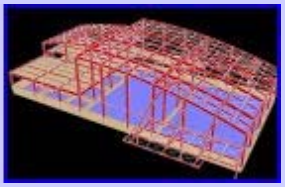
10 Years (1994-2004)

VirtualWork

A newsletter for customers and friends

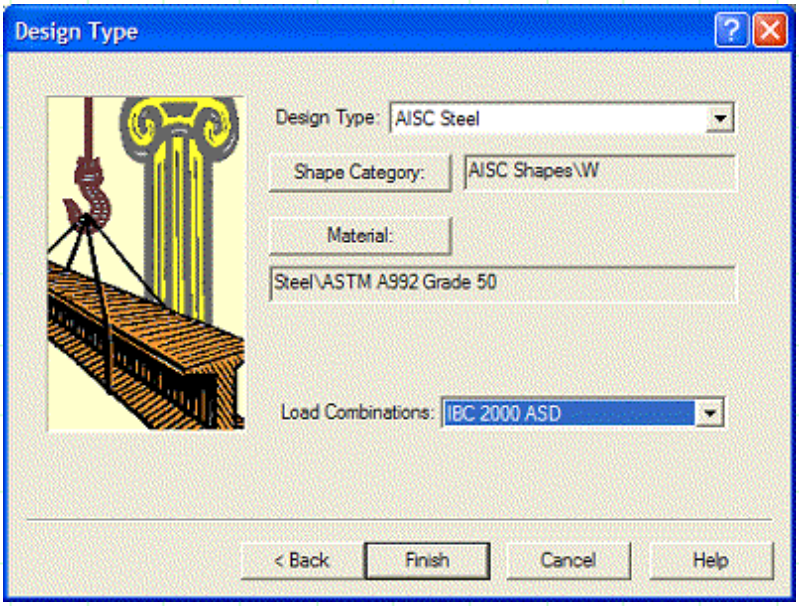


Volume 10.5, May 2004

*Quick**R***Design Beta Test

It is not a new diet fad, it just has fewer bytes. Those **everyday** little **beam or column designs** do not need the full muscle of VisualAnalysis, and many customers cannot justify $1000 or more on a **little design tool**. So IES has a test version of this new product to fill a little "hole" in your toolbox and on our order form.

This new tool is called Quick***R***Design and specializes in the analysis and design of continuous beams or multi-story columns. We like to think of it as the **Low-Carb, 99% Fat Free** version of VisualAnalysis.



Quick***R***Design is quicker to use for simple beam or column **design** than the full-blown VisualAnalysis 5.1 Package. It is also quite a bit **less expensive**, so it fills a hole in the IES product line-up. If you need some basic design, or you are looking for a way to simplify the design of those everyday little beam or column problems, Quick***R***Design could be the solution.

CONTENTS

Opportunities

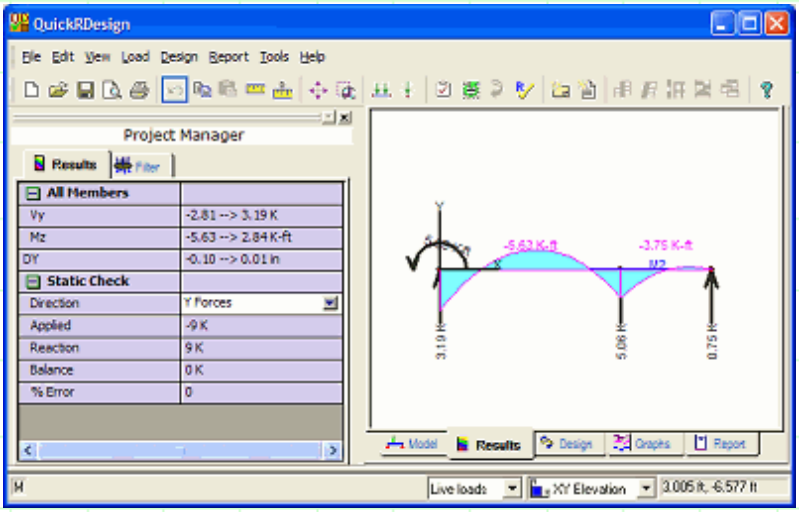
Ever want to get published? Would you like to promote your company's work? Would you like to pat one of your employees on the back? Here is an opportunity from Modern Steel Construction.

Modern Steel Construction is looking for "Case Studies", "Project Stories", and "Technical Articles". Project stories need only be 1500 words, and Case Studies only 500, and provide a public way of expressing your successes with your peers and others in the industry.

Here at IES we moan and groan every time we see another product story that shows the use of some non-IES software product. We KNOW that you are out there building great things with VisualAnalysis or our other tools, but just have not been asked to share that with the world.

If you want help in the writing, let us know! If you have a case study describing how you used VisualAnalysis we could even make it worth your while with a reward of some sort.

For more information about this opportunity please contact Terry through technical support email or Beth Pollak, Assistant Editor at Modern Steel



Of course, this is just a beta-release of a 1.0 version product. What we are really looking for is some constructive criticism! Feel free to download this tool, run it through it's paces and let us know what it does wrong, and why!

Next month, we will have more details, an official feature list, and pricing.

[to Contents]

Successful Tools to Smart Business

As we continue our backward glance over the 10 year history of IES, it is time to look at why IES has succeeded. Last month we hinted at our successful business model, but it all started with successful software.

