



## **DBUG MEETING MINUTES**

Date: January 26, 2005  
Host: Professor Geoff Langdon  
Peabody, MA

### **OPENING**

Nine hardy souls descended on Geoff Langdon's living room, on a nearly sub-zero evening, to partake of his wife Cindy's homemade chili and fixin's. Although up on the North Shore of Massachusetts, it was an easy drive and we even got there early. After the usual feasting and schmoozing the meeting began with Geoff launching into his usual "stream of consciousness" (as Evan Shu aptly calls it). That guarantees a lively meeting with numerous topics and generous input from the group.

### **Interesting Hardware and Software**

With Geoff connected to the Internet with via a wireless network Neil Blanchard had us take a look at the [www.OQO.com](http://www.OQO.com) website to have a look at the latest (and expensive) in micro computing. It's a very small computer with a 20Gig hard drive, full 800x600 resolution screen, slide-out keyboard, Blue Tooth integration, all running on Windows XP.

Geoff then demonstrated software that he uses to manage downloads, restart dropped downloads, and speed up most downloads. It's available at [www.internetdownloadmanager.com](http://www.internetdownloadmanager.com).

Geoff's next topic was his latest tech toy: a red Toyota Prius, hybrid electric car. So far he is very happy with the car, and only laments that he should have gotten the one with the computer that "talks" to you. At the end of the meeting we all went outside in the near-zero weather to ooh and ahh over the vehicle and get, what was for many of us, our first look at such a car. We were duly impressed.

We next got a look at several 3D projects that Geoff had completed for various clients, mainly done with ArchiCAD. One project involved modeling an existing MIT fraternity house, right down to the décor and the dirty laundry, so that it could be used in the fraternity's 3D computer gaming environment, where fraternity brothers can play shoot-em-up games over the internet, using their own fraternity house as the backdrop!

### **3D PDF's**

The next topic was Bentley MicroStation's how new announcement that they can now export 3D PDF's to Adobe Acrobat v.7 (either the full version or the standalone [free] viewer). Bentley has evidently been working closely with Adobe, but this format is proprietary to Adobe and not to Bentley, so more CAD and modeling companies are sure to follow. The best way to describe it to DataCAD users is "o2c on steroids." With layers, rendering options, and walk-through features, this is something to keep an eye on. You can read the hype at [www.bentley.com/en-us/](http://www.bentley.com/en-us/). Look in the "News" section. There is another link there that will give you access to some stunning examples, if you have Acrobat 7 or the free Acrobat 7 viewer.

### **MOK3**

The most stunning part of Geoff's stream of consciousness meeting was his review of the MOK3 software ([www.mok3.com](http://www.mok3.com)). This yet to be released software is nothing short of stunning. Our collective jaws were on the floor as we viewed the process and the results. Imagine this: you take a single photograph of a building on a street corner. Say, a gothic cathedral. After defining ground planes, wall planes and key corners in the photograph, the program turns it into a dynamic 3D scene and 3D model. You can now fly around the visible sides of the building and the street scene as if it were a fully rendered 3D model with an amazing level of detail that comes from the fact that the scene IS an actual photograph. And with a few more photos of the other faces of the building and the site you would SWEAR that you were watching an actual video of the site! Now imagine bringing in your own 3D model of a proposed building next door, and being able to interactively fly around the new and existing buildings as if they all already existed! The interior walk-throughs were equally as stunning. This is going to revolutionize the 3D visualization industries.

The program was developed by a Korean student, Mok, for his MIT doctoral thesis. It has been in commercial development for a couple of years now, and will hopefully be unleashed on the public in May of this year. There has been no pricing set so far. In fact, they have been asking beta testers and potential users how much they should charge. It appears that, like Adobe Photoshop, they will plan to release 2 or 3 versions of varying complexities (such as a Lite version), and then sell specialized add-on tools, or plug-ins, to users who need them.

You simply MUST check out the web site, and download the sample video files. They are large, but well worth it. Boston area residents will recognize many of the vistas presented, including a proposed park over the expressway in the Rowes Wharf area.

### **Announcements**

We finally took a few minute's break to allow Evan Shu to announce that he still has 3 DBUG meeting dates that he

needs hosts for: June, July and October. Neil Blanchard said he hoped to be able to host one of them. The February DBUG meeting will be at Signature Architects in Berlin, MA (just a few hundred feet from I-495, between the Mass Pike and Rt. 2).

### **Live Meetings and Webcasting**

For a long time now, DCAD users the world over have asked if there was some way to broadcast the DBUG (and other DataCAD user group meetings) live over the internet for all to see. Most of the rest of the meeting involved Geoff Langdon going over the various options that he has been exploring. There was no consensus, as Geoff was only able to scratch the surface of all the potential options, but we were able to agree on some methods that would probably NOT work, due to limitations in the number of participants, or in most cases due to exorbitant costs.

#### **What we want to be able to do:**

1. Allow an unlimited number of participants who can watch the broadcast
2. It is not necessary to allow all participants to interact with the broadcast
3. It must support video and/or computer output, and audio
4. It must be inexpensive, for low budget user group meetings
5. It must be easy to use

#### **Software that was explored:**

1. MS Live Meeting
  - a. Expensive (10 seats = \$750/month; pay per use = 0.35 cents/minute, per user)
2. MS Windows Net Meeting
  - a. Really only for 2 users at a time
3. eZ Meeting
  - a. Expensive (4 users = \$99/month; 15 users = \$299/month; single meeting = \$29, but only for 4 people)
  - b. Easy to install
4. Glance ([www.link47.com/glance.html](http://www.link47.com/glance.html))
  - a. Works over multiple operating systems via web browsers
  - b. Only the host subscribes (\$49/month).
  - c. Each session can have only up to 15 guests.
5. Goto My PC
  - a. Person viewing meeting does not need to purchase anything
  - b. Only set up for 2 users at a time
6. Goto Meeting
  - a. \$49/month for 10 attendees
7. WebEX
  - a. Fancy, and very expensive. Fortune 500 companies use it.
8. Better Than Web EX
  - a. Yes, this is a competitor of "Web EX"
  - b. Less expensive than Web EX, but we couldn't find much useable pricing info on their web site

9. Vodium Webcast
  - a. Couldn't find much useable pricing info on their web site

#### **Another Option:**

1. Video the meetings, then make them available via download
  - a. Would require a large server with large download allowances (expensive?)
  - b. Video files too large?
  - c. Video files could be cut up into individual topics
2. If you know of other options that might work, please let us know:
  - a. Geoff Langdon:  
[glangdon@architecturalcadd.com](mailto:glangdon@architecturalcadd.com)
  - b. Evan Shu: [eshu@world.std.com](mailto:eshu@world.std.com)

### **Panorama Creation Software**

The final topic of the evening was hardware/software that would create instant 360 degree panoramas without having to "stitch" together several photographs. Stitching leads to uneven edges, missing areas, and random color and lighting. One option that Geoff found is at [www.0-360.com](http://www.0-360.com). As the web site describes it: "The **0-360** One-Click Panoramic Optic is a specially designed camera panorama lens attachment, with an exclusive optical reflector, which captures an entire 360 degree panoramic virtual tour with a single shot." Either 35mm or digital cameras can be used, but they must support the addition of a threaded lens. The web site lists the cameras that work with their hardware. But if you don't have one of those cameras, or if you only need the hardware for a single day, you can rent the entire setup for \$99/day. The panoramas on their web site are fun to look at.

### **Conclusion**

The meeting broke up just after 9:00, when everyone went outside to check out Geoff's new Prius.

-- Meeting Notes by Mike Smith