



Another First for AUGluk

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Paul Munford

Paul is an AUGIuk member and draughtsman at Beck Interiors Ltd, based in Chessington, Surrey in the UK.

Last year saw the first AUGI CAD camp in the UK. AUGI CAD Camps provide a chance for AUGI members to target their specific learning objectives, and to share their knowledge and experience with their peers.

This year brought us the first two day AUGI CAD Camp... in the world... ever! Dubbed 'AUGI Design Academy' this non-sales event was aimed at promoting AUGI's main tenants of 'Network, Learn and Share' and is intended in the future to provide a stepping stone for international members between AUGI CAD Camps and Autodesk University (AU).

This years event was held on the 13th and 14th of November at the Hilton Metropole in Birmingham, with rooms and food included in the price. There where 8 one & half hour workshop sessions held over the two days, from a choice of 50 different classes held by highly regarded national and international experts, such as Dan Dolan, Matt Murphy and Robert Green.

There was a small exhibition area in the main conference hall where some of the countries leading CAD service providers were represented. Not only does this provide an opportunity to find out the latest technical innovations, but it is also a great way to make contacts and put a name to a face. It's worth mentioning that this event is only such good value because of the sponsorship provided by local companies such as Excitech and Cadpoint and international companies such as Autodesk and HP.

While the event is organised and run by AUGI volunteers, AUGI CAD Camps and AUGI Design Academy are supported by Autodesk. This year Autodesk were represented by Kevin Ison, Autodesk's Marketing Manager for Northern Europe and Autodesk's ever popular 'Technical Evangelist' – Lynn Allen.

The opening session was kicked off by Kevin Ison, setting out Autodesk's themes for this year including 'Experience it before its real' and the benefits of 'Digital Green Design'. There was a welcoming speech from AUGIuk's Chairman Philip Madeley and a humorous take on the growing move towards 3D design from popular speaker Matt Murphy. The AUGI 'Top DAUG' competition was launched; a traditional event at AUGI CAD Camps. The Top DAUG competition is a light hearted attempt to find the most knowledgeable AutoCAD geek attending.

The opening speeches made way for the first of the breakout sessions, with candidates choosing between session tracks grouped under the headings of 'Architectural and Building', 'Civil Engineering and Infrastructure', 'Manufacturing', 'Education and Management', and 'General Design and Drafting'.



The option to pick and choose what you want to learn is one of the great benefits of AUGI Design Academy, and of course if you don't like the session you're in you are encouraged to move quickly to another.

The lunch time session saw us back in the main conference hall to 'Lunch and Learn' at the same time with Lynn Allen's presentation on 'Making the move to 3D'. While this was very informative, I couldn't help but think that this might have been better moved to the second day, with a 'Bird's of a Feather' networking lunch to help everyone get to know who's who on the first day.

The most popular sessions were, perhaps not surprisingly, in plain old AutoCAD. The most under represented group was in Manufacturing. This seems to be a trend, with Architectural firms being the most likely to take on new technology and manufacturing least likely to look for change. I hope that AUGIuk can help its members in manufacturing by promoting itself in this area. It is much easier to ask your boss to send you off to an event if your boss has heard of it!

The first AUGIuk general meeting was held on the Tuesday night. As is traditional at Autodesk University, this made way for the AUGI 'Beer Bust'. The annual AUGI Beer Bust is an opportunity to lug down free beer whilst having a good look around the exhibit hall and getting to know your fellow AUGI members. Entertainment was provided by a live band, and the 'networking' continued long after the exhibit hall had closed.

Day two saw slightly jaded attendees crawling their way into breakfast. However, the morning sessions were still well attended (except for manufacturing). Sessions continued at a furious pace until the closing speeches in the evening. The closing speeches rewarded those who had managed to stay the course. Hats, fleeces, USB keys and even a few new laptop cases were given away as part of the 'Top DAUG' competition and as part of a raffle for those who had been careful to hand their session evaluation forms in.

Attendance was enthusiastic, but not as high as AUGIuk had hoped. There were 250 attendees out of the 500 AUGI had expected. Although this raised some comment from the exhibitors, I didn't see this as a major problem. The response from everyone I spoke to was good. I am sure that attendance will only go up next year. I am sure that the exhibitors themselves can do a lot to promote the event with their clients to improve attendance next year.

I hope that next year AUGI Design Academy is held in the summer, so that it doesn't come quite so close to AU. I look forward to the AUGI Design Academy being supplemented by further, local AUGI CAD Camps, CAD Matinees and Jump schools in the future.

In all, AUGI Design Academy provided high quality targeted learning at a great price. I made some new contacts and got to meet up with some old friends. Once again I have come away with a new drive and enthusiasm for my work, and some great tips on how to work smarter, not harder.