



BENTLEY BE CONFERENCE 2007, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

THE ANNUAL BENTLEY BE CONFERENCE WAS HELD APRIL 29 – MAY 3 AT THE LOS ANGELES CONVENTION CENTER. WITH 3000 GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE AND FOLLOWING THE EVENING WELCOME RECEPTION, THE PLENARY SESSION BEGAN WITH BENTLEY COO MALCOLM WALTER OPENING THE EVENT TO ADDRESS THE AUDIENCE, “IT’S TIME FOR LEARNING AND WE ARE HERE TO SHARE!”

Greg Bentley, CEO of Bentley followed and harked back to the beginning of the company in Pasadena, California by his brothers. He spoke about ‘extra-ordinary’ infrastructure being built around the world and how Bentley products are at the forefront of the rapidly growing infrastructure design market. Bentley pointed out several challenges including a need to face sustainability challenges, resource limitations and the difficulties in finding design professionals as well speculating on how these needs might be met. “Bentley software is in 80% of the post-secondary institutions in North America and 68% of them outside the United States of America,” he said.

It was pointed out that recent studies have shown that while production has increased, productivity has fallen and that speeding production is not the answer to solve the lack of efficiency. Rather, it was suggested that the design process itself must become more efficient and provide new ways for increasing efficiency and generating higher quality work in shorter periods of time. Inevitably this will lead toward IT systems becoming more integrated with design workflows and processes. Bentley suggested to meet this challenge we must respond in 3 important ways.

- Prioritize continuous learning
- Extend collaboration
- Innovate

The combination of learning and sharing together, it is believed, would ensure a supply of knowledgeable and talented professionals who would work together, whose interactions would lead towards higher levels of innovation.

Several production strategies were outlined including more interoperability, acceleration of processes through efficiency, improving deliverables and changes on the ‘business model’ of design itself. For each point an example was provided from current projects around the world – demonstrating the efficiencies and gains.

The Bentley Business Model is relatively straightforward consisting of:

- The Bentley Institute (On demand learning and distance learning)
- Consulting, Implementation and Best Practices
- Managed Solutions (Operational resourcing and Bentley professionals on-site)

In 2006 Bentley (a privately held company) had revenues of 389 million USD (over 50% from outside USA) and 15% growth (9% organic). Subscriptions to Bentley amount to two-thirds of revenue and for the first quarter 2007, revenues are up 14%. The company continues to invest 20% of revenue into research and development. One new product – Generative Components – is innovative and coming to market shortly.

Bhupinder Singh, senior VP of Bentley software indicated that 41 trillion USD will be spent on infrastructure over the next 25 years. Of that amount, 3.5 trillion will be on water related infrastructure in North America alone. In terms of Bentley software, he said that the company goal is to operate on one platform that creates high levels of reuse, evolution, standardizes and which provides a multi-connected environment for users. Keith Bentley would later explain the platform and how it was designed and 'layered' to provide a broad and rich expandability. In his words, Bentley software (built on MicroStation) provides;

- reuse of training-customization
- breadth of workflows solutions and workflows
- continuity and predictability
- file / data longevity and sustainability
- growing and evolving platform

A new 'ProjectWise Navigator' was introduced which includes much of the platform strategy.

Styli Camateros, vp Civil and Geospatial Products presented during the opening Plenary as well. One thing I will point out is his new title. You will notice that Bentley puts Civil and Geospatial under one person. This has major implications and supports the design process line of thinking. But it also supports the fact that geospatial is moving into civil applications in a big way. Products like Projectwise Navigator are examples of that occurring, but so too are integrated strategies which put 'location' into workflows. This is a bold step but perfectly rational and should yield some interesting results in the days ahead for Bentley.

Camateros spoke about 'spatial seamless' operations and design processes. He cited the examples of Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) standards such as Web Mapping Services (WMS) and Google Earth (KML) and identified all of these efforts as 'Geocoordination.' He also referred to the upcoming code named version of software called 'Athens' which will include a mapping interface in ProjectWise.

'Athens' will provide what is termed 'conceptual design' – the capability to explore and build on ideas moving from design to prototyping faster. This concept is important because it increases efficiency through schedule compression while creating alternatives - "different ways to do better." Other additions we can expect to see from Bentley include 'push/pull modelling' and a continued feeding of the front-end of engineering design (supported through interoperability and integration).

The highlight of this conference was the 'Annual BE Awards of Excellence'. The award winners for those categories of most interest to our readers include:

Civil

- Civil Innovation: HNTB – TrueViz™ OnTarget®
- Civil Road Infrastructure: Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick (India) Pvt Ltd – Feasibility and Detailed Project Report for 4/6 Laning of Hyderabad-Vijayawada and Vijayawada-Machlipatnam Under NHDP Phase III
- Civil Site Design: Vela VKE Consulting Engineering – Zimbali Civil



BE Award of Excellence Winners

Infrastructure

- Civil Visualization and Simulation: Mott MacDonald Ltd – East London Line Project
- Civil Structural Analysis, Design, and Documentation: Arup – Marina Bayfront Pedestrian Bridge
- Civil Distributed Enterprise: The Banks Group – Centralized Data Storage Using ProjectWise StartPoint and Riverbed WAN Optimization

Geospatial

- Geospatial Communications: Nacap Telecom BV – Fibre Optics 'Zuid-Limburg' -Isilinx
- Geospatial Government: Gemeente Amsterdam, Dienst Ruimtelijke Ordening – IJburg
- Geospatial Mapping and Cadastre: Petrobras SA – SGO Project - Petrobras Subsea Assets Tracking
- Geospatial 3D GIS: AAMHatch – True Orthophotography and 3D Model of the City of Melbourne
- Geospatial Water Resource Management: ISKI Genel Mudurlugu – Infrastructure Integration of Mega City - Istanbul
- Geospatial Utilities: Baltimore Gas & Electric Co. – The BGE Bentley Project
- Geospatial Innovation: Dutch Ministry of Finance – Geospatially Enabling the Dutch Ministry of Finance; Putting 'Where' into SAP
- Geospatial Distributed Enterprise: Sandia National Laboratories – Power Through Integration

The BE Conference continues to evolve. The presentation of award nominee's work is the highlight of the show, showcasing what is possible from creative and talented minds. We look forward to the 2008 show.

Jeff Thurston was editor of *Geoconnexion International Magazine* when this report was submitted.

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