



From the
Cheap Tricks Newsletter
Dec 2003 Issue

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From the Editor:



*Traveling through hyperspace
isn't like dusting crops, boy!"*

—Han Solo

A big audience was on hand at the World Trade Center for the DataCAD Boston Users Group's (DBUG) Sweet 16th annual meeting at the *Build Boston* trade conference. No, not just for the chocolate cake, we presume, but more likely to get a good view of DATACAD LLC's new DataCAD 11 release. This diverse group, which ranged in experience with DataCAD from 19 years to 2 weeks, was not disappointed as President and CEO, Mark Madura, gave a brisk but thorough tour of the many impressive features of this new release. In this issue of *Cheap Tricks*, we have tried to give you a "Star Wars" tour of most of the important basic features of DataCAD 11, but as several DATACAD LLC staffers commented, "We sure have given *Cheap Tricks* plenty to write about in the coming year, haven't we?" Yes, you sure have. From the new Symbol Browser, to the exciting TIN modeler and other 3D tools, to visible symbol attributes, and to layers for symbols, materials assignments, and PDFs, those new features enumerate just a few of many new frontiers opened up for a host of cheap tricks just ready to be discovered.

DATACAD LLC is extremely encouraged by early reports as the sales of DataCAD 11 have been brisk with overall feedback very, very positive. One major factor cited in strong sales is due in large part to DataCAD 11's network awareness, backup and recovery enhancements, session backups, and the move to double-precision, as they have seen a fair number of multi-station orders. In fact, we hear that the CAD guru at one firm with 20 seats predicted that many of his headaches managing the DataCAD network will be eliminated — but on the other hand, he may no longer get to be the "hero" by knowing how to recover swap files or other lost and deleted files!

One nice feature that allows DATACAD LLC and its users a sense of security in not waiting until the dust settles on initial

version of this release is the "Check for Update" selection in the *Help* menu. With many of us now with permanent live ties to the Internet, it is a simple matter to check to make sure we have the most up-to-date version of DataCAD 11. As a matter of fact, as we write, DATACAD LLC is wrapping up DataCAD 11.00.03 which will be the first free update that primarily addresses bugs reported after the initial release. Close on its heels will be DataCAD 11.01.00, which will include the new "create your own linetype" enhancement (*Figure 12*) that was the exciting surprise new feature demonstrated at the DBUG anniversary meeting. We also know that in the immediate pipeline are other major enhancements like *smart tags*, *smart text*, etc. So, once you do install DataCAD 11, do make sure you keep on "checking."

While it is only human nature to be hesitant on upgrading until you are certain there aren't any major problems, you can at least rest assured that DataCAD 11 can safely co-exist with earlier versions of DataCAD due to its separate directory and Windows INI structure. But don't wait too long or it will hurt you in the pocketbook to the tune of \$100 per station, as DATACAD LLC is holding its current upgrade sale prices only until *December 31, 2003*. Up until the clock strikes midnight for the new year, the sale pricing for DataCAD 11 will be as follows: registered owners of DataCAD Plus —USD\$195; DataCAD 10 owners to 11 — \$295; DataCAD 9 owners to 11: \$395; DataCAD 5->8.5 to 11: \$595. New users will pay \$995. Don't delay: *tick-tock*.



As these days wind down on another eventful year in this neck of the woods, we want to thank you for your loyal readership, as we know that many of you have been with us for much of the 13 years that we have now been publishing *Cheap Tricks*. Most of you, on a good amount of pure faith, have followed this "road less traveled by," eschewing the AutoCAD cow-path that took most of the herd. It is gratifying to see that DataCAD 11 is yet more evidence in support of the wisdom of that choice, and . . . "that has made all the difference!" . . . "Till next we meet in 2004. — Evan H. Shu, FAIA ☺