

Mario Hirz · Wilhelm Dietrich
Anton Gfrerrer · Johann Lang

Integrated Computer-Aided Design in Automotive Development

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Fundamentals, Methods of CAD,
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Data Management

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Introduction

Automotive development requires flexible and powerful tools. In the current, highly competitive market, the need to continually reduce development time and costs is driving the ongoing creation of strategies that can provide intelligent and functional links between the many parties involved in vehicle development, including project engineers, ergonomic specialists, safety and crash departments, designers, and many more. While a combination of virtual design and simulation methods with physical development and testing procedures represents the current state-of-the-art, the trend is moving towards integrated virtual development processes. Such processes focus on the product itself while also taking into account a wide variety of potential production and supplier interrelationships, as well as lifetime-relevant factors pertaining to customer use, support, service, and disposal.

In automotive development, computer-aided design (CAD) is used to perform the geometrical product definition, which provides the basis for three-dimensional virtual product models. The models are built by combining main assemblies, sub-assemblies, and individual components, which brings the virtual models close to the configurations of physical products. In this process, design tasks are carried out using parametric-associative techniques, which require the implementation of design-process-related guidelines and project-specific default procedural steps. The realization of parametric-associative model structures and interlinked geometry elements in turn improves the geometry representation by adding elements related to design check features, information relevant to digital mock-ups, or calculations and logical functionalities. The separation of geometry elements and geometry-defining parameters enables the integration of complex computation procedures, the creation of interfaces with design-external processes, and the direct embedding of macro-based automated routines into the design software. In this way, formerly separated working fields (e.g. calculation and simulation) are integrated into or connected to CAD models.

To enhance engineering capabilities in modern product development, intelligent solutions for the collection, storage, and distribution of product and process-oriented data and knowledge must be implemented. Powerful management concepts are necessary to manage the complex information flow, processes, and

documents during the development or modification of products. Engineering data management (EDM), which organizes the data flow throughout the development processes and prevents data redundancy, represents an important component in the generation of complex product structures in the context of multi-firm and global collaborations.

The book offers a comprehensive overview of integrated CAD, with a focus on development processes in the automotive industry. This focus does not limit the application of the methods, strategies, and tools described here to a specific industry, but rather provides well-defined boundary conditions within which the topic can be effectively discussed. Nevertheless, the basic findings of this book can certainly be transferred to other industries in the area of mechanical or mechatronics product development.

One primary aim of the book is to introduce and discuss the entire process chain of product design, including the basic methods of geometry creation, the application of CAD, the integration of design and engineering, and finally the management of information related to both product and process. This comprehensive overview of the methods and tools of virtual product development will provide the reader valuable insight into the complex web of interactions and connections that characterize product development.

The following paragraphs provide brief summaries of the nine chapters included here:

Chapter 1, *Automotive Development Processes*, includes a retrospect of achievements in the automotive industry and highlights the very different factors that have influenced the development of cars over the past 120 years. The wide range of requirements for current and future cars is then elaborated, in order to clarify the current challenges facing automotive development. In addition, the stages in automobile development are explained through a detailed analysis of the different project phases, including a discussion on the integration of virtual product creation throughout the entire development chain.

Chapter 2, *Overview of Virtual Product Development*, first provides a summary of the various stages in the life cycle of mechanical products. The main terms, definitions, and methods of computer-aided product development are then introduced. This includes the historical development of CAD, simulation, and data management. In addition, some selected, representative development workflows in automotive engineering are presented and discussed, and the chapter then closes with a brief introduction to the concepts of collaborative product development.

Chapter 3, *Geometric Fundamentals*, introduces the reader to the mathematical and geometrical concepts which form the basis of a CAD system. It starts from scratch and leads the reader through the fields of curves, surfaces, freeform techniques, interpolation, approximation, and a range of other geometrical topics. In effect, this section might also be considered a manual for standard CAD concepts. However, rather than simply listing the methods and algorithms, this chapter actually explains the ideas behind these elements. A proper understanding of these ideas and properties can help engineers perform their jobs more effectively.

Chapter 4, *Modeling Techniques in CAD*, includes a detailed introduction of design methods within the CAD environment. Structures and strategies of wireframe, surface, and solid modeling are presented and discussed in terms of their application in collaborative product development processes. Beyond the application of primary CAD functionalities, this chapter uses specific examples from the automotive industry to present a variety of methods for the efficient creation of mechanical components and assemblies.

