



**PI\_Editor**

**April 26, 2022**

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# Contents

|           |  |           |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Introduction to PI_Editor</b>                 | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>PI_Editor files</b>                           | <b>2</b>  |
| 2.1       | Input file and default title block . . . . .     | 2         |
| 2.2       | Output file . . . . .                            | 2         |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>Theory of operations</b>                      | <b>3</b>  |
| 3.1       | Basic page layout items properties: . . . . .    | 3         |
| 3.2       | Coordinates definition . . . . .                 | 3         |
| 3.3       | Reference corners and coordinates: . . . . .     | 3         |
| 3.4       | Rotation . . . . .                               | 5         |
| 3.5       | Repeat option . . . . .                          | 6         |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Texts and formats</b>                         | <b>7</b>  |
| 4.1       | Format symbols: . . . . .                        | 7         |
| 4.2       | Multi-line texts: . . . . .                      | 9         |
| 4.3       | Multi-line texts in Page Setup dialog: . . . . . | 10        |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>Constraints</b>                               | <b>11</b> |
| 5.1       | Page 1 constraint . . . . .                      | 11        |
| 5.2       | Text full size constraint . . . . .              | 12        |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>Invoking PI_Editor</b>                        | <b>14</b> |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>PI_Editor Commands</b>                        | <b>14</b> |
| 7.1       | Main Screen . . . . .                            | 14        |
| 7.2       | Main Window Toolbar . . . . .                    | 15        |
| 7.3       | Commands in drawing area (draw panel) . . . . .  | 15        |
| 7.3.1     | Keyboard Commands . . . . .                      | 15        |
| 7.3.2     | Mouse Commands . . . . .                         | 16        |
| 7.3.3     | Context Menu . . . . .                           | 16        |
| 7.4       | Status Bar Information . . . . .                 | 16        |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Left window</b>                               | <b>17</b> |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Right window</b>                              | <b>18</b> |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Interactive edition</b>                       | <b>20</b> |
| 10.1      | Item selection . . . . .                         | 20        |
| 10.2      | Item creation . . . . .                          | 22        |
| 10.3      | Adding lines, rectangles and texts . . . . .     | 23        |
| 10.4      | Adding logos . . . . .                           | 23        |
| 10.5      | Adding image bitmaps . . . . .                   | 24        |

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**Feedback**

Please direct any bug reports, suggestions or new versions to here:

- About KiCad document: <https://github.com/KiCad/kicad-doc/issues>
- About KiCad software: <https://bugs.launchpad.net/kicad>
- About KiCad software i18n: <https://github.com/KiCad/kicad-i18n/issues>

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## 1 Introduction to PI\_Editor

PI\_Editor is a page layout editor tool to create custom title blocks, and frame references.

The title block, associated to frame references, and other graphic items (logos) is called here a page layout.

Basic page layout items are:

- **Lines**
- **Rectangles**
- **Texts** (with format symbols, that will be replaced by the actual text, like the date, page number. . . ) in Eeschema or Pcbnew.
- **Poly-polygons** (mainly to place logos and special graphic shapes)
- **Bitmaps**.



### Warning

Bitmaps can be plotted only by few plotters (PDF and PS only) Therefore, for other plotters, only a bounding box will be plotted.

---

- Items can be repeated, and texts and poly\_polygons can be rotated.

## 2 PI\_Editor files

### 2.1 Input file and default title block

PI\_Editor reads or writes page layout description files \*.kicad\_wks (KiCad worksheet).

An internal default page layout description to display the default KiCad title block is used until a file is read.

### 2.2 Output file

The current page layout description can be written in a \*.**kicad\_wks** file, using the S-expression format, which is widely used in KiCad.

This file can be used to show the custom page layout in Eeschema and/or Pcbnew.

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## 3 Theory of operations

### 3.1 Basic page layout items properties:

Basic page layout items are:

- **Lines**
- **Rectangles**
- **Texts** (with format symbols, with will be replaced by the actual text, like the date, page number. . . ) in Eeschema or Pcbnew.
- **Poly-polygons** (mainly to place logos and special graphic shapes). These poly polygons are created by **Bitmap2component**, and cannot be built inside pl\_editor, because it is not possible to create such shapes by hand.
- **Bitmaps** to place logos.



#### Warning

Bitmaps can be plotted only by few plotters: PDF and PS only.

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Therefore:

- **Texts**, **poly-polygons** and **bitmaps** are defined by a position, and can be rotated.
- **Lines** (in fact segments) and **rectangles** are defined by two points: a start point and a end point. They cannot be rotated (this is useless for segments).

