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The USC School of Cinematic Arts: The Arrival of Spring in the Facilities Industry

buildingSMART alliance™

Interest Groups

By Terry Jordan

BUILDINGSMART ALLIANCE™ INTEREST Groups are ad-hoc groups of professionals from throughout the building industry—architects, engineers, building owners, contractors, facility managers, attorneys, real property owners, university faculty and students, and even first responders—who share an interest in exploiting technology to enhance quality and improve efficiency in the built environment. These groups meet informally each month for the exclusive purpose of professional networking and knowledge sharing.

HOW BSA LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS CAME INTO BEING

The bSa Local Interest Groups trace their origin to the “Bethesda Breakfast Club” (BBC) a group that formed when Deke Smith, the bSa’s Executive Director, then of the U.S. DoD’s Army Research Lab; Sandy Shaw, then of NIBS; and Michael Tardif, then of the AIA; began meeting for a monthly breakfast five years ago. Eventually Brad Holtz, of Cyon Research, Lamar Alexander, formerly of the CUA School of Architecture; Steve Hagan, of the GSA; and Ric Jackson, Executive Director of FIATECH; joined them. The BBC inspired Dave Jordani and Karie Johnson of Minneapolis to start a BIM Breakfast Group under the auspices of the Minneapolis AIA chapter, which soon began to attract 50 or more attendees regularly.

In December 2007, inspired by the Minneapolis group—and not to be upstaged—the BBC moved its monthly meeting to the Renaissance Hotel in downtown DC to coincide with the annual AEC-ST Show and buildingSMART alliance™ National Conference. Nearly 40 people showed up for that first breakfast, and the Renaissance Club was born. Shortly thereafter, the New York City Metro BIM Group was formed and began attracting 50 to 100 attendees for each meeting. The NYC group and others soon petitioned the bSa for “local chapter” status. The bSa, to avoid organizational bureaucracy, encouraged the local groups to grow organically and remain focused on the knowledge-sharing mission

of the alliance. In May 2008, the bSa Board of Direction approved a simple set of guidelines for local interest groups seeking official bSa affiliation, which can be found at www.buildingsmartalliance.org/resources/interest_groups.php.

What began as a small gathering of like-minded individuals meeting for breakfast in a Bethesda diner has grown to a network of ten professional networking groups and one student interest group all over the nation. bSa Local Interest Groups now meet regularly in Atlanta; Austin; Chicago; Cincinnati; Dallas/Fort Worth; Gainesville, Florida; the Iowa-Illinois Quad-Cities; Minneapolis; New York City; Seattle; and Washington, DC.

THE “INTEROPERABLE CULTURE” OF BSA LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS

Typically these informal meetings are held once a month before or after business hours. The meeting format is determined by each group based on what works best for them. A typical meeting consists of 30 minutes of breakfast/chat, a 15 to 30 minute presentation (with or without PowerPoint), and 30 to 45 minutes of discussion. The total time for a typical meeting is about 90 minutes. Light refreshments are either provided by a sponsor or host or attendees pay for their own meal. Each group uses its own combination of Web, e-mail, and social networking tools to communicate with members about upcoming meetings. This simple organizational structure can work for groups of 5 or 50.

There is no cost for official bSa affiliation for a local interest group, though the group coordinator must be a member of the alliance and must also sign and agree to abide by the bSa’s Memorandum of Understanding. Meetings of bSa Local Interest Groups are open to anyone. In fact, the bSa guidelines specifically state that membership in any group, including the bSa, CANNOT be a requirement for attending any bSa Local Interest Group meetings!

Some meetings take place in the office of a local architecture, engineering, or construction firm, while others are held at local hotels, restaurants, schools, or community

centers. The Quad-Cities group, for instance, holds its meetings at a local La Quinta Inn. The hotel provides its meeting space free of charge provided that, at a reduced fee, attendees purchase their breakfast bar.

Attendance for interest group meetings can range anywhere from 3 to 4 people to 75 or more, depending on local interest. Most groups start small and gain members rapidly as word gets out. Some are affiliated with local chapters of national organizations such as the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC), the American Society of Professional Estimators (ASPE), or the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI).

ATLANTA BIM BREAKFAST GROUP

The Atlanta BIM Breakfast Group began with an open call from Chuck Eastman at Georgia Tech for interested parties in August 2008. The group has since held seven breakfasts in the Student Center at Georgia Tech. There is no charge and people buy their own food in the food court. Most meetings begin with a 45-minute presentation by one of the participants and have featured Bobby Jones of Beazer Homes on their use of BIM as a national homebuilder; Chirag Mistry of HOK and Paul Hedgepath of Holder Construction, who presented their work on the Psychology Building at Emory University; Chuck Eastman and Yeon-Suk Jeong, who spoke about the work by Georgia Tech on automating design guides for the GSA; Greg Dasher of the Facilities Group, who presented work on 3D laser scanning of the Emory campus; and Kristin Tilakos and Arol Wolford of Reed Construction, who presented Reed’s SmartBIM Library. Attendance averages 20 to 30 people.

