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## IMAGINiT Technologies and HP Team Up on Training

With HP's top-of-the-line workstations, trainees can learn how to get the most out of CAD software.

By Robert Green, *Cadalyst* Contributing Expert



Over the years I've lead and participated in a lot of software training sessions and have often been frustrated by the antiquated and ill-maintained hardware I've been forced to use in training labs. After all, if you attend training to learn the latest software technology, does it make sense to run that software on a four-year-old computer that's on its last legs? Wouldn't it make more sense to learn new software on modern hardware so you'd actually be able to gauge the actual performance?

Turns out the training specialists at IMAGINiT Technologies have heard these types of comments and have partnered with HP to outfit their Autodesk training labs with the kind of modern workstations that can make BIM (building information modeling), 3D mechanical modeling, and visualization software tools perform well. The IMAGINiT/HP partnership represents a creative way to bring better software training to users that merits some examination.



### Big Commitment

In late November Rand Worldwide (the parent company of IMAGINiT Technologies) CIO Nedim Celik announced the HP partnership saying, "Continual improvement is embedded in our culture. We are always exploring ways to support our instructors who deliver the valuable combination of real-world experience and product expertise. The learning experience we offer, whether in one of our classrooms or onsite in a mobile lab, is now truly best in class."

Jeff Wood, VP of Worldwide Marketing, Commercial Solutions, HP added, "Our workstations go through rigorous testing and are certified on Autodesk applications, providing IMAGINiT trainers with a significant engineering edge."

This new partnership will see IMAGINiT upgrade its 44 training centers with HP Workstations powered by Intel® Xeon® processors including quad-core technology and all mobile labs equipped with HP Mobile Workstations with optimized graphics and processor configurations. More than 80% of the implementation of new hardware will be done in the first year and the remainder will take place in the following year with the ultimate goal of providing a training environment where 3D design and visualization software can be run at optimal speed to improve the learning experience.

### Expert Interview

I wanted to get a ground-level view of IMAGINiT's take on the new partnership and how it might benefit their customers. To get that perspective, I spoke with Kevin Kuker, vice-president, services operations with IMAGINiT Technologies. The contents of the interview follow.

Robert Green (RG hereafter): Can you give me some background information on what lead to the HP-IMAGINiT partnership?

Kevin Kuker (KK hereafter): HP and IMAGINiT have been talking for several years



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to find a way to work together. Originally the discussions started around a marketing partnership and then evolved to a full-blown hardware and marketing partnership that stemmed from IMAGINiT's need to replace hardware in all classrooms across North America. We knew we could look to local HP resellers and get some discounts, but felt that working directly with HP would allow us to better form and leverage a partnership that would go beyond just the purchase of hardware.

RG: This whole approach to training with the latest hardware is a new commitment — why should customers care? I mean, what's in it for the customer?

KK: The performance of Autodesk software is very dependent on having the latest technology on which to run the software. In fact, we often hear from our customers that they have not upgraded to the latest version of Autodesk software because they can't afford the hardware investment. Not having the latest hardware in our training centers prevents us from helping our customers recognize the full benefit of the latest software product releases.

In our training rooms if we can showcase the latest versions of Autodesk software, running on the most current HP technology platforms, we believe that customers will understand the importance of keeping hardware current as well as their Autodesk software. By partnering with HP, we are able to offer clients a discount on hardware that makes that upgrade more accessible for them. In addition, we believe that we are one of Autodesk's only channel partners who are investing this much in hardware to make sure that students who come through our classrooms have the best learning experience, using the latest hardware technology, and the most current versions of Autodesk software.

In addition, our training labs also support the needs of our Rand Worldwide division in the delivery of training on the Dassault Systèmes and PTC CAD platforms.

RG: Do you feel that customers get a better idea of what is possible with their software when they work with high performance workstations?

KK: Absolutely. There is nothing worse than waiting for files to load, and data sets to build when you are using old hardware. We recognize that companies are looking for ways in which to trim costs and hardware often falls into that category. When our customers use Autodesk software on outdated hardware, they can get the perception that the software is slow and that it does not work the way it was marketed, intended, or sold to perform. This can result in frustration on our customer's side, increased calls to our support center, and a general feeling of dissatisfaction on our customer's behalf.