These basic items can be repeated.

Texts which are repeated accept also an increment value for labels (has meaning only if the text is one letter or one digit).

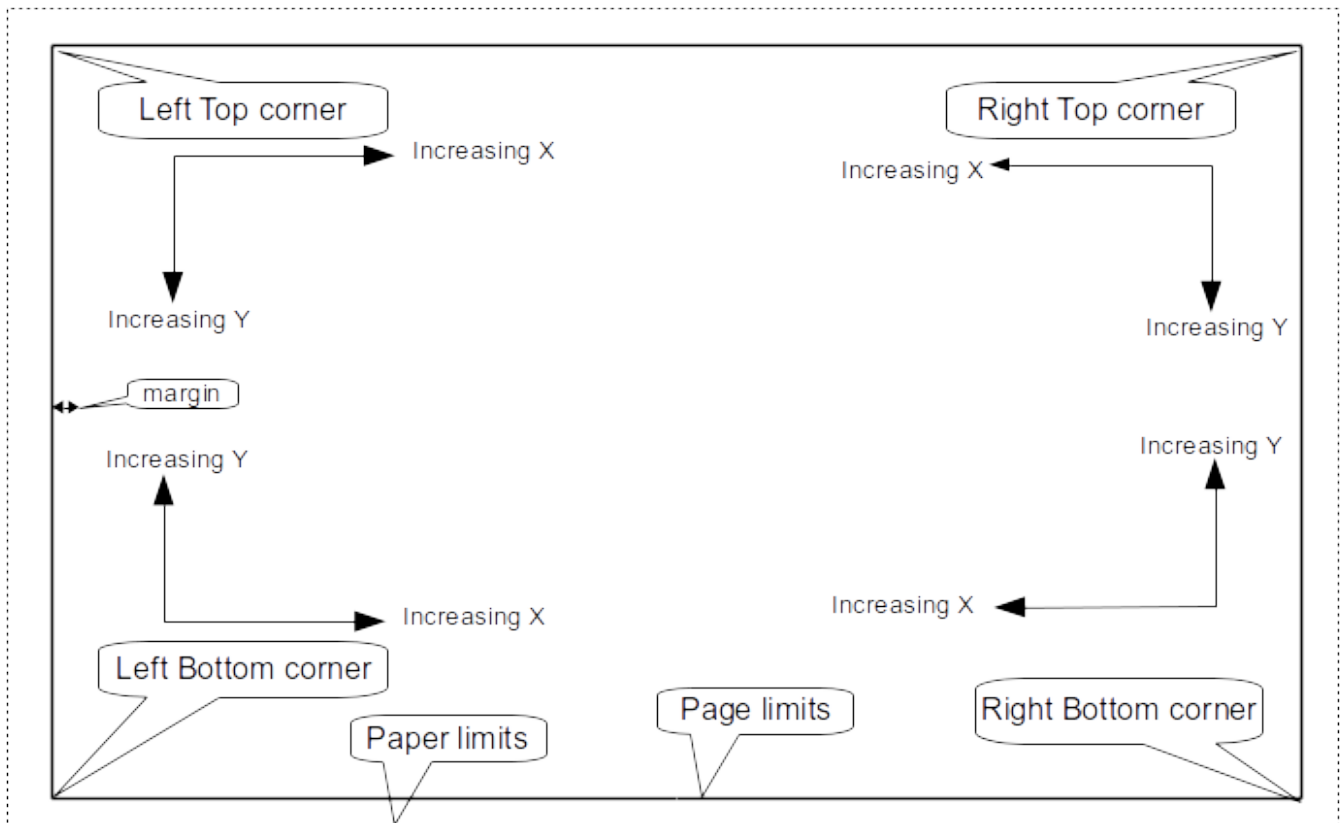
### 3.2 Coordinates definition

Each position, start point and end point of items is always relative to a page corner.

**This feature ensure you can define a page layout which is not dependent on the paper size.**

### 3.3 Reference corners and coordinates:

---



- When the page size is changed, the position of the item, relative to its reference corner does not change.
- Usually, title blocks are attached to the right bottom corner, and therefore this corner is the default corner, when creating an item.

For rectangles and segments, which have two defined points, each point has its reference corner.

### 3.4 Rotation

Items which have a position defined by just one point (texts and poly-polygons) can be rotated:

Normal: Rotation = 0

# Rotated Text



Rotated: Rotation = 20 and 10 degrees.





### 3.5 Repeat option

Items can be repeated:

This is useful to create grid and grid labels.



## 4 Texts and formats

### 4.1 Format symbols:

Texts can be simple strings or can include format symbols.

