Dreamspell Design Limited
AutoCAD® Architecture

Coming Home to AutoCAD Architecture
Small business owner uses technology to gain competitive edge

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David Chaddock, Chartered Architectural Technologist.

Project summary
“Using some software packages is like trying to pat your head and rub your stomach at the same time,” says chartered architectural technologist David Chaddock. “However, as an established AutoCAD user, I found AutoCAD Architecture simple to pick up and enjoyable to use. Now I’m proud of what I can produce with it.”

David founded David Chaddock Designs in 1997 and changed the name to Dreamspell Design Limited three years ago. He is one of a breed of forward-thinking owner-operators who use the best technology to remain small but to act big. Although he originally began as an AutoCAD® software user, working for different companies he has run the gamut of software solutions over the years.

“Many of my colleagues could not see the need to move to AutoCAD Architecture. However, after an excellent demonstration by Autodesk reseller, Key Systems, I could see its potential,” says David. “I’ve been able to build up my skills using the solution gradually and carefully, building on my knowledge of AutoCAD.

“This is vital when you’re a small start-up and can’t afford any time out to learn. It’s also allowed me to be very productive whilst at the same time develop an impressive virtual design to show clients.”

Building up knowledge

It seems that over the last 20 years, David has worked with every type of client imaginable.

“I feel like I’ve done everything from developing residential schemes to designing car showrooms. I’ve even spent some time working for a major tiling manufacturer designing floors.”

He has also gone through several different technologies. “After starting my career using AutoCAD and an early version of AutoCAD Architecture and then moving on to other systems, when I set up by myself I wanted to return to an AutoCAD-based system.

“AutoCAD was the technology I had used the most and so it felt familiar. I can understand how once you are used to using AutoCAD you don’t really want to look at anything else.”

However, as he explains, he still needed a solution that would help him the edge over other architectural practices. And, as working alone can be unpredictable, one that would help him design quickly and as accurately as possible if suddenly he were inundated with requests.

“AutoCAD Architecture had moved on considerably since I last used it and it soon became clear that it would address these issues. I had been using AutoCAD Architecture for at least two years before attending a house-builders’ exhibition and before I knew where I was I had three good clients. I then realised I had made the right choice in software as it gave me the correct tools for the job.”
Because AutoCAD® Architecture has been developed with architectural AutoCAD users in mind, David was able to make the transition smoothly, ensuring that there were no blips in his service to his new clients. Working with Key Systems, he has been able to gradually add to his skills using the software and now feels he is reaping the real benefits of the solution.

“It’s become easier and easier to use over time and now I’m creating a design which I can render using Autodesk VIZ. I can show the affect of trees and lighting on the building using shading and end up with lifelike images which are great to show to clients.”

“In fact, I’m designing a replacement house at the moment which is on a hillside. I’ve managed to produce a terrain model to show how it will sit. I’ve also been able to show a curved glass roof and I am really pleased with the results so far.”

He explains that he particularly likes the way that different views and elevations can be produced from the drawing with the click of the mouse. “Because AutoCAD Architecture automates many drafting processes, it enables me to quickly explore different possibilities and end up with a high quality, more innovative end design.

“I’m not an artist, but I find it simpler to portray the initial ideas that are in my head by creating them as a simple sketch to begin with. I then develop that drawing during the course of the design process by adding more and more detail using a combination of both basic AutoCAD and the array of AutoCAD Architecture functions.

“By operating like this I end up with quite a comprehensive drawing of the whole design. At this stage, in fact at any stage during this process, AutoCAD Architecture can automatically create extremely accurate plans, elevations, sections, perspectives and it gives you the flexibility to further enhance these automatically generated results by either using an additional set of AutoCAD Architecture functions or traditional AutoCAD techniques.”

Wayne Pardoe of Key Systems says that Dreamspell Designs Ltd is one of many smaller architectural firms discovering how AutoCAD Architecture can help. “It’s a combination of factors,” he says. “Firstly it’s versatile – you can even just use the AutoCAD functionality if, for example, you suddenly need to bring in contract staff. Also, because it helps users work more efficiently, they can get through more assignments, without taking on extra staff.

“Its visualisation functionality is also a big attraction. Homeowners, for example, are becoming far more sophisticated in what they expect from an architect. They now often expect to see a 3D drawing of their extension, for example, and if they do, it can help ensure the design is exactly what they want.”

In the meantime, David Chaddock continues to build his skills using AutoCAD Architecture. And importantly, this is something he enjoys doing. “I couldn’t go back to any other type of solution now,” he says. “I actually find using AutoCAD Architecture is great fun.

“But best of all, I strongly believe it’s also helping me win new business too.”

For more information
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