

3D DIGITAL GRAPHICS IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE: CURRENT CONDITIONS IN A NUTSHELL

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1 ABSTRACT

3D digital graphics and representation have been a critical part in landscape architecture professional practice. However, few studies have been conducted to document how 3D digital graphics are currently being used. Some important questions are largely unknown. For example, who are the primary users of 3D digital graphics programs, and what are the most popular 3D software packages, and why. A better understanding of these questions is not only important to practitioners, but also to educators and software developers. This study tackles the above questions through a national online survey of landscape architecture firms. Five sets of questions were asked, including (1) background of the firm, (2) familiarity with 3D software programs, (3) current status of using 3D programs, (4) interest in using 3D programs in the future, and (5) desirable impact of 3D programs on landscape architecture professional practice. The survey was sent to all the American Society of Landscape Architects' members through SurveyMonkey. More than 400 firms responded (response rate 13%). Results show that currently landscape architecture professionals exhibit limited use of 3D technologies. The main barriers are the steep learning curve and daunting cost for license. However, majority of the respondents expressed the desire to take advantage of 3D modeling and visualization in their work. The reported main benefits of using 3D technologies include: the ease of communicating with clients and the general public, the ability to create polished and detailed landscape design representations, and time saving in receiving feedback on design and making amendments accordingly, compared to traditional physical models.

1.1 Keywords

3D digital graphics, landscape architecture, professional practice, visualization