"To be more efficient than the competition, you need high performance tools—and AutoCAD 2006 is one of them."

KAL HOUHOU
CAD MANAGER
LESSARD GROUP

Resident Experts

Renowned Architectural and Urban Design Firm Uses AutoCAD® 2006 to Increase Productivity Up to 75% on Residential Project.

Project Summary

A well-established architecture and urban design firm, Lessard Group has been successfully tackling residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments since 1986. The company's residential projects frequently required thousands of different drawing files, which were stored in an elaborate folder structure on the company's server. Accessing groups of these files—either to publish or to print—could take a very long time. Fortunately, as an Autodesk Subscription customer, Lessard Group was able to effortlessly upgrade to AutoCAD 2006—the twentieth release of AutoCAD—and take advantage of significant user interface enhancements that increase efficiency and reduce lag time.

• Entire firm stays up-to-date with the latest AutoCAD upgrades via Autodesk Subscription

• Reduced time spent organizing drawing files by 75% with the Sheet Set Manager

• Boosted productivity 30-40% with easily customizable Dynamic Input feature

• Maintains competitive edge over other firms by continually providing employees with the newest AutoCAD technologies

Autodesk

Using the Sheet Set Manager has allowed Lessard Group to reduce the amount of time spent organizing drawing sheets by 75%.

The Challenge
Residential Projects Require Many Drawings

Founded in 1986, Lessard Group Inc. is an award-winning architectural and urban design firm specializing in residential, commercial and mixed-use developments. Through a combination of innovation and experience, the company has become the largest residential design firm in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

Kal Houhou, CAD Manager at Lessard Group, is well versed in the challenges and complexities that are unique to residential projects. "For starters, there's a greater amount of detail involved than with commercial projects," said Houhou. "A multi-family high-rise is going to have a lot more walls and rooms, than, say, a football stadium. As a result, it's not unusual for a residential project to have several thousand different drawing files associated with it."

Navigating to all these drawings could be quite a chore given their disparate locations on the company server. "By necessity, we have a very detailed folder structure at our firm to keep drawings organized and prevent accidental deletions," said Houhou. "Which is a good thing. But it can also mean having to click through a lot of sub-folders. We wanted to spend less time finding drawings, and more time working with them."

The Solution
The Latest and Greatest AutoCAD Features

Lessard Group's headaches were solved by new features and enhancements in AutoCAD 2006, the new standard in CAD productivity. As an Autodesk Subscription customer, Lessard Group was able to leverage these new developments as soon as they became available, as subscription customers automatically receive the latest versions of shipping software. Autodesk Subscription customers are also entitled to any incremental product enhancements, personalized web support direct from Autodesk technical experts, and self-paced online training.

"Autodesk is always coming up with new features, and new ways to make AutoCAD users more productive," reasoned Houhou. "That's why we're on subscription. To be more efficient than the competition, you need high performance tools — and AutoCAD 2006 is one of them."

The Results
A Single Sheet for Thousands of Drawings

Lessard Group has been able to start gaining a return on its investment right away, utilizing AutoCAD 2006 for a 32 story high rise residential project in New Rochelle, New York. Perhaps the biggest gains in productivity have been from the Sheet Set Manager, a powerful organizational tool first introduced in AutoCAD 2005.

"We're using the Sheet Set Manager to create a lot of preset views, which is very handy when you do family or residential architecture," explained Houhou. "You can have up to 100 settings for the floor plans and 400 settings for the unit plans. It's very easy for us to create a view of the floor plan and place it in the Sheet Set Manager instead of having to go to each unit plan to create a view. That feature has probably reduced the amount of time needed to set up drawing sheets by 75%."

Customizable Input Modes

Lessard Group has also boosted its productivity through AutoCAD 2006 user interface enhancements such as the Dynamic Input feature. Dynamic Input puts the power of the command line at the graphics cursor, allowing users to enter dimensional and command option information as they work.

"Our designers really like the Dynamic Input feature," said Houhou. "When they are in the drafting process, they appreciate being able to have the dimensions and the angles accessible in real time. It just makes things quicker for everybody. We measure a 30-40% gain of productivity just from not having to waste time moving our head up and down to look at different parts of the computer screen."

A Must for Leaders

By putting AutoCAD 2006 to the test in real world situations like its New Rochelle project, Lessard Group has been able to clearly see the benefits of AutoCAD. "The biggest value of AutoCAD 2006 is increased efficiency and productivity," concluded Houhou. "When you compare what you can do with AutoCAD 2006 versus other software products, there is no doubt that AutoCAD 2006 is a must. No doubt at all."

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