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Tech Ed Concepts, Inc. President Introduces Rapid Prototyping to Inventors, Educators and Students

Springfield Inventors see how parts can be grown
By Dan Bustard, Staff Writer, Eagle Times, 2-18-04

Richard Amarosa likes to watch dreams come to life. And with his company's product, he hopes to reach out to students across the country who want to do the same thing.

At Tuesday night's monthly meeting of the Inventors Network of Vermont at the Howard Dean Education Center in Springfield, Amarosa demonstrated how three dimensional computer images can be turned, or literally grown, into solid objects. The applications, running from generating CAT scans or magnetic resonance imaging into models to creating machine pieces to generate generating topographical images taken by satellites, appear to be endless. "We grow parts in this machine," said Amarosa, showing a model of a Porsche "grown" at an inch an hour out of powder and binding materials in two and a half hours.

Tech Ed Concepts, Inc. based in Pembroke, NH is a leading academic distributor of CAD, computer aided design, software products throughout North America. The company is a 3D academic provider for educators and students, bringing rapid prototyping to the classroom as a means of moving beyond three-dimensional computer images. Amarosa founded the company after spending more than 17 years in technology education. He sees easy-to-use 3D CAD software as a strong teaching tool to prepare students for engineering careers. "Anything you can create as a solid model we can make," he said showing a model of an overhead view of the Grand Canyon

The machine itself is rather simple, utilizing an ink jet printer head to help build the pieces of data slice by slice. Built by two Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduate students, the machine brings rapid prototyping to a more local level, as it is more affordable than larger machines. "The mechanism is basic. It is the chemistry that is high end," said Amarosa, hearing comparisons to the replicator on "star Trek" to the idea of growing a toy inside of a microwave. One of the practical aspects of pieces or models created by this machine is if they are broken, "I can have a new one for you tomorrow morning," he said.

The rapid prototyping machine can be very precise, creating chain links, where the powder is tapped out to create the spaces inside the links, and molecular structures. In a sense, the only limits for this type of technology are on the chemical side, as Amarosa said the momentum in the industry is toward a "coke machine" set up where material goes into the machine and the product comes out.

"It's where 'wouldn't it be nice' means chemists get going," he said.

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About Tech Ed Concepts, Inc.

Founded in 1987, Tech Ed Concepts, Inc. (TEC, Inc.) provides 3D solutions needed to teach today's young people about the fields of engineering, design, manufacturing, and architecture. TEC, Inc. is the North American Academic Distributor of CADKEY® (leading mechanical CAD software package), DataCAD® (robust architectural CAD software package), SURFCAM® (Computer-Aided-Manufacturing (CAM) software package), Chief Architect® (3D architectural, rendering, and design software) and 3D Manufacturing Programs. Its customers are served and supported through a network of Authorized Academic Dealers and Resellers in the U.S. and Canada. For over 15 years, TEC, Inc. has established itself as a trusted one-stop academic resource offering teacher training, textbooks, workbooks, reference guides, and additional classroom support materials. For the latest news and product information, visit TEC, Inc., on the Web at www.TECedu.com, email info@TECedu.com or call 1-800-338-2238.