

Upgrade Guide

for



& LED Wizard

Aries Graphics International

Sign Wizard 6.5 and Neon Wizard 6.5 Upgrade Guide

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Worldwide Headquarters:

Aries Graphics International
1834 Palma Drive Suite E
Ventura, CA 93003 USA

Web Site: www.aries-graphics.com

Telephone: 805 642-2650, 800 294-7273

Fax: 805 642-2653

Email: sales@aries-graphics.com
support@aries-graphics.com

Sign Wizard 6.5 and Neon Wizard 6.5 Upgrade Guide

The purpose of this document is to introduce you to the new features, capabilities, and improvements in Sign Wizard 6.5 and Neon Wizard 6.5. As a current user, you want to know what is new in the software and how it works so that you can decide whether to purchase the upgrade. Read this document carefully and you'll be up to speed on the new features and program improvements.

This upgrade guide describes the New Features and the Improved Features in version 6.5. You can read any or all of the items; each is separate and independent. The programs – Sign Wizard and Neon Wizard - and the levels for each of the new and improved features is included in the descriptions.

We are assuming that you are an experienced user of the software as we describe the new capabilities. If you don't understand some of the descriptions in this guide, please go to the **On-line Help** menu in the program for a more complete explanation of all the features and capabilities.

As always, please feel free to contact us directly by phone or email, or visit our Web site at www.aries-graphics.com.

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Improved Features

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Importing and Exporting PDF Files

Sign Wizard and Neon Wizard – all levels

All levels of Sign Wizard 6.5 and Neon Wizard 6.5 can now import and export PDF files. PDF is rapidly becoming the method of choice for professional graphic designers to transfer vector and raster files between graphic design programs. There are two new import filters in Sign Wizard 6.5:

(1) Interpreted Postscript (*.EPS, *.AI, *.PDF)

(2) Rasterized Postscript (*.EPS, *.AI, *.PDF).

If you want to import an **EPS, AI or PDF** file and retain all the vector data (the file may also contain raster data), use the **Interpreted Postscript** import filter. If you want to convert any vector data to raster data, use the **Rasterized Postscript** import filter.

Until recently, importing and exporting between the various graphic design programs has been very problematic for everyone in the graphic design industry. This is rapidly changing with the broad acceptance of the Adobe PDF format because PDF files are usually precise and highly compressed with a minimal loss of precision. **This means that even for very complex designs a PDF files will usually be small enough to send by e-mail.**

High Quality Anti-aliased Rendering

Sign Wizard Advantage, Grand, Pro - Neon Wizard all levels

Vector graphics can now be displayed in Sign Wizard 6.5 using anti-aliasing as shown below. **Anti-aliasing gives a very smooth look that will give your designs a more professional appearance.**

When you create a raster image in Sign Wizard 6.5, be sure to have the Anti-aliasing feature turned on to get the best quality raster image. Of course the pixel count (width and height) in the Export dialog box are also very important in creating a sharp raster image.

In earlier versions of Sign Wizard, vector images may appear chunky (especially if the resolution of your monitor is not very high) as shown here on the left, rather than very smooth, as shown on the right. To get the smooth look, set the **Drawing Mode** in the **View** menu to the **High Quality Anti-Aliased** mode.



For complex designs with lots of vector data, the anti-aliased mode may not be displayed as fast as the **Standard** drawing mode, so you have the option to run the program in either the **Standard** mode or the **High Quality Anti-Aliased** mode. Since it is usually not as important to have smooth vectors when colors are turned off, it is recommended that you check the option to **Use Standard when Show Fill Colors is off**.

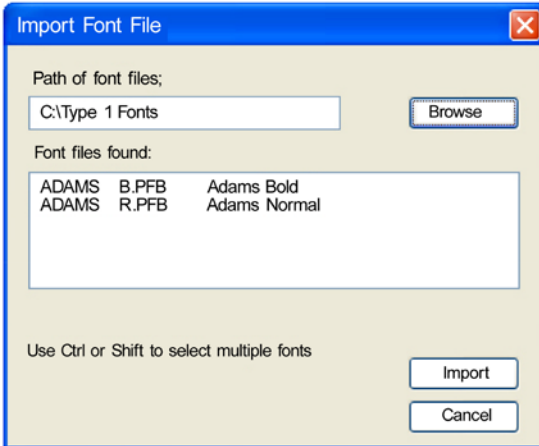
Adobe Type 1 and Open Type fonts.

