



Virtual Work

VisualAnalysis 6 Sneak Peak

A glimpse into the next generation of VisualAnalysis

Preview the future of VisualAnalysis as we highlight some of the features that are now up and running in our lab. VisualAnalysis 6.0 is taking shape and promising to add some *pizzazz* to your everyday structural analysis and design tasks. The following list is a partial outline of new features, more are in the works. We then highlight a few of these items with pictures and more detailed explanations.

VisualAnalysis 6.0 Partial New Features

- General Productivity Improvements
 - *Tabbed View Layout* (for easier program control and navigation)
 - *Improved Find Window* (customizable, better integrated)
 - *Simplified Main Menu* (easier to find commands)
 - *Smarter Toolbars* (context-sensitive!)
 - *Selected Results in Project Manager* (less reporting , quicker information)
 - *Result Specific Tooltips*
- Realistic Rendered Graphics
 - *Perspective and Hidden Lines in Model View* (Wow!)
 - *Picture View is no longer necessary!*
 - *Transparency for 3D Visualization* (See your structure come alive!)
 - *More Intuitive Rotate, Pan, Zoom Features*
 - *Simplified Standard Views* (easier control)
- Project Manager Improvements
 - *Smarter, Simpler Editing with Tips* (easier to learn)
 - *Create Tab* (un-hides the old Generate Standard command)
 - *Many More Parametric Model Types* (typical models are a breeze)
 - *Simplified Model Creation Dialogs* (why didn't we think of this before?)
 - *Multiple Sketch Grids* (significantly more intuitive 3D sketching)
 - *Advanced Sketch Grid Types* (lines, cubes, irregular spacing, etc.)
 - *Powerful Smart Layers* (to replace Cut-Planes & Smart Planes)
- Advanced Modeling Features
 - *Extend Members* (by length or to Intersection)
 - *Areas & Area loads* (for floor, wind & snow loading)
 - *Copy Member Properties* (like Format Painter in MS Word)
 - *Rigid Diaphragm Loads* (for quick-n-dirty wind loads)
 - *ASCE 7 Wind Load Generation* (for code-compliant wind loads)
- Administrative Improvements
 - *Project-wide Design Criteria Settings* (fast design setup)
 - *Simplified Units System* (one-place, easy to use, flexible)

Some Highlighted Features

Vivid 3D Visualizations: More than a Pretty Picture

VisualAnalysis was so visually cool in 1994 that it became instantly popular. Customers were amazed with the graphics and the sketching abilities in an analysis package. Today, well, the VA5.5 Model View is using essentially the same technology. We were long overdue for an overhaul. Essentially we are

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When Can I Get VA6?

Itching for an upgrade?

Many customers are asking: When will VisualAnalysis 6.0 ship? The answer, to quote our chief software architect:

"VA 6.0 will ship on Tuesday."

We still haven't been able to pin down on which month or even which year, while Tuesdays come and go...

In the mean time, here is the latest information, and what you can do to prepare for this major upgrade.

Alpha Test

Before we release the upgrade we will release two test versions. A local, invitation-only 'alpha test' for early feedback. This should happen in September. We will still be developing new features and start testing.

