Why Design Any Other Way?

Marshall Jeffus first discovered Ashlar-Vellum in 1989 when he was working for University of Texas McDonald Observatory on their Hobby-Ebberly telescope program. When Jeffus joined the team they were using a drawing program that made approximations based on integer-based algorithms, making it too imprecise for the design of scientific instrumentation. Computer-aided drafting programs, including Ashlar Vellum, were nascent at the time and it was still unclear whether they would provide any real benefits over board drafting.

Jeffus' boss encouraged him to look for an alternative CAD program. A colleague suggested he look at Ashlar's Vellum® software, the precursor to Graphite™. The demo arrived promptly on floppy disks one morning and by lunch, Jeffus says, "I was completely adept at using it. Nothing has that short of a learning curve."

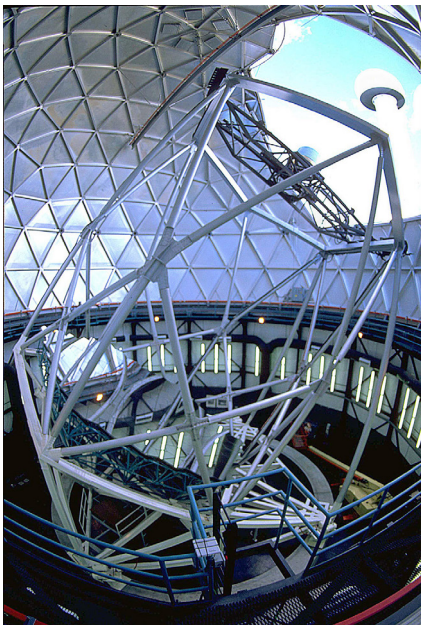
He was surprised that something that easy to learn was not limited in its precision or functionality. He's been using it ever since. He particularly likes the Drafting Assistant™, telling us:

> ***« The inference drawing engine seems to understand what I want to do, and accomplishes it easily. That's the difference! Other programs can create an object, but not without plenty of learning time; and even after that, requiring you to hold your tongue a certain way to make it fly. »***

Jeffus likes the fact that Ashlar-Vellum software is developed by those who understand how design professionals think through the process of designing something. The software emulates that process. Jeffus has tried dozens of other packages but always comes back to Ashlar-Vellum. "Other programs are designed by software developers, which is great if you want to think like a coder in order to make their software work for you."

Today, Jeffus is using Argon, one of Ashlar-Vellum's 3D solid and surface modelling programs and is thinking about starting a drawing service for those wanting to create short-run 3D printed objects. "It's true," says Jeffus. "It really does work the way I think. Why design any other way?"

The Hobby-Eberly Telescope at the University of Texas McDonald Observatory.
Photo: Ethan Tweedie.



One of the largest optical telescopes in the world, the Hobby–Eberly has an effective aperture of 10 meters and a 78-square meter, hexagonal mirror array made from 91 segments.
Photo: Marty Harris.

Background / Contact

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