Sign Wizard Advantage, Grand, Pro - Neon Wizard all levels

In addition to the wide variety of fonts supplied with all levels of Sign Wizard and the **True Type** fonts available on your computer, you can now import **Adobe Type 1** and **Open Type** fonts. **This will give you many more high quality fonts to choose from.**

If you have an **Adobe Type 1** or an **Open Type** font file, click on **Import Font from File** in the **Text** menu and browse until you find the file containing the data for the new font. Click on **Import** in the **Import Font File** dialog box.

The complete font will appear showing all the characters. You can change the name of the font or do any editing that may be needed. The imported font is converted to a Sign Wizard font and will be available to use in the same way the standard Sign Wizard fonts are used.



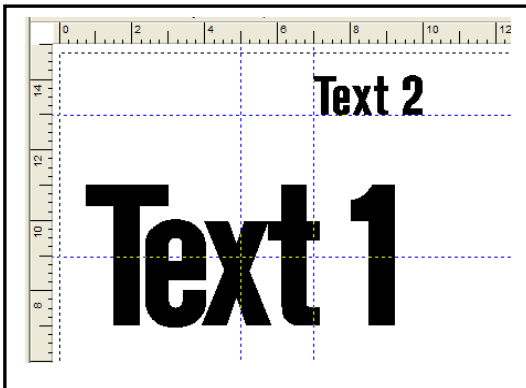
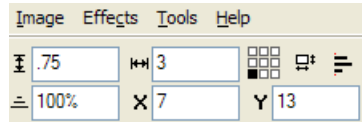
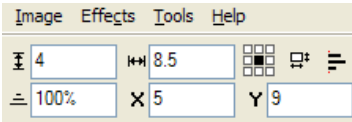
Anchor Points

Sign Wizard and Neon Wizard – all levels

This new tool is very handy for making precise numeric placements of design elements. You can now specify which of the nine **Handles** you want to use as the reference point for the **X** and **Y** position values. When you select any object, the **Handles** are the small boxes at the corners, in the middle of the four sides and the geometric center of the object.

For example, if you want to position the center of **Text 1** which is 4" tall X 8.5" wide at X = 5" and Y = 9", click on the box in the center of the nine boxes (which will then turn black), enter the coordinates (5 and 9 as shown on the left) and the geometric center of **Text 1** will be positioned exactly at that spot.

If you want **Text 2** with a width of 3" and a height of 0.75" to have its lower left corner at X = 7 and Y = 13, you would select the object, click on the small square in the lower left corner and enter the X and Y coordinates (7 and 13 as shown on the right).

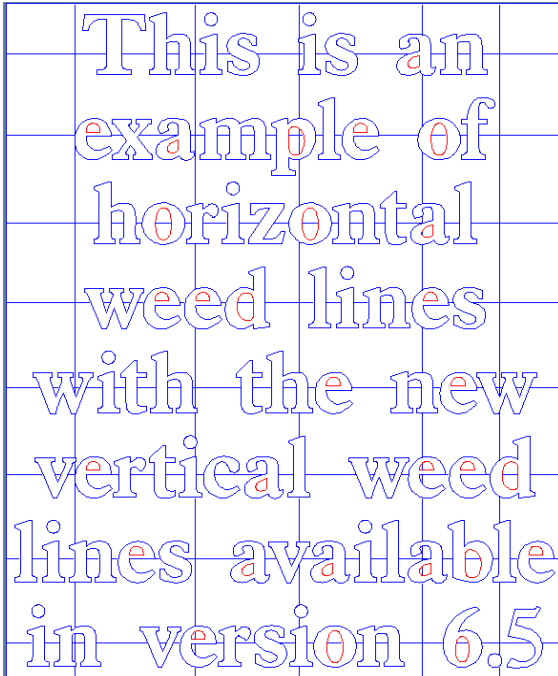


Vertical Weed Lines in Plot Manager

Sign Wizard Advantage, Grand, Pro – Neon Wizard all levels

In addition to the horizontal weed lines introduced in Sign Wizard 5, version 6.5 introduces **vertical** weed lines to further reduce the risk of having to do re-cuts. **By having weed lines in both the horizontal and vertical directions, weeding the most intricate designs could not be easier.**

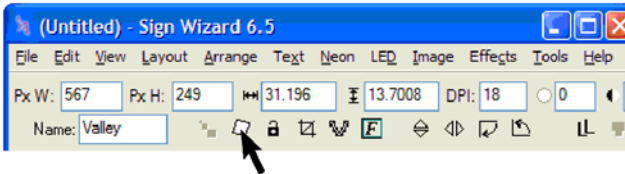
The example below may be a little over the top, but the weed lines are created manually, so you can put in as many weed lines as you need for each design. If a design is very simple, you may not need any weed lines at all.