Format symbols are replaced by the actual values in Eeschema or Pcbnew.

They are like format symbols in printf function.

A format symbol is % followed by 1 letter.

The %C format has one digit (comment identifier).

Formats symbols are:

**% = replaced by %**

**%K = KiCad version**

**%Z = paper format name (A4, USLetter ...)**

**%Y = company name**

**%D = date**

**%R = revision**

**%S = sheet number**

**%N = number of sheets**

**%Cx = comment (x = 0 to 9 to identify the comment)**


**%F = filename**

**%P = sheet path (sheet full name, for Eeschema)**


**%T = title**

Example:

"Size: %Z" displays "Size: A4" or "Size: USLetter"

User display mode:  activated. Title block displayed like in Eeschema and Pcbnew

|   |       |
|---|-------|
|   |       |
| Sheet:  |       |
| File: pagelayout_logo.kicad_wks               |       |
| <b>Title:</b>                                 |       |
| Size: A4                                      | Date: |
| KiCad E.D.A. pLeditor (2015-04-09 BZR 5589)-p |       |
| 4   | 5     |

"Native" display mode:  activated. The native texts entered in Pl\_Editor, with their format symbols.

|                  |          |
|------------------|----------|
| %CU              |          |
| <b>%Y</b>        |          |
| Sheet: %P        |          |
| File: %F         |          |
| <b>Title: %T</b> |          |
| Size: %Z         | Date: %D |
| %K               |          |
| 4                | 5        |

## 4.2 Multi-line texts:

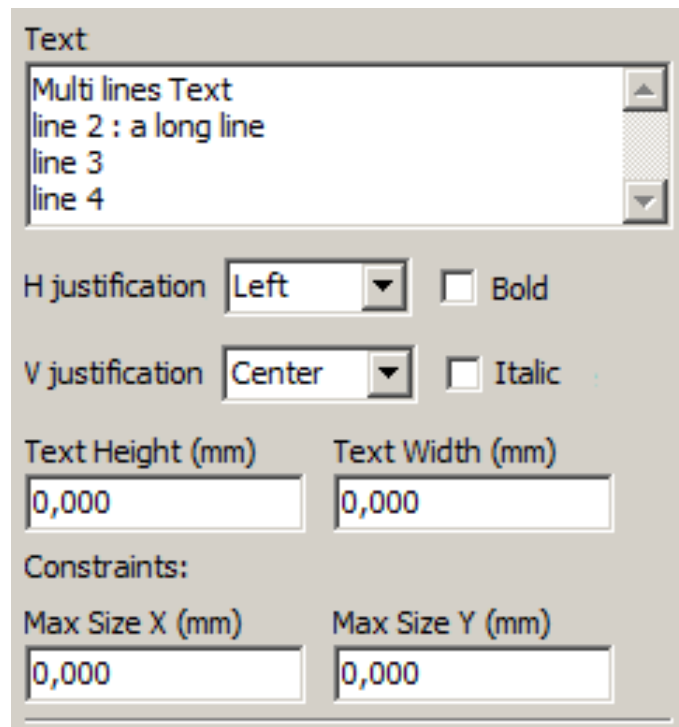
Texts can be multi-line.

There are 2 ways to insert a new line in texts:

1. Insert the "\n" 2 chars sequence (mainly in Page setup dialog in KiCad).
2. Insert a new line in Pl\_Editor Design window.

Here is an example:

