Carlson Point Cloud and the “Point Cloud Complete” Bundle – $6,795

May 1, 2010
It’s time to take another look at Carlson Point Cloud.

Carlson’s Point Cloud program has been re-vamped with many powerful and exciting new features giving those folks struggling to process data generated from laser scanners the ability to process up to 1 billion points.

Carlson Point Cloud is even more valuable to land surveying, civil engineering and mining professionals because of its seamless integration with Carlson Survey, Carlson Civil and Carlson Mining.

With the new and improved Point Cloud program, your scan can be oriented to a local coordinate system and clouds can be “cleaned” to filter and thin out duplicate points. You also have the ability to snap to edges and code points for use with the Field to Finish feature of Carlson Survey. This

allows you to define more accurate breaklines and create better surface models for generating contours, profiles & cross sections in Carlson Civil.

Starting on May 1, 2010, That CAD Girl is offering the “Point Cloud Complete” bundle that includes Carlson Survey, Civil, Survey, GIS and Point Cloud for $6,795.

To schedule a live, online or on-site demonstration, contact us at 919.417.8351 or contactus@thatcadgirl.com.

Read more about Point Cloud by clicking here. There are also several new 5 minute videos demonstrating the functionality of this program available here.

Carlson Webinars

May 1, 2010
Beginning on May 18th, I will be presenting a series of Free webinars in partnership with Carlson Software. This series of

webinars will generally alternate between IntelliCAD/AutoCAD topics and Carlson Software topics.

May 18, 2010, 12:00 EDT: Tips & Tricks for Carlson Civil: Beyond the Demo

May 18, 2010, 3:00 EDT: REPEAT Tips & Tricks for Carlson Civil: Beyond the Demo

June 3, 2010, 12:00 EDT: Introduction to Model Space & Paper Space for IntelliCAD or AutoCAD

June 17, 2010, 12:00 EDT: Introduction to Field to Finish

Descriptions and registration links can be found here: Carlson Software Webinars

Click here to access Archived Webinars

That CAD Girl

Carlson Civil Suite $2,125

May 1, 2010

Yes, I know that I just sent out an email advertising my price for Civil Suite at a different price, but Carlson surprised everyone by initiating their special pricing. New pricing for other products:

- Carlson Survey $ 1,275 (Regularly $ 1,500)
- Carlson Civil $ 1,275 (Regularly $ 1,500)
- Carlson Hydrology $ 850 (Regularly $ 1,000)
- Carlson GIS $ 850 (Regularly $ 1,000)
- Carlson TakeOff – $ 7,650 (Regularly $ 9,000)

That CAD Girl may offer additional discounts on Civil Suite, Civil, Survey, Hydrology, GIS and TakeOff. We also include one FREE hour of online training with any Carlson Software purchase.

Click here for a complete list of Carlson pricing.

That CAD Girl – March 2010 Newsletter

May 1, 2010
Our March Newsletter can be downloaded HERE

Carlson Software VS Civil 3D® – Revisited

May 1, 2010
There is a looooonnnggg conversation comparing Civil 3D and Carlson Software that is taking place across two websites: www.civil3d.com and Autodesk Civil 3D Discussion Group: Carlson VS 3D.

I give kudos to James Wedding for extending the discussion on his website www.civil3d.com and also to Autodesk for allowing the conversation to happen in their Civil 3D Discussion Group. This topic is of vital interest to many people and, I think, will be a valuable resource.

I have posted a lengthy response to the comments from both sites below. In order to make it follow-able for those here on www.thatcadgirl.com, I have included links to the comments I was responding to.

Neil – I'll cede several of the points you made in your post. (Read it here). Both programs have dynamic design capabilities; but, if you define dynamic as, "like Civil 3D does it", then: No, Carlson doesn't do it like Civil 3D does. And I definitely agree with the pad template example. You do have to pick the "Process" button to get it to re-design and there is no Undo for the surface model. Dynamic? I'll agree that's a stretch; however, I don't think I've ever cited it as an example of Carlson's dynamic reactions.

But, even with those and other supposed drawbacks such as the

number of files Carlson creates, can I get my job done and out the door on time and under budget? Can most of my staff learn it on their own? Can I easily recover my data after an AutoCAD crash? Can I share my designs with others using any version of Land Desktop without having to explode everything? Can I avoid upgrading and the associated headaches every year? With Carlson, I can.

Bottom line, there will obviously be trade-offs. So, what is it worth to me? You cannot have this conversation without looking at what makes your company money. Dewberry probably has the moral high-ground here: Dewberry – CE News Article. They went through all the motions with Civil 3D and undoubtedly put their checkbook behind that effort. But Civil 3D must not have returned the favor. If they'd met productivity and profitability goals with Civil 3D, would they have given it up?