Interactive Bitmap Rotate Tool

Sign Wizard Advantage, Grand, Pro - Neon Wizard all levels

This feature is very handy for rotating an image that is slightly skewed. Just click on the bitmap rotate tool



drag a line from left to right to define the new level



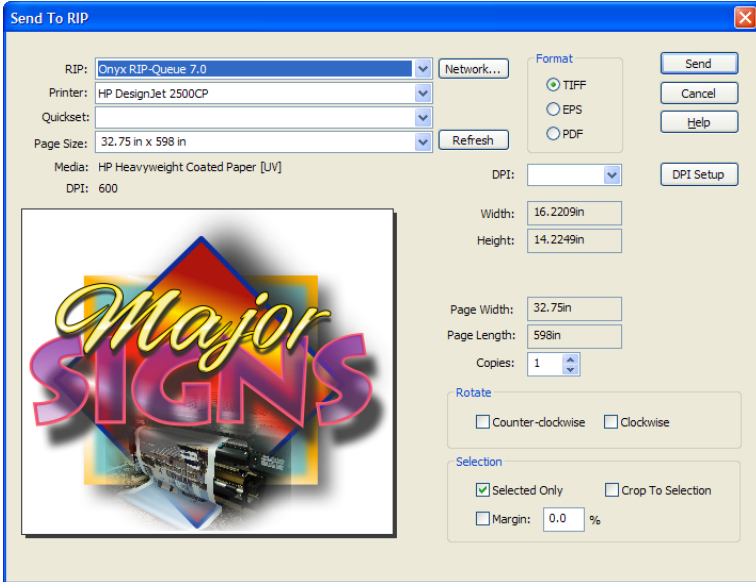
and then click on Done.



Expanded Send to RIP Features

Sign Wizard Advantage, Grand and Pro

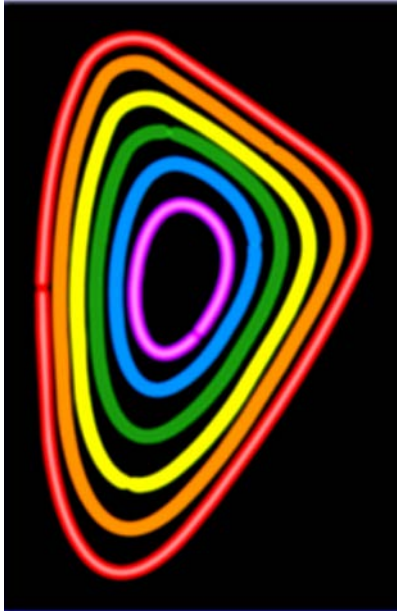
When outputting to an Onyx RIP, Sign Wizard 6.5 now includes the PDF format, preview, rotation and cropping options. You can also specify the number of copies you want. These new features will streamline your workflow.



Neon Preview now works on Groups

Neon Wizard Pro

Formerly the Neon Preview feature worked on one neon object at a time - limiting the number of colors to just one. Now Neon Preview works on a group of tubes containing many different colors.



LED Wizard Module

Neon Wizard Pro, Sign Wizard Pro (w/Neon Pro feature set)

This optional module allows you to create precision LED channel letter layouts in a fraction of the time it takes trying to adapt other graphic design software to the task. In addition, the number of LED modules required, the power requirements for each character and the totals for the complete job are automatically tabulated and sent to Excel to create a spread sheet to insure accurate quotations and lists of materials for production.

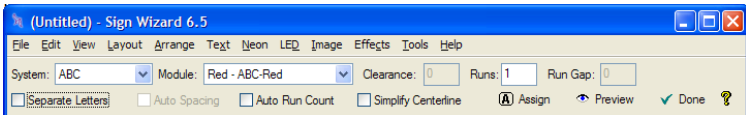
The detail specifications for most of the leading LED suppliers offering LEDs for use in channel letters are now available in LED Wizard. Work is continuing to incorporate the specifications for additional LED suppliers.

