

“Rhino Strategies: the development of Rhinoceros Nurbs Modeling Software”

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12:30 - 2:00pm
Room 3-133

Bob McNeel

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Abstract:

A small (fewer than 100 people) technical software business requires innovative strategies to design a business model with a global reach. The presentation comprises a summary of company and product history and some of the company's key strategies including technology and development, support and training, marketing and sales, and finance. Depending on interest and time available, an in-depth discussion will follow.

Bio:

Robert (Bob) McNeel is the founder and president of Robert McNeel & Associates (McNeel). Founded in 1978, McNeel originally focused on developing accounting software for accounting, architecture, engineering, and other personal services firms. Within a few years, McNeel expanded its services to include selling and supporting microprocessor-based engineering and design software including AutoCAD. By 1985, the main focus of the business had shifted to AutoCAD sales, service, training, and software development.

In 1992, McNeel started a development project to add NURBS technology to AutoCAD to provide their marine design and fabrication clients with the high-precision, free-form geometry tools needed to digitally design and fabricate the shapes common in the marine industry. After several years of development for AutoCAD, the project was moved to a stand-alone Windows project. In 1998, after five years of public testing, this project was released as "Rhinoceros, NURBS modeling for Windows." Today Rhinoceros dominates the business.

Bob McNeel grew up in the mountains of southern Washington State on a subsistence dairy farm. To pay for college, he worked in construction as a carpenter, welder, and cement finisher. Bob has a BA in Accounting from Washington State University. Prior to founding McNeel & Associates, he was a practicing Certified Public Accountant and the comptroller for a large construction company in Spokane.