

DataCAD Boston Users Group

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A Committee of the Boston Society of Architects

Announcements

A convivial group of a dozen DBUGers gathered at the Boston Society of Architects Building for another full evening program. Evan Shu announced that the April DBUG meeting will also be at the BSA and be hosted by Mark Madura of DATA CAD. Geoff Langdon said that a CAD teaching position was currently open for UMass in Amherst, and while he himself wasn't interested in commuting that far, he would be more open to "commuting" to a position in Hawaii that is starting a Doctorate in Architecture program! Dean Burland gave all a cautionary tale of the frightening things that you can receive in the mail (notice to appear to a hearing on license revocation) should you forget to renew your architects license.

Basic Lesson: DataCAD 11's Flexible Interface

Evan Shu started up DataCAD 11 and did something a little scary to some: he turned off ALL the menus and toolbars! What was left was a very clean wide-open drawing area unencumbered by any restrictions. He said that one would have to be extremely secure in his knowledge of keyboard shortcuts to operate this way, but that this method was a great way to learn the following:

- 1) know that all these toolbars and menus really can be turned off;
- 2) have the security of learning where they can be turned back on again; and
- 3) by selectively turning them on, one by one, better learn what they are used for in the first place.

He showed how the toolbar display is controlled via the *View* pulldown menu/*Toolbars* selection and went methodically through the various options (see *Figure above*) turning each on and reviewing what they did and whether you needed them or not. He explained his reasoning in only using the *Standard* (for the Undo) and the *Context* Toolbars, combined with the *Status Panel*, and *Coordinates and Hints*.

Another interesting option are the so-called "Classic" choices which in the *Toolbar* menu give back the old style *Navigation & Projection Pad* and *Status Area* menus that were used in DataCAD 9. More useful may be in the

March DBUG Meeting
DBUG Meeting
March 24, 2005
Host: Evan H. Shu FAIA, Shu Associates
BSA Building, Boston, MA

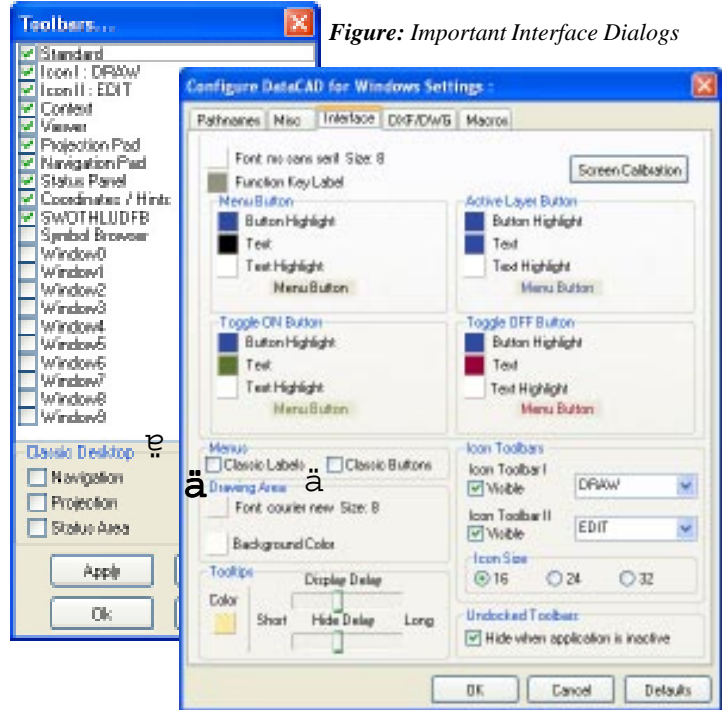


Figure: Important Interface Dialogs

Tools/Program Preferences/Interface dialog choices for *Classic Labels* and *Classic Buttons*. The buttons option returned the chiseled 3D look for the buttons and the labels choice not only shortens menu names, such as "Architct" instead of "Architect," but more importantly visibly narrows the side menu bar giving back yet more screen real estate.

Evan then demonstrated how you can drag all the various toolbars to dock at any side of the screen and how they can be rearranged to be the most pleasing and useful to each user. Once an ideal setup is developed, a useful option is "Lock Toolbars" in the *View* pulldown menu, which prevents accidental dragging to new locations and returns yet more screen real estate by eliminating the top "close" bar.

