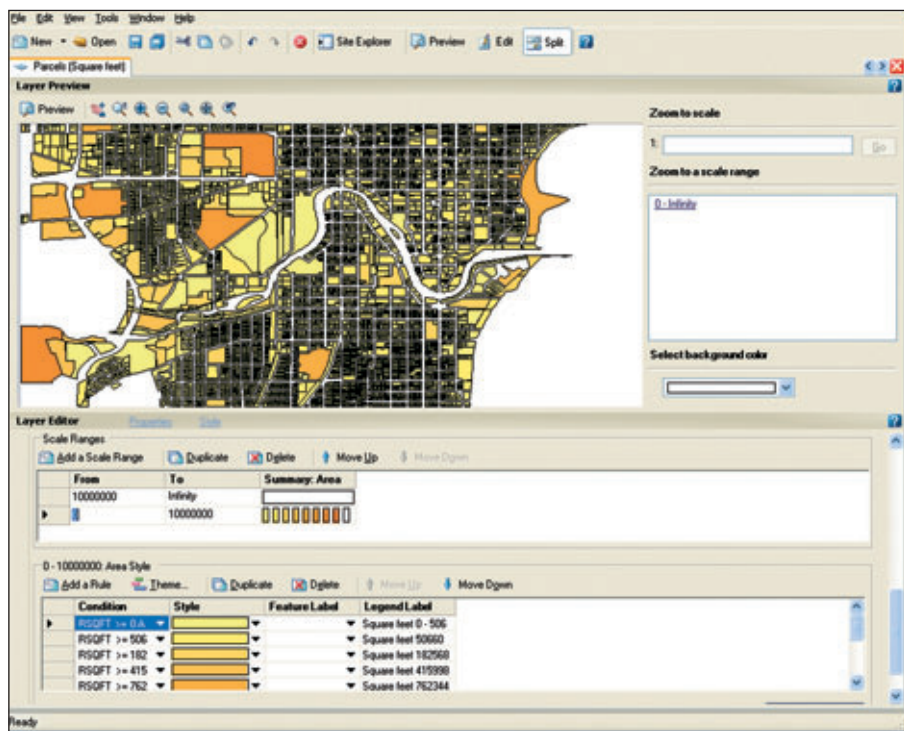


Autodesk University all About No Fear for the Future



From 28 November to 1 December 2005 the Autodesk University meeting was the hottest for renewal. In the Disney Congress Centre in Orlando the visitors were confronted with trainings, meetings and lectures all dealing with Autodesk software. The most important message: everybody should do what he feels like, but 3D really is the future.

'Technical Evangelist'

Remarkably enough the keynote of the Autodesk meeting took place on Tuesday afternoon, when the congress had already been in progress for two days. Still the majority of the 5,000 visitors were present when Lynn Allen approached the stage. This 'technical evangelist', as is the official description of her function, mostly talked about AutoCAD (2D) and the advantages of Autodesk Inventor (3D). According to her it is essential to make the transfer from two to three dimensional.

CEO Carol Bartz started her speech by explaining how Autodesk is trying to adapt to the wishes of the users. An example: the wish list which is composed of customer feedback every year. After this she quickly moved on to a topic which appeared to be more essential: change. Bartz was aiming at Computer Aided Design (CAD) users who in

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general seem to be quite hesitant with respect to the transfer from 2D to 3D. Though understanding this attitude she also thinks it is a step which is simply necessary.

"Individual business disciplines are dealing with the same problems", was a statement made by COO Carl Bass after Bartz's presentation. "Quicker, more effective and better are key words nowadays. This is why digital data should not be put on paper and be processed once again. By means of connected tools all data about products need to stay within the system of the company." After explaining the Autodesk slogan 'Create, Manage & Share' Bass stated that sharing information is especially important for the non CAD user. "The increase in bandwidth and the power of PCs make it possible to realize almost everything. The models that we can exchange are more

complex, richer in data and better than they ever were. We should make use of this to the utmost. My advice to everybody is: start digital, stay digital and finish digital."

'Global Bubble Company'

To enforce his words Bass discussed a non-existing case: the 'Global Bubble Company' that wants to expand its manufacturing department. First the role of the engineer was discussed, who had to design new machines. Accordingly Bass went looking for a new location in Wellington, New Zealand, for his plant. He did so by using Autodesk Map Server Enterprise. This new programme is capable of reading and combining existing GIS data based on the Open Source technology. Bass could enter several criteria for the new location, like size, desired infrastructure and price, after which the programme was able to find sites that met these criteria. Autodesk Map Server Enterprise offers serious GIS functionality that meets the Open GIS Consortium standards. After the selection of the location the plant had to be built for which Revit was used.

Disney Attractions

Because the Autodesk University took place in the Disney Congress centre it was obvious that there would be a presentation by a Disney representative. Thomas McCain, senior vice president engineering Disney, told about the history of the Disney parks and the development of new attractions that have to draw more visitors to the parks every year. McCain had the audience with one by saying that "it is very important to make clear that decisions having to do with the design have to be taken only by designers and not by somebody from e.g. the marketing department or the budget commission." He continued: "This is because it is better to exceed the budget limit than to be detrimental to safety, an issue that, in spite of other things like attractiveness and sufficient show elements, should always come first."

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Change and Re-use

MapServer Enterprise

During the Autodesk University Conference Autodesk announced that it is releasing the code for MapServer Enterprise, the company's new web mapping platform, as open source. A snapshot of the MapServer Enterprise source code is available through the MapServer Foundation, an independent non-profit organization with the mission of supporting and promoting open source web mapping: www.mapserverfoundation.org.

MapServer Enterprise enables developers to rapidly develop and deploy valuable spatial applications. It works with the latest PHP, .NET, and Java tools to quickly build applications for Windows or Linux server environments. Developers can also publish spatial views internally, over the web, or using Autodesk's DWF viewing technology for offline portability. According to Autodesk applications built using MapServer Enterprise give users a faster and more flexible way to query, analyze, and view critical spatial information. Autodesk plans to offer a commercial version of the product called Autodesk MapServer Enterprise in 2006, as well as an authoring environment which handles geospatial data collection and preparation of the data for distribution via the Internet.

MapServer Enterprise is licensed under the GNU Lesser General Public License (LGPL). In addition to the snapshot of the source code mentioned above, the company expects the full MapServer Enterprise open source project web site to be live in early 2006. The project site will support code contributions, as well as bug submissions, mailing lists and discussion forums. As a component of MapServer Enterprise, Autodesk will also make available source code for its feature data objects (FDOs) technology which provides a powerful application programming interface for accessing any type of spatial information. Autodesk will contribute nearly a dozen FDO "providers" to the open source project including ArcSDE, WFS, WMS, SHP, ODBC, and MySQL.

The MapServer Foundation's site also features the original MapServer platform, an open source web mapping platform with more than 10,000 downloads a month. Moving forward MapServer will be called MapServer Cheetah in order to differentiate it from MapServer Enterprise. DM Solutions Group is the commercial leader of MapServer development.