



***STEP is in Production at
Pratt & Whitney and AIRBUS!***

Charleston, S.C., USA

Technology developed as part of PDES, Inc.'s Aerospace Engine Alliance (AEA) pilot project is now being used in production at Pratt & Whitney and AIRBUS. Using the international STEP standard (ISO 10303), the pilot has achieved significant benefits. New methods for enabling an efficient business process were developed, implemented, and successfully demonstrated.

The objective of the pilot project is to improve and validate the exchange of solid model geometry and product management data for the A380 commercial airliner. In concert with STEP software developers, the pilot team defined, implemented, and demonstrated a process to verify data exchange quality. Called "Validation Properties," this process allows fully validated assembly exchange -- meaning the team can validate the position of each component within an assembly or sub-assembly. In addition, the pilot defined a method of using external references to break up very large CAD models. Theorem Solutions, a partner in this pilot, developed the ExtreSTEP processor, which allows a STEP file using the external reference mechanism to be processed, and the referenced files to be translated from one file format to another. In other words, this processor combines a number of tasks to remove what would otherwise be an onerous manual process.

The next stage of the pilot is to implement the communication of the metadata associated with the design model. This metadata from the different Product Data Management (PDM) systems will accompany the geometric data in a controlled way. "Although this PDES, Inc. pilot is not complete, it has already achieved significant benefits. The innovative work done by the pilot team members to exchange assemblies improves the efficiency of data exchange processing," said Bob Kiggans, PDES, Inc. General Manager.

The AEA pilot was initiated in 1999 with the participant companies being AIRBUS, Pratt & Whitney, General Electric, Theorem Solutions, PTC and Unigraphics Solutions (now EDS PLM Solutions).

PDES, Inc. has over 20 members including major industrial companies, government agencies, and universities. Focus areas include Pilot Projects, Implementation Support, Systems Engineering, and Module/Web activities.

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