Setup



Text

Multi lines Text  
line 2 : a long line  
line 3  
line 4

H justification Left ☐ Bold

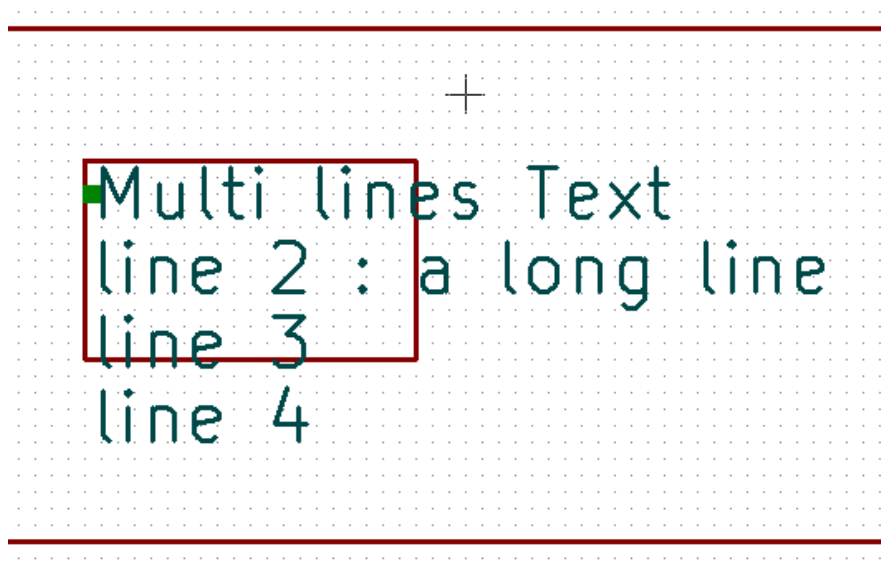
V justification Center ☐ Italic

Text Height (mm) 0,000 Text Width (mm) 0,000

Constraints:

Max Size X (mm) 0,000 Max Size Y (mm) 0,000

Output

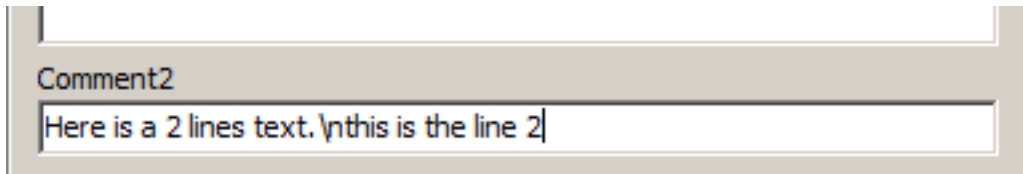


### 4.3 Multi-line texts in Page Setup dialog:

In the page setup dialog, text controls do not accept a multi-line text.

The "\n" 2 chars sequence should be inserted to force a new line inside a text.

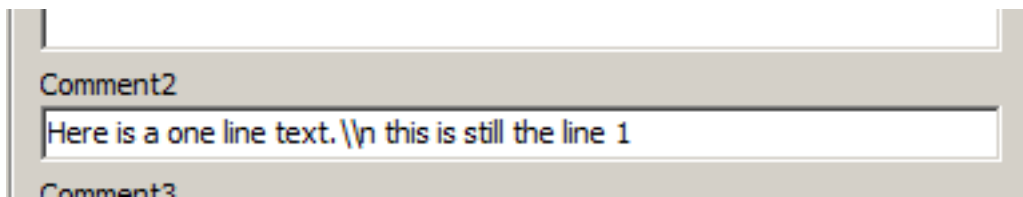
Here is a two lines text, in *comment 2* field:



Here is the actual text:

```
Here is a 2 lines text.  
this is the line 2  
Sheet:
```

However, if you really want the "\n" inside the text, enter "\\n".



And the displayed text:

```
Here is a one line text.\n this is still the line 1  
+  
Sheet:  
...
```

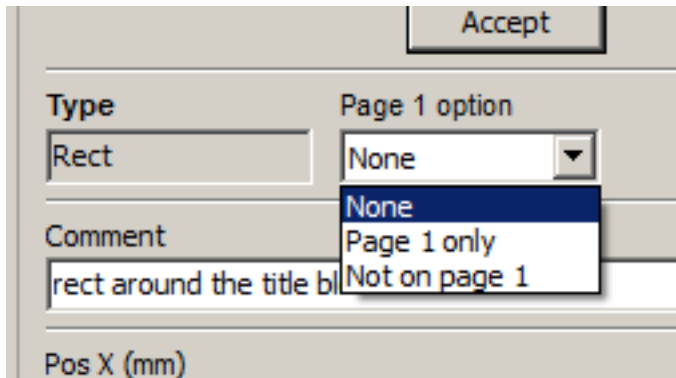
## 5 Constraints

### 5.1 Page 1 constraint

When using Eeschema, the full schematic often uses more than one page.

Usually page layout items are displayed on all pages.

