Fusion 360 NEW UI vs OLD UI

On August 13, 2019, the Fusion 360 Engineers pushed out a new update. Most Fusion 360 updates include several bug fixes and minor feature enhancements. This one, however, includes an update that completely rethinks how users work in Fusion 360.

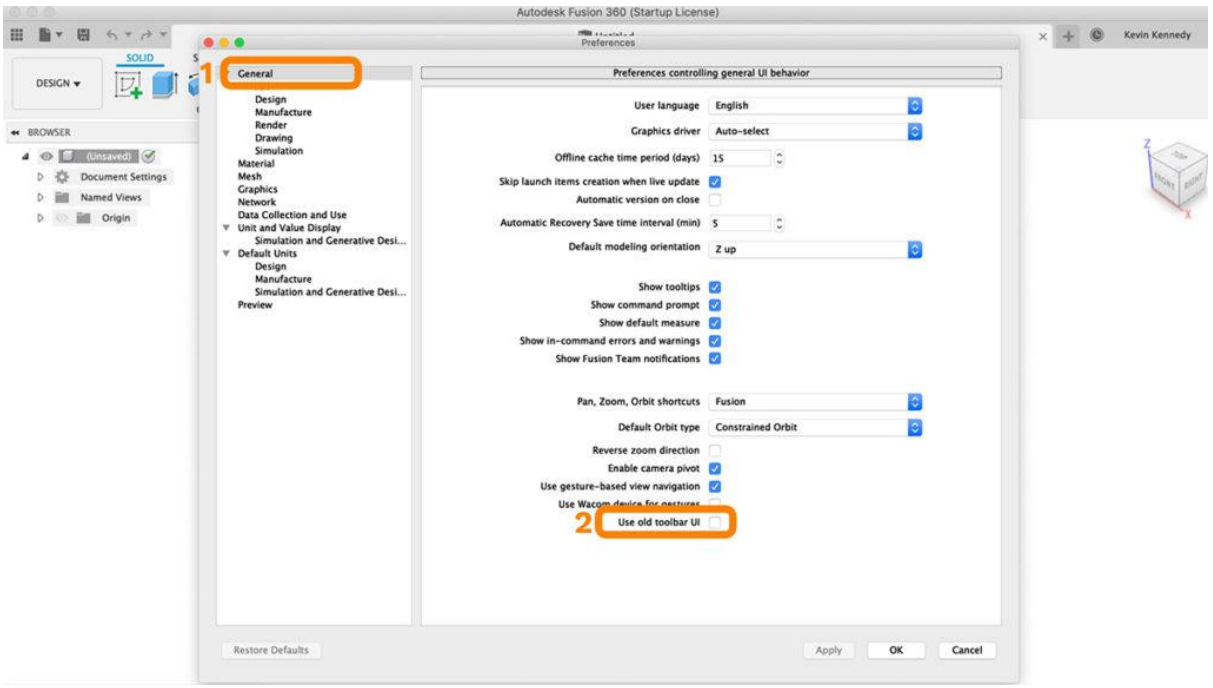
Table of Contents:

- Switching back to the old UI
- Iconography updates
- Workspace updates
- Tabs (Design Workspace)
- Contextual Tabs
- Shortcuts Box
- Right-Click Menu
- Add-ins and Scripts

Switching Back to the Old UI

First, you may be wondering, “can I switch back to the old UI?“

To switch back to the older toolbar, select username > preferences > general tab > check “Use old toolbar UI” > hit the “Apply” button and then restart your copy of Fusion 360 to get the changes to take effect.



Iconography Updates

You'll notice that (almost) all of the icons used throughout Fusion 360 have been updated. This is part of a larger plan to make the icons more unified across all Autodesk products. As in, these icons will also be used in Autodesk Inventor and other Autodesk products.
Old Fusion 360 Toolbar Icons

New Fusion 360 Toolbar Icons

Key changes with these icon updates:

- The "Create Sketch" icon now has a green plus symbol and no longer includes a pencil icon
- The icons no longer have a small drop shadow
- Most icons no longer have their solid black border around them
- Shades of blue are used more frequently throughout the icons

Previously, the Fusion 360 Browser used a lightbulb icon to show the visibility of objects. Originally, this was depicted by a lightbulb being yellow if it was visible, while a blue lightbulb meant the object was hidden or "turned off".

