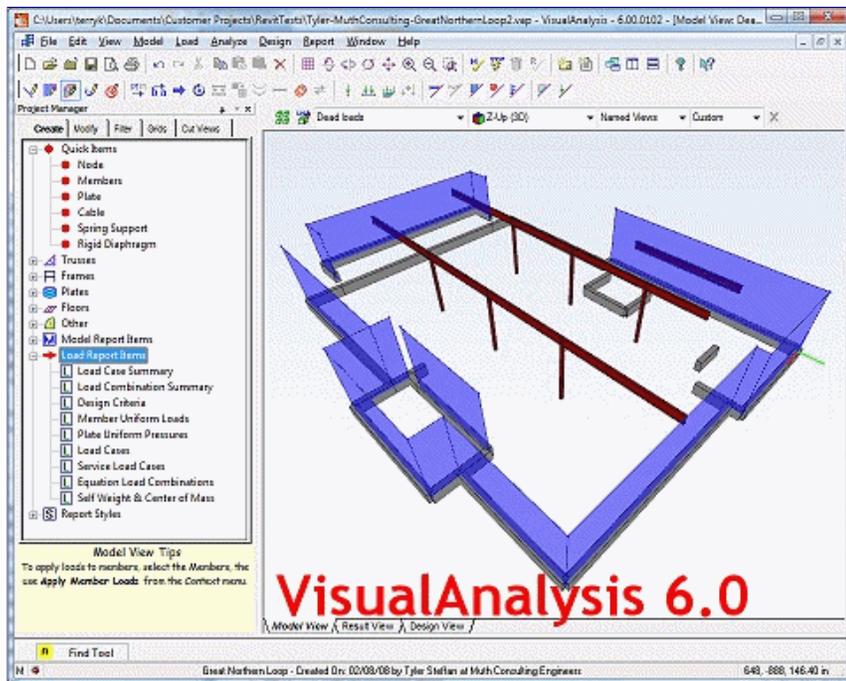




VARevitLink 6.0 Released

BIM, BIM, BIM!

Reading engineering publications these days reminds me of watching the Flintstones while growing up: "Bam, Bam, Bam!". Can we say **BIM** enough? BIM is one of those "white hot" acronyms gracing the engineering press these days and [Autodesk Revit®](#) is certainly turning out to be one of the key players in the marketplace for automating the exchange of **Building Information for Modeling**. Here at IES, we like to think of BIM as "Built in Montana", and our VARevitLink tool certainly qualifies for that interpretation. But it also can help you streamline your office procedures to better communicate your design information back to the architect or other professionals working on your building too.



If Revit is playing a part in your office production cycle, then you will want to take advantage of the automated exchange of information between [VisualAnalysis 6.0](#) and Autodesk Revit® Structure 2009, through the use of our new utility product. Best of all, this tool is completely free to use for the next 3 months as we offer it in a "Customer Preview" edition. VARevitLink 6.0 runs within Revit Structure to either export the Revit analytical model to a VisualAnalysis project file, or to import your changes from structural design back from VisualAnalysis into Revit. Two commands are added to Revit's Tools | External Tools menu.

[Download VARevitLink](#) today, and go BIM!

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System Crashes: "Bang Head Here"

A little advice to minimize headaches



Crash! General Protection Fault. Unhandled Exception. Application Error. "This application has stopped responding..."

We've all seen this behavior in Windows. It is easy to feel like Microsoft has hired us to be crash-test dummies! When it happens, it leaves us with questions:

- Why does this always happen to me?

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Customer Training

Meeting Customers Face to Face

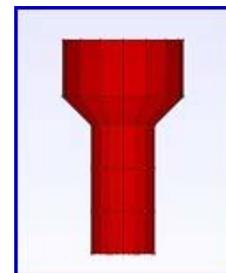
Terry had fun in the Midwest earlier this month as IES held customer training sessions in Minnesota, Illinois and Ohio. It was a good chance to meet some long-time IES customers in person after years of phone calls or email exchanges. The results of this training are twofold.

Customer Surprises!

Some customers were surprised to learn that they had been doing things the hard way for a long time. Most customers walked away from the training having learned one or two "little tricks" that will save them hours on their next projects. By the way, if you are suffering with tedious tasks, stop and email IES Technical Support, we may have an easy solution!

IES Surprises!

Terry learned that the software wasn't as easy to use as he thought. This was especially apparent in Chicago when he tried to demonstrate how easy it is to model an Elevated Water tank:



After stumbling through a couple of failed attempts and managing to crash the software once, he vowed to go back to the lab and fix the

- Have I lost all my work?
- What can I do to prevent this?

If you are running [VisualAnalysis 6.0](#), or [QuickRWall 2.0](#), you should rarely see this kind of behavior. If you do, we have some simple advice for you, to minimize your down time, eliminate lost work, and help IES correct problems where possible.

Solutions

1. Simplify & Update your System
2. Back up your work regularly.
3. Understand the VisualAnalysis History-File mechanism.
4. Use Windows Error Reporting.
5. Report crashes directly to IES.

Let's explain each of these a bit further.

Simplify Your System

Windows is a complex system designed for a variety of hardware devices and software systems. If you take a look at "Task Manager" (*right click* on the Start bar, away from any icons) to get a glimpse at how many programs are actually running, even when you aren't doing anything with your system. By eliminating programs that Startup automatically, and run in the background, often unnecessarily, you can free up memory and reduce potential problems. Use Start | Run... "*msconfig*" to get a handle on your system and what programs are running all the time. When you install new products they often will add things here that do not really need to be here. Be ruthless in removing these items! (If you 'break' some program you can always 'repair' it by reinstalling.)