Chapter 5, *Knowledge-Based Design*, covers the use of template models, integrated calculation and simulation procedures, and automated routines to support product design. Knowledge-based design enables the collection, storage, and reuse of expert knowledge, as well as the subsequent integration of know-how into development processes. Using examples from component and assembly development, the chapter elaborates on the potential of enhanced parametric-associative design and knowledge-based engineering used in combination with simultaneously linked calculation procedures.

Chapter 6, *Engineering Data Management (EDM)*, describes the fundamental principles of this approach, which involves the interdepartmental and interdisciplinary integration of data and workflows in automotive product development. Both complete EDM use cases and the basic functional modules of CAD and computer-aided engineering (CAE) are described in the context of process-oriented product life cycle management approaches. Finally, the chapter also presents the system-oriented view by describing EDM system architecture with integrated computer-aided applications and data management systems.

Chapter 7, *Knowledge Management in Product Development*, describes product knowledge as a basis for investigation, as well as the development of such knowledge across the product life cycle. The chapter introduces and discusses the fundamentals of knowledge, knowledge management, and knowledge transfer, as well as the principle related basic models and approaches. Thus, the chapter offers a summary of current scientific findings in the area of knowledge management that serves as background for further analysis.

Chapter 8, *Knowledge-Based Engineering Data Management*, describes an approach for using process-oriented knowledge management to identify and organize knowledge-intensive activities in relation to data management activities. Modern design processes involve a variety of tasks (e.g. geometry creation, simulation) and product-specific characteristics (e.g. functional layout, materials, process-relevant data (e.g. for production), product structure, configuration), all of which can be managed with knowledge-based methods. Comprehensive knowledge exchange in product development requires effective data management strategies, which can be applied within knowledge-based EDM.

Chapter 9, *Advanced Applications of CAD/EDM in the Automotive Industry*, offers a selection of concrete use cases in automotive development. One use case includes an application of knowledge-based EDM, which highlights the importance of the interaction of knowledge processes and data management throughout virtual product development. This use case also describes the integrated application of CAD, simulation, and management throughout the daily operations of

development processes. Another use case describes the integration of CAD data management in automotive engineering, which is an essential topic in the area of EDM. Finally, a use case describing an approach of a parametric-associative concept model for initial vehicle development highlights the various working fields involved in automotive concept phases and introduces a model for geometrical and functional integration.

Contents

1	Automotive Development Processes	1
1.1	Manifold Requirements in the Past and in the Future	3
1.2	The Process of Automotive Development	11
1.2.1	Project Periods.	13
1.2.2	Phases of Automotive Development.	14
1.3	Application of CAD in Automotive Development	21
	References	23
2	Overview of Virtual Product Development	25
2.1	Development of Mechanical Products	25
2.2	Virtual Product Development	29
2.2.1	Product Models	32
2.2.2	CAD-CAE Workflows in Automotive Engineering	34
2.2.3	Management of Product Data	43
2.2.4	CAD-CAE Data Exchange	45
2.2.5	Concepts of Collaborative Product Development	47
	References	49
3	Geometric Fundamentals	51
3.1	The 3-Space, Transformations and Motions.	52
3.1.1	Planar Reflections	55
3.1.2	Translations and Rotations	55
3.1.3	Orientation	57
3.1.4	Helical Displacements	59
3.1.5	Euclidean Motions	60
3.1.6	Some Fundamentals of Line Geometry	62
3.2	Polynomials.	65