Now, with the update, you'll see the visibility icons are represented with an eyeball icon. The eyeball is dark gray if the object is turned on. If the object is turned off then the eyeball icon is light gray and also has a slash through it.

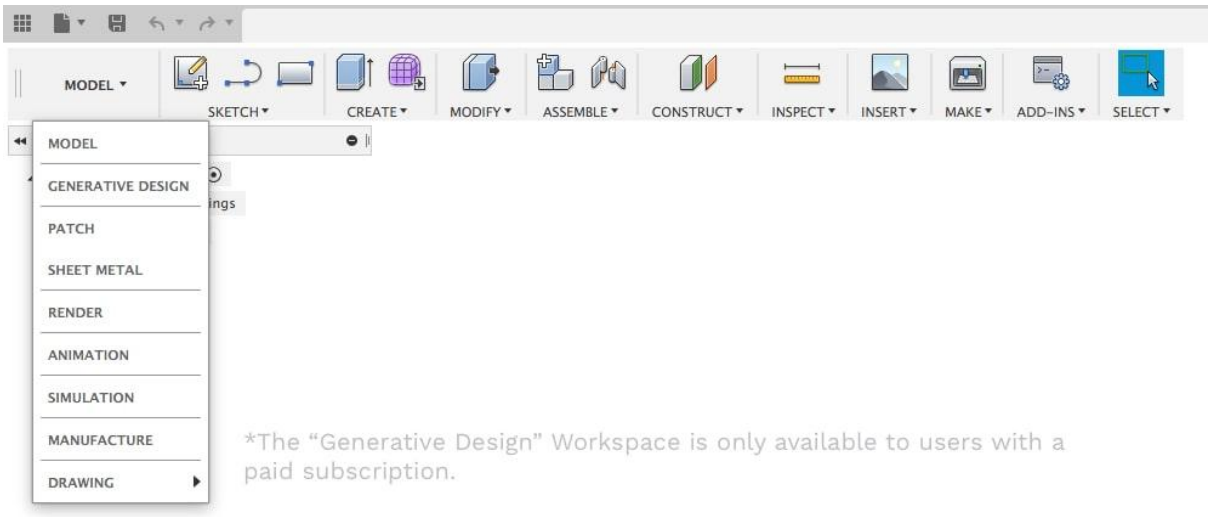
Notice the eyeball icons on the left (new) replacing the lightbulb icons on the right (old).

Workspace Updates

The new toolbar improves the organization and hierarchy of tools. These updates will take a little bit of time to get used to. However, eventually, they'll make working in Fusion 360 much more efficient and intentional.

The old toolbar had 9 workspaces:

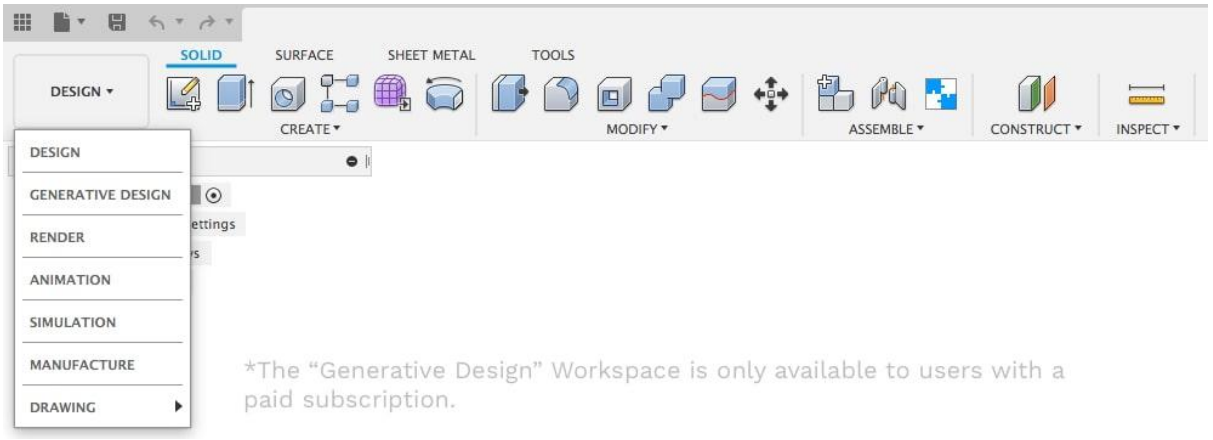
- Model
- Generative Design
- Patch
- Sheet Metal
- Render
- Animation
- Simulation
- Manufacture (previously called CAM)
- Drawing