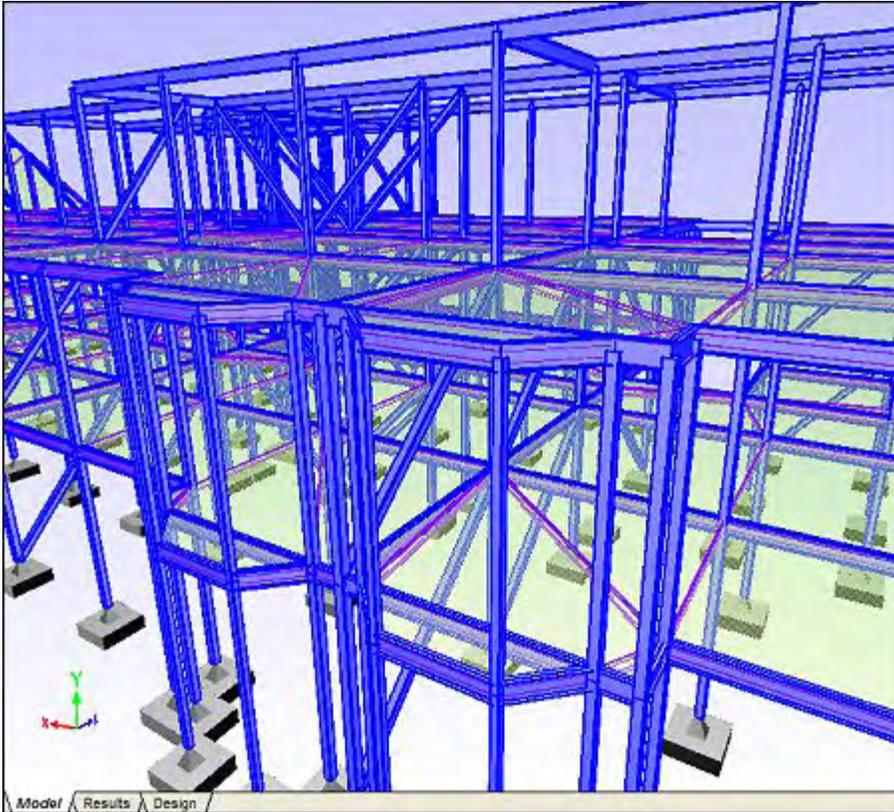
Beta Test

Shortly after that test, after tidying up the loose ends and working on the documentation and installation details, we will release a general beta test for current VisualAnalysis 5.5 customers. Expect this in late October. You will want to get all your work done before then because...



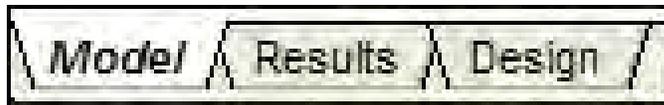
We will encourage all customers to

taking the Picture View (rewritten from the ground up) and giving it a depth of functionality in modeling and reporting that will make VA5.5 appear quaint.



Tabbed Views: Model, Results, Design

Almost all IES customers work with 'maximized' windows in VisualAnalysis. We also saw lots of customers who did not understand the "MDI" (Multiple Document Interface) system used in VisualAnalysis as they sent project files to technical support with dozens of redundant open windows. The new system promotes maximized windows, easy navigation between window types, and still allows the MDI paradigm, though not encouraging it.



Is Project Manager on Illegal Steroids?

The project manager is getting a major overhaul with auto-hide capabilities so you can keep it out of the way without losing track of it or its functionality. It sports a cleaner look, and has a new Create tab to make it faster, easier and provide a much more visible way to generate typical model components, including smarter simpler node and member creation options as well as complex frames, trusses or even "hip roof" type assemblies! We are still implementing additional options in the Project Manager, so this may not be the final form you see when we are finished...

"punish" VisualAnalysis 6.0 with difficult tasks, to flush out as many problem areas as possible. In fact, we are planning to offer a "Cash for Bugs" program. You may be able to **earn some Christmas money** this year if you have a few minutes to spare from your day job. Details will be made available with the Beta Test announcement.

Final Release

When the dust settles from the Beta Test, and depending on the nature and quantity of problems found, we hope to ship VisualAnalysis 6.0 by the end of the year. Of course, this is a software development project and we could be off by a Tuesday or two....dozen.

Details, Prices, Etc.

If you want to be first on the list, you can subscribe to a [Maintenance Plan](#) and get the upgrade automatically when it becomes available.

Pricing on VA6.0 has not been set, but is expected to be in the range of 30-40% of the current new product pricing, or \$200-\$900 per license, depending on the products & levels that you license. We will have more details next month...

