SolidWorks Successful in Benelux Educational Market

Training Institutes increasingly choose the user-friendly and turnkey teaching materials of SolidWorks 3D-CAD software

Alkmaar, The Netherlands, November 24, 2009 – Last year, many training institutes purchased SolidWorks® 3D CAD software and SolidWorks Simulation. For primary and secondary technical educational institutes in particular, SolidWorks Benelux developed a series of tutorials in cooperation with the Stichting Consortium Beroepsonderwijs (Vocational education syndicate foundation). As a result, SolidWorks' share in the educational market continues to grow.

In the Benelux, SolidWorks is the leading software at higher education institutes. Many technical universities and schools for higher vocational education switched to 3D many years ago, and opted for SolidWorks at that time. To familiarize primary and secondary technical educational institutes in particular with the benefits of SolidWorks, SolidWorks Benelux developed a series of tutorials. The development of these tutorials, including a collection of over 200 exercises and a glossary, took more than a year. Recently, the twelfth – and for the time being last – part of this series was released, and at the same time the entire series was adapted to the most recent educational SolidWorks version, 2009-2010.

"Two years ago, education was at a turning point", says Jack van den Broek, the tutorials' co-developer, teacher at the Helmond based Vakcollege Dr. Knippenberg, and within the vocational education coonsortium a CAD education pioneer. "Many training institutes still worked with 2D CAD. Some had started to use 3D CAD, but this was mainly based on well-intended initiatives of a few individual teachers. Non-existing standard software was one problem, but more important, there were no suitable training materials for primary and secondary technical education. SolidWorks Benelux set to work this challenge. The vocational education consortium and we jointly agreed that we would develop a series of 12 tutorials, that would not only provide educational institutions with the most user-friendly 3D CAD program, but also with excellent turnkey training materials".

"Tutorials are seamlessly geared to the training", says Jack van den Broek. "In this target group in particular, it is essential that students instantly see what can be achieved with a CAD program in practice. Many of the exercises students perform in the tutorials, from rotating a simple axis to making a complete sheet iron streetlight, are also performed in the workplace. It is wonderful to see that most students get a feel for this very quickly, and only want to progress fast. As SolidWorks is user-friendly and has a very short learning curve, students can focus quickly and exclusively on designing better products, instead of operating the program. This is hugely motivational".

"Many teachers, who have been working with 2D software for many years, are reluctant to switch to 3D", according to van den Broek. "At the vocational education community, we regularly provide introductory training for groups of teachers. When these teacher see SolidWorks' user-friendliness, and when they realize the availability of truly turnkey training materials, that is ready to go, this step is somewhat easier taken".

"The principles for creating these tutorials have always been that the threshold had to be as low as possible", says Arnoud Breedveld, who was responsible for the tutorial creation. "One way we achieved this was by using a minimal amount of text. No lengthy explanations about how SolidWorks exactly works, but only practical examples. In fact, students hardly have to read anything. By executing the examples they realize how to achieve a certain result. In the long run, students automatically see the connection, and are able to independently understand the structure of the program. This is information they will never forget. At the same time, the level in the tutorials quickly increases. After students complete all 12 tutorials, they can take the Certified SolidWorks Associate (CSWA) exam".

“Since we started creating these tutorials, we have seen a steep increase in training institutes choosing SolidWorks", says Kees Kloosterboer, SolidWorks' Regional Manager for the Benelux countries. Some of the important schools that made the switch include Noorderpoort College and ROC Friese Poort. In one year's time, we have been able to build a market share at primary vocational education (VMBO) schools that allows us to rely on word-of-mouth advertising to quickly win other VMBO schools over. In addition, SolidWorks Resellers increasingly start cooperation with educational institutions, and are able to provide these schools with excellent training and support".

“The response we receive is extremely positive,” says Kees Kloosterboer. "Response from teachers and training institutes and students attending schools that haven't switched to SolidWorks yet alike. The Student Design Kit and the tutorials allow these students to immediately start working independently with free material at www.solidworks.nl. Meanwhile we have customized training materials for every level of education: for primary and secondary education, the 12 tutorials and the exercises, for higher technical education the student exercise book and the advanced modeling tutorial. All tutorials can be downloaded from www.solidworks.nl. Those needing more in-depth background information may purchase the commercially available book called “Productmodelleren met SolidWorks 2009” (Product modeling with SolidWorks 2009), authored by Arnoud Breedveld. In this reference work, the only one commercially available in Dutch, all subjects from SolidWorks are discussed extensively.”

“Despite the success we already achieved with these tutorials, we continue looking ahead", says Kees Kloosterboer. “SolidWorks is committed to education. We want to make working with SolidWorks as easy as possible for every teacher at any training institute. Students working with SolidWorks are able to design better products that will provide them with a competitive edge on the labor market. In order to continue to provide students with these opportunities, we will further develop teaching material and keep it up-to-date with the latest versions of SolidWorks Educational Edition".

About Stichting Consortium Beroepsonderwijs
The Stichting Consortium Beroepsonderwijs is a joint venture of more than 40 ROCs with 150 Engineering and ICT departments and 34 Care and Well-being departments. In addition, the 'VMBO Platform Metaal en Metalektro' joined us as of August 2007 with 230 schools. For further details, please contact Jack van den Broek at +31 (0)492 544110 or visit the Web site (http://www.consortiumbo.nl).

About Dassault Systèmes SolidWorks Corp.
Dassault Systèmes SolidWorks Corp., a Dassault Systèmes S.A. subsidiary, is a world leader in 3D solutions. The company develops and markets software for design, analysis, product data management, documentation, and environmental impact assessment. It is the leading supplier of 3D CAD technology, giving teams intuitive, high-performing software that helps them design better products. For the latest news, information, or an online demonstration, visit the Web site (www.solidworks.nl) or call +31-(0)72-5143550.

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