Another added benefit, is that by having high performance workstations running current operating systems and applications, we are ensured that our students can take full advantage of the learning opportunity as we can teach all aspects of the software without worrying about hardware limitations.



Screen image courtesy of Autodesk



RG: What software solutions will you be training with the latest HP hardware?

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KK: We offer training on almost all of the Autodesk products including the AutoCAD, Building Solutions, Civil/GIS Solutions, Manufacturing Solutions, Process Plant, Revit, and Visualization products.

RG: Do you see the ability to train on BIM at a higher level as being key to your BIM consulting services?

KK: Our training courses focus more on how to use the software that makes BIM possible. We offer the option for customers to have customized training from us that could certainly tie in their unique BIM processes and our BIM consulting services. We are also able to work with clients who are looking to implement a BIM methodology and aren't sure where or how to get started.

RG: Besides the HP Workstations why should CAD users come to IMAGINiT for training?

KK: We offer an incredible number of training centers and we offer a variety of training delivery styles. Students who prefer traditional expert-led, in-person training can visit our classrooms to take training on the widest variety of Autodesk products. For those looking to remain in their office or who do not work or live close to our training locations, they can get the same expert-led training via our live online training solution.

All of IMAGINiT's training classes are based on Autodesk Official Training Guides (AOTG) that are written by our sister division ASCENT. So, when we say we wrote the book, we literally did! We are Autodesk's largest Authorized Training Center (ATC) in North America and offer public classes as well as private classes for those wishing to have an instructor exclusively dedicated to their needs.

In addition, we have mobile labs that we ship anywhere in the world where you want us to deliver training. Many of our IMAGINiT instructors have obtained Autodesk's Implementation Certified Expert (ICE) status, meaning that they have been acknowledged for their skills and knowledge of Autodesk software and implementation practices. See: <http://imaginit.com/training> for more information on our training options.

RG: Can IMAGINiT work with customers to provide specialized training?

KK: Of course. We have worked with many clients to deliver training that is based upon their models, their specific workflows, and their processes to ensure that they get the quickest return on their Autodesk software investment.

We offer dedicated classes that can be taught at the client's facilities, or at ours, that will be focused solely on the client's employees and their workflows or models. We also have personalized learning services where our experts can work with you to resolve your toughest design problems, or we can show you time saving techniques for a current project. We can also work beside you observing and helping streamline your workflow. And, finally, we are available to provide some one on one help if needed. See <http://imaginit.com/training/other-training-options/dedicated-custom-training.aspx> for more on specialized training opportunities.

RG: Besides training, I understand that IMAGINiT technical staff will be using HP Workstations in field demo situations. Can you tell me more about that?

KK: When our technical people go in front of customers to demonstrate the power of Autodesk software and what it can do for their organization, they will be able to use the latest hardware platform from HP to showcase the software in the best scenario. Renderings will look more realistic, models will take less time to compute, and customers will see the power that Autodesk software can truly bring to their design engineering teams.

RG: Can IMAGINiT offer consultative services such as implementation in conjunction with training?

KK: Absolutely. We have 85+ technical experts waiting to help our clients with any of their implementation needs. A few examples of the more common implementation services that we provide are: automating redundant tasks and processes to save the client time, identifying and resolving data management needs and issues, designing and writing custom software applications to mold the design engineering software to your particular processes or needs. We have the skills and the proven methodologies to help you become a more efficient organization and team (<http://imaginit.com/services>).

## Wrapping Up

When considering training for your CAD users you've got a lot to worry about from content to instructional style to software versions. And, since training takes time and costs money you'd like to know that your users will be learning in a productive environment that helps them get acclimated to new software rapidly.

With creative training center partnerships such as the one IMAGINiT and HP have forged, at least you won't have to worry about whether the training center's hardware is up to the task. Instead, you can let your users learn their new software on up-to-date workstations that can demonstrate real world performance advantages. And, you might even be able to get your senior management to see the benefits of running new software on modern equipment while you're at it!

*Authors note: I'd like to personally thank Kevin Kuker from IMAGINIT Technologies for taking time out for our interview.*

## About the Author

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Robert Green

Robert provides CAD implementation, consulting, and programming services for a variety of companies throughout the United States and Canada. He holds a degree in mechanical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and is the author of *Expert CAD Management: The Complete Guide*. Reach him via his web site at [www.cad-manager.com](http://www.cad-manager.com).

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