

# The Design Explorer

## The Ashlar-Vellum User Newsletter

Fourth Quarter, December 2005

### Dutch Court Grants Ashlar-Vellum another Victory

Once again Ashlar-Vellum is vindicated in our pursuit of our own intellectual property. Recently the court in Amsterdam handed down a judgment in the name of Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, ordering Disaro (formerly Vellum Benelux) to "cease and keep ceased" all use of the term "Vellum," the bricks logo, the www.vellum.nl website, and the publishing or copying of Vellum Pro software.

The court determined that not only did Disaro infringe upon the name and trademark rights of Ashlar Incorporated, but also the

copyrights on the software. Disaro has been ordered to pay court costs and damages in an amount to be determined in the next 90 days.

Says Robert Bou, "We are extremely pleased with this victory. This has global ramifications for our other pending court cases. A victory in one country carries a lot of weight when it is submitted as evidence in another country. The Japanese courts, where our suit against Concept Technology will be filed, will seriously consider the previous judgments of a foreign

court for issues regarding multi-national companies."

Will Disaro appeal? Probably. Will Ashlar-Vellum continue to seek justice? Absolutely. We'll continue to keep you posted as things progress.

#### Private Sale for Current Owners and their Friends Get a Second License for Half Price

Between now and the end of the year, Ashlar-Vellum is offering a very special sale to our current users and their colleagues. This is for those on the current version of our software who wish to share the Vellum magic with a friend in another company or buy a second license for someone else in their same company.

For those wishing to add a second license, the prices are as follows:

Cobalt	US\$1895 e-only
Xenon	US\$1395 e-only
Argon	US\$ 445 e-only
Graphite	US\$ 445 e-only

Add a Box Set with books and CD for just US\$100.00.

Prices in US\$.

Limit two new license opportunities per existing serial number.

**Offer ends December 31, 2005.**

Call your local Value Added Reseller or contact Ashlar-Vellum directly.

### Vehicular Design Initiative

We are still looking for a few more designers to join our Vehicular Design Initiative to guide the development of a vehicular design add-on to our 3D modeling software. If you or any of your customers design aircraft, automobiles, watercraft, rail compartments or any

other type of conveyance, your input would be greatly valued. Please contact Robert Bou at [robert.bou@ashlar.com](mailto:robert.bou@ashlar.com) to become part of this influential group.

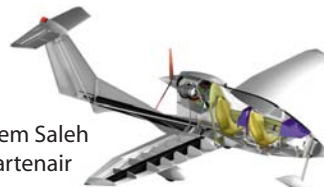
Bakewell-White  
Yacht Design



Nick Robinson  
Automotive Design & Illustration



Saleem Saleh  
of Partenair



## Welcome to Ashlar-Vellum Training

Want to get more productivity out of your software and a greater return on your investment? Sign up for an Ashlar-Vellum training session. Whether you attend at our corporate headquarters in Austin, Texas, or with one of our certified Channel Partners around the world, you'll learn secrets that will advance your skills and expand your creativity.

In November, Ashlar-Vellum welcomed Gary Bryngelson, Quality Assurance Manager and William Butek, Engineer, of Brithinee Electric to Graphite<sup>TM</sup> training in Austin. Brithinee Electric builds motors and motor control systems for a wide variety of industries.



Gary Bryngelson, center, and Bill Butek, right, of Brithinee Electric participate in Graphite training with Nick Slaughter, Ashlar-Vellum's training consultant.

### Accessory Feature: Graphite Share<sup>TM</sup>, Cobalt Share<sup>TM</sup>, Vellum Share<sup>TM</sup>

Do your customers need to share Ashlar-Vellum files with clients and collaborators who don't own Ashlar-Vellum software? Try one of our free Share utility products.

- AutoCAD
- SolidWorks
- Solid Edge
- Pro/E
- CATIA

Share is a set of utilities that allows others to open, view, print and export Ashlar-Vellum files from their own Windows or Mac desktop. Share displays exactly what you intended, not some translation that might be just a little different. It's especially helpful for interacting with clients or production people using:

Share comes in three versions for Mac or Windows:

- Graphite Share, which also views old Vellum 2D/3D files.
- Cobalt Share, which also views Xenon, Argon and old Vellum Solids files.
- Vellum Share 99, which opens old .vlm files.



