

Ashlar-Vellum Channel Partner Newsletter March 2006

Check out Greg's Podcast

If you haven't done it already, check out Greg Morgan's new podcast called *Greg's Ashlar*. These audio and video episodes can be downloaded to your iPod or enjoyed on your computer. Greg provides an inside view on products, development and cool

things about our software. You can get to the podcast through iTunes or going the Ashlar-Vellum website at www.ashlar.com and click on **Community>Podcasts**. Subscribe to this free podcast and you'll be automatically notified when new episodes are available.



Robert Bou Awarded 5th Patent

In late February Robert Bou received notification of the awarding of his fifth patent from the United States Patent &

Trademark Office. Among other things, this technical patent enables computer graphic systems to be certain that all

appropriate patterned lines (such as those with dots and dashes) are always selected when a user clicks in an area or uses a crossing window to select everything that touches the frame, even when the pick or window border falls in a blank area of the pattern.



Pertinent specifically to AutoCAD and other applications that use a display list technology for drawing acceleration, the patent was sold to Autodesk in 1998 with Ashlar-Vellum retaining a license should we ever choose to implement this type of technology in our software at some future date.

Update on Ashlar-Vellum Support for Intel Mac

Cobalt, Xenon, Argon and Graphite have all been tested under the Rosetta emulator by Ashlar-Vellum staff members on the 17-inch 1.83 GHz Intel Core Duo and by one of our Channel Partners on the 20-inch 2 GHz Intel Core Duo. Any initial

problems were reported to Apple and have been resolved by them.

We have one field report of difficulties with color settings on the Mac Mini on Graphite. The problem has been reported to Apple and they are responding

to the situation. We have not tested in house, nor have we received additional field reports of difficulties with the MacBook Pro. We will continue further testing and are confident that Apple will be able to fix any issues in Rosetta.

Ashlar-Vellum Support Policies Changing

In an ongoing attempt to get our cost metrics in line with successful software companies around the world, we are changing our

policies and procedures for technical support.

Changes in the Current Procedure

Starting immediately, customers who call the Austin, TX office go to a Level One Technician who can usually answer about 90% of their questions. The caller is immediately asked for their serial number and has their contact and system information verified. If they are on current software the technician assists them directly or sends their problem via email directly to our Level Two support team. A Level Two or Level Three technician investigates the problem and responds either via email or through a scheduled telephone call directly to the customer.

upgrade or invited to send an email directly to



Michael Dyrda spearheads our Level Two technical support operation via e-mail from Kiev.

support@ashlar.com. We are trying to minimize support costs from those who are using software from the Stone Age on an operating system from Bronze Age, who've updated to their brother-in-law's old hardware from the Iron Age and are complaining that they can no longer print on their stone tablets.

All responses to customers (other than, "The price to upgrade is...") are now being captured into a knowledge-base system which will not only facilitate easier support by our technicians, but will also be added to the website for easy customer access.

Non-current users are either referred to sales in order to

Future Changes for Greater User Satisfaction

We are currently investigating the Kayako Support Suite, which is a web-based help system. Support Suite offers an extremely elegant knowledge-base system where customers start to type their question and possible answers appear based on key words. Kayako also provides a log-in system that will give you

as Channel Partners access to internal documents with answers and insider information within the system. Our knowledge base can also be put on your site very cost effectively, in your local language, allowing you to leverage our knowledge for better support to your own customers.

Exciting things are happening at Ashlar-Vellum as we move forward, streamlining our procedures and increasing user access to information. Stay tuned for more updates as we continually strive to serve our customers and help you increase sales.

Multilingual Design Explorer

The Ashlar-Vellum user newsletter, *The Design Explorer*, will go out this quarter in several languages and two page sizes, with the help

of our International Channel Partners. Special thanks go to Arnold CAD in Switzerland, SIMIT in Italy, Lonsain Design Studio

in Holland, and MediaWorks in France for making this enormous feat possible.

Ashlar-Vellum Ukraine Participates in EnterEX



On February 20th-23rd the Ashlar-Vellum Ukraine sales team gathered leads and exhibited our software at EnterEX 2006 in Kiev. Oriented toward corporate users in a wide variety of industries, EnterEX is the largest IT tradeshow in the Ukraine.

From left to right, Vladimir Karpenko, managing director; Michael Dyrda, QA and technical support; Peter Sinyavskiy, sales; and Alyona Fedorenko, marketing support; in the Ashlar-Vellum Ukraine booth at EnterEX.

Opening Ashlar-Vellum under OS 9

Occasionally customers use Graphite or one of our 3D modeling products under OS 9 to access the older Macintosh plotter drivers that provide better results for larger plots (over 4 feet or 1.3 meters), line width control through colors, and colored line conversion to black and white.

The easiest way to start Graphite v7 under "Classic" OS 9 mode is using the application wizard from MaBaSoft. This easily installed little program can be figured out in about 15 minutes and sells for only US\$16 for a single user or US\$200 for a site license.