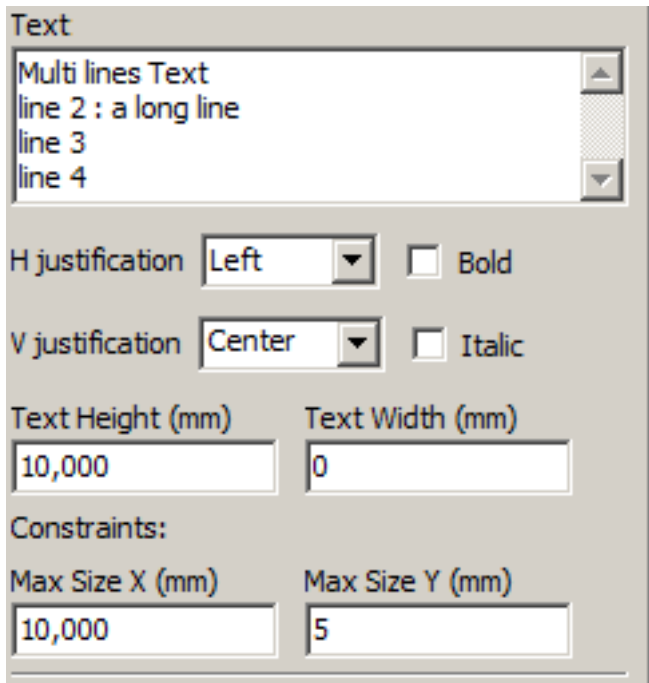
But if a user want some items to be displayed only on page 1, or not on page 1, the "page 1 option" this is possible by setting this option:



Page 1 option:

- None: no constraint.
- Page 1 only: the items is visible only on page 1.
- Not on page 1: the items is visible on all pages but the page 1.

## 5.2 Text full size constraint



Only for texts, one can set 2 parameters :

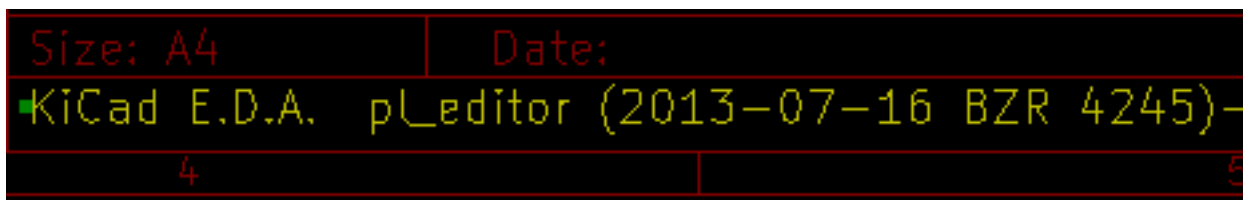
- the max size X
- the max size Y

which define a bounding box.

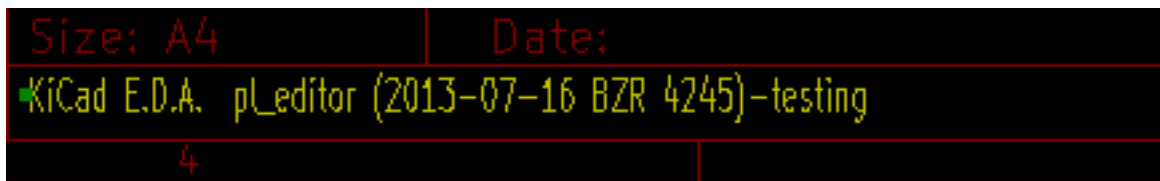
When these parameters are not 0, when displaying the text, the actual text height and the actual text width are dynamically modified if the full text size is bigger than the max size X and/or the max size Y, to fit the full text size with this bounding box.

When the actual full text size is smaller than the max size X and/or the max size Y, the text height and/or the text width is not modified.

The text with no bounding box. Max size X = 0,0 Max size Y = 0,0



The **same** text with constraint. Max size X = 40,0 Max size Y = 0,0



A multi line text, constrained:

Setup

Text

Multi lines Text  
line 2 : a long line  
line 3  
line 4

H justification  ☐ Bold

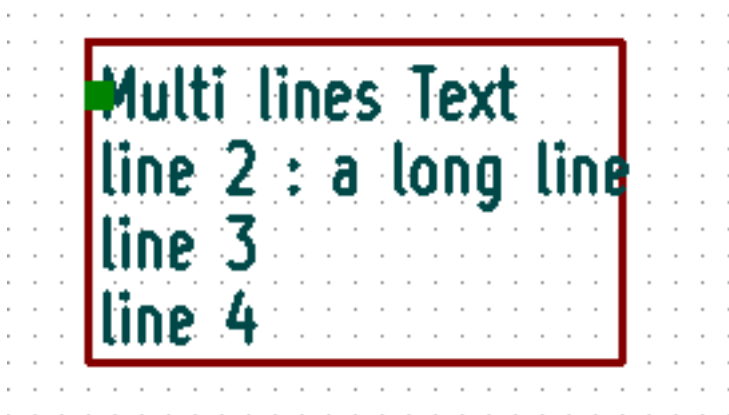
V justification  ☐ Italic

Text Height (mm)  Text Width (mm)

Constraints:

Max Size X (mm)  Max Size Y (mm)

Output





## 6 Invoking PI\_Editor

PI\_Editor is typically invoked from a command line, or from the KiCad manager.