The new toolbar has only 7 workspaces:

- Design (previously called Model)
- Generative Design
- Render
- Animation
- Simulation
- Manufacture
- Drawing

Note: You won't see the "Generative Design" Workspace if you're on the Education or Startup/Hobbyists license.



Tabs (Design Workspace)

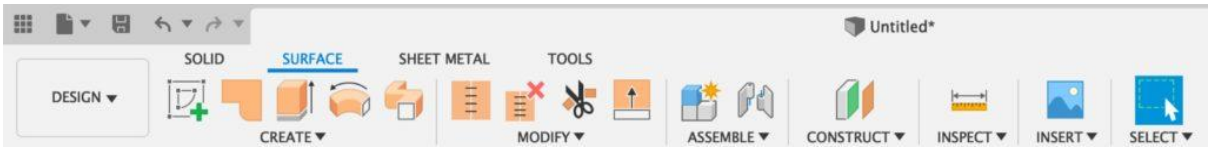
The new UI includes the addition of tabs within workspaces. The Model Workspace has been renamed the Design Workspace. You'll see there are four tabs within the Design Workspace.

Solid Tab

The Solid tab includes all of the solid (parametric) modeling tools that were formerly in the Model workspace.

Surface Tab

The Surface tab includes all of the surface modeling tools. These features used to be located in the “Patch Workspace”.

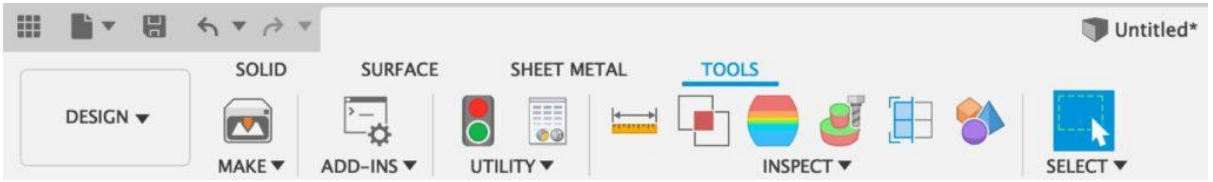


Sheet Metal Tab

The Sheet Metal tab includes all of the sheet metal tools that were formerly in the “Sheet Metal Workspace”.

Tools Tab

The Tools tab includes all of the features that don’t correlate specifically to one type of modeling. Within the Tools tab, you’ll find the 3D Print dialog, add-ins, and scripts, as well as your inspect and analysis tools.



Contextual Tabs

One of the largest changes with this update is the new addition of contextual tabs.
The idea with the contextual tabs is that they take away all of the clutter or features that you won’t be using in your current state, which allows for more room of features that you may need. This also gives you more room to customize your toolbars.

Sketch Contextual Tab

One of the big changes is the fact that you will no longer see the Sketch dropdown list while you’re in the Design workspace. To enter the sketch environment (now the sketch contextual tab) you’ll have to select “Create Sketch” or use one of the sketch shortcuts with the shortcut keys or the shortcut box.

When you're in the sketch tab or the sketch environment, you'll see that the "Create" dropdown list now includes all of the sketch geometry. This was formerly labeled the "Sketch" dropdown list.
The nicest thing about this improvement is that the toolbar has much more room to display the sketching-related features.
The other big change with this is the fact that they've decided to remove the sketch constraints from the sketch palette. All of the sketch constraints will now appear in the toolbar.

