

Chapter 6

Advanced

Unlike the other chapters in this tutorial, this chapter won't guide you through a lesson. Instead, it will briefly introduce you to some of the advanced features of Diagram! You should be able to read through this chapter in about fifteen minutes.

Grid

Diagram!'s grid feature offers a way of neatly sizing and positioning symbols, points and lines.

- 1. Raise the Grid panel by choosing the Grid Panel command from the Grid menu.**

GridPanel.tiff ↵

- 2. Click the Show Grid check box, and a grid appears on the screen.**

You can adjust the size of the grid blocks by using the Grid Spacing slider. The Align to Grid button aligns the selected symbol with the nearest intersection of the grid, and the Size to Grid button adjusts the size and position of the

selected object so that it fits in the nearest multiple of grid spacing. In other words, if a symbol is almost three grid blocks by three grid blocks in size, clicking this button will make the symbol exactly three by three.

For more information on the Grid panel, please refer to Chapter 28.

Grouping

The Group command causes a collection of symbols to be treated as a single unit.

1. Select more than one item on the canvas.

Group1.tiff ↵

2. Choose the Group command from the Arrange menu.

Group2.tiff ↵

Notice that the resize knobs of each individual item disappear, and one set of resize knobs appear around the entire selection. When you resize a group, all the symbols in it are resized simultaneously. Similarly, when you move or rotate a group, all symbols within it are moved or rotated simultaneously.

To break a group into its original components, select it and choose the Ungroup command.

For more information on these commands, please refer to Chapter 27.

Layering

In a drawing, symbols, lines and points can overlap one another. The Bring to Front and Send to Back commands allow you to control the order of overlap.

- 1. To move an item to the top of a pile, select it and choose Bring to Front.**
- 2. Similarly, you can place an item behind the others in a stack by selecting it and choosing Send to Back.**

BringToFront.tiff ↗

For more information on these commands, please refer to Chapter 27.

Select Panel

The Select panel is used to select symbols, points and lines on the basis of shape. Please note that the Select panel highlights entire categories, not individual items. For example, if you choose lines on the Select panel, all of the lines in your document will be highlighted.

- 1. Choose the Select Panel command from the Select submenu of the Edit menu to raise the Select panel.**

SelectPanel.tiff ↗

- 2. Choose whatever combination of symbols, points, etc., you wish to select in the current document.**

You can choose as many types as you like from the list. When you have selected an item, it becomes gray and its background becomes white. To make multiple selections, hold down the Shift key while you click.

- 3. Click the Select button to perform the selection.**

Please note that doing so will also clear any previous selections you had in your drawing.

Clicking the Deselect button deselects the indicated items in your drawing.

For more information on the Select panel, please refer to Chapter 25.

Customizing Palettes

- 1. Enter Edit mode by clicking the Edit button in the lower right corner of a palette window.**

The button stays down, locking the palette in Edit mode so that you can work freely. A palette with a white background is in Edit mode, while a palette with a gray background can be used to draw as usual.

PaletteEdit.tiff ↵

You can now work with the palette just like a normal document. You can place new symbols, such as EPS or TIFF images, on the palette, and you can name and save a palette in precisely the same manner as a normal document.

- 2. When you're done editing, click the Edit button again to exit Edit mode.**

The background of the palette becomes gray again, and you can now drag items from the palette and drop them in a document.

For more information on editing palettes, please refer to Chapter 12.

Images

Any file that Diagram! can make into an image, such as an EPS or TIFF file, can be utilized in a Diagram! drawing. You can add images to Diagram! documents in two ways: by copying and pasting them from other applications, or by

dragging imageable files from the Workspace and dropping them into your drawings.

Linked images

NeXTSTEP Object Linking allows you to keep an image in a Diagram! document automatically in step with the application that created it. For example, suppose you want to incorporate a pie chart from a spreadsheet application into a Diagram! drawing. You could copy and paste it in, but each time you changed the configuration of the pie chart, you'd have to copy and paste again to keep it current.

If, however, your spreadsheet supports Object Links, you can link the pie chart to your Diagram! document, so it will automatically be updated every time you change the spreadsheet.

For more information on images and linked images, please refer to Chapter 17.

Attachments

Attachments are a means of navigating from a Diagram! symbol to other files, or to selections in other files. When you set a symbol's attachment, a small diamond-shaped button appears at the symbol's side. (If you're familiar with Object Linking, you'll recognize it as a standard link button.) Clicking the button opens the attached file.

Attachments are a useful way of tying files such as spreadsheets, word processor documents, other Diagram! documents, etc., to symbols. They offer a powerful and compact method of cross-referencing. For example, suppose you've used Diagram! to create an organizational chart of your company. You can attach each employee's resume to the box in the chart that represents him

or her. When someone reviews the chart, they can click attachment buttons to study the resumes that interest them.

For more information on attachments, please refer to Chapter 18.