From a command line, the syntax is `pl_editor <*.kicad_wks file to open>`.

## 7 PI\_Editor Commands

### 7.1 Main Screen

The image below shows the main window of PI\_Editor.



The left pane contains the list of basic items.

The right pane is the item settings editor.

7.2 Main Window Toolbar



The top toolbar allows for easy access to the following commands:

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Select the net list file to be processed.  |
|  | Load a page layout description file.   |
|  | Save the current page layout description in a .kicad_wks file.   |
|  | Display the page size selector and the title block user data editor.   |
|  | Prints the current page.   |
|  | Delete the currently selected item.  |
|  | Undo/redo tools.   |
|  | Zoom in, out, redraw and auto, respectively.   |
|  | Show the page layout in user mode: texts are shown like in Eeschema or Pcbnew: text format symbols are replaced by the user texts.   |
|  | Show the page layout in native mode: texts are displayed "as is", with the contained formats, without any replacement.   |
|  | Reference corner selection, for coordinates displayed to the status bar.   |
|  | Selection of the page number (page & or other pages).<br>This selection has meaning only if some items than have a page option, are not shown on all pages (in a schematic for instance, which contains more than one page). |

7.3 Commands in drawing area (draw panel)

7.3.1 Keyboard Commands

|    |                 |
|----|-----------------|
| F1 | Zoom In         |
| F2 | Zoom Out        |
| F3 | Refresh Display |

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| F4          | Move cursor to center of display window                 |
| Home        | Fit footprint into display window                       |
| Space Bar   | Set relative coordinates to the current cursor position |
| Right Arrow | Move cursor right one grid position                     |
| Left Arrow  | Move cursor left one grid position                      |
| Up Arrow    | Move cursor up one grid position                        |
| Down Arrow  | Move cursor down one grid position                      |

### 7.3.2 Mouse Commands

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Scroll Wheel         | Zoom in and out at the current cursor position |
| Ctrl + Scroll Wheel  | Pan right and left                             |
| Shift + Scroll Wheel | Pan up and down                                |
| Right Button Click   | Open context menu                              |

### 7.3.3 Context Menu

Displayed by right-clicking the mouse:

- Add Line
- Add Rectangle
- Add Text
- Append Page Layout Descr File

Are commands to add a basic layout item to the current page layout description.

- Zoom selection: direct selection of the display zoom.
- Grid selection: direct selection of the grid.

---

#### Note

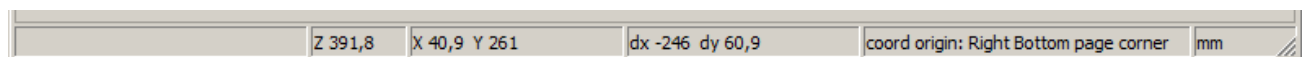
*Append Page Layout Descr File* is intended to add poly polygons to make logos.

Because usually a logo it needs hundred of vertices, you cannot create a polygon by hand. But you can append a description file, created by Bitmap2Component.

---

## 7.4 Status Bar Information

The status bar is located at the bottom of the PI\_Editor and provides useful information to the user.



Coordinates are **always relative to the corner** selected as **reference**.

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## 8 Left window

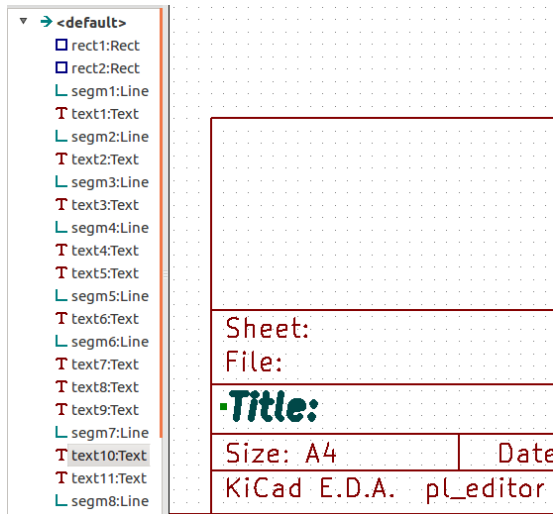
The left windows shows the list of layout items.

One can select a given item (left clicking on the line) or, when right clicking on the line, display a pop up menu.

This menu allows basic operations: add a new item, or delete the selected item.

→ **A selected item is also drawn in a different color on draw panel.**

Design tree: the item 19 is selected, and shown in highlighted on the draw panel.



## 9 Right window

The right window is the edit window.

