To the members of DBUG,
 As some of you may know by now, I recently resigned my position at Cadkey after 10 years of affiliation with the DataCAD product line and its successors.

 When Microtecture, Corp., the original makers of DataCAD, were acquired by Cadkey in 1989, I chose to participate in the acquisition and accept employment at Cadkey with one principal goal in mind; that of creating a worthy successor to DataCAD. It is with great sadness and frustration that I leave Cadkey with this goal unfulfilled.

I clearly remember my first assignment at Microtecture back in 1985. The president of our company at the time, Griff Burgh, said that there was strong feedback from our users that they wished to have a hidden line removal capability in DataCAD. It took less than a week for me to realize that what the user□s needed to obtain this capability extended far beyond simply removing unwanted lines from a drawing. Thus began DataCAD□s first □official□ foray into the world of three dimensional graphics and modeling. I say □official□, only because Eric Smith had already implemented a quite capable perspective viewing facility.

What matters most in this case is that we listened to our users and delivered what they needed to get the result they wanted. Our users wanted hidden line removal automation, but to accomplish this objective, they needed the ability to create and edit three-dimensional models. Much of the success of DataCAD has been built upon the idea of listening to the needs of our users and delivering to them the tools required to attain their goals.

 Six years ago we began the task of engineering from the bottom up, an entirely new successor to DataCAD. This effort was borne out of the same fundamental principle. We knew what our users wanted in a new product, and knew that delivering a suitable solution required that we first re-engineer the foundation upon which DataCAD is built from the ground up. Less than a month ago, we had a meeting in which which we reviewed, once again, our market objectives and the needs of our users. The result of this discussion was nearly identical to a design specification which we wrote in January 1990.

 In spite of our best efforts over the past five years, the objective of building a successor to DataCAD has been lost in a never ending list of missed opportunities. As one of the leaders of the development team during this period, I accept some of the responsiblity for this failure, principally in that I never really succeeded in communicating to the management of Cadkey what we were doing and why. However, if they had been really listening to our users, and they clearly had many opportunities to do so, it should have been obvious. Without the full support and leadership of Cadkey□s upper management, it is impossible to complete the task of building DataCAD□s successor. The development of CAD software has become too difficult and too expensive for one or a few people to design and develop something as comprehensive as a □new□ DataCAD. A team of people is required, and consequently, the full support and active leadership of Cadkey as a whole is required. This has not and still does not exist.

There remain at Cadkey some very talented software design engineers who are capable of delivering DataCAD s successor. Cadkey Architect, their latest effort, has the potential to be a viable successor to DataCAD. Embodied in Cadkey Architect is technology that could be exploited to produce a successor to DataCAD which truly addresses the needs of our users and creates a state of the art competitor in the AEC CAD marketplace.

However, potential is distinct from reality. It remains to be seen whether or not Cadkey intends on delivering just _a_ product, or whether they intend on delivering a product which truly serves the needs of our users, both current and future. I genuinely hope that they make the right decision.

In closing, I wish to extend my most heartfelt gratitude and thanks to two groups of people in particular: the talented and dedicated users of DataCAD and the talented and dedicated people with whom I have had the pleasure of collaborating with in the design and development of DataCAD and its successors over the past 10 years. It never ceases to amaze me the way our users continue to find creative and newly productive ways to utilize our software. My colleagues over the past ten years have proven that creativity and innovation are alive and well and that there is great value in applying discipline and engineering to the design of computer software. I am moving on to a new company, a new field of software design, and a new life in the West. I will continue to monitor this forum from time to time, and once I am settled, I will pass along my new addresses, physical and cyberspatial.

As always, I look forward to your letters, comments, and suggestions. My private e-mail accounts are listed below.

Best wishes,
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