

Online Training – Friend or Foe?

With the economy what it is and everyone trying to get as much bang for their buck as possible, I'm finding that online training for your CAD software programs is an increasingly popular and cost effective option.

Although this post describes my personal approach and may be different considering your trainer, hopefully it will answer some of your questions about online training and will encourage you to give it a try.

How does it work?

There are several online services that trainers may use for online training. WebEx, GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar are all very commonly used and popular. My preference is GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar as they have a very low footprint on your computer and are simple to use. When first entering an online meeting, a small installation of the program occurs allowing you to view and interact with the presenter's computer.

GoToMeeting is smaller scale and better for personalized training. GoToWebinar can handle up to 1,000 "attendees" and is typically used for presentation or demonstration to a large group.

Some of the online meeting services are free, but most require a monthly fee. The fee is paid by the organizer who then has the ability to schedule meetings/webinars in advance or "Meet Now" for meetings on the fly. Your organizer will either email you a link to the meeting site or can tell you the link on the phone. Each meeting has a unique "Meeting ID" that you'll enter at the main page.

GoToMeeting is typically used for standard training where more than one person may need to show their screen and/or be given control of the mouse and keyboard. This interaction can take place in a variety of ways. When in a meeting, anyone can be given (and must accept) the "Presenter" role which allows others to view their computer. And, even though the Presenter always has priority, control of the mouse movement and keyboard entry may be granted to others in the meeting. This allows someone else to work on my computer remotely.

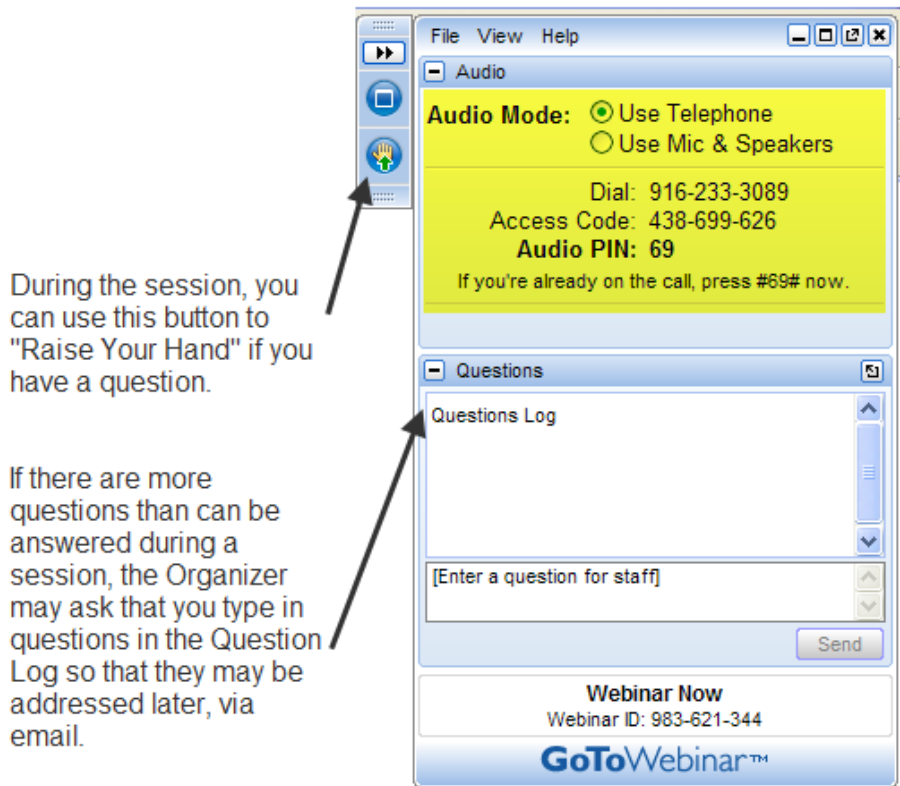
The audio portion of the training usually takes place by calling in on a conference call line supplied by GoToMeeting. VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) is also available allowing you to use your computer's speakers and microphone but it is not recommended because of quality.