Properties

Item Properties

General Options

Type

Page 1 option

None

Text

H justification

Left

☐ Bold

V justification

Center

☐ Italic

Text Height (mm)

Text Width (mm)

Constraints:

Max Size X (mm)

Max Size Y (mm)

Accept

Comment

Pos X (mm)

Origin

Lower Right

Pos Y (mm)

Origin

Lower Right

End X (mm)

Origin

Lower Right

End Y (mm)

Origin

Lower Right

Thickness

Set to 0 to use default

Rotation

Repeat parameters:

Repeat count

Text Increment

Step X (mm)

Step Y (mm)

Properties

Item Properties

General Options

Default Values:

Text Size X (mm)

Text Size Y (mm)

1,500

1,500

Line Thickness (mm)

Text Thickness

0,150

0,150

Page Margins

Left Margin (mm)

Right Margin (mm)

10,000

10,000

Top Margin (mm)

Bottom Margin (mm)

10,000

10,000

Accept

On this dialog you can set the page property and the item property of the current item.

Displayed settings depend on the selected item:

| Settings for lines and rectangles  | Settings for texts   |
|--|--|
| <div><div>Accept</div><div>TypeLinePage 1 optionNone</div><div>Comment</div><div>Pos X (mm)50,000OriginUpper Left</div><div>Pos Y (mm)2,000</div><div>End X (mm)50,000OriginUpper Left</div><div>End Y (mm)0,000</div><div>Thickness0,000Set to 0 to use default</div><div>Repeat parameters:Repeat count30Step X (mm)50,000Step Y (mm)0,000</div></div> | <div><div>Accept</div><div>TypeTextPage 1 optionNone</div><div>Text%K</div><div>H justificationLeftBold</div><div>V justificationCenterItalic</div><div>Text Height (mm)0,000Text Width (mm)0,000</div><div>Constraints:Max Size X (mm)0,000Max Size Y (mm)0,000</div><div>Comment</div><div>Pos X (mm)109,000OriginLower Right</div><div>Pos Y (mm)4,100</div><div>Thickness0,000Set to 0 to use default</div><div>Rotation0,000</div><div>Repeat parameters:Repeat count1Text Increment1Step X (mm)0,000Step Y (mm)0,000</div></div> |
| Settings for poly-polygons   | Setting for bitmaps  |
| <div><div>Accept</div><div>TypePolyPage 1 optionPage 1 only</div><div>Comment</div><div>Pos X (mm)136,002OriginLower Right</div><div>Pos Y (mm)18,002</div><div>Thickness0,010</div><div>Rotation20,000</div><div>Repeat parameters:Repeat count1Step X (mm)0,000Step Y (mm)0,000</div></div>  | <div><div>Properties</div><div>Item PropertiesGeneral Options</div><div>TypeBitmapPage 1 optionNone</div><div>Accept</div><div>Comment</div><div>Pos X (mm)169,002OriginLower Right</div><div>Pos Y (mm)18,007</div><div>Bitmap PPI300</div><div>Repeat parameters:Repeat count2Step X (mm)0,000Step Y (mm)30,000</div></div>  |

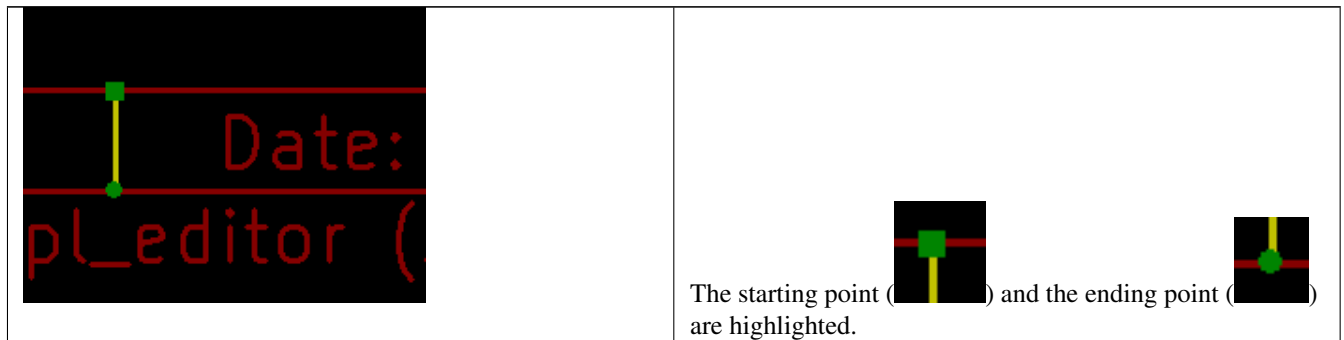
## 10 Interactive edition

### 10.1 Item selection

An item can be selected:

