

Communicating in 3D

Jack Zimmer uses Envisioneer to jump off the 2D page and show clients what they're really getting.

Profile

Jack Zimmer earned his Master's degree in Architecture in 1975 from the University of Wisconsin. After several years he began to lose interest in working for an Architect. In 1980 he shifted gears and decided to start his own design/build business, taking on residential and small commercial projects.

Up until 1997, Jack had not touched a computer. An introduction to IMSI's FloorPlan@3D software, which Cadsoft developed, provided an entrance into the world of 3D modeling. He realized immediately that this would benefit his design/build business. He soon began using FloorPlan 3D in conjunction with TurboCAD® to produce designs and working drawings. In January 2007 Jack and his partner founded AEC CAD Pro, a company providing a variety of construction drawing services – everything from plans and renderings to full designs with working drawings – across North America. They soon began to realize that the technology they were using was becoming outdated and not fully meeting their evolving needs.

An Obvious Choice

Having a strong technical background and always on the lookout for new and innovative products, Jack's partner soon came across Envisioneer software. Having reviewed most of the other products on the market, Jack knew right away that Envisioneer was the best choice. Not only was it affordably priced, but it also offered a wide range of features that would allow Jack to complete different types of projects for a variety of customers, including architects, designers and developers. "The real strength of Envisioneer is its depth. It has the ability to do so much", states Jack.

As a design service AEC CAD Pro works with draftspeople and other industry professionals. According to Jack, being able to quickly bring those people up to speed is extremely important when producing and customizing designs. "With Envisioneer's ease of use and short learning curve, it was a no-brainer", he says. It was so easy, in fact, that he was using it for projects within one day of installing it.

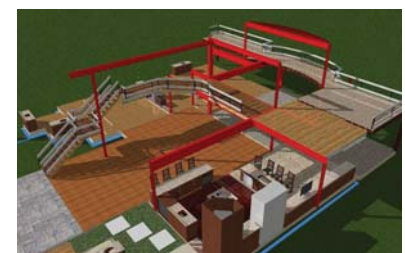
The Added Dimension

With online meetings being central to his business, Jack immediately realized after seeing Envisioneer that 3D was the only way to go. "The ability for me to communicate online with customers was so important, and Envisioneer handled that so well...there is absolutely no other way that I would go", he insists.

Jack would even say that Envisioneer's 3D capabilities have helped him land more jobs. One particular couple had been working with an architect to design a new home in Hawaii. They couldn't get a sense of what the home would be like by looking at the

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AEC CAD Pro



architect's 2D drawings, so they enlisted Jack's services. By producing the architect's design in Envisioneer, Jack was not only able to show the customer their home in 3D, but also helped to discover problems with the design. Had the customer gone ahead with the architect's original plan, they would have ended up with a home that they didn't like, and wracked up tens of thousands of dollars in change costs. Using Envisioneer allowed Jack to explore different design options with his customer at a relatively low cost. More importantly, he was able to produce a design that they truly loved.

Success through Versatility

With a variety of customers and projects across the country, Jack needs a product that is as versatile as he is. In the case of new construction, for example, Jack can use Envisioneer to first model the site's terrain, and then see how the building will work on that site. He can even import a photo of the site and use it as a background. When he needs to input existing information, Envisioneer's import features are very beneficial. "The customer may have something as simple as a hand-drawn sketch. Envisioneer's Project Trace Image tool is just wonderful". On the flip side, Envisioneer also makes it easy to share drawings with others via renderings or export to the industry-standard DWG format.

For Jack, being able to customize a design is one of Envisioneer's greatest strengths. When working on a kitchen remodel, for example, he can download images of the customer's actual appliances from the manufacturer's web site and bring them into Envisioneer. Needless to say, his customers are always impressed. "The ability to customize makes the customer feel like they're in their own space."

Jack considers Envisioneer to be a multi-discipline tool that can handle many of a company's roles, whether it be drafting, design, sales or estimating. "I use Envisioneer exclusively", he states.

A Top-Notch Company

Now an Envisioneer reseller, Jack is particularly impressed with the product's ongoing development, and attributes its success to Cadsoft's knowledgeable development team. "It is obvious that Cadsoft has background in both building and architecture and incorporates that into the product, as opposed to other companies who produce products with all the bells and whistles, but aren't very productive", he says.

As Jack got deeper into the program, he was able to find answers and learn more through Envisioneer's comprehensive online help system, Cadsoft training videos, customer forums, and more. In addition, he has found Cadsoft's technical support staff to be very professional and "tremendous" in offering solutions.

All in all, Cadsoft's progressive product development, industry knowledge and multi-faceted support system are, in Jack's opinion, "a nice combination".

To learn more about Envisioneer, please visit www.cadsoft.com.



Jack's top three Envisioneer features are:

- **3D Modeling**
Switch between 2D and 3D with the click of a button; walk through your model and get a true sense of your design.
- **Customization**
Precisely edit the properties of elements, create new elements, and import custom textures and objects.
- **Versatility**
Input existing design information. Produce plans, elevations, working drawings, 3D renderings, estimates, and more. Export to formats that can be read and used by other professionals.