

Bentley Focuses on Advancing

Report on BE Conference Europe 2006

Making clear to your users how to increase knowledge, productivity, and competitiveness by using your products: isn't this the main reason why major companies are organising conferences at least once a year? Bentley went one step further by organising a geospatial research seminar on the first day of the conference. This event presented quite a unique opportunity for academics, Bentley staff, and users from the geospatial and AEC communities to exchange ideas and learn from each other.

By Sonja de Bruijn



GeoSpatial Server works in a similar way as Google.

Keynote Summary

Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Tony Flynn spoke on preparing the next generation to improve the world's infrastructure. "Prepare kids by educating them to be their best" and "you might not be there, but your spirit will" were some of the thoughts he shared with the audience. The CMO recommended that those of us in the infrastructure community meet with schools and tell them what we need, read BE Award educational stories and become inspired, hire and teach interns how to apply our software tools, and volunteer to be a mentor in the Future City Competition. The next topic highlighted was Bentley Institute, which is elaborately discussed on pages 28 and 29 of this issue of Geoinformatics. The small increase in productivity in architecture and engineering compared to industry in general (1 per cent vs 3 per cent) brought Flynn to the Bentley conclusion that "we need to get better and better at what we do" because it is "our job to improve the world's infrastructure."

ProjectWise V8 XM

The technology keynotes concentrated on the V8 XM Editions of MicroStation and

ProjectWise and were presented by Bhupinder Singh, Senior Vice President (VP), Platform Products, Bentley Software, and VP of Platform Product Management Tom Anderson, who had to improvise on his presentation because of a hardware problem during the demo. Keith Bentley was unable to attend the conference, but the audience viewed his recorded presentation during BE Conference 2006 in Charlotte, N.C., USA, two weeks prior.

Long Lifecycle

It does not seem to be easy to integrate GIS and infrastructure. Styli Camateros, VP Geospatial Bentley, filled part of the Geospatial Research Seminar by providing for a high-speed presentation. First he mentioned characteristics of infrastructure that don't make the situation an easy one, such as a long lifecycle (50-75 years) and increased requirements on infrastructure asset management due to aspects like Disaster Management and Terrorism Prevention. This doesn't mean, however, that GIS isn't used in this area, but diversity and heterogeneity in data are major obstacles.

Camateros spoke about several drivers of change that, according to him, are needed to

get GIS adopted in infrastructure. "One of them is indexing infrastructural data in the same way as web search engines such as Google do". He was also clear about another aspect: the necessity of using 3D models in infrastructure, with clear communication being one of the obvious benefits.

'CAD versus GIS camp'

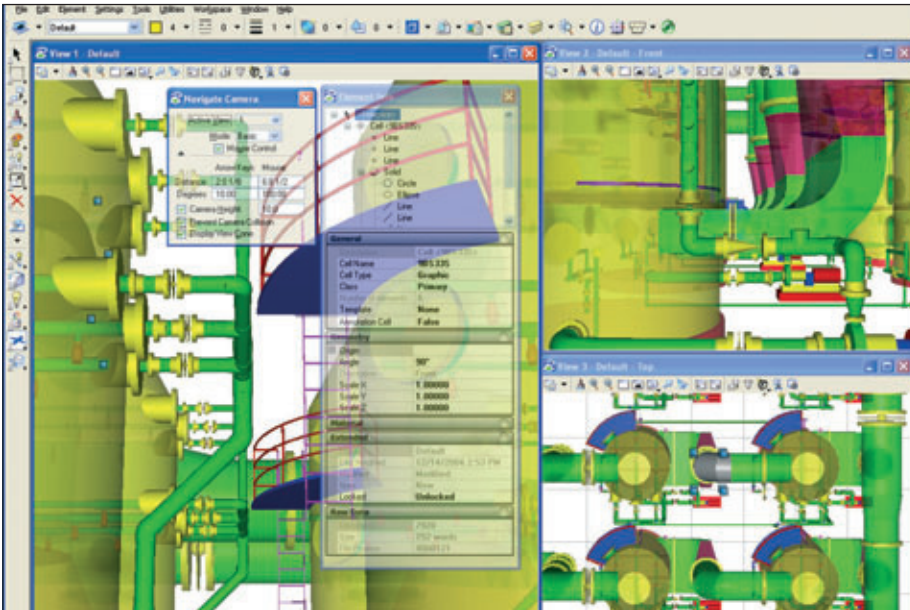
It is Bentley's vision that a good GIS should be able to plan, design, model, analyse, in fact all of the things a user can do with data. In this respect, there will be no 'CAD versus GIS camp' anymore, at least not in Camateros' expectations. He summed up the capabilities of a good GIS: based on openness, open standards, and interoperability. In this respect OGC, GML, XML were mentioned, as well as Oracle, Google Earth, and PDF, being called 'de-facto standards' by Camateros. To round out his lively presentation, the VP highlighted two other aspects: the importance of working in small groups from 5 to 6 people, and the necessity of a workflow-centric approach instead of a task-centric approach. "There should be multidisciplinary projects that are focused on the whole enterprise."

