

Topic:
AEC

Website Wishlist

Find out what features would tempt AEC CAD managers to visit their suppliers' websites .. and who has made it on to their Internet favourites list.

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

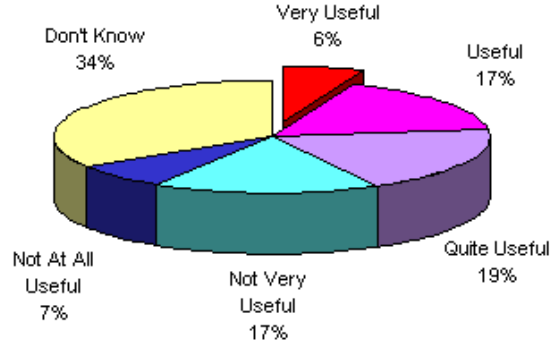
In the last issue of *iCAD* we established that, for most CAD managers in the AEC sector, Christmas occurs more frequently than a visit to their CAD/CAM suppliers' website. The majority are therefore unaware of what value-added information/services are available on these sites. So what features might tempt them to stop by more often? Business Advantage interviewed managers of design functions at 261 UK AEC sites to find out.

We saw last month that only a minority of managers said the following features were present on the website of their main CAD supplier (percentages in brackets):

- FAQs/self-help facility for commonly occurring problems (34%)
- A users' tips page (28%)
- Description of known software bugs (23%)
- Electronic software manuals (18%)
- Customer discussion forums (24%)
- Customisable customer section for individual companies, eg. for showing contact history etc. (11%)

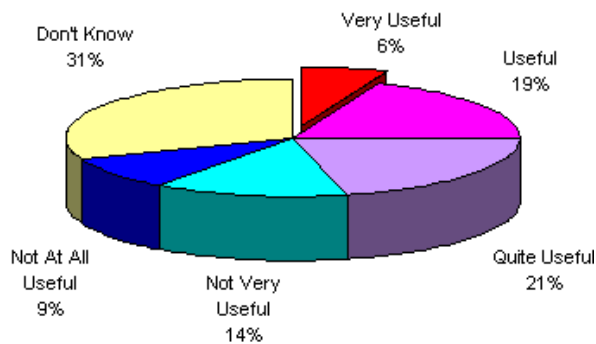
We asked the remaining groups (ie those who said each feature wasn't available on their suppliers' websites, or didn't know one way or the other) how useful each of these features would be.

How Useful Would FAQs Be On Your Main CAD Supplier's Web Site?



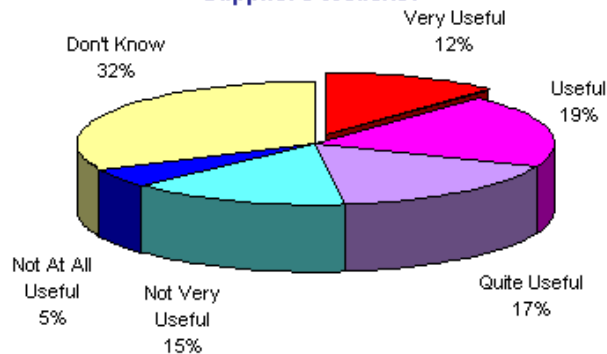
Around two in five thought they would find some use in an FAQ facility on their CAD supplier's website (base 172).

How Useful Would A Users' Tips Page Be On Your Main CAD Supplier's Website?



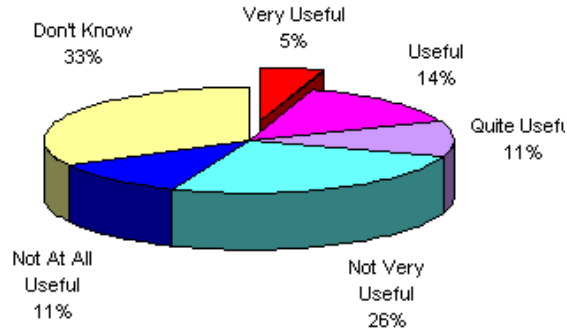
Nearly half thought a source of tips on using their CAD solution would be useful; nearly a quarter however can't see the practical benefits of such a facility (base 187).

How Useful Would Information On Software Bugs Be On Your Main CAD Supplier's Website?



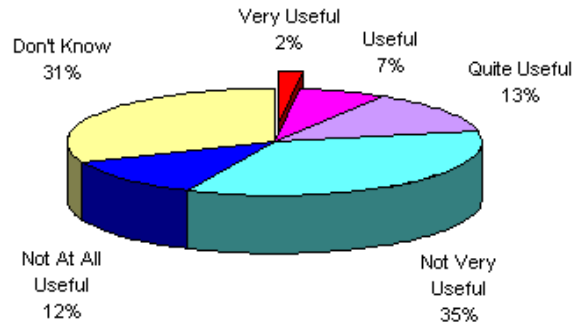
The provision of information on CAD software bugs received the highest proportion of managers offering a 'very useful' rating at 12%, and the highest overall proportion of managers (48%) who thought it would be useful to some degree (base 201).

