

DBUG Meeting Notes

Hosts: Jeff Tagerman, CADvantage

Geoff Langdon, Architectural CADD

Mark Madura, DATACAD LLC

June 25, 1997 – Last Hurrah at Madura Studios

Mark Madura, founder of Madura Studios and now President of DATACAD LLC, opened the meeting by reflecting on the past five years: Madura Studios both opened and is now closing with a DBUG meeting. Tonight's milestone (gravestone?) was somewhat bittersweet for Mark as Madura Studios has served the Greater Boston's DataCAD community with great service and distinction over these years, but Mark finally felt that the splitting of assets and energies (along with periodic questions of "conflict of interest") caused him to decide to close Madura Studios.

Boston Area Consultants

With the closing up of Madura Studios, the natural first question is, "Who will take their place to provide CAD service and support in the Boston Area?" At this point, various Boston Consultants were asked to introduce themselves and hand out flyers and business cards. The first excellent development to follow in the wake of Madura Studios is a new arrangement to create a "DataCAD Training Center", which will offer DataCAD classes at the Designers CADD Company at 40 Pearl St. in Cambridge (near Central Square.) This service is initially sponsored by CADvantage and Architectural CADD but it is their hope to entice other Boston Area consultants to participate by offering classes as well. For more information, you may contact them at The DataCAD Training Center or via datacadtrainingcenter@architecturalcadd.com or at (508) 927-6796.

Those contacts for the DataCAD Training Center above will also put you in touch with Geoff Langdon, who is quite likely our foremost expert in multi-program, multi-platform, architectural CAD programs. Geoff notes that he

often assists firms who are making "transitions" from one program or platform to another.

Jeff Tagerman, formerly of Madura Studios, has now also started his own consulting service named CADvantage and he offers Professional DataCAD consulting and support including help with construction documents, DataCAD support and training, 3D Modeling, and development of Office Standards. He is also finalizing the steps to become an official DataCAD Dealer --ah I mean -- Value Added Reseller. He can be contacted at (617) 923-0141.

Michael Tardif (he of the renowned "Turbo DataCAD & Windows 95 fame) has a consulting business called "architechnologie inc." which splits his time between the Boston area and the NJ area. While he does not provide any hardware or software products, he does offer much expertise in the area of in-house training and support to architectural firms, with special expertise in Windows 95 support. You can contact him at architechnologie, inc. or at (617) 491-8018 (Boston) or (908) 358-9347 (NJ).

Keith Glass has 7 years of consulting experience in DataCAD production work, much of it in commercial projects. He can also offer DataCAD training. Contact him at 18F Strawberry Hill Rd. #34, Action, MA 01720.

Manny Snyderman, Snyderman Associates calls himself a "hired gun" for production work -- in the best sense! With his DataCAD expertise, he has worked with a number of Boston area architectural firms to "take care of business" (imagine the Marlboro theme playing the background.) He can be contacted at (508) 478-3071.

How about hardware? Many in the group recommended various computer dealers in the Boston area who will custom configure a computer station for you at low cost. Among those noted were Mainboard Computers 617-891-0060 in Waltham, PC Warehouse (617) 890-3939 in Waltham, Microsmart in Ashland, Aegis Associates in Watertown (617) 923-2500.

Geoff Langdon noted that he can also recommend using the computer Superstores in the area (Microcenter, CompUSA, Computer City, etc.) as they have good return and service policies.

Announcements

Mark Madura said that DATACAD LLC would like to add a "hired guns" section to their web page to help facilitate virtual collaborations. He asked that interested parties send their contact information along with a line or two about their specialty to DataCAD's Webmaster. DataCAD 7.50 is near mastering (Mark noted that you can still get in under the special upgrade price but only until the grace period ends on July 15 -- <http://www.datacad.com>). DataCAD 7.90 is also in the works; look for a Cheap Tricks Ware, Vol II CD in the fall. DATACAD LLC has met with Geoff Langdon regards the rules for the next Architectural CADD cup and you can expect DataCAD to compete more fully with the higher end products this time around. (If interested in being part of the design team, contact Mark Madura). Mike Smith said that William Mitropoulos Associates continues to look for full time help (DataCAD experience preferred, but they will retrain AutoCADers (617) 861-7731. Evan Shu noted that the next DBUG meeting would be and Dietz and Co. Architects in Springfield, most likely delayed one week to July 23. One of the presentations will be how they use Apple Newtons as part of their site survey work.

Quick Shading to High End Presentations

Stuart Sansevere made the trip up from New Jersey to show DBUG his techniques for using DataCAD's Quick Shader as a means to an end for some very slick renderings. His basic technique is to develop a good 3D DataCAD model, then do a Quick Shade and export to a POF file. Next he uses the POF2PCX utility to change it to a PCX file and import it into Corel Photopaint for additional enhancements and color adjustments. He has had good success with taking a 2D Tree in elevation and doing a "Rev.

