Autodesk Names British Antarctic Survey as Inventor of the Month for July 2008

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Digital Prototyping Helps Scientific Center Rapidly Develop Tools for Research on Global Environmental Issues

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., July 30 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Autodesk, Inc. (Nasdaq: ADSK), a world leader in digital design innovation technologies, announced that British Antarctic Survey (BAS) has been named as the Autodesk Inventor of the Month for July 2008. Responsible for the United Kingdom's national scientific activities in Antarctica, BAS uses Autodesk Inventor software to design crucial tools that allow the organization to more effectively carry out research and provide insight into key 21st century challenges such as climate change, ozone depletion and rising sea levels.

The Inventor of the Month program recognizes the most innovative design and engineering advancements made by the extensive community using the Autodesk Inventor software -- the foundation of the Autodesk solution for Digital Prototyping. A digital prototype is a realistic 3D digital simulation used to virtually optimize and validate a product before it is built, reducing the need for physical prototypes.

The Antarctic region is an important regulator and indicator of global climate. Scientists know that the Antarctic ice sheet has grown and shrunk over geological history, and recent analysis of Antarctic ice cores reveals that during the last 800,000 years, the Earth experienced eight glacial cycles, each with an ice age and warm period. Understanding this natural rhythm helps scientists get a better picture of what's happening to the Earth's climate today and what might happen in the future.

Transforming Digital Prototypes into Tools for the Field

The BAS engineering team is charged with producing and readying equipment for use in the field. At any one time, the engineering team could be working on half a dozen projects of varying complexity. Examples of the team's work include a rugged digital camera system to monitor sea ice activity, a tethered stake to measure the movement of ice over sediments in glacial streams, a star-pointing telescope to measure the ozone in the atmosphere, and an ice core drill capable of taking samples dating back tens of thousands of years.

The BAS engineering team relies on products in the Autodesk Inventor product line to create these sophisticated scientific instruments. By generating models that are accurate 3D digital representations of the finished product, BAS engineers are able to validate design and engineering data as they work. This approach minimizes the need for physical prototypes and helps to reduce the number of costly engineering changes that might otherwise emerge after the design has been sent to manufacturing.

"Autodesk Inventor has proved invaluable in checking for interferences and making sure all the components fit together," said Andy Tait, a mechanical design engineer at BAS. "Just as important, it allows us to present very realistic 3D models to the scientists so that we can gather their input on the device before we actually produce a model. Sometimes it could be something simple, like the device being the wrong size to handle when wearing gloves, or that the device needs to be more modular and easier to assemble and take apart in icy conditions."

By using Inventor in this way, Tait estimates that the organization has been able to reduce the amount of time needed to finalize a piece of equipment by 40 percent. Since there are few opportunities to get ships in and out of Antarctica, speed is essential. For BAS, Digital Prototyping can mean the difference between getting a piece of equipment to the Antarctic on time versus missing the window of opportunity for what could be up to a year.

"BAS is carrying out research of the most timely kind," said Robert "Buzz" Kross, senior vice president of Autodesk Manufacturing Solutions. "Digital Prototyping allows them to carry out their mission more effectively. We are pleased to present an organization whose research has implications for the entire planet with our Inventor of the Month award for July."

About the Autodesk Inventor of the Month Program

Each month, Autodesk selects an Inventor of the Month from the more than 700,000 users of Autodesk Inventor software, the foundation for Digital Prototyping. Winners are chosen for engineering excellence and groundbreaking innovation. For more information about Autodesk Inventor of the Month, contact us at IOM@autodesk.com.

About British Antarctic Survey

The Cambridge-based British Antarctic Survey is a world leader in research into global environmental issues. With an annual budget of close to pounds sterling 45 million, five Antarctic Research Stations, two Royal Research Ships and five aircraft, BAS undertakes an interdisciplinary research program and plays an active and influential role in Antarctic affairs. BAS has joint research projects with over 40 U.K. universities and has more than 120 national and international collaborations. It is a component of the Natural Environment Research Council. More information about the work of the Survey can be found at http://www.antarctica.ac.uk.

About Autodesk

Autodesk, Inc., is the world leader in 2D and 3D design software for the manufacturing, construction, and media and entertainment markets. Since its introduction of AutoCAD software in 1982, Autodesk has developed the broadest portfolio of state-of-the-art Digital Prototyping solutions to help customers experience their ideas before they are built. Fortune 1000 companies rely on Autodesk for the tools to visualize, simulate and analyze real-world performance early in the design process to save time and money, enhance quality and foster innovation. For additional information about Autodesk, visit http://www.autodesk.com

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