DataCAD Boston Users Group

July DBUG Meeting
July 10, 2007
Host: Neil Blanchard
at Signature Architects, Berlin MA

About 25 DBUGers attended this early summer meeting that served to combine the regular June and July session into one. They enjoyed an excellent selection of pizzas, while enjoying the usual networking conviviality. Host Neil Blanchard welcomed the group and thanked the hospitality of Signature Architects who provided their offices for the meeting. In terms of announcements, Evan Shu reminded the group that there would be no August meeting and the September meeting would be hosted by Eric Gjerde at MZO Architects in Stoneham.

Workflows using DataCAD 12 and SketchUp 6

Bill Huther opened the presentations by showing how to work back and forth between DataCAD 12 and SketchUp. He noted that using the two programs together can utilize the strengths of both programs (DataCAD for drafting and SketchUp for modeling), reduce duplicate work and eliminate inconsistencies and errors in a drawing set.

First, Bill showed how to move a SketchUp massing model and round trip it from SketchUp to DataCAD and back to SketchUp again. First, showing the model in SketchUp and making a few changes, he demonstrated how to generate a series of schemes with little duplicate work. He saved the model in SketchUp format. Then in DataCAD, from the *Insert* menu, the SketchUp file(s) was selected and placed it into DataCAD, where it was viewed in the usual ways or further edited. Finally, the DataCAD version of the model can be exported as a DWG file, where it can be reimported into SketchUp. (Note: a future DataCAD 12 free update will allow DataCAD 12 to export directly to SketchUp format.

SketchUp XREF into DataCAD. Next Bill showed a different way for working with a SketchUp model (with interior/exterior views) in DataCAD through XREFing. He reviewed the differences in SketchUp, where components are used (NOT LAYERS) to create separations between key data in the model, although layers can be used to turn on/off data in the XREF for DataCAD. Next, Bill showed the steps of inserting the SketchUp model into

DataCAD, this time as an XREF, than how to manage the data by using the Reference Manager settings.

Furthermore, he used the SketchUp XREF as a tracing outline to draw smart walls, windows and doors in DataCAD 12 to take advantage of this new capability. Finally, he talked about obtaining construction details for SketchUp from *3D Warehouse* <www.google.com/sketchup/3dwh/> which can now be used in SketchUp models or now in DataCAD to assist in the Construction Document phase.

Starting Out With DataCAD 12

For the next presentation, Neil Blanchard covered a number of topics regarding customization issues in going from DataCAD 11 to installing DataCAD 12. Below are his handout notes that specified these items.

If you are upgrading from v11, then the installer should "look" for your custom settings and copy them over to v12. If you are doing a "fresh" installation, then you will want to manually copy the macros, fonts, linetypes, hatch patterns, DcadWin.MCR (keyboard shortcuts), etc.

DcadWin.INI file settings to (possibly) modify:
    [General]
    MinusKeyTogglesOvershoot=FALSE *[if you like to use negative numbers for distance input]*
    PeriodKeyRestoresLastEntity=FALSE *[if you want to start typing inches by typing a period]*

    [MenuBtn]
    BTN_SPACING=##   *[if you want to change standard size using 11 pt Arial Narrow]*

    [Recent File List]
    [Recent Folder List]
    Max=10   *[6 is the default]*

    [Status Area]
    DropDownWidth=##   [to ADD to standard, e.g. "35"]

In the View/Toolbars menu, I selected "Classic" Navigation & Projection Pad, and **de**selected the new versions of these.

In the Tools/Program Preferences/Interface dialog, I changed the font to Arial Narrow 11 Point, and adjusted the General & Object Snap Display & Hide Delay times. Once I get the icon and toolbars arranged as I like them – I lock the Toolbars.

Wall Types
The Default wall type is (oddly, IMO) a 4 1/2" width – I have changed mine to 3 1/2", and I have saved a 5 1/2" version. You have to Load all the Wall Types that you want to use. Whenever possible, if I need a new Wall Type, I start with an existing one.

Window & Door Types
You probably will need to Browse for new External window & door types – and the list is not shown until after to click Okay (I wish this Previewed the list!). You can resize these dialogs, and they will "remember" their new sizes.

I have changed the default door and window to be variable widths – so they work just like the old door and window tools. (Doing this in a blank file is probably wise, and you can either delete or rename the original default files.)

If you use the smart entities, you need to think about if you are going to "just" use them for 2D or if you are going to also use them for 3D functions.

Object Snapping
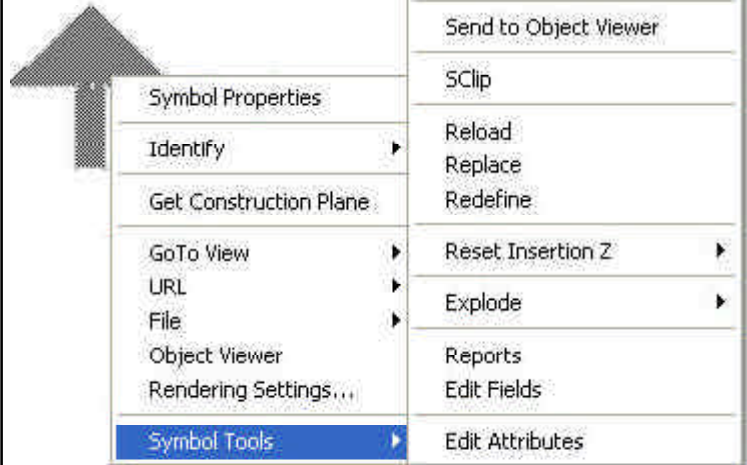In DataCAD 12, object snapping has some important changes and improvements:
· Flyouts can be toggled on, to indicate which points are around your cursor.
· New "Offset" setting – is really cool!
· You can snap to (almost?) everything that you can see on the screen. The main exception is bitmaps, which only work on their boundaries.

Issues
This is v12.00.00 and there are some issues with smart walls cleaning up correctly – things like inside/outside, and whether the nodes "touch" each other, can cause things to go (slightly) awry. We hope to see additional smart entities, and we should see them in future free updates:
· smart floors
· smart roofs
· complex/compound walls, including curved, sloped, and tapered walls
· arched windows & doors
· smart stairs
· structural beams & columns

Figure: CTRL-right click on any symbol to open Symbol Tools and to directly edit any symbol -- or set your Program Preferences to double-click on any symbol to open in editor.

Editing Symbols in DataCAD 12

In the final presentation of the evening, Neil covered the specific of the new direct editing feature for Symbols in DataCAD. Below are his handout notes on the topic.

There is an option to Double Click to open the Symbol Editor (as well as open the Entity Properties, and RFM). Key points to remember:

· Empty Layers are not "allowed", and they will be purged from DSF file.
· The Insertion Point is at the Absolute Zero position in the Symbol Editor – if you move everything, then this will change the Insertion Point.
· To Save a (new) version of a symbol **to the hard drive**, you must use the Save As function.
·
You can edit layer names, colors, linetypes & spacing – everything that you can do in a drawing, can be done in the Symbol Editor.

Another important thing to remember is that all symbols that are used and that have been used in a drawing – are stored in the drawing's "header" and they will show up in the SB; rather than the symbols that are on the hard drive.

The meeting adjourned about 9:30 p.m.

-- Handouts by Neil Blanchard, Bill Huther, and other notes by Evan H. Shu, FAIA