NEW YORK CITY METRO BIM

New York City Metro BIM was formed to enable NYC Metro area industry professionals to network on the subject of BIM technology application. The NYC Metro membership has grown rapidly from 3 original members in March 2008—Hosney Abdelgelil, Project Controls Director, Hill International

Inc.; Stephen Thomson, Principal, Thomson Architects PC.; and Steve Jones, Sr. Director, McGraw-Hill Construction—to over 300 members today, making it the largest interest group.

Within a year, the group had held 10 consecutive monthly events. The group has drawn the attention of local industry and professional organizations to BIM applications and sparked the interest of the local media. To attract new members, NYC Metro BIM has certified their meetings for continuing education credit by professional associations, including the AIA, ASPE, the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA), the Association for the Advancement of Cost Engineering International (AACEi), and others. The February 2009 meeting was the first at which attendees could earn AIA continuing education learning units.

NYC Metro BIM is also studying enhanced networking capabilities among members and with other national and international BIM groups. “We are looking for video conferencing to allow us to invite out-of-town speakers, upgrade our Web site format, add forums and blogs to discuss all issues related to BIM, and provide space for those looking for jobs or business opportunities,” says Hosney Abdelgelil, NYC Metro BIM co-founder. The group is planning to launch its first ever BIMStorm New York in fall 2009. To prepare for the event and maximize its community benefit, a series of presentations are being planned to educate both public and private organizations to allow them to actively participate.

The agenda for 2009 has been designed to cover as many topics of interest as possible. These include, but are not limited to: BIM applications for Emergency Response Teams; BIM and Ecosystem Preservation; Tele-manufacturing and Supply Chain; BIM in Education; local New York Wicks Law and BI; Financial Dimension of BIM; and even Post-BIM Phase in Facilities.

For more information go to www.meetup.com/NYC-Metro-BIM.

CHICAGO BIM-IPD GROUP

David Ivey, coordinator of the Chicago BIM-IPD Group, reports that the group is humming along quite nicely. They currently have just under 50 members, but are having a small growth spurt created by word-of-mouth. David has spoken at several local seminars recently—always plugging the

group—which has brought in new members as well. Attendance averages 12 to 20 people. The group is considering experimenting with alternate meeting times (currently meeting at 7 a.m.) to help increase attendance. Membership is slightly heavier on the architecture side, but includes a good cross-section of all disciplines. With one exception, when the group met at the offices of OWP/P, the group has been meeting at the Chicago offices of HOK. The group plans to change venues occasionally to give everyone a chance to showcase their office.

The group is currently exploring ideas related to its agenda and goals. Meetings have been fairly ad-hoc up to this point, generally with a planned topic to spur discussion. The group's stated goal of bringing together like-minded people in the local AEC community to discuss working collaboratively has in some ways been accomplished, and they are now considering more tangible actions the group can take to make members' working relationships that much more effective. This may take the form of published whitepapers for the group's use outlining workflows, methodologies, and so forth, but ideas are still in the germination stage with nothing yet decided. Chicago also is looking to the other local interest groups for ideas that it might borrow.

To join the Chicago BIM-IPD Group, go to <http://chicagobim.ning.com>.

COLLABORATIVE BIM BREAKFAST GROUP, CINCINNATI

Meanwhile, in Cincinnati, the Collaborative BIM Breakfast Group continues to grow. The January meeting, which doubled as an Owner's Symposium on Integrated Project Delivery, was hosted by Messer Construction Company, a local advocate of BIM and Lean Construction methods. There were over 20 participants. James Salmon, founder and coordinator of the Cincinnati group, served as the panel moderator, which featured great presentations by Andy Burg of Messer, Rich Cardwell of Construction Owner Resources, Matt Birk of GBBN Architects, and Donnie Reed, an owner's representative with Clarian Health of Indianapolis.

MINNESOTA AIA BIM BREAKFAST CLUB

The Minnesota AIA BIM Breakfast Club first met in early 2007 as a follow up to a 2006 seminar sponsored by Minnesota AIA. A growing group of about 65, the group is a

collaboration of local architects, engineers, and contractors, with a nice cross section of educators, attorneys, and risk management experts. The group has met monthly for over two years, drawing about 30 to each meeting.