Sketch constraints are not only a little bit easier to access up in the toolbar, but you can now also apply custom keyboard shortcuts to them, which was something that was not available when the constraints were in the sketch palette.

The Sketch contextual tab will remain "active" (highlighted in blue) until you do one of two things. You either have to click the "Finish Sketch" button in the sketch tab, which was previously labeled "Stop Sketch". Otherwise, you'll have to activate one of the modeling commands, which will then automatically close the sketch tab.

Mesh Contextual Tab

If you select the "Create" dropdown list under the "Solid" tab, you'll see that you can select the "Create Mesh" option. This will put you in the Mesh contextual tab with all of the relevant Mesh tools.

Similar to the others, this used to be its own workspace but it's now simply a contextual tab that's within the Design workspace. Hopefully, you can start to see how this design workspace encompasses a variety of modeling tools all into one workspace.
Note: The Mesh Workspace is still in preview and must be activated in your preferences dialog.

Direct Modeling (Base) Contextual Tab

Select the Solid Tab, and then the "create" dropdown menu. From there, you can select the "create base feature" option near the bottom of the list. This will place you into the "direct editing" mode where the actions you take are not recorded in the timeline below.
In this "base" mode we have the "Base feature solid" tab that includes all of the solid modeling tools and we have the "Base Feature Surface" that includes all of the surface modeling tools. Notice, the sheet metal and tools tabs won't appear while in "base" mode.

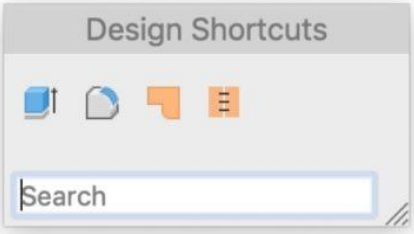
Shortcuts

Another critical change with this new UI update is the shortcuts box.
Hit the shortcut letter “S” to activate the shortcuts box.

Previously, this box only displayed the tools relevant to your workspace, which is somewhat still the case. However, you’ll notice that while in the Design workspace, you can now see shortcuts for all of the available contextual tabs within the Design workspace.

With that said, these shortcuts boxes are still tied to certain contextual tabs. For example, if enter the “form” tab and hit the keyboard shortcut letter “S,” you’ll see that it includes the “Form Shortcuts.”

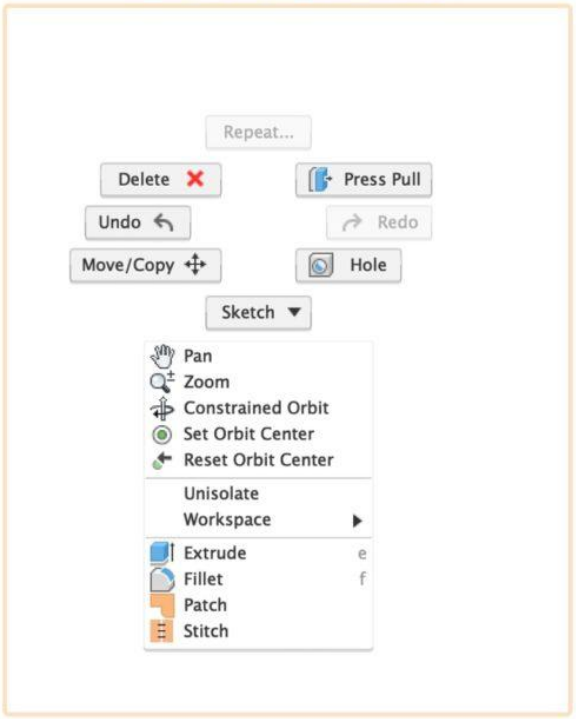
In summary, the “Design Workspace” shortcuts box will include the solid, surface, sheet metal, and tools shortcuts. While the other contextual tabs will still have their own unique shortcuts boxes.



Right-Click Menu

Another small change, that is still fairly critical, would be the right-click menu. If you right-click you’ll see that the shortcuts you’ve saved to the shortcuts box (discussed above) now appear here as well. This replaces the old right-click menu that used to include all of the standard dropdown menus.

NEW RIGHT-CLICK MENU



OLD RIGHT-CLICK MENU