GoToWebinar is used for larger scale demonstration and presentations and can accommodate up to 1,000 Attendees. Online Webinars are generally structured to have one or more Presenters making the presentation.

Like GoToMeeting, the audio portion of GoToWebinar usually takes place by calling in on a conference call line supplied by GoToWebinar. However, in a Webinar setting, the Attendees are muted automatically by the Presenter so that everyone isn't blessed with the sound of crinkling potato chip bags and elevator music when someone puts the phone on hold. The Presenter has the ability to un-mute one or more Attendees as needed. The audio of all Attendees is managed by the Presenter by having each Attendee enter a unique "Audio PIN" upon arrival.

GoToWebinar has 2 ways to ask and respond to questions from Attendees. The Control Panel has a "Raise Your Hand" button that notifies the Presenter there is a question. Depending on time constraints, the Presenter may decide to un-mute and answer the

question during the online session. If there are more questions than can be answered during a session, the Organizer may ask that you type in questions in the “Questions Log” so that they may be addressed at a later time.



Pros and Cons

I've put together what I consider to be the Pros and Cons of online training for CAD Software programs. Please pitch in and offer your comments.

Pros

- Can eliminate travel time and expenses
- Very cost effective option for customized one-on-one training
- Allows for personalized, absolutely customized training because it's normally one on one.
- Can't find a local trainer? No problem. Felicia Provencal can train you from Hawai'i – although you may want to go

to her!

- Can be set up within minutes if there is a pressing technical support issue or project that suddenly comes up.
- Can be scheduled in shorter blocks of time – one of the best ways to make sure you retain what you are taught. I like to schedule 2 hours maximum per session.
- Shorter blocks of time allow for easy customization of training topics from one session to the next. If more time is needed on certain features, it's easy to squeeze in another 2 hour session.
- It IS interactive!
- All sessions can be recorded and played back at your convenience for a refresher.

Cons

- Some people are more comfortable sitting beside and working directly with the trainer
- It's less interactive than hands-on, in person training.
- For hands on training and depending on the material being covered, it may not work as well if you have several folks needing training at one time.
- Requires a high-speed connection and a telephone headset allowing two hands on keyboard. A speakerphone can be used as long as feedback doesn't become an issue.

Real World Example

I recently worked with a client from out of state. He is a grading contractor who thought he needed Carlson TakeOff training but, after some discussion, realized training in basic CAD (IntelliCAD) needed to come first and then TakeOff training.

The initial proposal was for me to travel there and spend 3-4 days training this client plus a second person (a competitor, in this case) who needed the same training. Both of them decided to give online training a try.

We scheduled online training for every morning one week. I worked with one from 7:30 – 9:30 am and then with the other from 10:30 – 12:30 pm. After the 3rd day, we had covered so much material that one asked to skip the next day so he could work with it himself and apply what he'd learned so far.

We ended up skipping two days. By the time we met again, he'd worked with it enough and become so much more proficient with the basic CAD operation that we were able to fast-forward through the next couple sessions and started working on his current project. Another subsequent session was cancelled because the rain finally stopped!

And then a few days later, he needed to get his project finished and out to bid. So, after our first session one morning, we set up another session at 4:00 that afternoon and worked until almost 7:00 that evening.

Both customers ended up very happy with the amount of material we covered and where they were with the software when we wrapped up our regular training. They still have the video recordings of the training for their reference to go back to when needed. In the end, the cost was almost the exact same as it would have been had I fulfilled the original proposal but they both learned and retained much more because the training was customized and personalized to their specific jobs.

