

Topic:
MCAD & Industry
Interviews

Interview with Rachael Dalton-Taggart of PlanetCAD Inc

The World according to PlanetCAD

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 Rachael:

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What are the major issues facing your business?

The major issue facing PlanetCAD is one related to market education. The global engineering market is largely unaware that our Web-based application services are even available. Our primary challenge will be to educate the millions of design and manufacturing engineers that these services exist and that they can save significant time and money on a daily basis.

A further challenge is assuring engineers of the inherent security of their data as it is transmitted across the Internet. This has represented a major barrier that is being overcome by education and familiarity as more and more engineers use the Internet. This education effort extends well beyond the individual engineer, however. Decision makers in key areas dealing with engineering issues should be considering an application solution at the enterprise level because it will have an impact on their company's bottom line.

[PlanetCAD](#) offers automated solutions for manufacturing and design engineers to enable data interchange, improve data quality and streamline the manufacturing process.

PlanetCAD started as a division of Spatial Technology Inc. in January 2000. Spatial Inc. changed its name to PlanetCAD Inc. on November 14th, 2000 following the sale of its Component Software Division to Dassault Systèmes. The company's PlanetCAD Division was not sold in the transaction and continues to operate as an independent company under the name PlanetCAD Inc.

Have these changed from a year ago?

A year ago, our main challenge was trying to grow our core software business in a limited developer-based market. With the launch of PlanetCAD this year, we have opened up a whole new set of avenues to a broader end-user engineer customer base.

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

More and more engineers are moving towards Web-based or enterprise-based product and service solutions. Companies involved in the manufacturing supply chain are looking for ways to lower production costs, increase productivity and improve process efficiency. A careful balance between Web-based and enterprise-based services will provide a way to respond to customers' diverse needs. By combining the core competencies of several aggregate players in this market, PlanetCAD and similar services that follow its lead will be able to respond to these growing, changing needs.

What are the most exciting opportunities for your business?

PlanetCAD has the opportunity to leverage several assets together with a significant new partner, Dassault Systèmes, the leading engineering software supplier in the automotive and aerospace industries. The goal is for PlanetCAD to become the leading provider of Web infrastructure tools and applications that maximize the value of engineering data in the manufacturing supply chain. PlanetCAD's assets include:

- significant software expertise in engineering and 3D software markets
- recognition as a neutral supplier of engineering solutions
- excellent customer relationships with many CAD/CAM/CAE application software providers
- recognition as a pioneering Web infrastructure tools and applications supplier to the engineering community.

What are the biggest potential threats to your business?

A potential threat to our business would be the difficulty in educating the global engineering community about the value of Web-based or enterprise-based application services. Engineers may still be of the mindset that their everyday engineering problems and tasks must be solved hands-on. This approach is extremely labour and time intensive, but is no longer necessary with the innovative techniques available to engineers today through services like PlanetCAD.

How far is the US CAD market ahead of Europe?

The European engineering market, while being substantially smaller in total revenues than the US market, still represents an enormous opportunity for software and technology companies offering ubiquitous solutions for engineering problems. The European Internet market is also evolving somewhat differently than the US market with an increased focus on the wireless Internet market. With that in mind, we do not anticipate substantial growth of revenue from Europe for another 12 months while that market evolves and reliance on Internet connectivity develops. The potential market in the US is already well in place and growing rapidly.

What implications do the economic forecasts for 2001 have for PlanetCAD?

The predictions of economic slowdown mean that while our sales message and positioning might change slightly to focus on the issues that arise in these circumstances, we anticipate a rise in sales due to the time, effort and cost savings directly associated with PlanetCAD products for manufacturing enterprises.

Many thanks to Rachael Dalton-Taggart for talking to *iCAD*.

Note from the Editor:

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

iCAD will be presenting exclusive market research on attitudes to Web-based application services in a future issue.

Do you need more information on the awareness of and attitudes to your products and services in your target market? Our [market research services](#) can provide the solution.

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