How Useful Would Electronic CAD Software Manuals Be On Your Main CAD Supplier's Website?



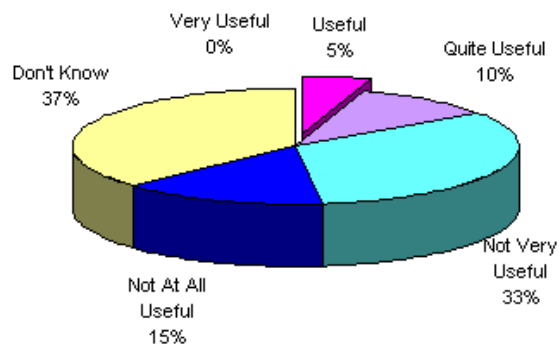
There was an equal split between managers seeing some potential use in on-line CAD software manuals, and those who didn't. Experience of non-user friendly paper manuals will make some doubt that electronic versions will be any different (213).

How Useful Would Customer Discussion Forums Be On Your Main CAD Supplier's Website?



Only around one in five managers thought they might make use of a facility to exchange views/tips with others (base 198).

How Useful Would Your Own Customisable Section Be On Your Main CAD Supplier's Website?

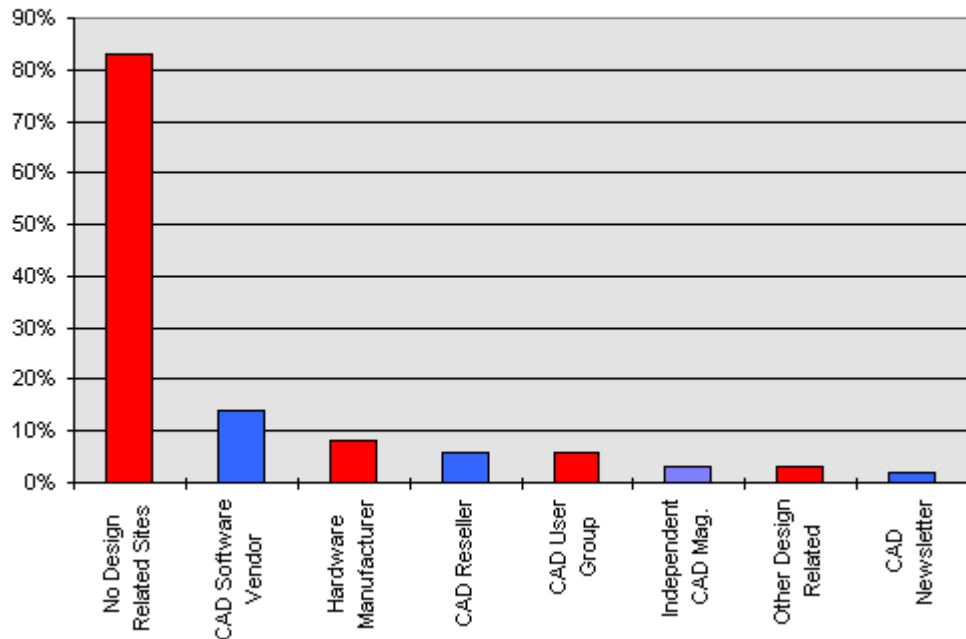


Few suppliers have set up the facility on their websites for customers to set their own personalised areas, so lack of awareness of the potential of these will be a factor here (233).

Favourites Lists

We saw in the last issue of *iCAD* how infrequently CAD managers in the AEC sector are visiting reseller/vendor websites - so no surprise that only 14% have bookmarked their CAD manufacturers' websites in their favourites list, and 6% have done so for those of resellers. It's a similar story for other CAD or design solution related sites.

Proportion Of Managers With Websites Stored In Favourites Lists



Conclusion

Around a third of our sub-sample were unable to assess the potential usefulness of each of the six website features asked about - not surprising as many of these will not have accessed this type of on-line information in the past. While a definite correlation cannot be made from this survey, we've noted before in *iCAD* the existence of a significant rump of CAD/CAM using companies that are barely using the Internet at all.

For suppliers who do regard their website as an integral part of their business strategy, there are signs here that significant proportions of *CAD managers would appreciate certain value-added web services*. *A tiny minority of managers are in the habit of visiting their suppliers' websites three or four times a month*; this sort of frequency will only happen where content is provided that becomes a reliable ongoing aid to working efficiently - and if you tell people it is there.

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