Originally posted on **Carlson Connection** by Jennifer Dibona

Carlson-IntelliCAD GIS Starter

Kit from ESRI

Those currently using Carlson with IntelliCAD are eligible for a new “GIS Starter Kit” from ESRI. The Kit includes:

- ArcGIS ArcView desktop software
- A copy of the book *A to Z GIS: An Illustrated Dictionary of Geographic Information Systems*
- A copy of *GIS Tutorial: Workbook for ArcView 9*, Third Edition
- A 10% discount for the ESRI Survey & Engineering GIS Summit (\$325 – standard registration price)

To take advantage of the offer, call 1-800-GIS-XPRT (1-800-447-9778) and request the **Carlson-IntelliCAD GIS Starter Kit** and **please have your Carlson Serial Number available**.

You can read more about ESRI’s commitment to survey and engineering services by visiting <http://www.ESRI.com/engineering>.

Originally posted on **Carlson Connection** by Jennifer DiBona

A Closer Look at the Drawing Inspector

Learn more about using the Drawing Inspector to view data about drawing entities.

Another Twist for World

I'd like to offer a few other arguments for the use of the DVIEW TWIST routines discussed in North Rotation: Using Twist Screen. The four Carlson DVIEW routines cited:

1. **Standard** – *This option allows you to select a rotation angle using the mouse.*
2. **Line, Polyline or Text** – *This option allow you to select an object to set as a view baseline. It is the most useful when trying to match views to objects such as property lines or road centerlines.*
3. **Surveyor** – *This option prompts for the manual entry of a bearing or azimuth for the rotation angle.*
4. **Restore Due North** – *This option returns the screen to the orientation where North is straight up.*

fall right in line with remarks made by ESRI's Brent Jones at the 2009 Carlson User Conference who said:

"GIS changes the whole domain for surveyors," Jones added, "And surveyors need to be ready for what's coming next – high accuracy GIS. The key is geo-referencing," he said. "We can use our data to communicate to our world with greater precision over greater areas."

In my opinion, a **User Coordinate System** (UCS, by its very definition), takes the data one step further away from being geo-referenced. There are those that would probably argue that having data in a World Coordinate System (WCS) and at assumed coordinates of something like 5000,5000,100 is no better than

using a UCS to shift this same data to a proper geo-referenced coordinate system. From a holistic stand-point, I'd tend to agree. However, what sets the WCS vs. UCS argument apart is this simple statement:

All drawings must have a WCS yet not all drawings have a UCS.

When one considers the longevity of information represented in drawings created to this point in time and then reflects on how this information might also be used in the future, I feel it is important to model that information (and subsequently allow that information to be easily extracted) in a consistent and reliable fashion. A **User Coordinate System** is typically only understood and used by its creator which in turn, limits its use and subsequently increases the risk of liability when the **User Coordinate System** isn't known or understood by a "downstream" recipient of the drawing (survey stake-out, machine control excavation, etc).

Side note observation... Is it me or are there some parallels between UCS and custom ARX objects used in other products? When I look at how long the DVIEW vs. UCS arguments have been made, I can only surmise the length of time that will be involved to bring the non-proprietary vs. proprietary data argument to a close. I suspect it's going to be a long, tough road.

In any event, it is my opinion that standardizing on a single WCS should provide more consistent deliverables when the drawings/projects span multiple people, offices and/or disciplines. When properly adopted, using a "twisted view" of geo-referenced data in a World Coordinate System should provide more feature-rich information now and into the future when our data is mapped onto the Earth.

Originally posted on **Carlson Connection** by Ladd Nelson

Ribbon vs. Menu... Your preference is??

I was reading a recent AP article that was similar to the article entitled Meet Microsoft's antidote to Vista and saw the following:

You probably don't know her name, but if you're using Office 2007, the sleeper hit of the Vista era, you're already familiar with Larson-Green's work.

She was the one who banished the familiar system of menus on Word, Excel and other programs in favour of a new "ribbon" that shows different options at different times, depending on what a user is working on.

Hmmm... I'm wondering if she'd be willing to re-think that decision?

