UAA College of Engineering
University of Alaska Anchorage

UAA Professional Development Seminar Series



From Chat to CAD: What Today's AI Models Can Actually Do for Engineers

Presented by Kyle Easterly

ABSTRACT: Over the past year, frontier AI models have moved well beyond drafting text. Current models such as Anthropic's Claude Opus 5.5 and OpenAI's latest GPT release can now reason about three-dimensional space and engineering-domain problems that earlier models could not handle reliably. This presentation opens with a practical update on the state of frontier AI and where its capabilities have improved most for technical work. It then briefly summarizes a recent project in which AI models built a 3D digital twin of an on-premises AI server, driving 3D graphics software almost entirely through scripts, and what that experience revealed about the models' strengths and the verification they still require. The session then surveys the AI tools now available for CAD, BIM, and civil workflows, organized into three levels: assistants built into engineering software, general-purpose models that write automation scripts, and agent connections that act directly inside programs such as Revit and Civil 3D. Attendees will leave with a clear picture of what these tools can do today, where caution is still warranted, and practical ways to begin evaluating them in their own work, with ample time reserved for questions.

BIO: Kyle Easterly is Co-Founder and CEO of Delve Group, deploying AI solutions for organizations throughout Alaska. With 15 years of experience in enterprise software spanning oil and gas, telecommunications, and government sectors, he focuses on building durable, production-ready systems. As a Claude Community Ambassador, he was featured in Anthropic's oral history, The Making of Claude Code, and showcased his AI security research at DEF CON 31's AI Village. He is dedicated to cultivating a community of AI practitioners and guiding organizations toward successful AI integration.

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