3.3	Curves	70
3.3.1	Parametric Representation of a Curve.	70
3.3.2	Planar Curves	72
3.3.3	Derivatives and Tangents	73
3.3.4	Arc Length Parameter.	76
3.3.5	Curvature and Torsion	77
3.3.6	Osculating Circle and Osculating Plane	78
3.3.7	The Frenet Frame	79
3.3.8	Planar Algebraic Curves	81
3.3.9	Rational Curves	82
3.3.10	Second Order Curves	83
3.4	Freeform Curves	85
3.4.1	Bézier Curves	86
3.4.2	B-Spline Curves.	99
3.4.3	Rational Freeform Curves, NURBS	109
3.5	Univariate Interpolation	116
3.5.1	Lagrange Interpolation	119
3.5.2	Interpolation by Cubic Segments	122
3.5.3	Parameterization	134
3.6	Univariate Approximation.	136
3.6.1	Improving the Quality of Approximation	140
3.6.2	Approximation with Cubic B-Splines	143
3.7	Surfaces	144
3.7.1	Parametric Representation of a Surface.	144
3.7.2	Surface Curves	146
3.7.3	Derivatives and Tangent Planes.	147
3.7.4	Curvature Theory of Surfaces	152
3.7.5	Surfaces Represented by Equations	157
3.7.6	Algebraic Surfaces.	158
3.7.7	Rational Surfaces.	159
3.7.8	Quadrics	160
3.7.9	Ruled Surfaces.	165
3.7.10	Developable Surfaces	167
3.7.11	Surfaces of Revolution	170
3.7.12	Helical Surfaces.	173
3.7.13	Moving a Curve or a Surface in Itself	174
3.7.14	Intersection of Surfaces	176
3.8	Tensor Product Surfaces	180
3.8.1	Bézier Surfaces	182
3.8.2	B-Spline Surfaces	192
3.8.3	Rational Tensor Product Surfaces, NURBS Surfaces	198

3.9	Bivariate Interpolation	204
3.9.1	Coons Patches	204
3.9.2	Interpolation of a Rectangular Point Set	206
3.9.3	Bivariate Lagrange Interpolation	208
3.9.4	Bivariate Hermite Interpolation	210
3.9.5	Bivariate Cubic B-Spline Interpolation	214
3.10	Bivariate Approximation.	216
3.10.1	A Plane Fitting a Set of Scattered Points	216
3.10.2	A Tensor Product Surface Fitting Scattered Data Points	220
3.11	Triangular Bézier Patches	225
3.12	Tensor Product Volumes.	232
3.13	Example: Side Window Kinematics	235
3.13.1	The Appropriate Screw Motion to a Given Surface . . .	236
3.13.2	Constructing an Ideal Side Window Surface	237
	References	238
4	Modeling Techniques in CAD.	241
4.1	Structures of 3D CAD Models.	249
4.1.1	Surface-Based Model Structure	250
4.1.2	Solid-Based Model Structure	252
4.1.3	The Role of CAD Models in Product Development . .	254
4.2	Wireframe and Surface Design	256
4.2.1	Reference Elements	256
4.2.2	Wireframe Design	257
4.2.3	Surface Design	260
4.2.4	Operations in Wireframe and Surface Design	265
4.2.5	Modeling in Wireframe and Surface Design	270
4.2.6	Surface Analysis Functions	274
4.3	Solid Design	276
4.3.1	Modeling of Basis Solids	277
4.3.2	Boolean Operations	279
4.3.3	Editing and Detailing Functionalities	281
4.3.4	Feature-Based Geometry Modeling	282
4.4	Combination of Wireframe, Surface, and Solid-Based Functions	285
4.5	Assembly Design.	289
4.5.1	Organization of Product Structures.	290
4.5.2	Methods of Component Positioning	294
4.5.3	Geometry-Based Interlinks in Assembly Design . . .	301
4.6	Derivation of 2D Drawings	305
	References	308

5 Knowledge-Based Design	309
5.1 Parameterization as a Basis for Knowledge-Based Design.	312
5.1.1 External Parameter Control	315
5.1.2 Implementation of Non-CAD Data.	316
5.2 Knowledge Integration Using Template Models	317
5.2.1 Template-Library-Based Design.	320
5.2.2 Implementation of Mathematical and Logical Relations.	323
5.2.3 Integrated Virtual Product Development Using Centralized Master Models	326
5.3 Example: Integrated Design in Automotive Bumper System Development	328
References	330
6 Engineering Data Management	331
6.1 The Concept of Engineering Data Management (EDM)	332
6.1.1 The Y-CIM Model.	332
6.1.2 PLM as a Foundation of EDM	334
6.1.3 Definition of Engineering Data Management (EDM).	336
6.2 EDM in Virtual Product Development	338
6.2.1 Process Orientation in Product Development.	338
6.2.2 EDM as Integrated Management Approach	339
6.2.3 The Product Development Process	341
6.2.4 EDM Support in Virtual Product Development	341
6.2.5 EDM Process Integration	343
6.3 EDM Database	344
6.3.1 The Role of Development Data	344
6.3.2 EDM Documents	346
6.3.3 CAD Data in EDM	347
6.3.4 Digital Mock-Up (DMU)	347
6.3.5 The Virtual Product	348
6.3.6 Data Security.	349
6.4 Engineering Data Management System (EDMS)	350
6.4.1 Product Data Management System (PDMS)	350
6.4.2 Application-Related Functions of EDMS	354
6.4.3 EDMS Architecture	356
6.4.4 EDMS Interfaces	357
6.5 Computer-Supported Engineering in the Context of EDM.	358
6.5.1 How CAx Changes Product Development.	359
6.5.2 CAD Integration	360
6.5.3 CAD Implementation	361
6.5.4 Virtual Computer-Generated 3D Product Design Models.	362