Sample LED layouts

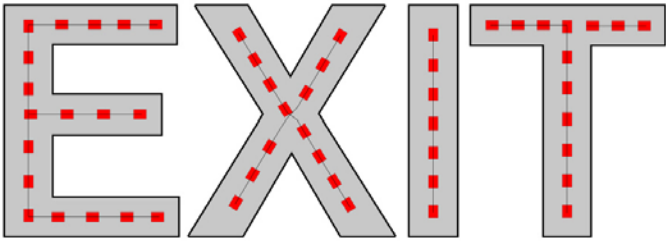
The following examples illustrate how LED Wizard works. The text below is 18" tall Helvetica Medium with a 3½" stroke width, so a single row of LED modules is needed.

EXIT

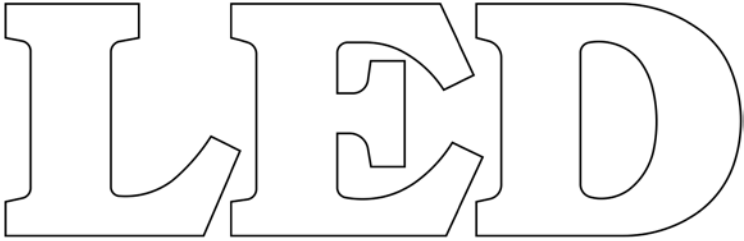
Click on the LED menu and select the brand and model LED to be used. In this example, a fictitious brand and model were selected – **ABC Red** - from the list of available modules. Enter 1 in the box labeled Runs. The other boxes (**Separate Letters**, **Auto Spacing** and **Auto Stroke Count** are left unchecked.)



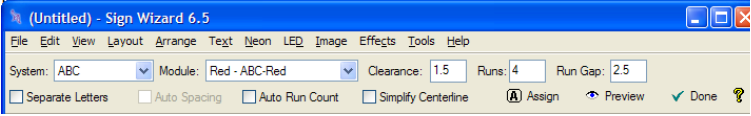
When you click on Done the LEDs will automatically be positioned in the center of the letter strokes as shown below.



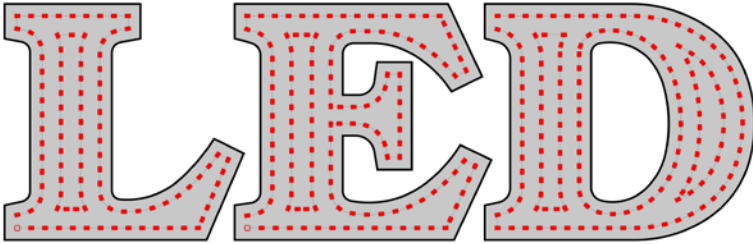
In the next example the Bookman Bold text is 40" tall with a stroke width that varies from 6" to 15", so the number of LED strokes will vary with the stroke width of the letters.



In this example the **Clearance** is set for 1.5" with 4 **Runs** and the **Run Gap** is set at 2.5". For this example the other options are left unchecked.



The resulting layout of the LEDs is shown below.



When the LEDs are positioned in the channel letters, as shown above, the data on the number of modules and the power requirements is automatically sent to Excel which generates the spreadsheet summary shown below.

LED Wizard Template						
Brand	LED Module	Letter	Modules / Run	Modules / Letter	Watts / Run	Watts / Letter
ABC	White Mini		48		28.80	
ABC	White Mini	L	19	67	11.40	40.2
ABC	White Mini		73		43.80	
ABC	White Mini	E	18	91	10.80	54.6
ABC	White Mini		24		14.40	
ABC	White Mini		42		25.20	
ABC	White Mini		20		12.00	
ABC	White Mini	D	18	104	10.80	62.4
	TOTAL	Modules	262		Watts	157.2

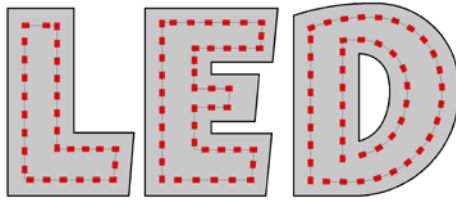
The Excel spreadsheet can be expanded as needed to include all the costs for generating complete quotations and for production control. For example, the total number of LED modules and the total number of power supplies can be multiplied by their unit costs and included along with the other production costs (to produce the channel letters with their plastic faces, installation, etc.) to arrive at the total cost for the job. *It should be noted that prices for the LED modules or power supplies are not included in the data generated by LED Wizard.*

