

Topic:
MCAD & Industry
Interviews

Interview with Bill McClure of the Solid Edge business of Unigraphics Solutions

iCAD is produced by Business Advantage, a B2B research, business development and marketing consulting practice operating in the global IT, Digital and Telecommunication sectors.

iCAD asked Bill:

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What are the major issues facing your business?

The biggest issue the U.S. CAD market faces are 2D designers who have yet to migrate to the proven productivity advantages of 3D solid modeling. Fear of 3D and perceived ability to deal with complex assembly drawings still keeps users in low-productivity, automated drafting. 2D Drafting is inefficient for making 2D drawings. 3D solid modeling with Solid Edge is at least twice as productive, even for producing drawings.

Large numbers of industrial machinery designers and engineers are still working in 2D today. Why? They mistakenly believe that 2D CAD is adequate, 3D CAD is too difficult to learn and is too expensive.

Product development processes that rely on 2D CAD as the primary design tool have critical limitations that unnecessarily extend design cycle time, compromise product quality, and increase engineering and manufacturing costs.

So it's our job to communicate and prove to 2D designers that they should move to solid modelling.



Bill McClure

How have these issues changed compared to a year ago?

The message is getting through. In the past year, thousands of 2D users have documented or demonstrated that this issue should evaporate very quickly. Thousands of Solid Edge users have successfully migrated to 3D productivity gains with Solid Edge.

There are dozens of published Solid Edge case studies available. <http://www.solid-edge.com/success/default.htm>

What do you think will be the major developments or changes in the US CAD/CAM market over the next few years?

I see three directions: Moving to 3D, web-based collaboration and an expansion of software development by companies wishing to complement CAD with integrated tools that address all aspects of product development.

Designers who move to 3D will discover they are at a competitive advantage. They will be able to design and deliver products faster than their competitors. In addition, those who move to 3D will find themselves ahead of the curve as new web collaboration technologies take off. The use of 3D data on the web takes advantage of the full intellectual capital in their designs. As bandwidth and reliability of the internet's infrastructure strengthens and security concerns diminish, the web will drive new levels of design collaboration. Those designers who have moved to 3D will be ready to take advantage of this trend.

U.S. manufacturers who move to 3D will also see strong growth in integrated software packages that address CAM, product data management, analysis, standard parts and more. As the mass of 2D users migrate to 3D, so will the opportunity for extended software development expand. Our Voyager Program continues to grow, with more than 150 members. New technologies being developed to meet the workflow needs of engineers at discrete manufacturing companies continue to impress us. We have pulled together many of these exciting technologies into a web location. See <http://www.solid-edge.com/voyager/default.htm>

What are the most exciting opportunities for your business?

There are many. Most fall within the large numbers of designers still using 2D. But perhaps the biggest opportunities within that replacement CAD group for Solid Edge are companies that develop industrial machinery. Custom Industrial Machinery is probably the largest CAD market segment and remains one of our primary focuses. These companies make large assemblies and are in need of a continual flow of innovative, easy to use design tools. To that end, our clear challenge is to continue the delivery of highly productive, innovative, easy-to-use machine design tools.

We also see major opportunity in companies that design electro-mechanical products. Many companies in telecommunications, computing and office electronics are still using 2D systems to design their complex products. We see major opportunity for 3D design tools there.

Providing the discrete manufacturing industry with trained CAD users paves the way for increased use of Solid Edge. Ease of use is frequently mentioned as one of the top reasons cited by our customers for selecting Solid Edge. Already in place at more than 1,600 educational institutions worldwide, the Solid Edge Academic Partnership Program is open to accredited universities, colleges and high schools. The program provides unlimited site licenses, course guides for basic and advanced studies, software support and upgrades, and use of Solid Edge on students' personal computers.

How successful is Solid Edge in Europe?

The success of our 2D to 3D migration targets has been equally effective worldwide. The Solid Edge Origin program - which provides a free subset of Solid Edge to allow 2D users to prove to themselves the productivity gains in 3D - has been hugely successful in all three major geographic regions of the world.

Europe has been a very strong market for Solid Edge and actually leads each of the other two worldwide zones.

Many thanks to Bill McClure for talking to *iCAD*.

iCAD will be presenting exclusive market research on attitudes to moving to 3D modelling in a future issue.

Note from the Editor:

Please note that the views expressed here are purely those of Unigraphics Solutions and do not necessarily represent the views of *iCAD*.

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