Critical Update

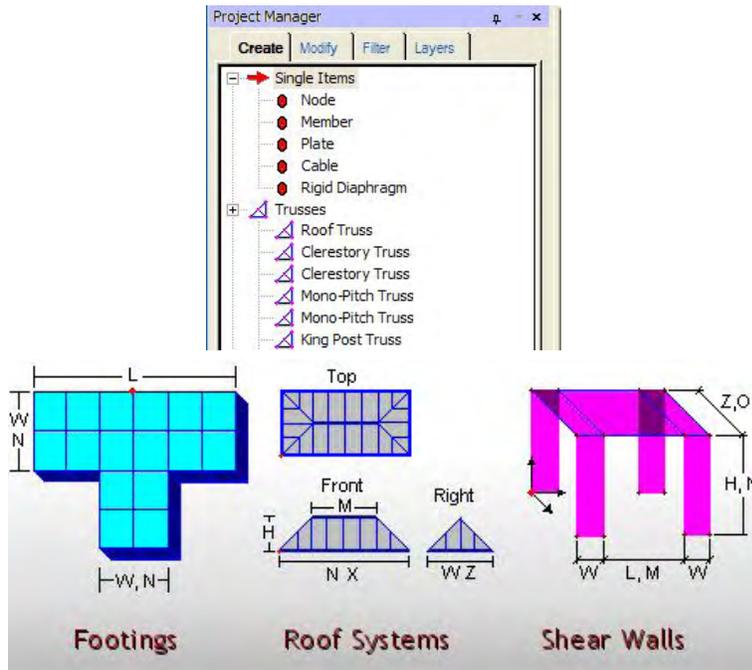
Design Check Problem Fixed

This morning I read an article in the newspaper about some 'defective' ice cream. As an **Ice Cream addict**, it caught my eye that this company was recalling ice cream products that contained eggs, but the label did not list eggs. Apparently, some small percentage of the population is **very allergic** to eggs. Yet, it still seemed like a lot of fuss and press for one small mistake.

Although this story is probably true, it reminded me of PT Barnum's comment:

"All publicity is good publicity"

Perhaps far fetched, yet after Floyd Landis' recent Tour de France drug-scandal, his former team sponsor, Phonak, in the news for firing Floyd and disbanding the team, has reported record sales of their hearing

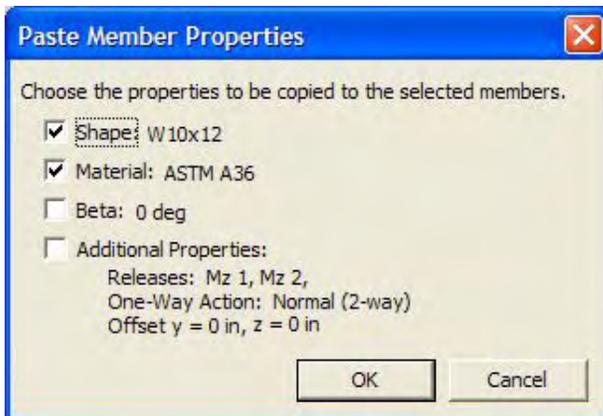


Little Features to Go a Long Way

Sometimes it's the little things that can make a software product special. Customers have been asking for a number of small features to help with typical modeling tasks and we have been trying to work them in, sometimes for years. These things often get lost in the shuffle of major changes, things like: extend member, or a member "format painter".

Need to connect a member from the endpoint of one member to some point along the same line? To the nearest intersection perhaps? Done. Just **right-click** on the member and choose the **Extend Member** command.

Perhaps you have some members set up with end releases, member shapes, but others are not. You will be able to select a member's properties (**Edit | Copy**) and then **Paste** those properties to other members in a selective way:



That's all we have time for this month, stay tuned as we get closer to the future :).

aides.

I know that I had never heard of 'Hook'd on Chocolate' ice cream before today's news, but I am ready to try it, with eggs or not!

Well, at least IES isn't the only company that makes mistakes now and then, and so you can download build 18 of VisualAnalysis 5.5 today. This latest update fixes a couple of 'critical' bugs that could possibly lead you into making a design mistake too.

1. [Read the VA5.5 Change Log](#)
2. [Update to VA5.50.0018 Today](#)
3. If you are not allergic to eggs, see if you can track down some of that Hook'd on Chocolate...

A Faster PC: Free!

Spend a few minutes & work faster

Here is an article filled with some very easy to perform steps that will help you improve the performance of your Windows XP machine, whether you are running VisualAnalysis or other applications:

It offers the following suggestions, along with instructions:

1. Remove Unused Programs
2. Run Disk Cleanup
3. Defragment Hard Drives
4. Disconnect Unused Network Items
5. Clean out Autostart Programs
6. Rejuvenate Prefetch
7. Remove SP2 Remnants
8. Use Multiple Paging Files
9. Speed up Start Menu
10. Disable Costly Display Features
11. Disable Indexing Services

[11 Tips for Speeding up Windows XP machines](#)