Last year, the group began to include product presentations at meetings to expose attendees to products or concepts that are not easy to find through local channels. The group also finds value in the discussion that evolves from viewing demos in a group setting with fellow professionals, something that would not happen in a private office demo. Thus far, the group has hosted presentations of DProfiler by Beck Technologies, the Onuma Planning System, Newforma Project Center, the ICC's SmartCodes, and others. Late last year the group webcast a meeting to other bSa interest groups in which New York and DC members participated. The vendor/presenter moderated questions from all locations through the webcast chat interface.

THE RENAISSANCE CLUB, WASHINGTON, D.C.

The DC group meets faithfully at 7 a.m. the first or second Wednesday of every month. Twenty to thirty minutes of informal networking is followed by a 30-minute presentation and another 30 minutes of Q & A. The group began meeting at the Renaissance Hotel, but when the hotel increased the price of its buffet breakfast to \$24/person, coordinator Michael Tardif appealed to club members for suggestions on alternate venues, and was soon flooded with dozens of possibilities. VOA Associates generously offered to host meetings in its newly-renovated DC office and provide complimentary breakfast refreshments. So after a two-month hiatus, the Renaissance Club was reborn (hence the name remains apropos) in a new and better venue. Attendance, which averaged 25 to 30 at the hotel, is now typically averaging 40 to 50. Attendees include architects, engineers, constructors, subcontractors, federal agency representatives, and private-sector property owners. The group uses iContact to e-mail HTML meeting invitations to over 2,100 DC-area industry professionals each month, but thus far has not established a Web site or social networking site. Meanwhile, the original Bethesda Breakfast Club, unable to break its “tired old men” habit, continues to meet monthly on an alternate Wednesday, and eventually plans to move to a retirement

venue in the lobby of a bank in South Florida that serves free coffee and donuts.

QUAD-CITIES BIM-IPD GROUP

The newly formed Iowa-Illinois Quad-Cities bSa Interest Group has yet to hold a meeting, but already has more than 40 "official" members and several "unofficial" members. It seems some folks would rather not join, but would still like to attend the meetings. Not a problem! Everyone is welcome and membership is NOT a requirement.

Scheduled to speak at the first meeting is Luke Faulkner, BIM Director of the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC), who will make the 180-mile trip from Chicago for what should be a very interesting presentation and discussion. On the agenda for future meetings are John Cross, VP of Marketing of AISC and Secretary of the Executive Committee of the building SMART alliance™. David Ivey, Associate and CAD/BIM Manager at HOK in Chicago and founder of the Chicago BIM-IPD Group, also will speak at an upcoming meeting, as will Dennis Befeler of IPC, Inc. in Iowa City, who has offered to provide a 1-1.5 hour AIA CES accredited presentation focused on BIM.

Group founder Terry Jordan, Structural Designer with Stanley Consultants, Inc., would eventually like to provide web conferencing ability, not only for local members who like to sleep in, but also for those who would like to attend from outside the local area.

For more information on the Quad-Cities BIM-IPD Group, go to <http://qc-bim.ning.com>.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BIM INTEREST GROUP

Another newly formed group is the Southern California BIM Interest Group. Founder Kimon Onuma, FAIA is recognized as a world leader in the building industry and has a unique perspective that spans architecture, planning, programming and software development.

Attendees for the group's first meeting will receive lessons from the building SMART alliance™ on how to position themselves to participate in the new generation of projects driven by the Stimulus package. They'll also learn how owners such as the General Services Administration (GSA) are redefining how contracts are being written and what is expected from the industry and

will witness and learn how to participate in a Green BIMStorm. BIMStorms are award winning events that illustrate that collaboration can happen at a stunning pace using Low Carbon Collaboration techniques.

Other topics that will be covered include preparing yourself for the new reality of having to do more with less and be green at the same time; a discussion of emerging BIM technologies; and a discussion of inputs used in generating CO2 reduction, energy reduction, investment, and incentive dollars.

GET INVOLVED, SPREAD THE WORD!

We have a huge job ahead of us to transform an entire industry, and we need everyone's help to accomplish this goal. To see if there is a group in your area, or to start a group of your own, please visit www.buildingsmartalliance.org/resources/interest_groups.php. ■

Terry Jordan is a structural designer with Stanley Consultants, Inc., in Muscatine, Iowa. Hosney Abdelgelil, Chuck Eastman, David Ivey, David Jordani, James Salmon, and Michael Tardif also contributed to this article.

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... if every senior manager actually read this we'd find the industry moving forward at a much better, and unified, pace. I'd recommend every practice to order a copy, read it, and act on the recommendations within.

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