LED layout options

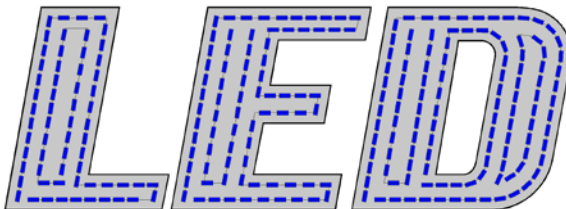
There are three check boxes that were left unchecked in the LED Wizard examples illustrated above: **Separate Letters**, **Auto Spacing** and **Auto Tube count**.

If **Separate Letters** is *checked*, each letter outline and the LEDs inside each letter will be individually selectable. If **Separate Letters** is *not checked*, all the letter outlines will be a single graphic object and all the LEDs inside the letters will be a separate graphic object.


If **Auto Spacing** is *checked*, there will be two rows of LED modules. This feature is intended for use with fonts whose stroke width ratio is about 1.5:1. Where the stroke width of the letter is thin, the **Clearance** value you enter sets the minimum spacing between the edge of the letter and the edge of the LED module. In the areas where the stroke width of the letter is thicker, the centers of the LED strokes will be 25% from the edge of the letter.



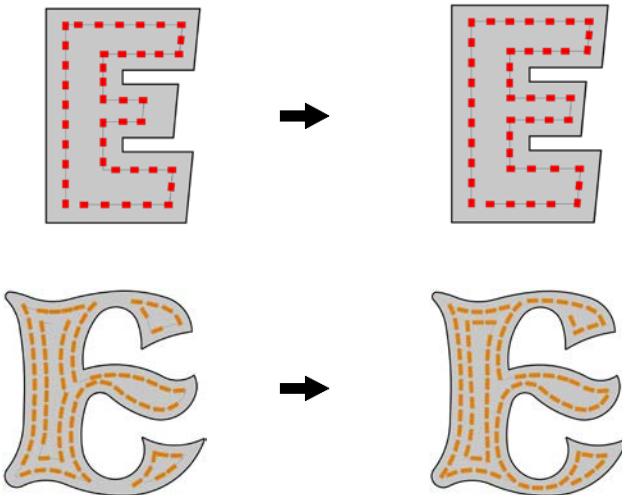
If **Auto Tube Count** is checked, the number of strokes will be determined automatically using the **Clearance** and **Stroke Gap** values you entered to position the LEDs as shown below.



Manual Editing for LED layouts

There are cases where the automatic LED positioning features may not result in the best layouts. Manual editing tools are available in LED Wizard that allow you to reposition, add or delete individual LED modules. These cases are more likely to occur with designs that have thin serifs, connecting script characters, complex logo shapes, "high stroke width ratio" fonts or otherwise deviate from simple block letters that have relatively uniform stroke widths. The manual editing tools for LEDs are similar to those used for editing neon tubes and the vectors that define the outlines for letters and logos. The **LED Editor** tool is a flyout (shared with the Neon Editing tool) in the fourth position from the top in the Toolbox on the left side of the screen. The LED Editor Tool looks like this: 

The examples below illustrate how the **LED Editor** tool can be used to handle the kinds of situations indicated above. For details on using the **LED Editor** go to the **Help** menu and search on **LED Property Bar**.



Rasterize Tool

Sign Wizard Pro

You can save hours of design time using this handy new tool in the **Image menu** which converts vector images into raster images without going through the usual steps of exporting and importing. You have the option of saving the original vector image or discarding it. **This tool makes it easier to produce a large number of copies of the same complex design.**

Using the **Rasterize** feature together with the **Crop tool** you can modify raster images to better fit the available space in your designs. You can also add **Transparency** to the raster images.

When the colors are turned on, it may not be apparent if an object is a vector image or a raster image. Colors are turned on and off by pressing the F3 key. For a raster image, when the colors are turned off, only the boundaries will be displayed as a thin blue line. When the colors are turned on, all the details of the raster image will be visible. For vector images, when the colors are turned off, the details of the object are shown in thin blue lines (outer loops) and red lines (inner loops), but the fill colors are not visible.