These powerful tools are free from Ashlar-Vellum for the download at: <http://www.ashlar-vellum.com/sections/products/share/share.html>.

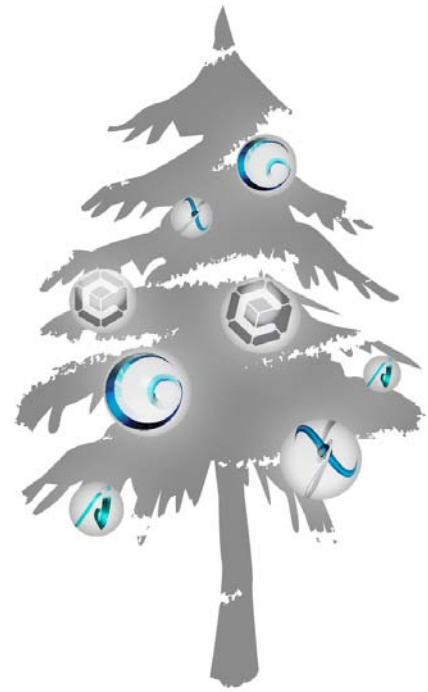
Help make customer translation and collaboration issues smoother. Download a free copy of Share today.

## Special Upgrade Pricing

We're offering special pricing on certain upgrades to Cobalt™, Xenon™ and Argon™ v7 between now and the end of the year. These specials are from a number of earlier versions and are a great reason upgrade. But hurry because these prices are going up on January 1, 2006. Don't miss the opportunity to move up in power and functionality at a terrific price.

	Price thru Dec 31, 2005	Price on Jan 1st, 2006
<b>Cobalt v5 to v7</b>	\$995	\$1295
<b>Xenon v5/v6 to Cobalt v7</b>	\$1295	\$1595
<b>Xenon v7 to Cobalt v7</b>	\$1095	\$1295
<b>Xenon v5 to v7</b>	\$895	\$995
<b>Argon v5/v6 to Cobalt v7</b>	\$3095	\$3395
<b>Argon v7 to Cobalt v7</b>	\$2895	\$3095
<b>Argon v5/v6 to Xenon v7</b>	\$2095	\$2395
<b>Argon v7 to Xenon v7</b>	\$1995	\$2095
<b>Argon v5 to v7</b>	\$495	\$495
<b>Solids to to Cobalt v7</b>	\$1695	\$1995
<b>Solids to to Xenon v7</b>	\$1095	\$1495
<b>Vellum 3D 3+ to Cobalt v7</b>	\$1995	\$2495
<b>Vellum 3D 3+ to Xenon v7</b>	\$1095	\$1495
<b>Graphite via 3+ to Cobalt v7</b>	\$1795	\$2295
<b>Graphite via 3+ to Xenon v7</b>	\$995	\$1295

All prices in US dollars.



### Graphite 7.6.2 Reads Unauthorized Vellum Pro & DraftBoard Files

The next Graphite update, v7.6.2 (also known as v7.6r2 or v7sp2r2), will soon be available. The most important news for this release is the ability to open .vlm files created in Vellum Pro and DraftBoard, the unauthorized Ashlar-Vellum software distributed without license in Germany, Benelux and Japan.

## German Court Denies POSH's Appeal

In mid November Ashlar-Vellum received word that a judge from the German federal court in Munich denied the appeal by POSH GmbH, formerly Vellum GmbH, and upheld the previous ruling regarding Ashlar-Vellum's

claim to our trade names, domain names and intellectual property in Germany. POSH has been ordered to turn over their customer list for evaluation of damages to Ashlar-Vellum. We'll let you know as this story unfolds.



## Rio 21 on the Go with Obvio!

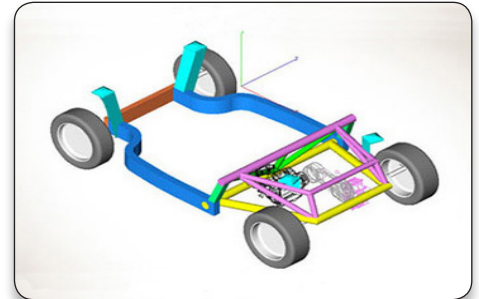
Celso Santos, Cobalt aficionado in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is working with Obvio! Automotoveiculos to design the new Obvio! 012. While still in prototype it was unveiled at the San Francisco International Auto Show on November 15th.

