

Haworth's Faciliteq: A New Way of Working

Frank Gehry hasn't lost his touch for eccentricity. While his Guggenheim Museum and the Walt Disney Concert Hall, L.A., certainly look like they are cut from the same cloth, at least on the outside, one of Mr. Gehry's latest creations, the **Lou Ruvo Brain Institute**, Las Vegas, is another eye-opener entirely. While the Institute is not modeled on the brain, nor the focus of its activities – brain anomalies – the design certainly suggests the complexity of the brain's convoluted structure and its even more anfractuous workings. Some suggest that Mr. Gehry's selection for the Institute reflect the paradoxes of the human mind: orderly, logical, chaotic, creative. It could also be said to be quite ironic in that the institute's design is the antithesis of what is required for people suffering from one of the Institute's main research subjects, Alzheimer's.

Pan the exterior: On the one side, a striking tangle of 75-foot-high metal-and-glass trellis glints in the Las Vegas sun; circle around to the other side and you'll find stacked plaster blocks looking like giant, opaque ice cubes. Inside, there are open spaces, odd angles, vivid colors and multiple levels that mesmerize the eyes.

The institute, named to honor the principal benefactor's father who succumbed to Alzheimer's disease, was commissioned by the **Keep Memory Alive** organization as a facility that would help those suffering from diseases of the brain.

The facility is a combination of structures:
>The medical and scientific work is housed in a staggered, multileveled platform of offices, with 31,000 sq. ft. of the structure devoted to patient care, a diagnostic center, neuroimaging rooms and an area set aside for clinical research.

>The Activities Life Center is located in a "whimsical trellis hall," 10,000 sq. ft. of out-of-the-ordinary architecture used for a variety of large-group events. Next door, 5,100 square feet house a kitchen and restaurant – designed and operated by the world-renowned Wolfgang Puck organization.

>The "Museum of the Mind" comprises nearly 7,000 sq. ft. . This innovative space will be an interactive learning center with a primary focus on the mind and the brain.



LOU RUVO BRAIN INSTITUTE EXTERIOR



LOU RUVO BRAIN INSTITUTE REAR EXTERIOR

>Additional areas include a resource library, conference room, a public café and offices for Keep Memory Alive and related organizations.

"The medical-office building is user-friendly and quite straight-forward in planning and circulation," said Gehry Partners Senior Associate **Brian Zamora**. "The intent was to creatively disguise the fact that it is a medical building by using unique and inspiring design, good natural light and welcoming spaces." To this end, Mr. Zamora created an interior design concept that played off the exterior of the medical building by bringing some of the same aesthetic elements inside: a white-base palette, juxtaposed "boxes" and splashes of color.

The selected furniture system needed to be facile and adaptable to fit this vision.

Keep Memory Alive hired dealer **Faciliteq** based in Las Vegas to suggest the furnishings. "**Haworth's Compose** line was chosen for its clean lines and rectilinear design – its details are unmatched by other lines in its class," said **Damon Andrews**, vice president of operations for Faciliteq.

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Seeing is believing

Faciliteq Designer **Abby Stevenson** flew to California in spring 2008 to meet with Mr. Zamora at Gehry Partners' Santa Monica headquarters and, together, they started creating concepts. "I wanted to give Brian a 'proof of concept' solution," Ms. Stevenson said. The solution involved more than design and furniture selection: It had to be one that would allow quick back-and-forth collaboration plus fit the client's tight time and budget constraints. "There was very little room for error," said Ms. Stevenson.

Fortunately, there is now technology available that can easily and effectively short-circuit the usual time-consuming comment/revision process. Ms. Stevenson popped open her laptop and imported the architects' base AutoCAD design into the cutting edge parametric solid modeling software that she had begun using for rendering and specifying furniture configurations while working closely with architects and interior designers: **Configura CET Designer**. As a Haworth dealership, Ms. Stevenson was fortunate that Haworth had spent considerable resources over the past

couple of years to bring its furniture into the software through the appropriate software extensions, which Haworth calls *Canvas*.

"AutoCAD would not have provided the desired and rapid visualization capabilities. CET Designer lets dealerships to work closely with the A&D community to design and render, on the spot in give-and-take-and-display exchanges, in both 2D and photo-realistic 3D," said Ms. Stevenson.