VisualAnalysis Succeeds

IES was VisualAnalysis in 1994. Sure we had AnalysisGroup, but it was the success of VisualAnalysis that secured our place in the market. This software was actually two years old when it was introduced commercially and contained some novel concepts, but it really was not that much different internally than most products it was competing with.

The user-interface is what set it apart. Here are a few features that made the VisualAnalysis experience pleasant for customers:

- Sketch the model.
- Click to edit.
- Immediate graphical feedback.
- Flexible handling of units for physical quantities.
- At-the-source error detection and warnings.
- Polite and informative error messages.
- Color-coded menu and toolbar items.
- A limited feature set: just the engineering basics.
- Built-in help and reference material.

Construction.

[to Contents]

Ask Dr. Dan

A Customer Asks:

"Shear areas in the ShapeBuilder advanced analysis seem to be functions of the applied loads? I thought these were properties of the cross section, what gives?"

Caution: Theory Zone Ahead!

Dr. Dan Replies:

The idea of a shear area to handle the shear deformation effect in beam theory is an approximation. Shear deformation is a second-order effect, which is not necessarily linear and the shear area concept was developed to approximate the behavior. The correct approach involves looking at the shear stress variation across the section to come up with an effective shear area. ShapeBuilder uses this approach to calculate shear areas. If you would like to study this further, it is discussed in detail in the journal articles by F. Guttmann, referenced in ShapeBuilder's help file.

Further Information

The way ShapeBuilder 3 works, you will get the "expected", or maximum, Shear Area value in each direction, by applying a shear force (of any magnitude) in that direction and a zero force in the other direction. In other words, to calculate the maximum SAx, you would apply a shear force in the X direction only.

[to Contents]

VisualAnalysis Showcase

Customers are regularly sending in projects for us to see. Often the projects are accompanied with technical support questions or concerns, but it gives IES a glimpse at what is getting accomplished. This month we thought we would share some of these achievements with you. The following anonymous images are just teasers.

- Example projects and tutorials.
- Standard Windows menus (e.g. File, Edit, View...Help)

In fact, still today these things are driving some of the success of our products.

Experienced Customers
Of course the other primary ingredient to our successful business venture has been smart customers. Within a year of launching IES, we conducted a survey of customers. What we found was rather surprising. The typical IES customer had 8-10 years of **experience**, had used 4 structural analysis programs in the past, and became **productive** with VisualAnalysis within **8 hours** of using it.

Customers were also not shy about telling us what was right and what was wrong with our tools. Given their level of expertise and there past experiences with software, we made it a core feature of our business model to regularly ask and to always listen for customer ideas and suggestions. We encourage customers to let us know not only when something goes wrong, but even if something is just confusing or slightly annoying!

The Feedback Loop
It is the combination of useful tools and listening to experienced customers that forms the successful foundation at IES. We write down and try to address customer ideas promptly. We try to write our software so that it does not require any documentation or technical support. And then we try to provide the best of both.

Fortunately (for us) we have not yet attained the goal of perfect software. We are successful entirely because our software is **very good** and yet always needs some improvement. Because the improvements are those that customers have requested, they are valuable enough for purchase when they arrive. Customers remain loyal by choice, not by any coercion.

Thanks Customers!
So, IES is celebrating **10 years** in the structural software business this June. As we have seen, it is in large measure that we owe our success to loyal customers. Next month we will express our appreciation in a more direct way...

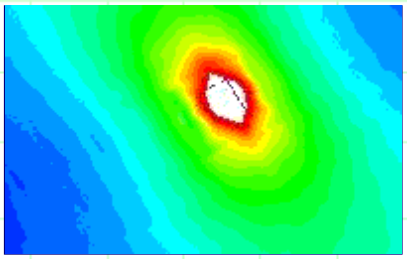
[to Contents]

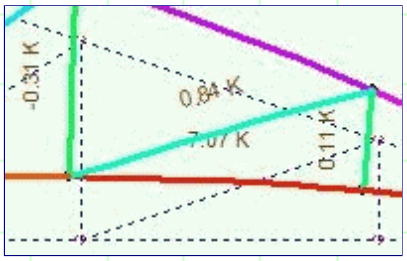
Extra License Sale

Too Many Engineers, Not Enough Software?

Add Extra User Licenses!

Only a few days remain in the extra license sale. If somebody in your office would also like to use IES tools, there is no better time than now to purchase





View the full-size animated presentation available with much better images and credits for the engineers who have created these projects.

[to Contents]

Support Update

IES support has been busy answering questions and fixing bugs reported by customers over the past month. Most of the problems that were reported in the last month relate to VisualAnalysis 5.0 or VisualAnalysis 4.0. If you are still running one of these older systems, you are encouraged to upgrade to version 5.1, which includes better technical support, more streamlined installation, regular updates, and is much more capable than our previous releases.

The web site has been undergoing some support improvements including clearer troubleshooting tips and manual installation instructions. If you have a need to re-install your software, or install it on a new machine, please do so directly from our web site rather than from an old CD. This will spare you the pain of problems that have already been corrected.

Also note: An update is planned for QuickRWall 1.5 by the end of May.

[to Contents]

Quick Links:

those additional licenses! Start running as a team.

Additional licenses are normally discounted, but during the month of May 2004, ***the discount is 75%***! Take advantage of prices that may never be this low again! *Note: Because this newsletter is late, the extra license sale extends through June 2004!*

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