This three-seat vehicle offers high performance and high safety for the urban driver. The low consumption 1.6 Liter Trittech engine provides 115 HP getting 30 mpg (12.5km/l) city and over 40 mpg (17.3 km/l) highway. Larger engines are also available offering 170 and 250 HPs. The suggested selling price is about US\$28,000.

We'll pass along more details on this exciting project as they become available from Celso.



Designer Celso Santos tries out the driving position of the Obvio! 012.



Obvio! 012 chassis drawing done in Cobalt.



Obvio! 012 in prototype production.



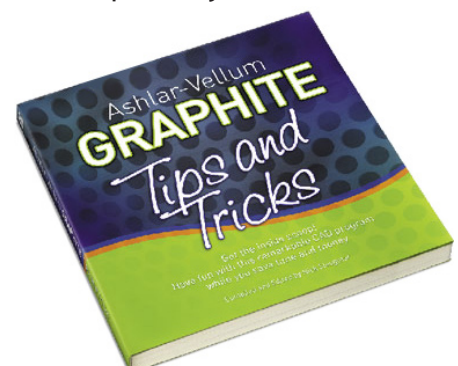
The Obvio! 012 debuts at the San Francisco International Auto Show.

## Accessory Feature Graphite Tips & Tricks Book

Have you seen the new *Ashlar-Vellum Graphite Tips and Tricks* book? This book offers power-users all kinds of useful insider's information, saving significant amounts of time. In it are over 80 tips including:

- Work more efficiently by stringing together tools and commands.
- Learn the hidden features of sheets, views and models.
- Quickly access a floating tool palette.
- Learn the fast way to create annotated leaders.
- Place dimensions for radii, diameters and angles in precise locations.
- Create tangent and perpendicular lines in a heartbeat.
- Explore non-associative detail views.
- Use macros with the skill of an expert.
- Create smart walls along center lines.
- Learn how to take 3D parts and create solid-looking 2D flattened images.

Designed for both Mac and Windows users, this book will increase your productivity whether you're a long-time user from the days of Vellum 2.7 or a relative new comer in the last release or two. Its suggested retail price is just \$49.95.



## Hot Fixes

The Ashlar-Vellum development team is dedicated to providing the best possible software to our customers. Hot Fix 2 for Cobalt, Xenon and Argon was released in mid October and addressed issues such as various crash conditions, hatching difficulties, extrusion problems and difficulties with hidden lines, check object box, and the Update All preview images, to name a few.

Hot Fix 3 is in testing and will soon be available. This version addresses issues with the positioning of flyout palettes, shortcuts activating wrong tools, hatching irregularities, idiosyncrasies with



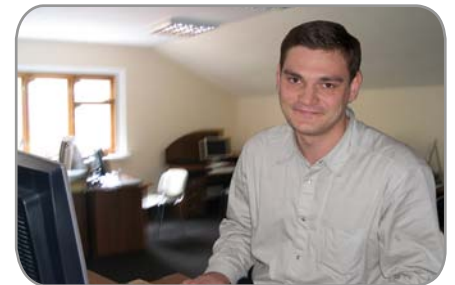
model-to-sheet, various crash conditions, inappropriate part orientations, and a number of other bugs.

If you have not downloaded these hot fixes we recommend that you do it soon. Our development department is simultaneously preparing Service Pack 1, anticipated sometime after the first of the year.

## Meet our Staff

**Andrey Voloshin** is part of our crack development team in Kiev. At university, he graduated at the top of his class and then worked for a Russian defense

contractor developing graphical navigation systems. When he's not developing software, Andrey is an ace ping-pong player and likes to travel.



**Vu Cao** is finishing his degree in Microbiology at the University of Texas, and eventually wants to run his own business. He's a perfect fit for us, learning all aspects of keeping a small business in

motion, from operations to IT to sales to support. Besides being fluent in both English and Vietnamese, Vu is a huge movie buff, especially comedies, and even does some amateur editing.

