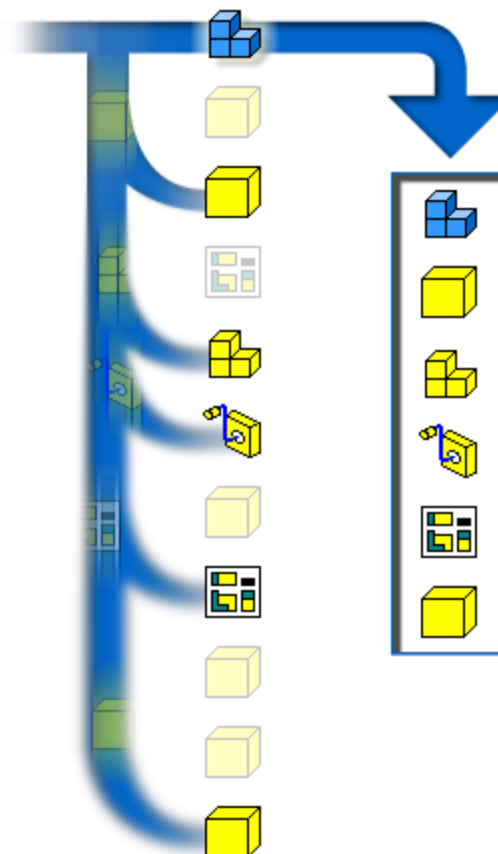*A Skill-building Exercise*

Pack and Go

In This Exercise

This Skill Builder provides a description of Pack and Go and guides you through a typical Pack and Go workflow. This exercise does not attempt to cover all aspects of Pack and Go. Please refer to the Autodesk Inventor Help for additional information.

What is Pack and Go?

As the name suggests, Pack and Go is a utility that copies and then packages an Autodesk Inventor file and all its referenced files into a single location. Pack and Go works hand-in-hand with the specified project (ipj) file to find the referenced files. The term "Pack" refers to the process of copying and coalescing a set of associated files to a location separate from the location(s) of the source files. The term "Go" means that you can then zip and move the copied files, if and as desired. The source files can be widely dispersed on a single hard drive or across a network. The copied package includes a newly generated project file. The package can have a folder structure that reflects the source project's locations and subfolder structure or the copied files can be packaged into a single location, or even flattened to a single folder. Pack and Go does not alter the source files or the copied files in any way. Pack and Go is included by default in your installation of Autodesk Inventor.

Why use Pack and Go?

The chief advantage to using Pack and Go is that you can quickly identify and create an isolated copy of those files, and only those files, referenced by a given file. Pack and Go ensures that the copied package will be complete yet not contain any extraneous files. Typically, you use Pack and Go to package an assembly file, and its associated files, though you can also apply Pack and Go to part, drawing, and presentation files. There are numerous ways to apply Pack and Go to your designs and workflow, including the following:

- Pack an assembly and its referenced files to test a design variation.
- Pack a complete set of files to send to a third party.
- Pack a set of files for archiving.

■ Pack a set of files so that they can be used with the Autodesk Inventor Vault.

■ Pack a set of files so that they can be used as a library for project.

■ Determine which file or files a given file is referencing.

Pack and Go and Projects

To ensure that Pack and Go finds all file references, and to ensure that the packaged files resolve correctly, it is important that you use Pack and Go in conjunction with the project file that is associated with the files to be packaged.

How do I access Pack and Go?

There are two methods to activate the Pack and Go dialog box. The first is to right-click an Autodesk Inventor file in Microsoft Windows® Explorer and then select Pack and Go. The second method is to right-click the file in Design Assistant, and then select Pack and Go.

The Pack and Go Interface

Open Windows Explorer and locate an assembly file that, for the purposes of this exercise, is associated with a project that has one or more Work Group Search Paths or Libraries. The assembly needs to reference at least one file from those workgroups or libraries. Right-click the assembly, and then select Pack and Go.

1. Use the Destination Folder field to specify a location for the package. Make sure this folder is empty.
2. In the Options field, select Keep Folder Hierarchy.
3. In the Project File field, choose the project file from the drop-down list, or browse to and select the project file.
4. Click the More button to expand the dialog box.
5. Click the Search Now button in the Find Referenced Files field.

Notice that Pack and Go lists the source file and all referenced files in the Files Found field. You can deselect any file that you do not want to include in the package. Notice also that the total number of files found is listed, along with the disk space required to store the package.

Right about now, you may be wondering about the difference between the Find Referenced Files and Search for Referencing Files fields. Find Referenced Files looks for files that the source file is dependent upon. This includes the files it references, the files each of those references, and so on. Search for Referencing Files looks for files that directly reference any of the files that are selected in the Find Referenced Files list. For example, a drawing file may exist that contains views of the components of the source assembly. Search for Referencing Files will find this drawing file, and any other referencing file, in the project (or selected search folders) that reference those components.

Click the Start button. After Pack and Go is finished (the Progress bar will be full and the Start button will return to the Active state), select the destination folder in Windows Explorer. Notice that if the project file contained multiple workgroups, those folders are represented in the package and contain copies of the referenced files from those workgroups. If the project file contained libraries, those libraries are represented in the package and are populated with copies of the referenced files from those libraries.

Notice also that the destination folder contains two project files, both named automatically with file names based on the file name of the source file. For example, if your source file was named 300-7423-05.iam then one project file will be named 300-7423-05.ipj and the other will be named 300-7423-05.ipj.old. The project file 300-7423-05.ipj will be based on the source project file and configured to reproduce the folder structure of the source project in the destination folder. The project file 300.7423-05.ipj.old is a copy of the source project but will be modified to show the full path of the source project workspace. 300-7423-05.iam in the package destination folder will use 300-7423-05.ipj to find its referenced files within the package destination folder.