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Kevin Scott  
Vice President of Architecture and Design  
Centex Homes

# Centex Homes Cuts Turnaround Times with DWF

Dissatisfied with PDF, Centex, one of the top 10 homebuilders in the U.S., migrated to DWF™ for more effective design information sharing and management.

## Project Summary

As one of the largest homebuilders in the U.S., Centex succeeds by offering high-quality homes that meet the needs of families across the country. Which means the company places a premium on fresh design ideas. As such, Centex’s VP Architecture and Design created a digital plan book—an online resource through which designers in all 58 divisions in the company could view and access the latest designs created by any other division. Making it possible was DWF. By archiving their ongoing work in the plan book using compact, information-rich DWF files, Centex designers can:

- Quickly share work and generate new ideas
- React quicker to the preferences of homebuyers
- Save as much as 10 months on the development of new plans



*"We are starting to see some definite time savings. Normally on a job like this you're running multiple sets of prints in the tens and thousands of dollars. With DWF, none of that was done, and the timeframe was a full 90 days quicker than we typically allow for."*

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### The Challenge

#### Sharing Designs Across 58 Divisions

When Kevin Scott, vice president of architecture and design at Centex Homes, a homebuilder based in Dallas, wants to see what kind of building designs his architects are working on, he simply logs into the company's digital plan book from his desktop PC. Nothing too surprising there, all kinds of companies maintains inventory or catalogs online nowadays.

The difference for Centex, however, is the level of architectural detail and the comprehensive scope of the design information that is available. For every new home design Centex architects create, all the essential design information for that building—floor plans, elevations, CAD layers, design coordinates, sheet properties and hyperlinks—is stored on the company's secure project management site within compact, easily transmittable DWF files.

"We wanted anybody in our 58 divisions around the country to see the latest designs created by any other division," said Scott. "The idea was that with this online searchable catalog of designs, anybody could grab them and use them, get new ideas, or share work at any time." The technology that made this all possible is DWF, Autodesk's open, secure file format that allows rich design data to be distributed to anyone who needs it for viewing, publishing, reviewing or printing.

### The Solution

#### Great for External Communication

"At first we were using DWFs to collaborate on designs between regional architects and the team here at the main office," explained Scott. "Then we realized that DWFs would also be ideal for our other online service, Build With Centex."

Centex's online project resource for collaborating with subcontractors and partners, Build With Centex, provides the developer with a virtual platform for posting bids and sharing documents in real time. The site quickly became popular with Centex's purchasing and estimating professionals who use it as a way to communicate information on project materials and costs with regional architects.

Initially, the format of choice for sharing design information was Adobe's PDF. For many people in the organization, however, PDF just didn't make sense as a standard for design information. Scott was one of them. "With a PDF or GIF it's like you're getting a brochure of the design," he said. "DWF, on the other hand, is the design."

When Centex first launched its digital plan book, design images were stored as GIFs, but the poor quality of the graphics prompted Scott's team to switch over to DWF, thereby vastly increasing the fidelity, quality and usability of their design information. Scott felt that phasing out PDFs was the logical thing to do on the Build With Centex site as well. DWF is becoming a standard all across Centex. And the results are beginning to show.

### The Result

#### Faster and More Responsive

"We are starting to see some definite time savings," said Scott, citing in particular a 300-home project that involved six separate designs. Throughout the bidding process on the project, which involved dozens of subcontractors, suppliers, contractors accessing the Build With Centex site, there was not one piece of paper that was generated internally. "Normally on a job like this you're running multiple sets of prints in the tens and thousands of dollars," said Scott. "With DWF, none of that was done, and the timeframe was a full 90 days quicker than we typically allow for."

Centex is also seeing significant ROI from using DWF on its digital plan book, especially in terms of helping architects and construction managers to react more quickly to market demands. A situation the company faces frequently is that one house plan within a development doesn't perform as well as the others, and a substitution becomes necessary. "By using DWFs in our plan book, our architects are able to quickly search and find a better plan, make the changes necessary and get moving with that new model," said Scott. "We can save as much as ten months on the development of a plan—it's incredible what can be done."

### For More Information

To learn more about how Autodesk can help enhance collaboration through effective information sharing visit [www.autodesk.com/dwf](http://www.autodesk.com/dwf). To download the free DWF Viewer go to [www.autodesk.com/dwfviewer-download](http://www.autodesk.com/dwfviewer-download).