I'm not sure what it is about the ribbon interface but I cannot seem to get used to it. I've tried... I mean *I've really tried* to be productive with the Office 2007 ribbon but continually find myself wasting lots of time searching for a particular command whose location I could find instantly in the traditional pull-down menu system used in Windows and Office applications for the past +15 years. The article also said:

"We want to reduce the amount of thinking about the software that they have to do, so that they can concentrate all their thinking on the task they're trying to get done," Larson-Green

said in an interview.

*The task I'm trying to get done?? I'm trying to figure out where all my favorite old commands went for getting my work done. I'm finding that I'm spending **more** time thinking and searching for commands and having less time for the task(s) I'm trying to get done. Don't even get me started on the new default file formats for Office files (*.docx, *.xlsx, *.accdb, etc) and having to Save As for those who haven't adopted Office 2007 and later.*

Side note observation... I wonder how soon it will be until Autodesk decides to release a *.dwgx file format? Perhaps the Open Design Alliance should beat them to the punch.

According to the frequently changing Wikipedia write-up on ribbons:

Microsoft has started the process of acquiring a patent on the ribbon user interface concept^[2] and licenses the ribbon design to third-party developers royalty-free, as long as the user interface conforms to the Microsoft's design guidelines and they can get an approval from Microsoft. The ribbon design guidelines are confidential and an evaluation copy is only available when a non-disclosure agreement has been signed.

The Ribbon has been licensed by Autodesk for AutoCAD 2009...

My fear is that when I eventually have to migrate out of AutoCAD 2008 (I'm running the ribbon-less AutoCAD 2008 and IntelliCAD and haven't even looked at AutoCAD 2009/2010), I'll be too far behind the 8-ball. Maybe I'm too grounded and comfortable with pull-down menus. I still prefer Windows XP over Vista and suspect I'd prefer pull-down menus in my CAD product like many of comments left at AutoCAD 2009 – How do you use the

Ribbon? blog. Perhaps it is time to accept the fact that ribbons are likely here to stay. However, if my CAD productivity takes a hit due to the migration to ribbons like my Office productivity took a hit, I suspect I'm "going to have some 'splainin' to do." Personally, I'd love to have a one-to-one chat with Julie Larson-Green (a.k.a. "Microsoft's antidote to Vista") to learn why throwing away +15 years of interface familiarity is/was a good idea.

What do you think?

[polldaddy poll=1552888]

Originally posted on **Carlson Connection** by Ladd Nelson

Carlson + ESRI = Wow!

So, how cool is this?

At the Carlson User Conference this week in Lexington, KY, Brent Jones of ESRI announced a new grant program in coordination with Carlson Software. The program will bring ESRI products to every IntelliCAD-based Carlson program.

Speaking with Brent on Tuesday, he said that a few of the details have yet to be worked out, but Carlson IntelliCAD users should be hearing details in about a month.

Originally posted on **Carlson Connection** by Jennifer Dibona

Brent Jones of ESRI discusses 'Why GIS Needs Surveyors'

Combining all the GIS and land development technologies that exist today is what Brent Jones suggested surveyors do in his keynote address to the attendees at the 2nd annual Carlson User Conference. Jones, PE, PLS, is the Survey, Cadastre, and Engineering Industry Manager for ESRI, which designs and develops the world's leading geographic information system (GIS) technology.

To help surveyors accomplish this, Jones announced an upcoming grant program to be offered by ESRI for every Carlson IntelliCAD user. "ESRI is very supportive of Carlson's development on IntelliCAD and we want to support your users," said Jones of this specialized grant program being developed exclusively for Carlson IntelliCAD users. "We want to help surveyors leverage their existing resources to help in the GIS market." With this offer Carlson IntelliCAD users will be able to access GIS technology and jump-start a GIS practice. [Read More](#)

Originally posted on **Carlson Connection** by Karen Cummings

Dewberry's Dave Palumbo presents 'Choosing and Implementing Carlson'

Starting his presentation at the Carlson User Conference by saying "Carlson works for us," Dave Palumbo, PE, Technology

Manager for Infrastructure Services at Dewberry, noted that Dewberry, an ENR top 50 design firm was an early adopter of technology as a differentiator. The evaluation and implementation of three competing solutions took Dewberry more than two years. "Patience was of the essence," Palumbo said.

