

AUGI: Who exactly are they?

Autodesk User Group International (AUGI, for short) is the non-profit organization officially recognized by Autodesk for users of its products. AUGI provide an invaluable resource to the Autodesk user and, more importantly, membership is completely free!

Run by a group of dedicated volunteers, AUGI has a huge world-wide presence and has got so large that it is now building AUGI Country Chapters around the world. Membership has now passed 100,000 members worldwide in 225 countries, most definitely putting the "I" in AUGI!

At the AUGI Annual General Meeting at Autodesk University 2006 in Las Vegas, a number of Country Chapters were announced including Japan, Denmark and Brazil, as well as the UK. AUGI UK, as it will be known, will soon provide the United Kingdom with its own AUGI UK website with UK-oriented content as well an AUGI Board of Directors based in the UK.

AUGI provide a plethora of features on their international website, www.augi.com. Not only is there a huge amount for the user to read, but there are discussion forums, product communities (AutoCAD and Revit, for example) and even quick links to specific AUGI pages, such the AUGI Training Program (ATP) where you can sign up for free training webinars (yes, I did say free!).

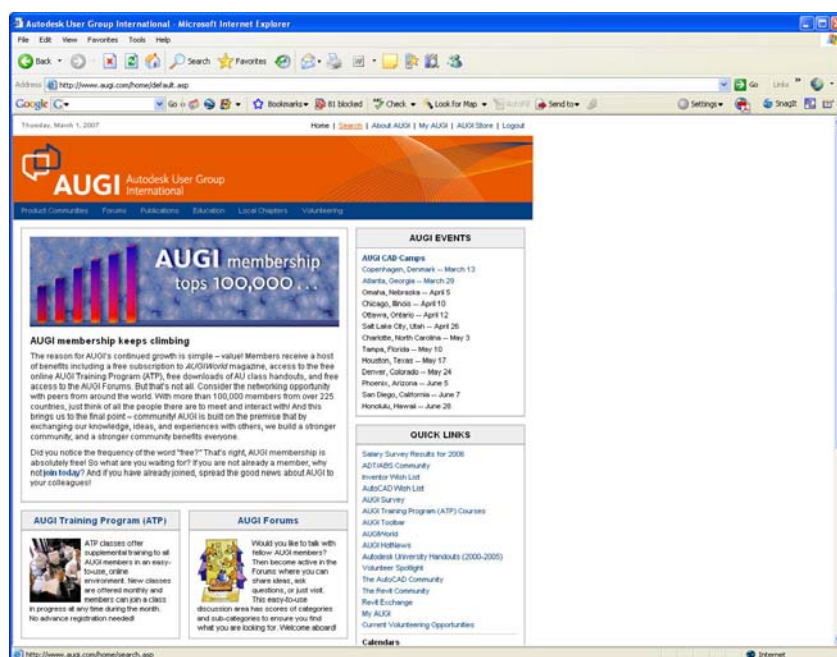


Fig.1 – The AUGI website, www.augi.com

AUGI have been running a series of events known as AUGI CAD Camps in the USA for the last couple of years. These have an Autodesk University "flavour" to them and have proved highly valuable to the attendees. The ethos of the CAD Camps is to network, learn and share with your peer Autodesk users. The first UK AUGI CAD Camp was held in June last year at the University of Surrey in Guildford (if you weren't there, where were you?). Approximately 180 delegates attended the event and it was a huge success. It was the first CAD Camp on European soil. The first European CAD Camp this year was in Denmark in the city of Copenhagen on March 13.