Together, Ms. Stevenson and Mr. Zamora began to create the space. Mr. Zamora's concept contemplated



LOU RUVO BRAIN INSTITUTE INTERIOR

panels of varying heights and colors – replicating some of the *playfulness* on the outside of the building . . . and also a Mondrian painting. “Constantly, I was asking Abby, ‘Can we do this?’” said Mr. Zamora, “and she’d simply drag-and-drop elements into place.

CET Designer is a smart, rules-based software, that is, the symbols representing Haworth products look and behave just like the actual products. For example, if one component is not meant to connect with another, the software won’t let the user design using that incompatibility. Products meant to connect, however, automatically snap into place, and, behind the scenes, the software automatically adds the necessary connectors and related parts, thus ensuring everything necessary is included in the order and pricing without the usual specification delays and errors. The bill of materials is automatically generated with a mouse click.

“These new tools enhances our relationships with architects and designers,” said Ms. Stevens. “They bridge communication gaps because we can both instantly visualize the space. And it makes the process so simple.”

She and Mr. Zamora experimented with various designs and, within an hour, they had their typicals, and with a bit more tweaking Mr. Zamora was able to quickly decide about the furnishing and colors based upon the preferred aesthetics and budget.

The process was really quite simple

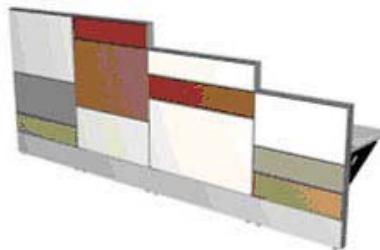
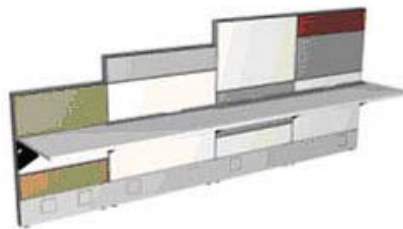
They created this first typical in CET Designer Canvas as an idea starter:



Their work evolved into this pricing typical, a far different color choice:



Panel build-ups would provide much of the separation of space within the office areas of the institute. Compose enabled flexibility in color choice, height and size, giving a random-structure effect:



Once the panel build-up “look” was achieved, they created more-detailed typicals:



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This preliminary 2D floor-plan created in CET Designer Canvas shows the unusual angles in the facility and how the Compose line was used to complement the space:



This preliminary 3D rendering created in CET Designer Canvas provided great detail and enabled Mr. Zamora to see how the furnished space would look:



“When you’re designing a space of this magnitude,” it is very helpful to be able to see how the environment will look – the walls, the furnishings, the colors, the flooring.” “The renderings should be as realistic as photographs, and to be able to move around the space in 3D and from various angles adds a new dimension to our visualization and ability to see where adjustments were needed or beneficial.”

Collaborative process

There are many benefits to using parametric solid modeling software such as CET Designer, but the ground-breaking aspect is how it facilitates, even encourages a new level of designer/dealer collaboration. By the summer of 2008, Mr. Zamora and Ms. Stevenson

had moved into full-design mode. With in the next few months they had to fully design and specify the furniture for the space. They couldn't afford the time delays of back and forth, so they worked together online using *GoTo Meeting* – he from his Santa Monica office, she in Las Vegas.

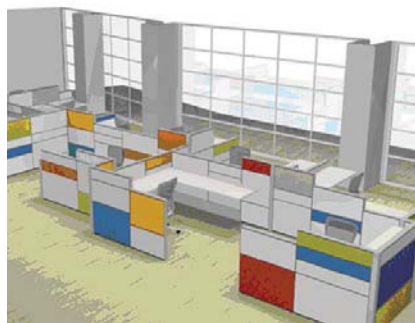
“Instead of me doing renderings and sending them to him and waiting for a response,” said Ms. Stevenson. “We'd collaborated in real time.” Using *CET Designer* not only enabled the quick adjustment needed for the furniture design, it enabled them to specify all of electrical routing requirements, fabrics, finishes and flooring choices, all with 3D virtual walk-throughs.

