

## 3D Systems World Conference and the 3DSUG

Having just attended the 2008 3D Systems World Conference in Charlotte, NC, I could not help but think back to the 2006 3DSUG Conference in Tucson, AZ. That conference marked the beginning of a new path for 3D Systems as they made the announcement that they were going to host their own "World Conference" and that their presence at the 3D Systems User Group (3DSUG) would decrease. As Abe Reichental

wrapped up his presentation, he called the entire 3D Systems team to the front stage and made the announcement. I must admit I was impressed by the 3D Systems team as they stood flanking their CEO in their white and black shirts but the announcement shocked and upset many. I too was upset at the initial announcement and found myself echoing the sentiments of the crowd. I departed the conference at odds with 3D Systems and their CEO and questioning why they would abandon the very people who own, operate and promote their technologies and products.

Since that 3DSUG Conference in 2006, I have come to realize the 3D Systems decision was not only a smart one but critical for the success and longevity of their company. While the 3DSUG is a critical event for users, so too is the World Conference for 3D Systems. In my opinion, the dissent and negative feelings that exist between some users and 3D Systems and the lack of 3D Systems participation at the 3DSUG only hurts our industry. We (U.S. OEMS and users) need to work together to make additive fabrication successful not only for prototyping but also for production. As the additive fabrication industry grows and changes, both events are needed and both bring value to users and 3D Systems for various reasons.

I thought this year's World Conference was a huge success. I was impressed with the turnout despite the slowing U.S. economy. The final attendance numbers were over 400

with 35 countries represented. 3D Systems announced several new platforms and materials including the new iPro™ SLA® system and the ProJet™ line of machines. 3D also announced the new Accura® ClearVue SL resin and a REAL polypropylene material for SLS® known as PP100.

Over 50 interactive presentations were given by 3D Systems employees as well as users of the equipment. The opening presentation by Abe Reichental reminded us that 3D Systems is a solid company providing comprehensive solutions rather than providing a singular product or service. 3D Systems develops, sells and services many technologies including 3D printers, Stereolithography, Selective Laser Sintering and direct metal machines and the materials and software to support those technologies.

Just as the World Conference was a success, so too was the 2008 3DSUG in Costa Mesa, CA. In April of this year APP (Spectrum3D) attended, sponsored and exhibited at this conference. 3DSUG was celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> year and attendance and participation were high. As always it was a great mix of business and pleasure and APP walked away with many new customers as well as information and ideas to help us build parts more efficiently and to run our company to better serve our customers.

Don't you agree that in the end we should all be focused on exchanging information and ideas to strengthen the U.S. additive fabrication industry? We have too many external forces working against us like the slowing U.S. economy and cheap labor from other countries to let jaded feelings between our two groups hinder our progress in the United States.



Jason L. Dickman  
President

