CAD BRIDGES THE SOFTWARE CURTAIN

Cyco signs with Soviets

BY NICOLAS MOKHOFF

Atlanta — A letter of intent has been signed by Cyco International here with the Soviet "Ministankoprom" agency to "Russify" Cyco CAD software and have the Soviets provide Russian software in English to the American market.

The agreement was reached at the conclusion of the first-ever AutoCAD Expo Moscow. It is significant because it goes further than any other software deal to establish normal software programming relations between the two superpowers, industry analysts note.

The deal was made possible as a direct result of the Soviets relaxing their copyright laws—another testament to Gorbachev's *perestroika* campaign.

The letter of intent stipulates the following four points:

• As a first step the Soviets buy several software programs for studying and adaptation.

• Cyco delivers detailed descriptions of the programs with the intent of possible distribution of the programs in the Soviet Union.

• The Soviets provide detailed descriptions of their own software packages for analysis and potential distribution in the world market.

• Both sides, by the end of 1988, have to come up with a charter and a place for an organization that will work toward mutually beneficial economic relationships.

"The Russian people are now buying a lot of western software," says Vincent Everts, Cyco's president. "They are equally eager to earn hard currency by getting their software, which is very high quality, into the U.S. market." Consequently, along with their Soviet connections Cyco is currently investigating a dozen products and plans to market the best of them internationally.

So far, Cyco's products have been distributed in the Soviet Union by Quest Automation, an English company with a 15-year-old office in Moscow that specializes in selling CAD solutions. Quest's technical director, Paul Bygrave, says that "their Russian clients love the Cyco products which complement our AutoCAD products."

By hook or by crook, of course, Soviet designers get a hold of what they want or need. With the reforms, Russian "companies" are willing to spend hard currency as well as earn it legally. "According to reliable sources, there are more than 15,000 illegal copies of the AutoCAD programs floating around the Soviet Union," says Vincent Everts, president of the American subsidiary of Dutch-based Cyco, founded by Everts in 1983. "Now with the new copyright laws, not only AutoCAD, but any software from the West can be distributed in a legitimate business-like fashion." Everts predicts that within a year many more cooperative agreements will be signed, simply because it is in the Soviets' best interests to share computer software information with the West.

Evert's company was the only U.S.-based concern invited by AutoDesk Ltd. in England to participate at the Moscow expo. While the entire expo consisted of only 10 companies, more than 10,000 visitors stopped by during the five-day event.

In Cyco's case, the two programs that will be showing up in the Russian language first are AutoManager and The Flying Dutchman. AutoManager offers AutoCAD users the ability to view AutoCAD drawing files without the need to have AutoCAD in the system. "Fast viewing of lots of drawings without the hassle of AutoCAD has been the desire of a large part of the 170,000 AutoCAD users," says Everts.

The Flying Dutchman version 5.0 is bridging software that can transfer files between PCs via the parallel port at speeds up to 280,000 baud instead of the usual 115,000 baud used by competitors like Lap Link and Brooklyn Bridge, which use the serial port.

About the new atmosphere in the Soviet Union, Everts states, "I was struck by the difference between what I saw and my expectations. The Russians discussed the changes in their country openly and intensely; in doing so, they complained so much about the government and bureaucrats that for a moment I thought I was back in the States!"

A MOSCOW DIARY

by Vincent Everts

The Flying Dutchman reports on Autodesk's historic first exposition in the USSR.

Phil Roswell from Autodesk, England called to ask if Cyco Automation wanted to be part of Autodesk's first Expo in Moscow, October 17 to 21. We would be expected to man a booth and give a seminar. I agreed to attend and speak in three seminars on Networking, American third-party software and Architecture with AutoCAD. I also brought software from Synthesis, Applications Development and Dennis Klein & Associates. At *CADalyst*'s request, I kept a diary of the daily happenings while in Moscow.

Saturday: Flying to Moscow

Our company's delegation consists of Dirk Teitsma and me. A third person is denied a visa by the USA and has to stay behind. Flying me from the States to London is reasonable. Flying my baggage is expensive. I have to pay $25 per kilo of excess luggage and I have 75 excess kilograms with me.

At Heathrow Airport in London, we meet the others who will be manning the show in Moscow. There are five from Autodesk and another 30 from other firms. Richard Handyside (Autodesk UK) and Jane Penn (Autodesk Europe) are already in Moscow.

The flight takes four hours; getting through customs takes another two because of the crowds. Importing our equipment and software takes only two minutes with a customs official who understands no English. A charter bus takes us from the airport and gives us a tour of the city and the Kremlin. It looks wonderful. We end the day with a drink in Autodesk's hospitality suite, meeting the Polish and Czechoslovakian distributors.

Sunday: Setting Up the Booth

Today we woke up at 7:00 am. Actually, 5:00 am, with the time zone difference. Breakfast consists of three eggs, just like in the USA.

The exhibition is being held in the conference centre of a car factory. Putting our booth together is difficult. We have only one computer instead of the two we had ordered. The power cords are missing. We are warned we will probably not have enough brochures. We finally find extra power cords and obtain an extra EGA monitor.

In the evening hours, we go to a Pakistani restaurant at which the locals go crazy dancing to the exciting music.