A screenshot of Stevenson's and Zamora's online collaboration:

A final layout in 2D:



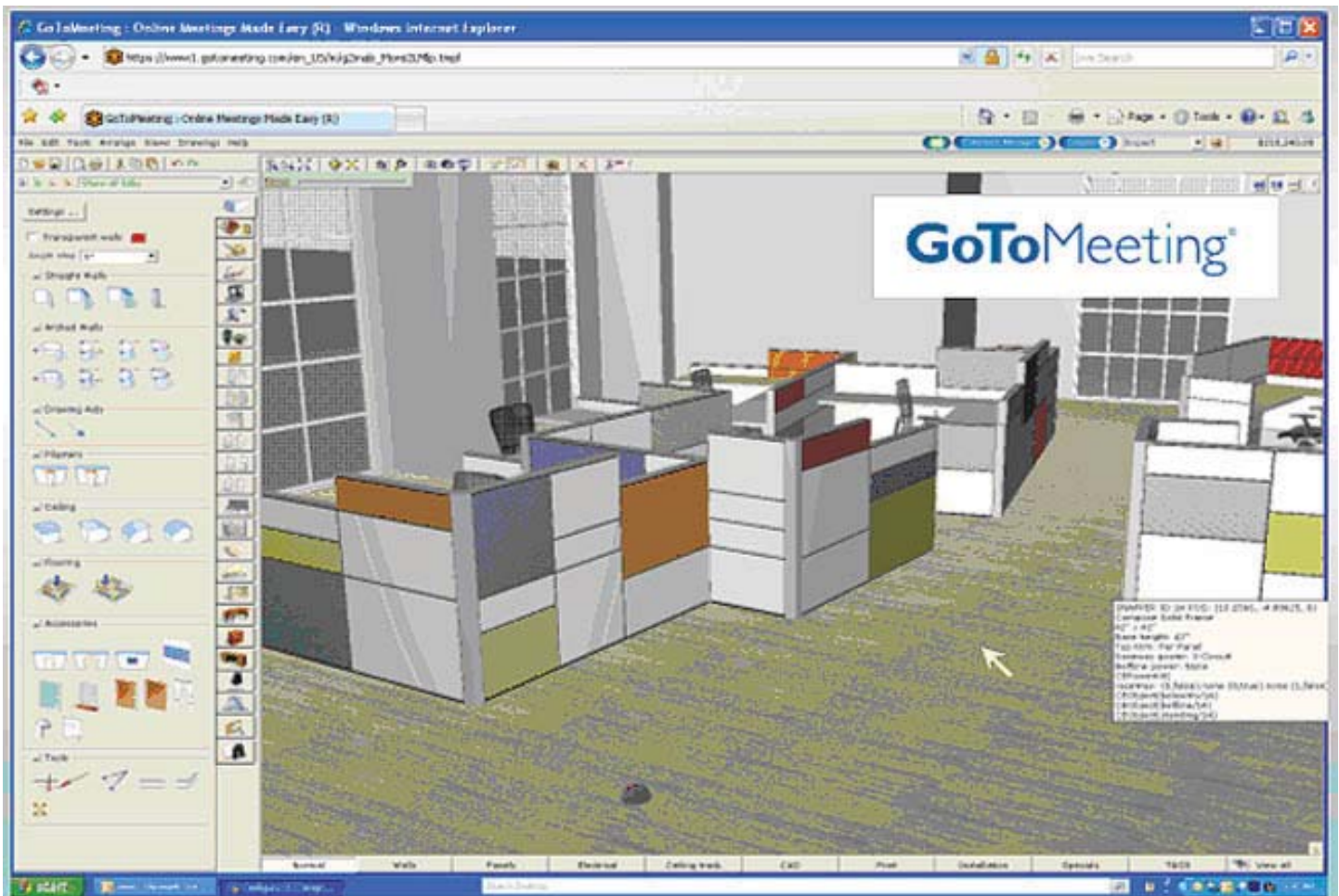
A final layout in 3D:



Ultimately, they created 20 stations. The stations had 96 unique panels and a bill of materials of 846 line items, all as visualized and no errors.

A project that could have taken months of solid work took only weeks. “There's no way we could have done this in AutoCAD,” said Ms. Stevenson. “And if we had had to outsource the rendering production, the time and expense in that alone could have been a deal killer. *Canvas* pumps out photo-realistic renderings in a few seconds on an office printer and saves them to PDF for emailing.”

Mr. Zamora was pleased that the software enabled him to explore numerous options in a relatively short period of time, with immediate and accurate understanding of the final



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product: “We were able to test a lot of layout, color and amenity options very efficiently.”

After owner approval, the furnishings were ordered, and the institute was furnished in late fall 2008. The grand opening of the Institute will be held in the summer of 2009.

