

2D to (Civil) 3D - Varsity Views on Civil 3D

October 12, 2008

BIM for Civil Engineers?

I bet some of you are scratching your heads, like I did a while back when I heard the same phrase "BIM" applied in the context of Civil engineering. Especially confused at times are my primary academic audiences, who like me, thought that BIM (Building Information Modeling) was more about "buildings" (a noun), meaning it related to architecture and construction management domains. However, as we have all come to put our arms around this acronym BIM a bit more, it turns out that "Building" word in BIM is really a verb, as in building any infrastructure. Just so anyone is still wondering BIM is, here's how I have understood it. BIM is It is an integrated process built on coordinated, reliable information about a project from design through construction and into operations.

Well..a colleague of mine just published a paper on this whole saga of how BIM applies equally to professionals and students engaged in infrastructure design and constructions. And if you really think about it, Civil 3D started out from Day 1 as "BIM" application; it's just that no one ever thought of it like that or even marketed it. (Oh well..I am an engineer by training, so I can always blame it on architects for keeping BIM caged/hostaged in the walls of architectural definition. But the word it out; I digress though).

So, BIM simply means a "way" to think about and work on your projects so that information stays digital, consistent, and coordinated throughout various phases of the project. And as you can imagine, the chief benefits of BIM are realized by no duplication of information, constantatly updated centralized database model, and streamlined flow of information from field (survey) to design and finally to contruction and maintenance/operations. I tend to thin of infrastructure projects more as revolving cycle, with different phases repeating themselves over time since projects live beyond design and constructions.

[Download the PDF document](#) I mentioned above by my colleague Adam Strafaci, published in CE News (October 2008 issue).

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