I'm not trying to deny that there are people and companies out there who are able to be efficient and turn a profit with Civil 3D. If you have figured it out and it works for you and your company as it seems to have for Arthur Miller, a gentleman who posted at James' site (Read it here), then more

power to you – I think that's fantastic.

I've looked for good hard numbers and more "Arthur Millers" but they seem to be few and far between. Instead, Civil 3D defenders usually point to bells and whistles, whistles and bells…

MSpatz makes the argument for the bells and whistles very well here on this DG thread and then cross-posted the same thing here: (Read it Here). He states that it only cost his company $500 per person to implement. I must say that's the lowest cost I've ever heard. Is this typical? MSpatz knows Civil 3D well enough to be a contributor at www.civil3d.com. Do you need an MSpatz on staff to create and maintain Civil 3D installations in order to keep those numbers that low? And what if an office only has one MSpatz on staff? There's a potential cost there too… Who picks up if he's out of the office or leaves the company? Redundancy in knowledge is pretty important. I'm happy to admit that I'm wrong, but I'd like to hear from others what it really costs to get it up and keep it going (training, upgrades, pilot projects, creating templates, assemblies, styles, etc.). Contact me here ContactUs@thatcadgirl.com.

He also states that, “It is not a layer thing, it is a style thing – KEY”. No matter how KEY he believes “Styles” are, they don’t pay salaries. I agree: dynamic objects are COOL! and can also greatly increase productivity. But they also have a cost and complexity component. How much money does, “Look how cool this is!” bring in the door on an annual basis? That’s why, instead of touting the **features** of either Carlson or Civil 3D, I tend to focus on the **benefits** to a business as a whole. **Features** make money for Autodesk, their resellers and consultants. **Benefits** make money for the people using the software.

Sinc’s post (Read it here) summed this up very neatly. As much as they like Civil 3D, he’s just not sure they’ll be able to justify the cost. And it sounds like they are extremely productive with it.

Which leads me to my last point: If and when they have to leave Civil 3D behind, Sinc’s group will have a choice and that choice might lead them away from Autodesk entirely. It seems that in so many things Autodesk is doing these days, they are forcing everyone to, not just move to Civil 3D, but to move to the ***latest version of Civil 3D***. Retiring products

so quickly… making 2010 C3D objects incompatible with 2009… punitive costs for letting subscription lapse… the list goes on. Business decision for them, too – I understand that. They must have decided it's profitable for them, but it's pricing many people out of Autodesk's civil/survey market.

I had a conversation with Jason Hickey at AU right after he started with EE. I think he was either just starting or just finishing up an implementation with Stantec. I told him that I thought that Autodesk was missing the vast majority of small to mid-size engineering & surveying customers out there because the cost/benefit just wasn't there and they wouldn't adopt Civil 3D until it was. I'm paraphrasing, but his response was something like, "Once the Stantecs of the world move to Civil 3D, the others won't have a choice."

I had just recently signed on with Carlson at that point and wasn't yet sure whether Carlson would be competitive. But, I told him then what I've told many people since, "Whether it's Carlson or another software company, someone, someplace will develop an alternative for that market. Because they just will not sign onto something that will make them lose money."

PS – Working on putting together a real shootout, invitations

have been extended… will keep you posted.

Poll: What Are Your Upgrade Plans?

May 1, 2010
We ran this poll last year and thought it would be interesting to run it again to see how and if things have changed…

That CAD Girl – February

2010 Newsletter

May 1, 2010
Our February Newsletter can be downloaded HERE

Carlson Software: Student Version

May 1, 2010
Answering a need that's been out there for some time, Carlson has recently announced the availability of a "Student Version" of their products.

From the announcement in the American Surveyor magazine:

> *Carlson Software is offering civil engineering, land surveying and mining students the option of purchasing their own software on which to learn and work at home for $99 for a full academic year. This program is available for*

fulltime students.

The software that Carlson is offering for this program includes the following:

- *Carlson Civil Suite – Carlson Survey, Carlson Civil, Carlson Hydrology and Carlson GIS in one powerful package.*
- *Carlson Survey – now with C&G Survey included is the ultimate office survey software*
- *Carlson Takeoff – provides fast and accurate CAD-based estimating, plus essential quantity and quality controls*
- *Carlson Mining – the software choice of the U.S. coal mining industry in Underground, Surface and Geology modules*

To apply for your Student Version of Carlson Software, you must complete this application and submit it online. Lauren Brown, the Academics Coordinator for Carlson Software, will contact you to complete your purchase.