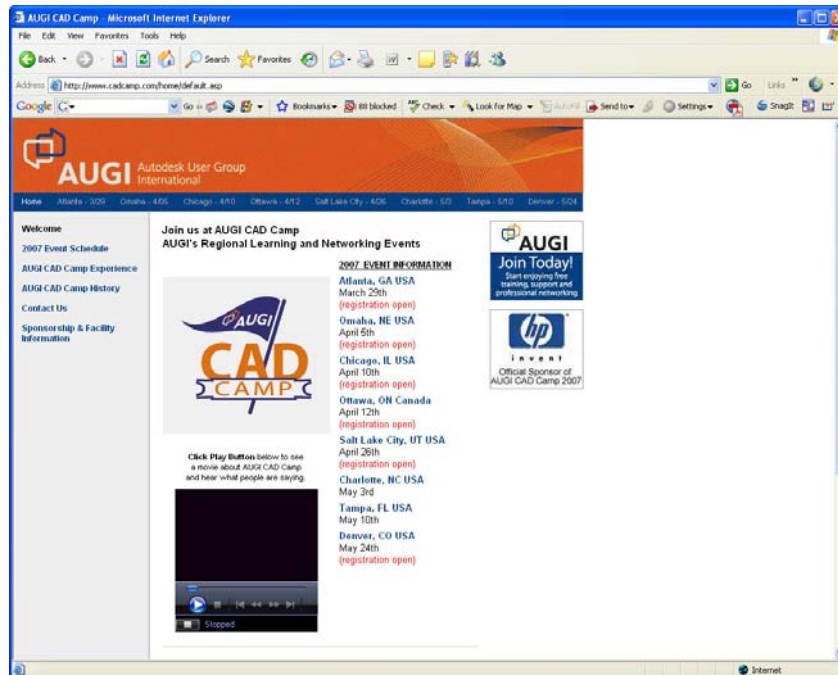


Fig.2 – The AUGI CAD Camp website – www.cadcamp.com

The AUGI CAD Camps provide a day of learning through five breakout sessions of 75 minutes that each contain tips and tricks on all of the Autodesk range of products. Taught by world-class instructors, you learn things that you can immediately put to use in the workplace, meet other users and share those experiences only Autodesk users can have! The AUGI CAD Camps promote this ethos of networking, learning and sharing in an effort to bring Autodesk users together, building up the community, letting the AUGI member know that they belong to that community. Whilst there are exhibition areas at each AUGI CAD Camp, they are developed purely for the user. There is no direct sales pitch at these events. They are there purely for the user. Visit the AUGI CAD Camp website, www.cadcamp.com for more information.

AUGI members can also submit items to the AutoCAD Wishlist, which is always submitted to Autodesk at Autodesk University each year. It is the primary source of user feedback for Autodesk in the development of AutoCAD each year. As an AUGI member, you are able to submit as many wishes as you like. Not only does this empower AUGI members who are AutoCAD users by letting them influence the development of AutoCAD, it provides valuable input for AutoCAD software developers at Autodesk, letting them know exactly what the users want to see in the next version of AutoCAD.

If you want to talk to other AUGI members, you have the AUGI Forums to use. As an AUGI member, you can also get involved by becoming an AUGI Forum Moderator, monitoring the forums, making sure they are being used appropriately. Again, it is another way AUGI allows you to be part of the ever-growing community. The Forums are an excellent source of information ranging from informative Tips and Tricks to the ever-entertaining Coffee Without CAD. The Forums are full of useful information where you, as an AUGI member, can share knowledge and, more importantly, gain knowledge.

I have been an AUGI member since 2005 and have progressed to the AUGI Country Coordinator for the UK, assisting the AUGI UK Chapter to build up its own local AUGI community with specific UK content. I started off as an AUGI member by signing up

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on the AUGI website. Who knows, after you have read this, you too could be inspired as I was and want to get involved! Maybe you could become a Forum moderator or even an AUGI Training Program instructor?

All AUGI UK members will be encouraged to contribute to the AUGI UK community, so get signed up and get involved! It is free, after all and you won't be disappointed.

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He is currently Vice-Chairman of the Autodesk UK/Ireland Authorized Training Centre Advisory Board (ATCAB).

He is also currently the Country Coordinator for the UK Chapter of AUGI and is also an AUGI CAD Camp Content Manager and Instructor. He can be reached on AUGI business at shaun.bryant@augi.com