

SolidWorks 2014 Revealed

CIMdata Commentary

Key takeaways:

- *SolidWorks 2014 delivers solution enhancements that will please the existing customer base*
- *Executives updated industry analysts on progress with SolidWorks' new Mechanical Conceptual solution, now in select customer's hands*

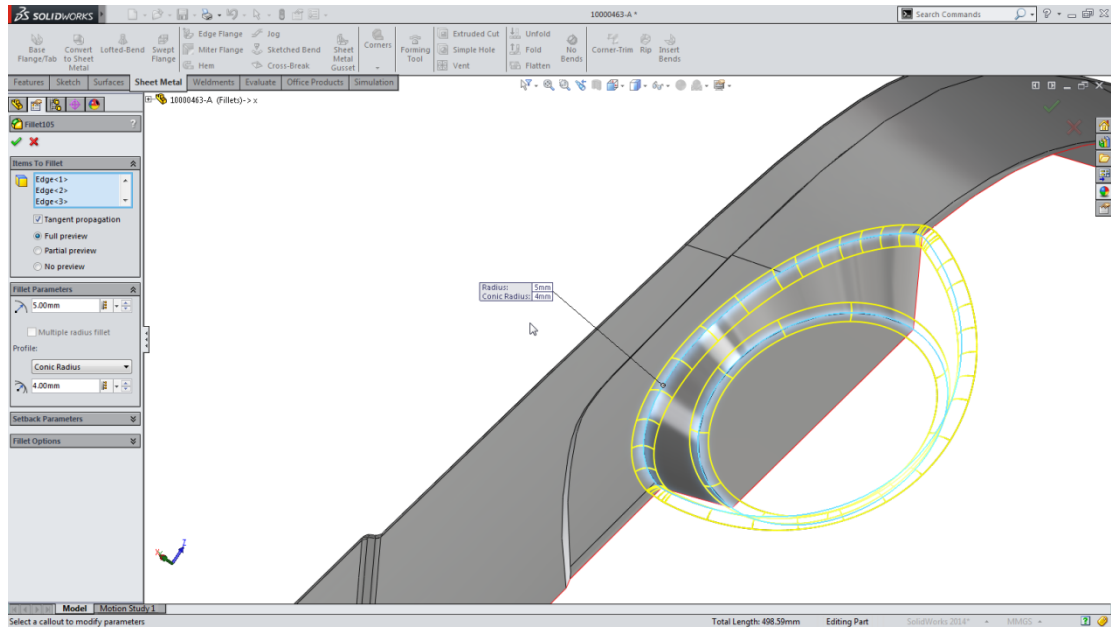
On September 10, 2013, Dassault Systèmes announced the latest revision to their design-focused solution, SolidWorks 2014. Prior to the formal announcement, SolidWorks CEO Bertrand Sicot hosted a small gathering of industry analysts to demonstrate key enhancements to the solution, and to discuss the company's ongoing development strategy. Mr. Sicot, accompanied by Gian Paolo Bassi, Vice President of Product Management, opened the event at the new SolidWorks campus in Waltham, Massachusetts by reminding attendees that this year marks the twentieth anniversary of SolidWorks. Since 1993 the SolidWorks community has grown to over 180 thousand customers and 2.1 million users.

On the business side, Mr. Sicot noted that SolidWorks' revenue now accounts for 20% of their parent company Dassault Systèmes' annual income. He spoke of their "heavy investment" in existing relationships with value added resellers (VARs) and of plans to get closer to their end-user base. Currently they are "building a connection" to users by sponsoring MySolidWorks.com, a service that allows users to aggregate company and community knowledge. MySolidWorks.com can draw relevant information (forum discussions, blog posts, YouTube, Twitter, help files, and more) into a single view. SolidWorks hopes to leverage this community knowledge to better understand customer needs and to deliver improved content.

Mr. Sicot explained SolidWorks' view on a number of industry trends in a relaxed and open discussion with the analysts. He first articulated their view on mobility, a trend seen in all products, not just in CAD and PLM. He indicated that SolidWorks will not release a simple list of mobile apps, but rather will focus on use-case scenarios where mobile computing can help. In addition, rather than blindly implement applications that run in the cloud, SolidWorks' position was best described as a belief in "connected devices," which use the cloud when appropriate.

SolidWorks executives updated analysts on their in-development solution—SolidWorks Mechanical Conceptual. This new offering was built upon Dassault Systèmes' 3DEXperience platform and is the company's attempt to resolve the industry's lack of conceptual design applications. The 3DEXperience platform uses the convergence geometric modeler (CGM) that is also used in CATIA. Unfortunately, no demonstration was provided in this session. The software is reportedly being tested by ten select customers who are evaluating the product's capabilities. The test phase is expected to include additional users, and feedback will determine the software's readiness. No planned release date was given.

Aaron Kelly, Vice President, User Experience & Product Portfolio, and his team, demonstrated many of the enhancements to be found in the SolidWorks 2014 release. Improvements included advances in geometric modeling shape control with conic fillets and a new style spline, and sketching and drawing additions. Previously, they noted, users had to redefine constraints when sketch geometry needed to be replaced. SolidWorks 2014 facilitates smooth replacement without re-constraining.



New CONIC FILLET Controls Allow Constant- or Variable-Radius Conic Blends

Additional enhancements have been made to assembly performance and visualization (improved Section View speed; rotation added in Explode Steps); design communication and collaboration (eDrawings mobile support for Android devices; eDrawings for SolidWorks Electrical schematics); and streamlined workflow in SolidWorks Enterprise PDM (automated cache management to cache and clear specified folders at user log-in and log-off).

CIMdata respects the attention SolidWorks is giving to the needs of their current user base with the many enhancements found in SolidWorks 2014. CIMdata believes, however, that the lack of a new attention-grabbing capability in the release represents a missed opportunity for SolidWorks to regain some industry mindshare. The internal focus on the new SolidWorks Mechanical Conceptual solution is likely the reason. Regardless, CIMdata welcomes the honest dialog with SolidWorks executives and looks forward to their next twenty years of delivering enabling solutions to the product design community.

About CIMdata

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