Other issues can arise with 2 monitor setups, where floating dialogs on the second menu will close and be relocated if the main DataCAD window is deactivated. To prevent this problem, uncheck the box "Undocked Toolbars: Hide when application is inactive" in the *Tools/Program Preferences/Interface* dialog. Neil mentioned that you can also control the width of your status panel by adding a line in the INI file under

```
[StatusArea]
DropDownWidth=xx
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Passage to India, Part I

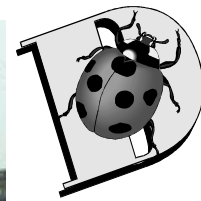
Greg Barriere then took the group on an exotic trip to India (visually also via a Keyhole global journey), where he has been doing a lot of work this past year on Deloitte company offices. He explained how understanding cultural and work environment issues can have a huge impact on both how designs are developed as well as how they are executed. One interesting note is that many Indian “tech” office workdays run from 10 am to 10 pm, in order that there be a significant overlap with the US workday (10-13 hour difference) — so, basically, our am is their pm and vice-versa.

In a fast paced slide show, he gave us stunning images first of Mumbai (formerly Bombay), which is an ancient, somewhat dirty city set in a tropical climate. Most arresting for the western eyes were scenes of beautiful palaces set cheek by jowl next to squatter tent villages, or views of beautiful government buildings blocked by massive electrical transformers. Obviously, there is little use in India of the “zoning” concept prevalent in other parts of the world.

Here are some of Greg’s other observations on things you might want to know in India:

- a typical work area for an Indian worker is 5' by 5' (vs. 8'x7' for US);
- a work crew will often do what cranes do in US;
- power going off once or twice a day is the norm;
- Indian designers/contractors feel empowered to change things for their own reasons;
- a construction site will have more women than men, women doing most of the heavy carrying labor (they wear flat top construction hats to better carry loads on their heads);
- wood is plentiful and is often used as construction support for concrete slabs and scaffolding (picture a paperback book being held up by 50 varied length and angled toothpicks to get an image);
- open toed flip flops and traditional Indian dress is common wear at construction and industrial sites;
- trucks are often decorated to look like elephants;
- their brooms have no handles, lots of squatting and spitting (root chewing is common);
- long span concrete slab construction is common for new building;
- education is extremely important to Indians.

Greg’s slideshow took us to see Bangalore furniture manufacturers, and to Hyderabad and its Hitec City, the development where Greg is doing his fitout work for Deloitte. He has developed new office standards for worker areas and showed a number of layout options for office designs using DataCAD and Blocker. He will continue this presentation at the April DBUG meeting.



Advanced Lesson: CADD Translations

Geoff Langdon gave us the benefit of all his knowledge in the various ways that

AutoCAD conversions to DataCAD can trip you up. He had assisted Greg with converting the Indian designers AutoCAD 14 drawing files. First of all, DataCAD to AutoCAD conversions were generally no problem. But some Blocker info did not come through, so PDFs were provided to make sure all info was accounted for.

He explained that the major culprit these days in conversions is PaperSpace (ACAD’s version of DataCAD’s multiscale plotting); it has become easier and is now more popular in use. Even more difficult is that you can now draw in PaperSpace mode, which creates a new kind of scaled entity that conversions must deal with. Geoff recommends memorizing the factor 1/48, which in decimal form is .020833 and is a common conversion factor for 1/4" scale elements. For Properties, use “Standard Scale.”

Geoff recommends getting your hands on a copy of IntelliCAD 2000 as your best bet to open most DWG files. He does *not* recommend the student version of AutoCAD as it inserts a watermark on drawing files that sometimes acts like a virus, infecting other non-student DWG files and which proves pesky to get rid of. He hasn’t tried out DataCAD’s new 11.06.00 DWG translator as yet.

Other recommendations on CADD Translation issues by Geoff:

- 1) Use the *Zoom All* command (vs. *Zoom extents*) to make sure you have everything;
- 2) The *wblock* command is very useful in turning any “foreign” objects such as PaperSpace elements like Titleblocks into DWG format data which can be read in by most CAD programs;
- 3) He often imports *wblock* data into a clean DWG file, then exports out via *AutoCAD 2000 DXF* which he finds the most successful import format to other programs;
- 4) After *wblocking* any needed data from PaperSpace Layouts, delete all PaperSpace layouts before exporting;

The group’s impression was that in dealing with AutoCAD conversion issues, the final recommendation should be to call Geoff for help! With that capper, another long but stimulating night at DBUG was concluded.

— Meeting Notes by Evan H. Shu FAIA