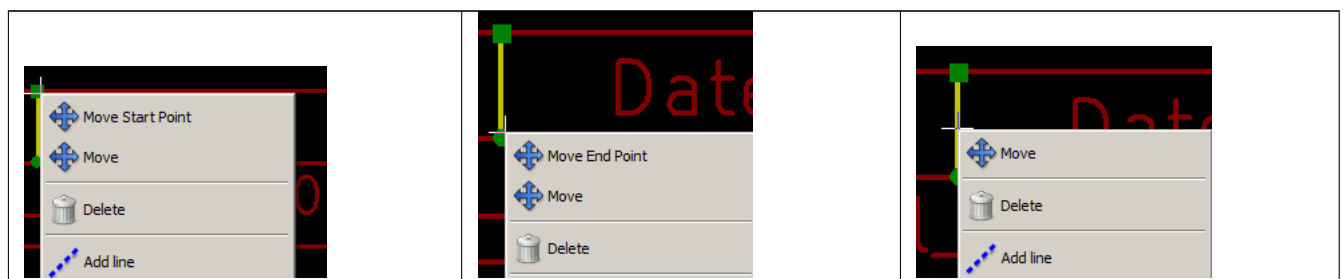
- From the Design tree.
- By Left clicking on it.
- By Right clicking on it (and a pop up menu will be displayed).

When selected, this item is drawn in yellow.



When right clicking on the item, a pop-up menu is displayed.

The pop menu options slightly depend on the selection:



If more than one item is found, a menu clarification will be shown, to select the item:



|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>Once selected, the item, or one of its end points, can be moved by moving the mouse and placed (right clicking on the mouse).</p> |
|--|--|



## 10.2 Item creation

To add a new item, right click the mouse button when the cursor is on the left window or the draw area.

A popup menu is displayed:

Pop up menu in left window



Pop up menu in draw area.



Lines, rectangles and texts are added just by clicking on the corresponding menu item.

Logos must first be created by Bitmap2component, which creates a page layout description file.

The Append Page Layout Descr File option append this file, to insert the logo (a poly polygon).

### 10.3 Adding lines, rectangles and texts

When clicking on the option, a dialog is opened:

Adding line or rectangle

The 'New Item' dialog box for adding a line or rectangle. It contains the following fields and controls:

- Pos X (mm):** Input field with value 0,000.
- Pos Y (mm):** Input field with value 0,000.
- Origin:** Dropdown menu showing 'Lower Right'.
- End X (mm):** Input field with value 0,000.
- End Y (mm):** Input field with value 0,000.
- Origin:** Dropdown menu showing 'Lower Right'.
- Text:** A large text area for entering text.
- Buttons:** OK and Cancel buttons at the bottom right.

Adding text

The 'New Item' dialog box for adding text. It contains the following fields and controls:

- Pos X (mm):** Input field with value 0,000.
- Pos Y (mm):** Input field with value 0,000.
- Origin:** Dropdown menu showing 'Lower Right'.
- End X (mm):** Input field with value 0,000.
- End Y (mm):** Input field with value 0,000.
- Origin:** Dropdown menu showing 'Lower Right'.
- Text:** A large text area for entering text.
- Buttons:** OK and Cancel buttons at the bottom right.

Position of end points, and corner reference can be defined here.

However they can be defined later, from the right window, or by moving the item, or one of its end points.

Most of time the corner reference is the same for both points.

If this is not the case, define the corner reference at creation is better, because if a corner reference is changed later, the geometry of the item will be a bit strange.

When an item is created, if is put in move mode, and you can refine its position (this is very useful for texts and small lines or rectangles)

### 10.4 Adding logos

To add a logo, a poly polygon (the vectored image of the logo) must be first created using Bitmap2component.

Bitmap2component creates a page layout description file which is append to the current design, using the **Append Page Layout Descr File** option.

Bitmap2component creates a page layout description file which contains only one item: a poly polygon.

*However, this command can be used to append any page layout description file, which is merged with the current design.*

Once a poly polygon is inserted, it can be moved and its parameters edited.

## 10.5 Adding image bitmaps

You can add an image bitmap using most of bitmap formats (PNG, JPEG, BMP ...).

- When a bitmap is imported, its PPI (pixel per inch) definition is set to 300PPI.
- This value can be modified in panel Properties (right panel).
- The actual size depend on this parameter.
- Be aware that using higher definition values brings larger output files, and can have a noticeable draw or plot time.

A bitmap can be repeated, **but not rotated**.