Proof in the pudding

With Haworth at the leading edge of adopting parametric solid modeling software almost 3 years ago, its *Canvas* extensions to the software – necessary ingredients for intelligent use – a majority of Haworth dealers now use Configura CET Designer Canvas. But Ms. Stevenson is one of the first of her colleagues to fully explore the new dimensions of this type of software. It’s not how to use it technically, but how to develop new work-styles, particularly new ways of collaboration that are the key to a wider future. Many of the Haworth dealerships apparently use



BEFORE: RENDERING



AFTER: PHOTO

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CET Designer primarily as a design and rendering tool. Ms. Stevenson used it start to finish, and hand-in-hand with Mr. Zamora.

She, and interior design working at a dealership, admits using Canvas to “sift out” – calculate the costs and print a bill of materials – took her outside of her comfort zone. “As designers, we’re so used to AutoCAD, and using something that is ‘tried and true’ seemed like a safe way to go. In this case, however, it would not have been smart. With 96 panels, none the same – all the odd angles and the partsy-piecy-ness of this design, there was no way we could have relied on AutoCAD. It would have taken a huge amount of time, with endless redrawings as changes were made, and with inevitable calculation mistakes.”

She found the specification tool built within CET Designer Canvas to be easy and reliable. “Early releases of Canvas

couldn’t handle sifting such a huge job, but the 2.0 release has taken care of early issues.”

As a bit of frosting on the cake, the software also produces installation instructions for the latter use of installers. Ms. Stevenson even walked around with her laptop during installation to show the installers how each station was supposed to look. The specs from Canvas were accurate. “To see our designs come to life – to literally match the renderings with no major issues – that was huge,” she said. “The client got it. They could see it. They could be a part of creating it. And that’s what sold it.”

The Lou Ruvo Brain Institute

Opening: 2009, Las Vegas’s Union Park

Architect : Gehry Partners, Santa Monica, Calif.

Furnishings: Haworth Compose

Haworth dealer: Faciliteq, Las Vegas

Source: <http://www.keepmemory-alive.org/>

Images: http://www.keepmemory-alive.org/index.php?path=ABOUT_LRBI/PHOTO_ALBUM

Gehry Partners:

Gehry Partners, LLP is a full service firm with broad international experience in academic, commercial, museum, performance and residential projects. Frank Gehry established his practice in Los Angeles in 1962. The Gehry partnership, Gehry Partners, LLP, was formed in 2002 and currently supports a staff of more than 160 people.

Every project undertaken by Gehry Partners is designed personally and directly by Frank Gehry.

Source: www.foga.com ■

Reducing the learning curve

Abby Stevenson is an experienced interior designer but her boss at Faciliteq, **Damon Andrews**, vice president of operations, says even new designers can quickly get up to speed on manufacturers’ products by using CET Designer.

The designers he hires know AutoCAD and have academic training in commercial interior design. A typical new hire will train four to six weeks under close supervision before he or she can produce quality drawings and specs. “They can immediately draw and specify furniture with AutoCAD and in Project Spec,” said Mr. Andrews, “but until they fully understand furniture application and the rules of systems furniture design, they cannot contribute to production.”

Mr. Andrews said he recently hired a new designer with AutoCAD knowledge but no previous office furniture experience. After only a couple of weeks of working in CET Designer Canvas, she started contributing by producing drawings and specs for substantial projects.

“The learning curve is dramatically reduced with CET because the ‘rules’ of furniture design are built into the program. A designer doesn’t need to study planning guides for weeks or attend lengthy training classes before producing accurate drawings and specs. As long as he or she applies proper interior design principles gained through design education, then he or she can contribute in a matter of days.”

About Faciliteq:

Faciliteq Architectural Interiors is a preferred Haworth dealer, providing products and services to the Las Vegas and Southern Nevada area since 1991, where the firm has installed more than 20,000 workstations and offices.

Source: www.faciliteq.com

Benefits of CET Designer:

- Reduces learning curves and sales cycles
- Creates concepts with the client in real-time
- Produces inexpensive, photo-realistic renderings
- Enables client collaboration and confident decision-making

About Configura CET Designer and the Canvas Extension:

CET Designer is a design, rendering, specifying and ordering software tool used by the majority of Haworth dealers across North America. **Steelcase** and **Teknion** have also strategically invested in Configura Extension Technology and have released their own Extensions for their dealer communities to also benefit from the CET platform. **Spacefile** and other manufacturing clients are also building Extensions. A ProjectSymbols Extension offers more than 80% of the symbols in the office furniture industry. www.configura.com.

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