Carlson Software: In the Classroom

May 1, 2010

Did you know that there are almost 200 colleges and universities currently participating in Carlson's Academics Program?

Carlson works simply and simply works – making it the ideal CAD-based software program to learn while in school. Why spend time fighting the peculiarities of a software program when Carlson, rightly, allows students to concentrate on learning the concepts essential to their chosen Surveying, Engineering, Construction or Mining fields?

Learning to use Carlson Software helps improve students' chances to get jobs after graduation and makes it possible for them to complete projects on their own both during school and after. Because Carlson includes a FREE copy of IntelliCAD with every Carlson license, learning institutions can also

use Carlson with IntelliCAD for basic CAD training in other programs such as general design, architectural & mechanical design and many others.

For an annual fee of $650, Carlson Software provides **unlimited** desktop licensing to qualified colleges and universities. Carlson Software with IntelliCAD allows institutions to stay within their budget while still providing their technical students with the tools they need to be competent and competitive in the marketplace.

> *Interested in receiving your first year for FREE?*
>
> *Contact Lauren Brown, Carlson's Academic Coordinator, at 606.564.5028 and let her know you heard about this offer from **"That CAD Girl"**.*

That CAD Girl is working with Carlson to schedule "Train the Trainer" events for the Summer of 2010. These hands-on, multi-day training events will assist classroom instructors with development of lesson plans and exercises. Events are tentatively being planned for Eastern Tennessee, Ohio, Florida and Oregon. Please contact us at 919.417.8351 or

ContactUs@thatcadgirl.com to request additional locales.

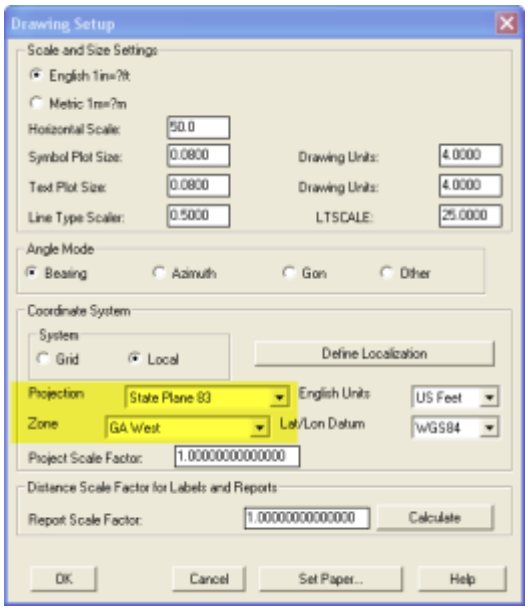
Export IntelliCAD or AutoCAD DWG files to Google Earth

May 1, 2010
I've recently started using a very cool feature in Carlson Software. The bad thing… it was in the 2009 version and I didn't even realize it!

I had no idea exporting our DWG files from IntelliCAD or AutoCAD out to Google Earth was so easy.

1. Download and install Google Earth. You can download it here: http://earth.google.com/
2. Open any one of your project DWG files that has been positioned at its correct state plane coordinate system.
3. In Carlson, go to Settings –> Drawing Setup and then

select the correct **Projection** and correct **Zone** for the project site. If you're not sure of the **Projection**, try using "State Plane 83". This will work for most systems.



4. Next, go to File –> Polyline File –> Write Polyline File. When prompted for "Polyline File Format", type "G" for Google. You will be prompted to specify a new filename and save location for a "Google Earth File to Write (.kml)".
5. You will then be prompted to select the entities that are to be exported out to the .kml file and viewed in Google Earth. After selecting the entities, press

Enter. For this exercise, we only want to see the drawing entities in 2D, so press “N” for “No” when prompted to “Use elevation from drawing in Google Earth [Yes/<No>]?”

6. Finally, you are then prompted “Would you like to display the file in Google Earth now [<Yes>/No]?”. Press “Y” for “Yes”. Google Earth should automatically launch and zoom into the project location.

In the example shown below and pointed out with arrows, notice how closely the new roads and designed turn lanes match up to the existing roadway. Also, you can see the designed graded slopes perfectly avoiding the tank that is to be preserved during construction.
Not too shabby…

This feature is available in all of the Carlson Desktop products: Carlson Civil, Survey, Hydrology, Construction and TakeOff.

Look for a future post on bringing Google Earth surface data into Carlson Software. Hint: It’s easy too!

Originally posted on **Carlson Connection** by Jennifer Dibona