

[BUSINESS UPDATE]

CAD outfitters enhance offerings to industry

PI Integrated Systems

Since 1991, PI Integrated Systems has provided industry along the Gulf Coast with computer-aided design (CAD) products, support and services. From desktop CAD applications to departmental document management solutions, PI Integrated has a long history of customer excellence extending beyond off-the-shelf product support to tailoring and complete CAD application customization.

PI Integrated Systems is perhaps best known as the developer of the FlexCAD family for AutoCAD-based piping design.

Originated in the late 1980s, FlexCAD was revitalized in 1996 when PI Integrated assumed all development and distribution rights to the software; PI has since updated and enhanced FlexCAD for AutoCAD releases.

FlexCAD modules include:

- > IDS-FLOW for intelligent P & IDs.
- > IDS-PIPE for high-quality plan and elevation drawings.
- > IDS-STEEL for designing equipment structures and industrial buildings.
- > IDS-ISO for isometric piping drawings with automated bills of materials.

PI Integrated's capabilities have made the company the preferred CAD supplier for many engineering, procurement and construction professionals; process equipment manufacturers; and plant owners and operators.

Augmented by its dealer affiliations, PI Integrated Systems is the Gulf Coast's premier CAD outfitter to industry.

FlexCAD

Piping design is a profession learned through experience and practiced with professional intuition.

Instead of making the job easier, most piping design software impedes productivity, requiring the professional piper to be both a CAD jock and computer expert as well.

PI Integrated Systems has taken a different approach to process and petrochemical plant design software — a "back to basics" approach that reflects the experience and the intuitiveness of the professional piper.

Simply put, FlexCAD software was created by pipers for pipers. PI Integrated's products have been used for over a decade, by more than 3,500 of some of the most demanding pipers in the business.

"They have used and tested our products, and told us what they need to do their job better. We listened, and the result is a family of products that work like you to fast track your design, and help you bring your projects in on time and under budget," Thad Pugh, president of PI Integrated, said. "And, we can customize AutoCAD and FlexCAD to meet our customers' needs."

The FlexCAD family of products includes FLOW, PIPE, ISO/SPEC, and STEEL and runs on AutoCAD R14 through R2005.

The "piper-friendly" approach to development means that you can load the software and achieve productivity in 24 hours or less, even if you've never used a piping design program before.

FlexPLANT 2004 3DDesigner

PI Integrated is currently introducing FlexPLANT 2004 3DDesigner (3DD) Release 4.0 (R4.0). Already in beta testing by existing FlexCAD users as 3DX for IDS-PIPE R3.60, 3DDesigner utilizes 3D solid and/or surface representations of pipe, valves, fittings, steel and equipment to deliver full-function 3D plant modeling capabilities.

3DD extends to process and power industry users of AutoCAD 2004 and 2005 with ease of use, high productivity, and adherence to traditional drawing standards and practices for which its FlexCAD predecessor has long been distinguished.

3DDesigner R4.0 features 3D drawreps and data blocks in addition to re-engineered FlexCAD 2D drawreps, enabling piping designers and contractors to visualize and present projects in a fully three-dimensional environment, thus facilitating visual checking for interferences, service envelopes and other spatial considerations.

Built on the successful spec-driven DATA

Users of FlexCAD are pleased with range of products

Sasol North America in Lake Charles, La., uses ISO and PIPE.

"We're also using a new extension for ISO called Code Map, but we're still tweaking it," Brandon David, CAD manager for Sasol, said.

Sasol, a chemical plant, needed software for piping jobs at the facility.

"We chose the FlexCAD products because they're cost effective and simple to use," David said. "It's a good program for small projects. All the applications work together."

The plant had been using something else, but was looking for a more user-friendly program.

"We felt like we could speed up production, which we did," David said. "Also, we went to a new operating system at our plant, and it was more cost-effective to buy the FlexCAD software than to upgrade what we were already using," he said.

Most of the plant's designers had worked with FlexCAD before.

"The people who use it are very happy with it. We listened to our designers, and they were really pushing for it," David said. "What we hear from our designers and the people who are using FlexCAD is that you get the most bang for your buck, because it's user friendly and not really expensive. You're able to knock jobs out quickly without going into a lot of hassle."

Whenever the designers have questions, they can get the help they need from PI Integrated. PI Integrated has also held training for Sasol when necessary.

"They work well with us. For example, with this Code Map extension — they actually rewrote the whole thing based on their work with us, our comments and what we wanted. They took our input to make it better," David said. "If FlexCAD meets our needs, it will meet the needs of others as well."

Huntsman's Jefferson County Operation (JCO) in Port Neches, Texas, is a user of FlexCAD ISO, PIPE, STEEL and FLOW. The site has used FlexCAD applications for almost 10 years.

"We were trying to find an easier software package than what we had. 'FlexCAD' came up, and we tried it," Ron Sasser, drafting coordinator for Huntsman, said. "We liked it. It's very simple, user-friendly, and all the operators like it."

As new products are developed as a part of the FlexCAD family, Sasser said his site invests in them.

"FlexCAD is quicker. Originally what we had for drawing ISOs stored a lot of information we didn't really need. We would call up drawings, and it would take several minutes for it to regenerate and get the new drawings," Sasser said.

The time saved by FlexCAD has been a real plus at JCO.

"That's what good — when a new person comes in, and they call up the program, I don't have to spend a lot of time teaching them. In a day or two, they can be drawing ISOs and other things with no problems," he said.

And, when it comes to concerns, PI Integrated is available.

block implementation of FlexCAD IDS-ISO and IDS-FLOW R3.60, 3DDesigner R4.0 is able to run accurate bills of materials, equipment lists, line lists and other reports against the 3D plant model.

"If we did it in FlexCAD, we'll do it in 3D," Pugh said.

Other planned features for 3DD Release 4.0 include the ability to automatically generate isometric spool drawings and piping orthos in either tabbed layouts of the model or in separate DWGs (AutoCAD drawing file format).

3DD also builds on FlexCAD IDS-PIPE's AutoAttach and AutoPipe capabilities to provide piping designers the ability to AutoElbow and AutoPipe 3D routing lines.

3DDesigner R4.0 achieves a small, concise codestream by utilization of a LISP-enabled, A.I. "fuzzy" object-oriented FlexPLANT architecture within which to further integrate the life-cycle tasks of industrial facility design.

For more information, visit www.flexcad.com or call (713) 862-7242. □

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