

DataCAD Boston Users Group

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<http://world.std.com/~eshu/dbug.htm>

A Committee of the Boston Society of Architects

DBUG Meeting Notes

February 22, 2006

Host: *Geoff Langdon, ArchitecturalCADD*
Peabody, Massachusetts

About ten DBUGers gathered for a convivial meeting at *ArchitecturalCADD*, spiced up and nourished with great homemade chili (thanks, Cindy!)

Host Geoff Langdon dived into his wide-ranging presentation topics in his inimitable style, moving easily and knowledgeably from topic to topic. Rather than try to categorize his presentation into limiting topics, you will get a better sense of the meeting if we simply note all the various illuminating statements as they came up during the meeting.

* In this season of stormy weather, if you haven't invested in a battery backup/surge protector, you'd be wise to do so before the next lightning or wind storm hits. The battery backup will give you enough time to save all your open documents as well as bridge those quick on/off/on power interruptions that shut down your computers.

* A good graphic viewer and converter (between file types) is a must. Various recommendations included *Irfanview* and *ACDSee*.

* *Mok3* update: this fantastic 3D imager presented at last year's meeting went private, as the developers decided they could make more money as consultants than by selling their software, which creates full 3D environments out of set of photographs. They are, however, selling a plug-in for *PhotoShop* that acts as a 3D clone brush which works with perspectives (see www.pluginz.com, sells for \$153).

* After experimenting with trying to broadcast a DBUG meeting live last year, Geoff has concluded that the available software for doing so is "not ready for primetime" at DBUG. The need for concurrent sound is not easily solved at an inexpensive price. Some programs try to work around the problem by using phone lines or *VoIP/Skype* (peer-to-peer voice over internet)

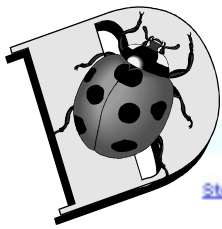
technology. Some offerings like what *SketchUp* uses for its daily broadcasts work well but are not easily adaptable for our monthly meetings. Geoff looked at *glance.net*, *netviewer.net*, and *webex* among others.

* Geoff has debuted caddtutorialsonline.com (*Figure 2*, next page), his new website which offers individual tutorials on a variety of CAD software issues. He used the *SketchUp* tutorials as his model. The tutorials are downloadable in WMV format and basically cost \$1 per minute, with tutorials ranging from 4 minutes to 10 minutes each. Payment is made through *PayPal*. There is no limit on viewings once you download. Some popular topics include *AutoCAD PaperSpace*, & *DataCAD for those who know AutoCAD*. The tutorials are created using *Camtasia Studio*.

* For those who want to create virtual reality environments from models, *ArchiCAD* is a very easy way to do it. It has a QuickTime VR engine built-in. Modeling time is very quick. Geoff translates models from *DataCAD* and *AutoCAD* into *ArchiCAD* format for creating these models in which clients can be taught how to move around within. The resulting files are compact yet hold a lot of detail. Other 3rd party utilities will stitch a set of photographs (taken in rotation at a set station point) into a 3D panorama to create similar environments, but Geoff prefers to use the tools within *ArchiCAD* to do the same thing. (*See below.*)

Figure 1: Virtual environment of Milton Village Center in Mass.





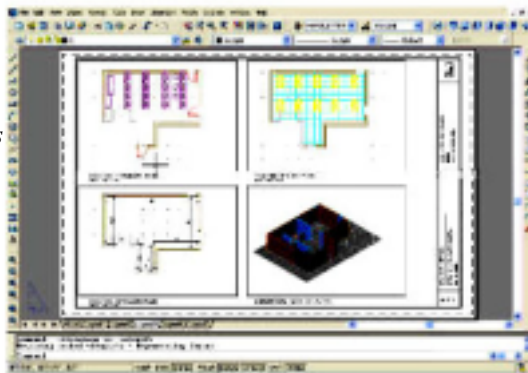
You have 0 item(s) in your basket.



Storefront > [Online Tutorials](#) > [AutoCAD Tutorials](#) > AutoCAD PaperSpace 1

AutoCAD PaperSpace 1

Figure 2:
Downloadable
Tutorial from
CADD Tutorials
Online.



Price	\$4.00
SKU / Status	ACAD-PS100 / In Stock
Notes	Digital Movie with sound Windows Media Video - smv 4 minutes

Quantity:

* You can get a basic animation capture program along with a fantastic image capture program with SnagIt (\$30) <www.snagit.com>. But if you want to also record sound or do further video editing, you will need the full Camtasia Studio product <www.techsmith.com>.

* Geoff displayed a variety of digital imaging tricks. While many people think the necessary tools require *PhotoShop* (list \$650), most of tools that you will need are in lesser packages such as *PhotoShop Elements* or even *PhotoShop LT*, which often come free with scanners and the like, or are available inexpensively.

a) Use filters and effects with layering of image can be a very effective presentation and rendering tool to blend models with backgrounds, etc.

b) While selecting an image (like a person) within a photo can be difficult using the magic wand tool, it often works better to magic wand select the background, then pick “Inverse” to pick the opposite selection. Painting with white via brush or bucket can help define background from image as well. This can be done multiple times to properly isolate your image. Another method is to use Lasso tool in rubber band mode (hold down Alt or Shift) to pick, point by point, a perimeter around your image.

c) To place a painting within a perspective image, you can use the transform/skew/distort options to make the image fit the perspective of the wall it is placed on.

d) To place a figure (or building) behind a tree or another item, put the figure on a overlaying layer. Decrease opacity (layer menu dialog), so you can see what is underneath, then erase from your figure layer where you see the tree beneath.

e) Dialing down opacity in landscape layers can help suggest transparency through trees/bushes, etc.

* Geoff showed a model he had developed for Richard Schneider who needed to show a client that an inventive idea for a skylight from the kitchen/dining area to the attic (which had side windows) would bring in some direct sunlight at times. He imported the floor plans and quickly extruded the model in ArchiCAD, then did a sun study virtual environment at a time when the sun would come in directly to the kitchen via the attic/skylight. This process might also be done in SketchUp with its ability to do exact sun studies.

* Another task Geoff demonstrated was how to put captured animations onto a DVD for playing on standard DVD players. While there are four different DVD standards that complicate matters, he recommended MyDVD 8 <www.myDVD.com> (\$50) by Roxio as the best software to do the job. This software includes tools to edit the video and insert transitions, etc. Greg Barriere also recommended MyDVD as an excellent video editor/DVD burner.

* Other topics touched on during these far-ranging discussions included inputting angles in DataCAD via bearings (see *Cheap Tricks* March issue), Adobe Acrobat 3D, Bluetooth earphones, Palm T/X PDA w/ WiFi, DataCAD on-demand printed manuals, TiVo’s new added services, hybrid cars, surprise parties, and who would win the next *American Idol* competition!

All in all, another good, informative night at DBUG!

— Meeting Notes by Evan H. Shu, FAIA