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Autodesk Unveils Building Design Suite 2013

By Brock Haroldson, ConnectPress Editor

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Last year Autodesk made a big move into the world of suites for their products. This March the new 2013 version of the suites were released and they feature many upgrades and new features.

"The building design suite 2012 that came out last year was very successful for us," said Joy Stark, industry marketing manager, Autodesk. "I think that one of the reasons is that the product mix was ideally suited for a lot of different people in the building industry, whether you're an engineer or architect or contractor there's a collection of products that people really saw valuable to their workflows," she said.

"For 2013 we've not only come out with new versions of the products in the suite but we've expanded the capabilities and product offerings within the package," Stark said. The suite comes in three versions; standard, premium and ultimate. One change in the suite is that Navisworks has been added to the premium level as well as the ultimate edition. "What we're finding is that architects and engineers are focusing on the premium edition so by including a version of Navisworks in the suite it gives them access to a tool that can be used to facilitate collaboration with others on the project team," Stark said. The ultimate edition has added a product called Infrastructure Modeler. "This is a conceptual, planning tool that we see used a lot in the civil infrastructure world but it also has use within the architectural side when you're doing urban planning concepts on a large scale," Stark said.



Infrastructure Modeler screenshot

The headline change to the Building Design Suite is the new version of Revit. "This version is simply called Autodesk Revit and what it does is it combines all the tools that were previously made available in the three different versions of Revit; Architecture, MEP and Structure, into a single software application," she said. It's now just one install to get all three and you can pick and choose what functions you want. "If you are an architect and didn't think that you had any use for the MEP tool, you could turn that off," Stark said. "You can turn off the tabs in the application very easily or you can make them available." Customers have been asking for this integration for a long time Stark said. "Previously they had to have two or more licenses for the different products they needed so for some firms they found that occasionally they used the engineering tools but they didn't need it on a day to day basis." The new version of Revit makes a broader tool set available for when people need it. It also improves the workflow because you don't have to open other programs and transfer data between them.

New to Revit and AutoCAD is a button to send your models directly to Showcase or 3ds Max. "When you do that, Showcase opens; it instantly renders your design and you can start modifying it in Showcase," Stark said. "That streamlines the process of getting your designs into Max or Showcase, which I think a lot of people will find really useful."

Another updated capability is access to the cloud for subscription customers. This includes document storage and management but what's really exciting for architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) users are analysis and rendering capabilities Stark said. "This version of Revit makes energy analysis even easier. There's a button that says 'send to cloud for energy analysis,'" Stark said. There are a lot of different options for rendering a Revit model, but one way is now to do it in the cloud. "One of the issues with rendering is that it takes time, it ties up your desktop so the cloud tools are really great because it allows you to send your design to the cloud speeding up the rendering process."



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In Revit they have enhanced the physical materials for building performance analysis. "This is again supporting energy analysis for sustainable design; it allows an architect to define thermal and structural properties of the building envelope." This information can then be sent to a tool like Green Building Studio for further energy analysis.

Other upgrades in Revit include enhancements to visualization tools for project reviews and there is a new way of creating stairs in the new version Stark said.

All of these improvements have been getting good feedback and "the thing that people have been talking most about is the single Revit application in the Building Design Suite, so we've gotten a lot of positive feedback on that from the beta program," Stark said. "I think customers are really excited to see that development."

Anyone who would like to try the new single Revit application can go to the Autodesk site and [download a free trial](#) . If you want to buy the new suite, the pricing is consistent with previous versions Stark said. It's \$6,495 for the premium version and the ultimate version is \$11,495. "If you look at the collection of products in the suite, it's really a great value," Stark said.

"And I think one of the great things about the suite is that because it has such a broad range of products, people start to use products that they hadn't thought to use before."

Brock Haroldson is a graduate of New Mexico State University where he received a degree in journalism and mass communications with honors. In his free time, Brock enjoys playing bluegrass and folk music, mountain biking, photography and cheering for the Denver Broncos.

[1 - 2 - All - Next Page](#)

Published 2012-04-09 00:00:00



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