Monday: The Expo Opens

A crowd of 600 people is waiting for the show's nine o'clock opening. People pour in and take everything that's on tables. Autodesk loses 12 copies of the book *Customizing AutoCAD* before they realize what's happening.

We have a great day! The interest and demand in Moscow for CAD is hard to believe. I give a networking seminar based on the one I gave at CAD Camp (*CADalyst*, Nov '88) which goes well. The Russians like my jokes and I get applause at the end of it. I go back to the booth to answer questions.

That night we eat at the Hotel International, one of the biggest restaurants I've ever seen. There are ten huge rooms, each with a violin and a piano.

Sixteen of us eat for 300 rubles, about $75. After dinner, we go to Red Square—you know, Moscow's other airport—and watch the changing of the guard. They come marching out of Lenin's tomb like robots and change exactly at midnight.

Tuesday: Signing Big Deals

Breakfast is meat and potatoes. My stomach feels terrible. We set off for the exhibition where at 8:30 am a line-up of 700 is already waiting.

The day seems long. I interview people and hand out brochures. Most of the brochures we give away are produced on a laser printer we were lucky to find.

Dirk gives a seminar on architecture and gets a good response. He is asked how many people in a Dutch architecture office use CAD. When he replies 80 percent, he is asked about the other 20 percent. He says that these are normally older people who don't want to learn about the new machines and that the firms don't want to fire them. He gets a big hand for the socialist West.

Synthesis is a big hit. More people here know about the concept of parametric design than at home. Many have implemented it with AutoLISP or with a separate program.

ADEV's Pro-series software is also very popular. People fight over the brochure so I don't give one out until they promise to buy at least two packages. Dennis Klein's mapping program, FMS/AC, is a little less popular, mainly because the exhibition catalog didn't have a product description. Still, interest is strong.

Even though I'm feeling sick, the show is going great. Somebody wants to buy three copies of every software package: total value 30,000 pounds. We haggle over the discount and then the contract is signed. I feel a bit better after that.

What we need now is the cooperation of a local distributor. There are only three choices. Quest Automation has had an office in Moscow for 15 years and seems to have a good reputation. The French company Schlumberger comes here five times a year, mainly selling their printers and plotters. A third company, from Finland, lacks permanent representation.

After the day's closing, the chief of the AZLK car factory comes by the booth. They just produced their 4,000,000th car. The cars cost 10,000 rubles, about four years wages for an engineer who earns 200 rubles a month. These AZLK cars are designed using AutoCAD.

Next we get a delegation from the south of the Soviet Union. They want to sign a letter of intent of cooperation between the two firms. They want to translate our software for the Russian market and distribute it in their region which has hundreds of factories. It sounds wonderful and exciting.

My stomach is making terrible noises, so I get onto the bus and ride back to the hotel. I listen to the Moscow English-language news radio and finally sleep for 12 hours and feel much better.

Wednesday: The Show Continues

The queue waiting to get in this morning is longer than ever. I'm not looking forward to talking all day again, but there are worse things in life than talking to a couple of thousand knowledge-hungry Russians.

I sign the contract with the delegation from the south. It officially states that we are impressed with each other and that we will research the possibilities of exploring mutual beneficial relations. They will buy my programs and study them in preparation for the translation work.

The day flies by. Lots of interest and lots of people with money. The funny thing is that they only have money for one big contract. One source has to deliver everything, so you have to talk to all their distributors who have interested clients.

At the end of day we go shopping on Gorki Street. We see a big crowd gathering in front of a building and hurry over, thinking this may be a political demonstration. The people are all very well dressed and waiting for... Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Unbelievably funny!

Friday: Closing Deals

On the last day of the show I sit down to talk with several big firms who want to buy the programs. They say the Pro-series and FMS/AC need to be Russianized. There are people willing to do it, but this requires further negotiation. They want a chance to test ADEV to see if it's useful to them. I am able to sign a letter of intent stating they want to buy three copies each of Synthesis, AutoManager, AutoSave and The Flying Dutchman.

I meet with Quest Automation to discuss how they could represent us. They are pleased with my programs and want to invest the time to learn them. Quest is knowledgeable in CAD but is just now learning AutoCAD, adding three new people for it. They have a ten-person office in Moscow and do $20 million in annual trade. My opinion is that it would be best for them to organize a seminar for the Russian market, with someone from my company flying over to give the seminar and further training.

Saturday: A Lasting Impression

On our last day we have another tour of Moscow. The Kremlin is fascinating—like a little city inside Moscow.

Russia is an incredibly interesting country. The Russians complain about their government as much as the Americans—that's healthy. A funny story illustrates the political changes. A newspaper cartoonist drew Gorbachev hanging from a tree. The censors closed down the newspaper for insulting the government. Next day, the paper was allowed to re-open and the censors were fired. It was stated that Russians needed that kind of criticism.

Russians are intelligent, educated people who are eager to learn and to change. They are well aware that their technology is one generation behind. They have the infrastructure—the factories, the trains and planes—to make it happen. What they currently lack is the operational management to motivate people, to think on a commercial basis, and to design the product to sell.

Autodesk considers Russia their biggest growth market and they are excited about it. To help Russia become more productive, we have to supply the support and the education. That will be the biggest challenge of all.

Vincent Everts is president of Cyco Automation, a software developer and hardware distributor based in Holland, with offices in the US.