



DataCAD Boston Users Group

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A Committee of the Boston Society of Architects

March DBUG Meeting

DBUG Meeting

March 26, 2003

Host: Jeff Tagerman, CADvantage

Boston, Massachusetts

Old Times Again.

It felt like old times again, as a good turnout of 30-plus folks came to this meeting hosted by *Jeff Tagerman* of *CADvantage* at the offices of *McConnell/Couts Architects* in Boston. After introductions, *Evan Shu* said that his informal survey of attendees revealed three main reasons why they attended on this evening: 1) the 3D agenda; 2) the return of spring weather; and 3) the new requirement by Massachusetts for continuing education credits.

By virtue of its accreditation by as AIA continuing education units, DBUG meetings automatically qualify as state certified. *Evan* said that as he understood it, it is a “self-reporting” system with your annual renewal form requiring 12 hours of education, 8 of which are health, safety, welfare credits (building design, construction documents, etc.). By the state standards, if you attend 4 DBUG meetings (3 hours each) during the year, you will fulfill you Mass. requirements <www.state.ma.us/reg/boards/ar/cmr/23103.htm>. Each DBUG meeting can be coded with this reference number AIA Provider A018/Program Number DBUG03/03 (where 03/03 equals month/year).

Mike Smith said he is coming down the homestretch of completing his update to his book, “The Official DataCAD Users Guide,” to cover DataCAD 10 features, including a new section on o2c as well as new material on advanced construction drawings. This update will be offered by *TechEd* concepts and perhaps on CD via *Cheap Tricks Ware*.

The folks from the newly formed *Spirit International* (*Dieter Heimlich*, *Jeff Kretzmer*, *Rick Morse*) were on hand and would present later in the meeting. *Jeff Tagerman* added a plug for us to check out a new PDA program for doing field surveying layouts on a Palm handheld <www.zipcad.com> which was recently developed by *Architect*, *Richard Coutts*. *Jeff* said that as a DataCAD dealer, he wants everyone to feel free to utilize him as a resource for any DataCAD or CAD question, big or trivial, and he can be contacted by cell phone at (781)405-7810, or (508)304-0475, or at CADBoston@attbi.com.

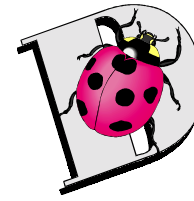
3D Basics

Jeff modified the agenda a bit to provide time for the surprise presentation of *Spirit 11* by *STI*, so he condensed his 3D presentation to show us how he converts a 2D Plan to 3D. After the reviewing the basic 3D elements of line, polygon, block, slab, and use of the z-key to change z-heights, he took us through these steps:

- 1) Isolate your walls and copy then to a “3D Walls” layer;
- 2) On 3D Walls, seal all openings (via Architect/Wall/Remove openings). Note that you can seal more than one opening on a wall at once;
- 3) Check and modify the z-heights of your wall if desired (default settings are usually z-base=0 and z-height=8’);
- 4) Explode all walls to Polygons (3D menu/Explode/ToPgons);
- 5) Using your 2D windows layer on as a guide, start the AEC Modeler macro (Toolbox/AEC-MODL.DCX) and select windows with the “Cut Wall” option on, (setting window type features as desired) and insert new 3D Windows. Do the same for doors. (Make sure that you are not trying to insert windows and doors in “horizontal” slabs as it won’t work);
- 6) Use a horizontal slab to put a floor in your model. A good guide is to set your finish floor level at Z=0’ and so put in a slab from say, Z=0’ to Z=-10” for typical balloon framing.

Showing us each step along the way via the Viewer, *Jeff* then demonstrated how to create voids in slab by creating another horizontal slab where the hole is to be, then using the *Void* command to select the “master” slab and then the smaller slab as the void. He then used the *3D Stairs* macro to insert a new finished 3D stair into his floor plan.

Jeff gave some hints on getting the extra 3D niceties of special detailing: use manufacturers’ CDs! Almost every major manufacturer has them as well as DXF 3D details which can be downloaded from their websites. He showed how a fancy Kohler toilet could be placed in the drawing.



STI and Spirit 11

Rick Morse, very newly-appointed CEO of STI (SoftTECH International <www.softtech.com>), took center stage and gave us background on this new company and gave us a first pre-release preview of Spirit 11, which you might think of as the reincarnated version of what used to be *DataCAD Plus* before the split between DATACAD LLC and SoftTECH occurred in October 2001. The new STI management team consists of *Dieter Heimlich* of SoftTECH, *Jeff Kretzmer* of Connecticut Advanced Products (CAPCAD), and *Richard Morse* (formerly DataCAD Plus Product Manager for DATACAD LLC). Gary Segal (fastest CAD gun in the west or east) was also there to help unveil the details of this new offering.

Our first look at Spirit 11 seemed positive based on what we remembered from the last version of DataCAD Plus. The interface and dialog boxes are much cleaner and have been made much more accessible (*deutsche, nicht mehr!*) in this English language International version. Rick admitted that most of the work of the past year has gone into cleaning up the interface with the base functionality about the same — with the exception of the work to complete the Window and Door Designer, which allows users to customize and create their own symbols for all levels of the ZAC (Zone Area Construction). The feature set of Spirit 11 (single precision, in case you were wondering) will be well familiar to DataCAD 10 users (XREFs, MSP, TrueType fonts, Bitmap import, Layer Manager, etc.) but there are some extra niceties such as direct XREF of DWG, DC5 or even SKP (Sketchup models), and a much-improved Roof Construction modeler (now rise/run options instead of angles).

Rick announced that the International version of Spirit 11 (to be released shortly) will be priced as follows: USD\$995 (cross-grade) to any existing (comparable) CAD user; \$2395 to the new user; and a special \$495 offer to anybody

who bought the previous version of DataCAD Plus (includes 30 day free trial). On top of that, STI plans to institute a new *Spirit Circle Plan* option that would cost another \$395 per year (or to the next major release, e.g. Spirit 12). They insist that the Circle Plan (don't say that dirty word "maintenance") will include an extremely high level of support along with frequent "live updates," where one click in the program will link to the company website to check for, download, install, and provide help for any new updates features. They realize that the "proof will be in the pudding" as far as making the Circle Plan worthwhile (why are we, the former Cadkey-burned, so skeptical?), and they have already planned out some 11 or 12 separate tracks for adding features. Spirit 11 will also only be one program of what they plan as a whole range of products in their "Building Information Network," one of which they showed as "Skribel" (similar to Squiggle with post-production sketch-look options). Spirit 11 will be dongle protected or else via a software lock tied to CPU#. They will also have a network version that will allow X number of users logged in at any one time across the network.

Dieter Heimlich insisted Spirit 11 isn't out to compete with DataCAD directly but rather to establish its own unique niche in the marketplace, which has as its major priority an eye on the overall global market. He said DataCAD and Spirit are now on completely different tracks of development. CEO Rick Morse noted that his main priorities will be to push the software toward providing more useful tools for the working architect and that his next big challenge will be to try to bring Spirit to the Asian markets.

Due to the lateness of the hour, Jeff agreed to postpone the rest of his 3D presentation to the April DBUG meeting.

-- Meeting Notes by Evan H. Shu, FAIA