Updating your system can also help. IES is regularly correcting problems in our software and so is Microsoft and everyone else. This is just an unfortunate reality of software development, there will be problems. If you experience crashes in IES tools, please check to see if updated versions are available for IES products. You can read about the updates, what specific problems were fixed to see if it will address your issue or not. Visit the [Updates & Patches](#) page on our web site for the latest versions and links to the Change Logs.

Backup Your Work

You should have not only an automatic plan for backup (such as a tape backup system), but you should also have a manual, simple, practical plan for keeping copies of project files at various stages of the project. It is a lot easier to pull a project file out of last week's saved projects folder than to try to get your IT staff to recover something off a backup tape.

History-Files

When working with VisualAnalysis, you have the option to create a set of automatic 'history' files, which are just numbered copies of project files. Each time you open a project file, another history version is created and saved in a TEMP folder (by default). This automatic backup can help you recover from a file corruption problem, when necessary. Read about this feature in the help file before you have to recreate a month's worth of work.

Windows Error Reporting

Windows XP and Vista have built-in systems to report system crashes or application crashes directly to Microsoft with low-level diagnostic information. IES is now taking advantage of this system and we can learn about the crashes in our applications and get post-mortem debugging information to help us pinpoint the crash. If you are prompted to report a crash to Microsoft for VisualAnalysis 6.0 (and other new IES products from 2007 and beyond), please send the report! In Windows XP, you may need to turn on this feature, see this Microsoft Knowledge Base article for details: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/310414>.

Reporting Crashes to IES Support

Finally, you should tell IES about crashes. Our goal is that they will never happen. We hate them as much as you do. Unfortunately, giving IES engineers the kind of information that might be useful is difficult. Just saying that the software crashed won't help us figure out where, when, or why. What we need from you is a way to duplicate the crash, if possible. If you cannot duplicate the crash, then it probably is not worth reporting. If you can, you might experiment with ways to avoid it (doing things slightly differently for example). The more information you can provide the better. For more details, please see the relevant topic in our [FAQ Answers](#) site.

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problems. In fact, the repairs were made on the airplane to Cleveland that very night. The results: **Polar coordinate** editing is now much more powerful and robust. You can see how this model is constructed in a short [animated movie](#)...

A few other defects were also found along the way and those have been repaired as well.

Future Training Sessions!

IES will conduct future training sessions for VisualAnalysis 6.0. Perhaps on the West and East coasts later this year (no specific details yet).

If you are interested in training, please let us know where you would like us to hold sessions.

If enough people in your town are interested (10+) we can set up a special event. It is a good way to learn VisualAnalysis and get professional development hours as well. And Terry would really like to meet you in person!

ShapeBuilder 4.5

Nearing a beta-test

Final development work is nearing completion for a long awaited upgrade to [ShapeBuilder 4.0](#). Currently the old version is ignorant of new VisualAnalysis 6.0 database file locations and this is making custom shapes a little more complicated than need be. We have easy solutions and updated Database Editor tools available (see the [FAQ Answers](#)), but the new ShapeBuilder will make custom shapes much easier.

Version 4.5 Features

- Cracked Moments of Inertia in concrete analysis
- Works with VA 6.0 data files
- Eliminates the need for the Shape Database Editor tool
- Easier export of shapes for use in VisualAnalysis
- Ability to export multipart shapes to VisualAnalysis(merge requirement waived)
- Smarter export of wood shapes to VisualAnalysis (correct property sets defined)
- Easier, simpler unit system
- Shift+Tab selects shapes in reverse order
- Pipe sector shapes can be

Foundation Design Primary Election

VisualFoundation is running to be your next IES Application

AnalysisGroup 3.0 offers excellent mat footing analysis in a popular tool, yet it has severe limitations. The two most critical appear to be: **rectangular-only mats** and **no design** support. IES is buried deep into an investigation of the latest programming technologies and we have decided that the biggest hole in our product lineup is in the area of complex foundations: mat footings, strip footings, combined footings, and the like.



The IES Democracy

Before we waste a lot of time writing a program to handle tasks you would rather do in a spreadsheet, or by hand, we figured it was time for you to speak into the issues. IES runs a democracy, and this is your chance to vote for features or tools to serve your special interests.

Five Minutes from You = Cool Tools from IES

We are asking you to send us a quick email to answer one or more of the following questions. You can **just copy these questions** into an email to [IES Technical Support](#) and help direct our path toward future products.

- Do you need a "VisualFoundation" tool, or did you have a different need? (e.g. Aluminum design, connection design, or improving existing products, etc..)
- What specific features do you need in foundation design?
- Would you like a tool to produce details (e.g. rebar) or just provide good design information (e.g. area of steel required)?
- How important is Pile Cap design? Do you also need pile design as part of this tool?
- Do you want a tool fully integrated with VisualAnalysis or a stand-alone foundation solution?

Please [email your votes](#) and get your candidate features elected!

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positioned or dimensioned from the center point of the arc.

- DXF file import improvements
- Reinforced concrete "Wizard" now functions correctly with metric bars.
- Some performance improvements
- Some stability improvements
- Minor report improvements
- Part data included in Clipboard (text report)
- Works with CFS 5.0 for importing cold formed steel shapes

Beta Test in June

Watch for a beta test of ShapeBuilder 4.5 in June and be sure to test the product to ensure that it meets your needs.

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