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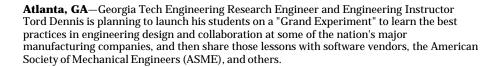 Job Links
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Software and Hardware
CAD Students Teach the Pros

They will share best practices they learn with industry

Paul E. Teague
Design News
April 21, 2003

Atlanta, GA—Georgia Tech Engineering Research Engineer and Engineering Instructor Tord Dennis is planning to launch his students on a "Grand Experiment" to learn the best practices in engineering design and collaboration at some of the nation's major manufacturing companies, and then share those lessons with software vendors, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), and others.

The goal, he says, is to work with a manufacturing company that will assign the students a real design project. Dennis and the students will then divide the project into separate sub-projects and outsource them to engineering students at other colleges and universities, mimicking the decentralization of design that's common in companies with geographically dispersed engineering teams. In two years, Dennis says, the teams will complete the project and then also document the practices that work best.

The students will choose whether they want to use EDS's I-DEAS CAD software or PTC's Pro/Engineer. Central to the project, however, will be PTC's ProjectLink, which he says will enable the dispersed student design teams to control the project and share CAD data.

Georgia Tech is one of several engineering schools that are part of PTC's University Plus program, where the CAD vendor provides the schools as many seats of Pro/Engineer as they need for a total of $2,500 per year. An additional part of the program includes free training for professors, free tech support, and ProjectLink.

Dennis says he is using that software today in a project with the University of Maryland. Both universities' engineering departments purchased the same-brand cordless power tool and re-engineered it, sharing data through ProjectLink.

Corporations interested in sponsoring Dennis's "Grand Experiment" can contact him at tdennis@cad.gatech.edu. "We're not looking for money," he says, "only interesting projects."

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