6.6	Integrated EDM Applications in Product Development	364
6.6.1	Functional Dimensioning and Optimization in Early Design Phase	364
6.6.2	Consistency of Simulation Data in Optimized Design Processes	365
6.6.3	Interdisciplinary Consistency of Simulation Data	366
6.6.4	Integration of Design and Simulation	367
6.6.5	CAD/CAE Data Management	368
	References	369
7	Knowledge Management in Product Development	371
7.1	Product Knowledge	371
7.1.1	Development of Product Knowledge	371
7.1.2	Life Cycle of Product Knowledge	373
7.1.3	Defining Product Knowledge	373
7.1.4	Product Knowledge Products	374
7.1.5	Product Knowledge Management	374
7.2	Fundamentals of Knowledge Management	375
7.2.1	Knowledge and Knowledge Management	375
7.2.2	Basic Elements of the Knowledge Base	376
7.2.3	Knowledge Management in Industrial Management	379
7.2.4	Basic Model of Knowledge Management	380
7.2.5	System Orientation in Knowledge Management	382
7.3	Knowledge Transfer in Product Development	383
7.3.1	Definition of Knowledge Transfer	383
7.3.2	Transfer and Transformation Processes in the Knowledge System	384
7.3.3	Direct Versus Indirect Knowledge Transfer	385
7.3.4	Direct Knowledge Transfer	386
7.3.5	Indirect Knowledge Transfer	386
7.3.6	The Definition of Knowledge Logistics	388
7.4	Process Orientation in Knowledge Management	389
7.4.1	Knowledge-Oriented Process Management	390
7.4.2	Process-Oriented Knowledge Management	390
7.4.3	The Knowledge Process in Interaction with the Added-Value Processes	391
	References	392
8	Knowledge-Based Engineering Data Management	393
8.1	Basic Models and Approaches of Knowledge-Oriented EDM	394
8.1.1	System-Oriented Reference Frame of Knowledge-Oriented EDM	394

8.1.2	The Knowledge Process as Connection Between Business Process and Support Process of EDM	394
8.1.3	Integrated Approach to Added-Value Processes	395
8.1.4	Model for the Integration of Knowledge Processes and Data Management	396
8.1.5	From the Knowledge Transfer Model to the Knowledge-Oriented Engineering Data Management	398
8.1.6	Model for the Reconstruction of the Knowledge Base and Database	399
8.2	Requirements for the IT Support of Process-Oriented Knowledge Management in EDM	400
8.2.1	Modeling Approach for the Technical Subsystem	401
8.2.2	The Database of Knowledge-Oriented EDM	403
8.2.3	EDM Workflow Support of Knowledge-Intensive Processes	403
8.2.4	Management, Transfer and Steering of Knowledge-Oriented EDM	404
8.3	Knowledgeware in Product Development	404
8.3.1	The Parametric-Associative Approach	405
8.3.2	The Fundamentals of Parametric-Associative Design	406
8.3.3	Knowledge Management and Product Configuration	407
	References	408

9 Advanced Applications of CAD/EDM

in the Automotive Industry	409	
9.1	Applications for Knowledge-Based EDM	409
9.1.1	Relevant Knowledge Operations in EDM	410
9.1.2	Factors that Influence Knowledge Transfer Via Data Transfer at the Operational Level	410
9.1.3	Data Management Barriers in Indirect Knowledge Transfer	412
9.1.4	Reference Process for the Knowledge-Oriented Development of EDM Use Cases	413
9.2	Integrated CAD Data Management in Automotive Engineering	414
9.2.1	Challenges Related to the Topic	415
9.2.2	Concept of Integrated CAD Data Management	415
9.2.3	CAD Scheduling	416
9.2.4	A Concept of Geometry Reference	418
9.2.5	CAD Data Quality, Progress and Maturity	419