Read the entire post

Originally posted on **Carlson Connection** by Karen Cummings

BIM vs. "CIM" – Is it a Noun or Verb?

I wanted to share my opinion related to the BIM this, BIM that.. What is BIM? article to essentially equate (or draw parallels between):

| "Acronym" | "Location" | "Data" | "Mechanism" | "Discipline" |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| BIM | Building | Information | Modeling | Architectural |
| GIS | Geographic | Information | System | Civil |

If one turns the acronyms around,

- **BIM** is another way of saying Owners/Architects who utilize Model Information for Buildings, and,
- **GIS** is another way of saying Officials/Civil Engineers who use a System of Information for Geographical projects/studies.

If the message(s) from the Autodesk marketing department

<http://usa.autodesk.com/company/building-information-modeling>

and

<http://www.cenews.com/article.asp?id=3137>

is/are to be believed, Autodesk is expecting the market to swallow the hype that the Civil 3D (C3D) product can function within the confines of a building or as a BIM solution.

I don't buy this (and in my opinion, neither should the public). By the looks of the responses to a discussion on the C3D newsgroup this past September, 2008:

<http://discussion.autodesk.com/forums/message.jspa?messageID=6033685>

it looks as if C3D users aren't necessarily swallowing the attempted message either. As the thread eloquently points out, it largely depends if you take the context of "building" to be a noun or a verb:

1. **Noun** <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/building>
– "1 a usually roofed and walled structure built for permanent use (as for a dwelling)"
2. **Verb** [http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/build\[1\]](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/build[1])
– "1 to form by ordering and uniting materials by gradual means into a composite whole"

Side note observation... Since GIS is/has been a well established market for other products on the market and is also one that Autodesk does not control, could it be that Autodesk is trying to capitalize on the relative newness of BIM by generalizing the Noun form of BIM into that of a Verb so they can use it to further confuse the market?

Whatever the context, I also feel C3D falls short for BIM in one

key aspect; all of the C3D seems to get locked up into the ARX/proxy objects within a given drawing. To my knowledge, C3D doesn't allow the "Information" aspect of the design to be externalized outside of the drawing. As Civil Engineers and Land Planners look down the road for the next 10 or 15 years (or more), I tend to question how they'll be able to manage/maintain/extract the data locked away in C3D drawings that are being produced today. As I heard one DOT employee say, their projects typically span years in the design/life cycle. If I were in their shoes, I wouldn't be looking forward to having to carry around all the LDT/C3D object enablers that will likely come out with each annual release of each C3D product for the next decade or two.

My ¢2.

Ladd Nelson
Sales Director – Midwest Region
Carlson Software

Originally posted on **Carlson Connection** by Ladd Nelson

Carlson Software Expands Carlson College™

Carlson Software recently expanded their expert level training program, Carlson College™, and started the Carlson College Training Program. This new program will allow individuals and companies to get training direct from Carlson Software or through the members of the Carlson College Training Program. New members of the Training Program include Harken-Reidar Inc. of

Front Royal, Va.; Carlson Desktop Solutions (CDS), based in Austin, Texas; That CAD Girl, located near Raleigh, N.C.; and, for C&G products only, Larry Phipps of the Land Surveyor's Workshop in Jefferson, N.C. Membership in the Carlson College Training Program is available to any person or organization that makes a commitment to providing quality training on Carlson Software products.

For more information on the Carlson College Training Program or training, please contact Carlson Software at 800-989-5028, email training@carlsonsw.com or visit www.carlsonsw.com/training. Members of the Carlson College Training Program are independent entities from Carlson Software.

Read the entire Press release [here](#).

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