**Tatyana Zavyalova** leads our web development team in Kiev. It is her deft hand and keen eye that laid out this issue of *The Design Explorer*. A student at Kiev Polytechnic Institute, she is currently studying chemical

engineering. While she lists her hobbies as mathematics, electronics and mathematical modeling, she also likes to cook and read fantasy. She was recently married this September.



**Oleg Pshenichniy** is our senior software developer in Ukraine, working hard on our next release. Always fascinated by physics, at

15 he won a Ukrainian national competition. Today he likes sports, world travel and reading.

## File Translation Tutorial for Graphite

In last quarter's *Design Explorer* we discussed importing and exporting 3D modeling files into Cobalt, Xenon and Argon. We will continue now with the issues relating to Graphite translation.

Ashlar-Vellum is committed to providing our customers with the best collaborative tools

### **Before You Begin**

Just as with 3D modeling, before beginning a file translation for Graphite, it is important to establish a clear purpose for each particular translation. You may be showing a client a design or exchanging data for FEA analysis. Maybe you're sending a 2D pattern to a cutting machine or other manufacturing device. Whatever the purpose, if you're trying to accomplish more than one goal, consider more than one translation.

Before translating a file, stop and consider if the translated data must be edited or just viewed and/or printed. If it is to be viewed or printed, use the Graphite Share utility available FREE on the Ashlar-Vellum

### **Specific File Format Advice Regarding Graphite**

#### **IGES**

Dating back to 1979, the Initial Graphics Exchange Standard was established by early pioneers in the CAD industry. Software and graphics standards have evolved

on the market, allowing you to work effectively with other designers, engineers, clients and manufacturers.

Once again we'd like to remind you that a file translation is exactly that — a translation — and certain subtleties may be lost in the process if you are not careful.

website. Graphite Share allows you to open, view, print and export Graphite and older Vellum 2D/3D files. Send Graphite Share to a client or manufacturer free of charge along with a Graphite file. Share allows them to export the file themselves, experimenting with the file format that works best for their needs.

On the other hand, if the translated data must be manipulated and saved, consider the target application. Can it handle the data being translated to it properly, such as multiple sheets in one file?

Remember that re-importing a file successfully into the original format neither proves nor

significantly since that time and today IGES is referred to by many in the industry as "I Guess" as its results are less than consistent. The IGES v4.0 translator was implemented in Graphite,

Discussed in this article are the common issues that occur when translating files into and out of Graphite, offering you tips to get the greatest possible results.



disproves its translation accuracy. It is no real indication of success nor failure.

Older versions of Vellum had difficulties with metric-to-English conversions. These were addressed in Graphite v6, but be aware of the issues if you have archive files that you're trying to convert.

Use Zip or Stuff-in to compress files before emailing. Using an email program's built-in compression has unreliable results on graphics, often converting them to text files. This is especially true if emailing a file from a Mac to a Windows-based system.

however, our technical support department maintains this format is a can of worms, best left alone. If there is any other translation option, we recommend trying that first.

## PDF

While not built in to Ashlar-Vellum software, Portable Document Format writers are readily available. Use Adobe Acrobat or Distiller for the best quality PDF files. PDFs created through the PDF maker included with the operating system are sometimes less complete.

## DXF/DWG

It is important to remember that DXF and DWG are NOT published "standards." They are file formats invented and encoded by Autodesk.

Graphite provides exact 2D/3D wireframe geometry for DXF and DWG translations. While

Graphite offers high visual fidelity for dimensions and text in these formats, if your goal is to import or export archive drawings, preserving the text and dimensions, we recommend using a free copy of Ashlar-Vellum Share or buying Adobe Acrobat instead.

DXF/DWG files present several inherent challenges. First, they do not always specify units. Be sure to set Graphite to match the source file prior to importing it. Second, because individual users customize their systems, there is often difficulty in translating fonts, line weights and patterns, dimensioning styles, hatch patterns and custom symbols. Be sure these are also present on

your destination system. Be aware that DXF and DWG are different and may provide very different results. We often recommend trying them both to see which provides the best results for your file.

Ashlar-Vellum has been asked about support for the DXF 2005/2006 standard. While the encoding on this system has been broken, it requires changes to our file structure and will not be incorporated until version 8. If you need to convert to this newest format, we recommend purchasing Any DWG DXF Converter 2005 for about \$75 from AnyDWG Software, Inc.