Almost Exact Duplicate

By connecting MicroStation to Google Earth, Bentley gave a clear signal that CAD and GIS can and should be combined. This year's European conference, an almost exact duplicate of BE Conference Charlotte in May, only underlined this idea. At least during the geospatial presentations and workshops there was a clear focus on advancing GIS for infrastructure. According to Camateros, "the CAD-GIS division is only there because of historical reasons. In fact, they have a lot to do with each other."

Regardless of the type of data, all Bentley applications strive to integrate planning, analy-

GIS for Infrastructure



MicroStation V8 XM.

sis, design, and modelling. The release of the commercial version of MicroStation V8 XM at the BE Conference USA, in May, as well as the presentation of the newest version of ProjectWise at the European Conference, fit well into this vision. Both products are now available to all Bentley SELECT subscribers. ProjectWise V8 XM has been developed for organisations running a portfolio of projects and includes a new project framework, containing search tools that make cross-project queries simple as well as providing templates with inherited properties. Furthermore, there are usability and administration enhancements like editable workflows and environments, and centralized view management, which provides a common view of project documents for all users across all projects.

GeoSpatial Technology Keynote

What is XFM? Which geospatial products does Bentley offer and what are they capable of? All this was explained by Camateros and his colleagues Robert Mankowski, Alain Lapierre, Jeff Eichler, and Vonnie Smith during the GeoSpatial Technology Keynote on Tuesday morning. For readers who are not familiar with XFM: it is an acronym for XML-based Feature Modelling and allows the user to do feature modelling, instead of just making drawings. Or in Camateros' words: "the underground technology that drives Bentley Geospatial Desktop." The benefits of XML, according to Bentley: the possibility to move to enterprise

applications, improvement of standards, and the ability to build smarter software. Essentially, there are three types of geospatial solutions that can seamlessly be integrated: Bentley Geospatial Desktop, Bentley Geospatial Server, and Bentley Geospatial Web Publishing. The Bentley Geospatial Server works in a similar way as Google and allows for simultaneous, multiple-use editing. There is a time component as well: the Geospatial



In his Prague BE Conference 2006 keynote, Bentley CEO Greg Bentley stressed that a solution to stagnating productivity is more, better, and faster application of information technology.

Server tracks assets over time, not only versions. GeoWeb Publisher integrates many information sources and makes queries and analyses possible.

Searching by Content

The main part of the Geospatial Technology Keynote consisted of the three types of solutions in action, based on a fictive situation in Toronto, Canada. It was quite nice to see how lots of different data could be called up by searching by content. As Camateros made clear: "Indexing rather than conversion of documents preserves the richness and detail of the original design documents."

Many other features were shown, of which I particularly liked the so-called 'conflict inspector' in Geospatial Server, with which conflicts in changes made by several users can be resolved. PowerMap Field, part of the Bentley Geospatial Mobile Applications, showed the audience that near real-time information can be available for disconnected use. It offers a redlining tool and annotation tools for capturing as-built information.

What's easier than informing citizens of a major change in their neighbourhood by sending them electronic mail? It is even more user-friendly to add a URL and the citizen's lot. Clicking on the URL guides the citizen to a demo created in GeoWeb Publisher and activated in Google Earth, so that the visitor can see exactly what will happen in his area. Filling in his lot will guide him to the parcel where he lives, so that it can clearly be seen if the action which will take place in the future will be close by. This last demonstration formed a nice ending of a quite elaborate technical keynote.

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MicroStation V8 XM edition:

www.bentley.com/MicroStation

ProjectWise V8 XM edition:

www.bentley.com/ProjectWise

CADscript image gallery: www.bentley.com/en-US/Markets/Geospatial/CADscript/Image+Gallery.htm

GeoWeb Publisher: www.bentley.com/en-US/Products/Bentley+Geo+Web+Publisher/Overview.htm

GEF-RIS: www.gef.de/gef_ris_en/index.html

Bentley annual report: www.bentley.com/annualreport