Surface" operation to create a nice looking 3D Tree. Another "cheap trick" of his is to print or color Xerox the building shaded rendering onto a color acetate. Then overlaying this sheet on a site photo and re-photocopying to create a finished product. (Note many paint programs will also allow this merging or overlaying of images.) Stuart told how one particular rendering of a high rise apartment building on the waterfront was instrumental in convincing the neighbors and the planning board that the neighbors' water view would not be blocked and the building would be an attractive neighbor.

Multi-scale Plotting

This topic once again returns for presentation as it remains a difficult concept for those who are unfamiliar with it. Yet, power users of DataCAD will attest that it may be the single best feature to be added to DataCAD in the last couple versions. Jeff Tagerman presented a "real" project that he worked on for the Taber Academy which he felt would help demonstrate some of the key concepts. Here are some of the tips he noted:

- 1) Get to know Clip Cube, as that will help you define your plotting detail (detail here used to mean each individually scaled view to be plotted);
- 2) Saving a Clip Cube view as a 3D GoTo View setting will help, because 3D GoTo Views automatically remember whether a clip cube is on or off along with its parameters;
- 3) A 3D View or 2D GoTo View is NOT the same as a Multi-scale plotting detail but it is extremely useful to use GoTo Views in conjunction WITH multi-scale plotting, as each GoTo View can immediately get you back to any particular plotting detail view you may have saved;
- 4) Don't try to use the same text for plan areas which will be plotted/printed at different scales. Create a separate text layer for each plot scale;

- 5) Don't try to squeeze title text inside plotting details clip cubes; just create a different plotting detail for the title itself which allows you to place it individually;
- 6) Remember multi-scale plotting is the opposite of quick layout plotting in that you move the drawing into the sheet rather than moving the sheet around the drawing;
- 7) 7) It is handy to create a border view (with grids for details) as a separate plotting view that will also aid in subsequent placements -- also this allows you to have one border layer that can fit any scale sheet size;
- 8) Remember that multi-scale plotting allows you to have all views updated all the time because a plotting detail views are only a series of saved settings (extents/layers/plotting scale) not the data itself -- so any subsequent editing will automatically show up in any plotting view.
- 9) Text remains a tricky concept for folks but try to understand that the dynamic text scale only allows you to size your text in relationship to the CURRENT plotting scale, but once text has been inputted, it stays at that "real" size and will not change with other changes in plotting scale.
- 10) Don't forget to NAME your plotting view or it will not be saved the next time you look for it if you don't name it.

AutoCAD to DataCAD Transfer Issues

Geoff Langdon took center stage to talk about AutoCAD transfer issues. He recommended reading the current issue of ARCHITECTURE on the near disaster AutoCAD has had with AutoCAD 13. He noted that there are actually 11 different versions of AutoCAD 13 and many of them are not compatible with one another. AutoCAD 14 is "supposed" to solve all these problems, but don't hold your breath. Geoff recommended to those involved with receiving

DWG files from AutoCADers that the SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER is to ask them to use the SAVE AS R12DWG option when saving their file to give to you. With AutoCAD 13.c3 and later, AutoCAD DXF transfer format will NOT work! Trouble spots continue to occur with files using Paperspace, Reference Files, or 3D entities. For 3D Models, Geoff recommended that AutoCADers export their file as a 3D Studio (*.3DS) file and then use 3D Studio to export it out via DXF. Usually this is not a worry as Geoff says that in his experience only 2% of AutoCAD offices use any kind of 3D capability.

For us DataCADers, Geoff gave us a run through of what AutoCAD's Paperspace function is like. Again, his experience is that most AutoCAD offices have no idea how to use it, but for those who do, they find it essential (much like DataCAD's GoTo View feature.) In some ways, it is like running mirrored sessions of AutoCAD, where one session keeps track of the drawing(s) in real world scale and another keeps track of them "on paper". Geoff bended our minds with the eccentricities of layers being "on" but "frozen" and thus not visible vs. Layers being locked and unlocked, etc. Also with all the typing that was required to go from one major feature to another (often as the ONLY way to access that feature), he reinforced for many our good judgment in picking the simplicity of using DataCAD's menu structure.

In summary, Geoff advised that you tell your consultants to turn off Paperspace in transferring any drawings to you; don't send over any 3D modeling directly; and most importantly, SAVE AS R12 DWG!!

DataCAD 7.50

For those who had no other lives to go home to - just kidding -- Mark Madura stayed on past 9:30 to give us a quick demo of what's coming in DataCAD 7.50. These features included the following: 1) Pocket and Overhead Doors; 2) UNDO for Change; 3) Select layers by entity; 4) PgUp/PgDn scrolls through menu lists; 5) Layer

Search status button added to main menu; 6) Dynamic On Screen Color Palette Editor; 7) Multiple View Windows; 8) Enhanced Command Line Calculator; 9) Updated Online Documentation; 10) WindowIn/Extents now zooms to viewable area of active clip-cubes; and 11) Cavity wall feature. Best of all, many of us have already paid for this update -- as well as the next! (If you haven't already taken advantage of this great 3 for 1 offer, you have a "grace period" to July 15. Call the DataCAD's sales line at (800) 394-2231.)

*Meeting Notes by **Evan H. Shu, AIA***