## ***Tips for Going Between Graphite and Specific Products***

### **Adobe Illustrator**

To export from Graphite to Illustrator, use the EPS format. Be aware that dimensions, text, and .pict and .bmp images are not supported by EPS in this process. Remember that EPS does not support 3D data. It will translate all data to the top view, unless you flatten the 3D data yourself before exporting as EPS. If you need text and dimensions for Illustrator,

export using the DXF format or print to Post Script. Usually the very easiest way to get simple data into Illustrator is to highlight it in Graphite, then copy it to the clipboard and paste it into Illustrator.

### **Pro/E**

We recommend using DWG for translating data between Graphite and Pro/E.

### **SolidWorks**

Again, DWG is the preferred method of translation between Graphite and SolidWorks.

### **AutoCAD**

Refer to the discussion on DWG/DXF above.

## ***Future Vision of Translation Development at Ashlar-Vellum***

Our development team is committed to continuous improvement of our DXF/DWG and bitmap translators. We are

considering implementing an e-paper solution, such as PDF, into Graphite. We appreciate that being able to collaborate

with other designers, engineers, manufacturers and clients using different software is extremely important to our users.



## Ten Benefits of Ashlar-Vellum Professional Software

### 1 **Bring successful products to market faster.**

Any 3D modeler helps speed the process between concept and production. The difference with Ashlar-Vellum is the flexibility to change and refine these products painlessly. Your products not only go to market faster, but you are assured of their success.

### 2 **Increase your creativity.**

How ever you chose to approach a design, Ashlar-Vellum software will accommodate your way of thinking to achieve exactly what you envision. You are never locked into one method or way of doing things.

### 3 **Reduce your learning curve.**

Any software is "easy" — as long as you think like a programmer. Ashlar-Vellum software lets you think your own way, so that learning is intuitive.

### 4 **Explore a design in 3D, don't just document a finished idea.**

While other 3D modeling software merely lets you draw what you've already designed, Ashlar-Vellum provides the tools to think through ideas in three dimensions, placing parts, reshaping features and refining ideas.

### 5 **Refine your design, don't wrestle with the software.**

Ashlar pioneered the Drafting Assistant so that drawing is a joy. We've reduced the mouse clicks,

dialog boxes and other things that slow the process, so you blaze through concept development, exploring maximum design variations in minimum time, for a refined, successful design.

### 6 **Create a unique design identity.**

Using Ashlar-Vellum's powerful tools you can rise above the industry standard, not just follow the pack. Don't get locked into



Show others exactly what you envision using our photo-realistic rendering and precision engineering drawings.

one thought process. Set your own course for success.

### 7 **Sell your ideas more successfully.**

The photo-realistic rendering in Cobalt, Xenon and Argon goes beyond visualization to reality. Clients and manufacturing all see exactly what you envision.

### 8 **Get 100% out of your entire workforce.**

Because of the Designer Elements' ease of use and adaptability, they can be deployed further throughout your organization.

No longer will your most creative thinkers resort to pen and paper just to get the job done.

### 9 **Use your choice of platform.**

Whether you're a long-time Windows user or a die-hard Mac aficionado, Ashlar-Vellum software supports your platform, exchanging files with ease. There's no additional cost to change platforms when running current software.



Develop your design in three dimensions, not just document a finished idea.

### 10 **Work at home, at the office, or on the road with one license.**

Ashlar-Vellum knows that creative people often get more done at home. Our unique licensing agreement lets you legally load our software on more than one computer as long as you are only using it on one machine at a time. Using a PC at the office and a Mac at home? No problem. One license covers both platforms as long as you're only using one at time.



## Translations without Pain



*With the rapid growth in 3D modeling, transferring data from System A to System B, intact, has become part of everyday life for most businesses. 3D file translation is made more difficult when large organizations have enterprise-based systems, each with its specific file formats.*

Like many other suppliers to these companies, Quigley Design faced the prospect of having to buy into expensive enterprise systems in order to read and write native files.