Graphite registration codes need to be longer than 30 days from expiration to run well without a registration conflict. Permanent or 90 day codes are best. Application Wizard requires Mac OS X 10.2 or higher and runs on PowerPC-based and Intel-based Macs. For more information or to order see <http://www.mabasoft.net>.



Special Price for Stocking Boxed Sets

For our international Channel Partners who do their own local manufacturing, Ashlar-Vellum is offering boxed sets including product box, manuals and CD snapper, at a reduced rate of US\$97.69 when purchasing three or more in any mix of products. Purchased individually, these sets are still US\$129.95.

UPS Red Worldwide offers a 25 kilogram box sent most places in the world for US\$200 to \$300. Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa are more expensive, costing usually US\$400 to \$500. This box will hold 10 unassembled boxed sets of any product mix you specify. This is a more cost effective way to stock

Ashlar-Vellum physical materials for those of you who manufacture and print your own CDs but do not produce manuals or other materials.



Progress on Service Pack 1

The beta version of Service Pack 1 is in the hands of our Quality Assurance team for testing. Product Manager Greg Morgan commented, "It's looking good. SP1 has fixed most of issues that

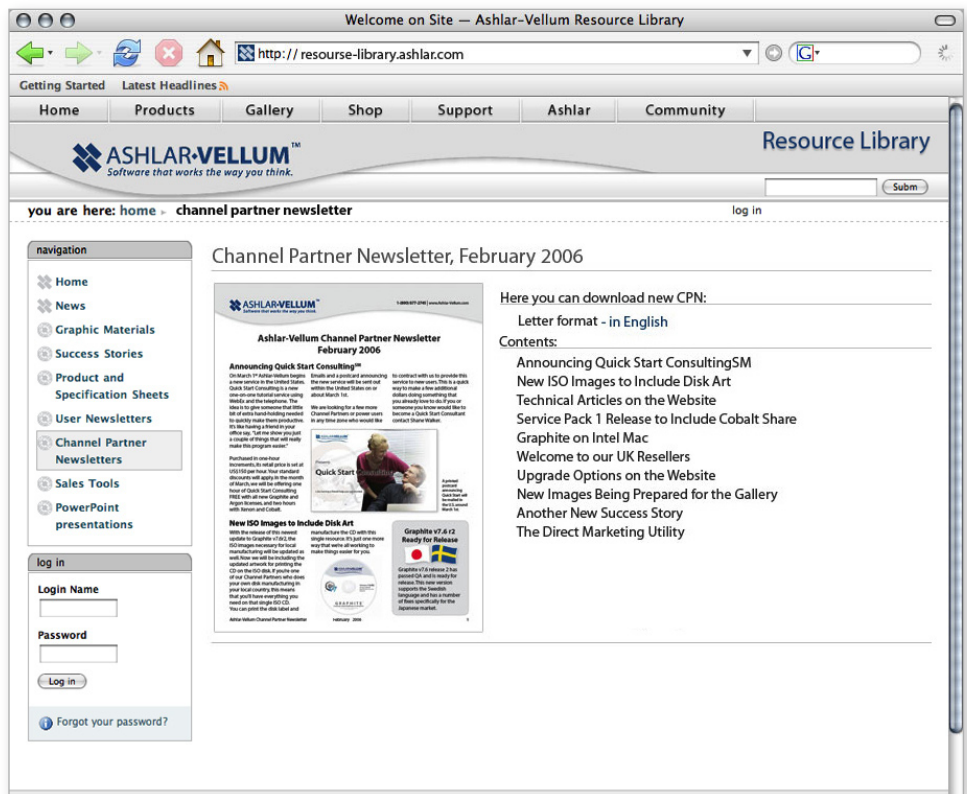
people have been complaining about on the Forum including crashing and model-to-sheet problems. We even added some new features." Morgan declined to name those specific features at

this date. We'll have to wait and see. Along with Service Pack 1 will come an updated version of Cobalt Share. Look for SP1 and Cobalt Share sometime around the end of the second quarter.

Resource Library Update

We are making progress on the Channel Partner Resource Library. Expect to see phase one sometime in April. At that time you will be contacted with your user name (your email address) and a password, which you will be able to change to a password of your choice. In phase one, expect to find:

- Corporate and product logos
- Product and accessory graphics
- Success story PDFs and source files
- Product and specification sheet PDFs and source files
- User Newsletter PDFs and source files
- Channel Partner Newsletter PDFs



Cobalt v7 Reviewed in MCAD

Al Dean gave Cobalt 7 an excellent review in the March 21st edition of the UK's *MCAD Magazine* with the help of user Kevin Quigley. Dean writes, "In short, Cobalt is an

impressively specified system and while the CAD industry at large is talking commoditisation and reducing margins, Cobalt actually delivers something still quite

rare – excellent value for money." Read the entire article at <http://www.mcadonline.com>