There are some objects that are hybrids – part vector and part raster. For example, vector text with a soft shadow. When the colors are turned off the soft shadow is not visible. These principles are illustrated below.

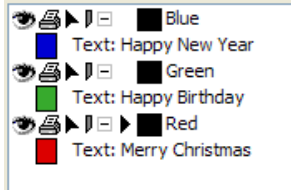
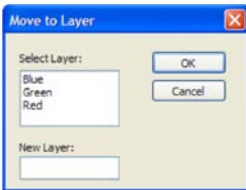
Colors turned ON	Colors turned OFF
Vector Image	
RASTERIZE	RASTERIZE
Raster Image	
RASTERIZE	<input type="text"/>

Move to Layer

Sign Wizard Advantage, Grand, Pro - Neon Wizard all levels

Layers have been an important part of Sign Wizard since version 5 as an effective way for elements of a design to be processed separately and later combined into an integrated design. Layering also facilitates sending different elements of a project to routers and other output devices for more efficient workflow.

This new feature in the Arrange menu lets you move an object to a different layer or you can create as many new layers as you want. (If the sidebar is not currently displayed, click on F7. Then click on the **Layers** tab.) When you create a new layer, you can assign any number or name to that layer as long as there is not already a layer with the same number or name. In the example below, three lines of text were created as part of Layer 1. Each line of text, initially entered in black, was changed to a different color and moved to a new layer whose name was the same as the color of the text. The contents of **Layer 1** had been moved to other layers, so **Layer 1** was deleted by clicking on the **Delete** button at the bottom of the **Layer** tab.

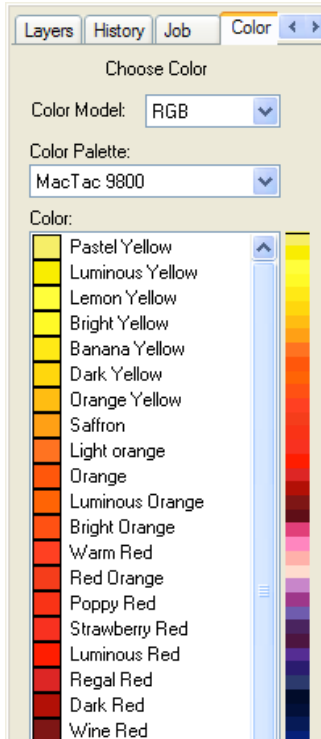


Color Palette Navigator

Sign Wizard and Neon Wizard – all levels

When you click on **Adjustment Controls** at the bottom of the Color tab in the side bar (F7), the selected color palette with the name of each color is displayed on the left. **This feature makes selecting colors faster and easier.**

On the right is the palette's complete spectrum. Move the slider bar up and down to display all the colors in the palette. Clicking on a color on the left will change any selected vector object to that color.



Print & Cut Registration Mark Support

Sign Wizard Pro

Sign Wizard 6.5 supports the Graphtec ARMS (Advanced Registration Mark Sensing System) used in the FC7000 series vinyl cutters. **Sign Wizard is the only graphic design program you need to create and print decals and other designs and cut them with high precision.**



Aries Graphics is currently developing support for other cutter manufacturer's registration mark sensing systems. Contact Aries Graphics for details on the availability of drivers for those cutters.

Height and Slant Options in Soft Shadow

Sign Wizard Pro and Neon Wizard Pro

The Soft Shadow feature now includes options to adjust the height and slant angles of the shadow.

Shadow

Improvements in Existing Features

ICC Profiles

Sign Wizard Advantage, Grand and Pro

Sign Wizard now supports ICC Profiles for importing, exporting, printing and sending raster and vector files to a RIP.

Text Notes Enhanced with Titles and Fields

Sign Wizard Advantage, Grand, Pro - Neon Wizard all levels

The Text Notes feature now supports optional titles and fields on the left side for creating table-like notes. You can easily reuse previously defined fields by selecting them from a dropdown list.

Hot Keys can be used without Ctrl, Shift or Alt

Sign Wizard Grand and Pro – Neon Wizard Plus and Pro

It is no longer necessary to use Ctrl+A for customizing your accelerator keys. You can now assign Hot Keys the letters alone - without using Ctrl+, Shift+ or Alt+.