"With every new project it seemed we were being asked to read and deliver files in so many formats it would have cost us tens of thousands of pounds just to be able to do the jobs," said Kevin Quigley, president of the Shrewsbury UK business. "We evaluated a range of options for file transfer and settled on Ashlar-Vellum™ Cobalt™ as it offered by far the best combination of CAD tools and native CAD data translators for the money."

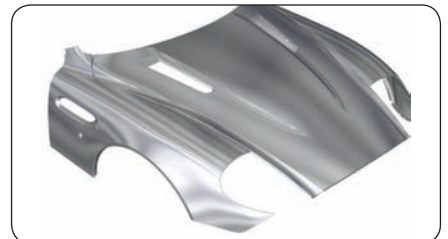
***"I've used most of the major CAD systems on the market, but in my experience there is not much to match the flexibility, and sheer value, of Cobalt's translation tools for 3D geometry — and then there's the modeling!"***

Shortly after installing Cobalt, Quigley Design undertook work on CATIA v4 files of the new Aston Martin Vanquish. Kevin stated that "Cobalt imported the entire CATIA file of all the body panels in just a few minutes — with no errors. I was impressed!"

Kevin added, "If we can read a native file from a customer they won't have to convert the file for us. Getting the files back to the customer is simple. As well as the export formats we can write in Cobalt, we supply each customer with the free Cobalt Share application. Our customers will be able to see what they should be getting and it lets them experiment with the best import options for their CAD system."



Thanks to impeccable styling and the cache of being James Bond's vehicle of choice, the Aston Martin is one of the most recognizable car brands in the world.



"Cobalt imported the entire Catia file of body panels in just a few minutes - with no errors. I was impressed!"

### **Background/Contact:**

For more details on this project contact:

#### **Quigley Design**

Westgate House, Hills Lane,  
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 1QU

Phone: +44 (0) 1743 231661

Email: kevin.quigley@kqd.co.uk

## Clearly a Great Design

Award winning industrial designer Nelson Au was challenged by Seagate Technologies to create a unique look for a new USB pocket hard drive. Offering higher storage capacity, they wanted a recognizable design to compete successfully in an already crowded market.

Given a physical model of a previous concept, a printed circuit board, and several other components, Au used Cobalt<sup>TM</sup> to quickly design several new concepts using the software's outstanding ability to create any shape imaginable.

Then Au had a breakthrough. He created an outer enclosure to house the retractable cord, and an inner portion to house the memory and electronic components. Using Cobalt's transparency features, he was able to show that the design and inner workings of the drive would fit and work together perfectly. Says Au,

***"Cobalt's ability to make objects transparent, as well as its great rendering capabilities really helped me communicate the design to the client. It helped them realize that the beauty of the design was the ability to see the inner components."***

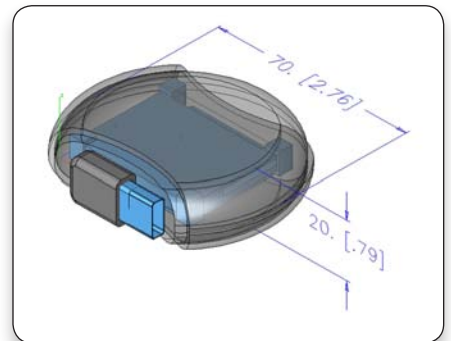
The client approved the design, and the drawings that were so easily done in Cobalt went directly to a rapid prototyping house to create an STL model, validating the touch and feel of this highly tactile design.

Having used Ashlar-Vellum<sup>TM</sup> software since 1989, Au loves Cobalt because it is so easy to learn and requires no training. He also likes the compatibility with his Mac. Says Au, "My coworkers use Rhino, Alias, SolidWorks, or Pro/E and then whine a lot about their software. I use Ashlar-Vellum software without all of the aggravation, and can still exchange information with all these applications using Cobalt's built-in translators."

Ashlar-Vellum is proud to have designers like Nelson Au as our customers, designers creating leading-edge products that are clearly above the rest.



The Seagate pocket hard drive by Nelson Au.



Au loved the way Cobalt presented shaded, dimensional drawings with transparency, allowing the client to visualize the inner workings and verify precise fit of the components.



The Seagate pocket drive with its retractable cord.

**Background/Contact:**

For more details on this project contact:

**Nelson Au**

**Phone:** +1 650-694-5329

**Email:** n.au@sbcglobal.net