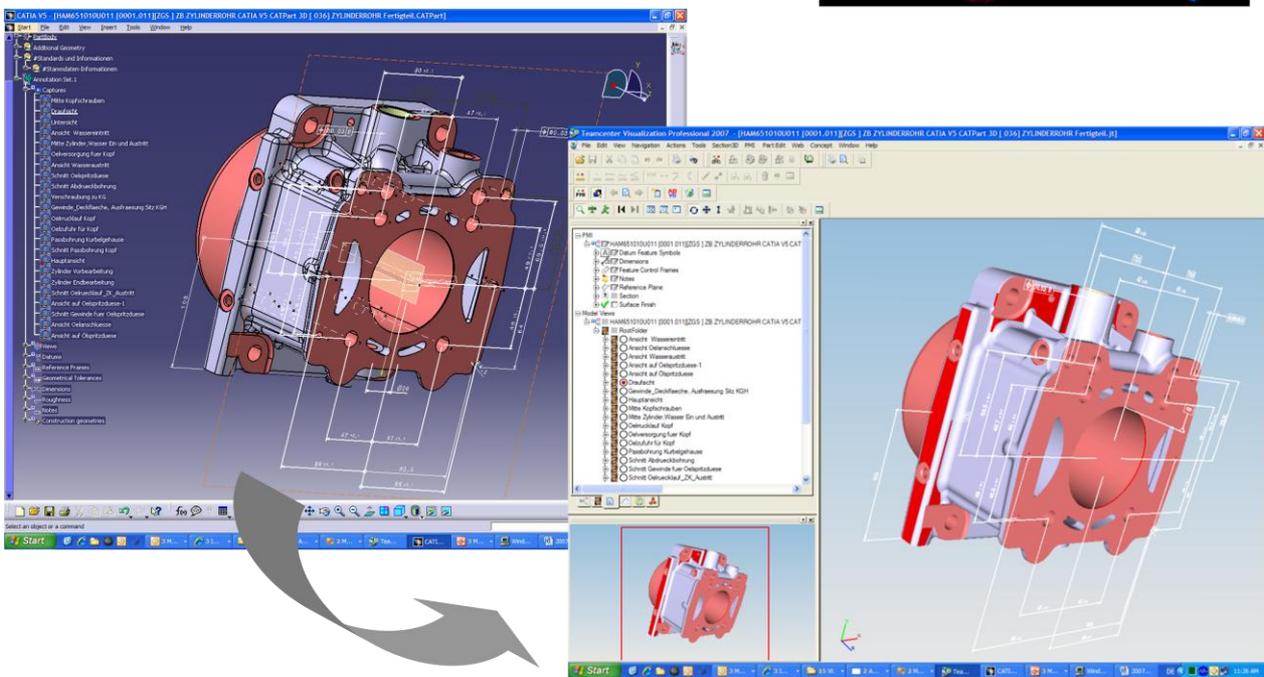


COM/FOX: MULTI FORMAT OPTIMIZED EXCHANGE.

For years the COM/FOX product from T-Systems has been among the best performing CATIA data converters on the market. Now this tool is set to capture the Asian market – the PLM Solution Center has modified the solution to convert digital models labeled with Japanese and Chinese lettering.



Nothing has so revolutionized the manufacturing industry in the past few years as digital product development. Engineers now develop, build and run simulations of three-dimensional components on the computer, and are increasingly using a central database to plan the entire production process and follow-up support. The efficient exchange of digital development data is essential for these processes.

Manufacturers must be able to cooperate closely and reliably with their suppliers, regardless of where in the world they are located. The ability to communicate smoothly has become one of the keys to success.

COM/FOX.

THE DEVELOPMENT NETWORK SHARES PRODUCT DATA.

As a general rule, not all partners working with manufacturing data will use a development program that generates geometries, such as CATIA from Dassault Systèmes. Even the specialist divisions of the manufacturing company itself, such as the processing department or the service center, often have no access to an application of this type. This is why Daimler, BMW and Volkswagen have been using T-Systems' 3D data converter, COM/FOX, for years. The application converts CATIA data into important exchange formats and back. Even system providers like Karmann, Johnson Controls and Keiper trust to this software solution to distribute manufacturing-relevant CAD, CAM, and CAE development information to all workstations throughout the company the development network.

"COM/ FOX is an outstanding tool for converting CATIA V5 data into JT format," confirms Michael Ebert from the Mercedes Car Group's EDM/Data Management competence center. Apart from pure 3D geometrical information, JT files can also contain surface descriptions and tolerances; that is, information that was formerly only described in two-dimensional drawings but is found today in full volume models. "The conversion of CATIA V5 to JT is without a doubt one of the most popular features of COM/FOX," according to Markus Vogelmann from T-Systems Solution Center. Even virtual reality formats like OpenInventor (IV), Stereolithography (STL) and the Virtual Reality Markup Language (VRML) are increasingly being replaced by JT.

THE COMPLETE INTEGRATION OF ASIAN CHARACTERS.

COM/FOX provides unrestricted support for this trend. Currently, the reader module is able to interpret 13 different formats and the writer module can write just as many. Recently, there has been an increasing demand for the KBL format used widely in cable set construction, as well as for the conversion of CATIA V5 to CAD System MicroStation, the leading planning tool for hall layouts in the digital factory.

T-Systems has continued to develop COM/FOX over the past years and, most recently, has made the converter ready for the Asian market. Whether they be in Japanese, Chinese or Korean, it is now possible to automatically analyze, render, transmit and export entries using Asian characters into any format without loss of information. Winfried Weber, the Head of Development for COM/FOX, stresses that the integration of the characters has nothing to do with the translation of the program's interface but refers to the descriptions in the models themselves, for example surface specifications such as 'sanded' or 'case-hardened'. "We have developed an intelligent way of converting these specifications by Asian users without losing information."

For Weber, this is the key to positioning COM/FOX as a global product. "We satisfy the need for a company-wide, standardized conversion of development data, regardless of where in the world the engineers are based." Daimlers commercial vehicle division uses COM/FOX in Europe, the USA and Japan. And Honda now ordered COM/FOX.

SMALL FILES—MORE PROTECTION OF YOUR EXPERTISE.

Manufacturing-relevant information from 3D models is required across the entire product realization process these days: during development, product planning and manufacturing. The design engineers need development data just as much as the CNC machines in the plant. The scope and volume of the information is what varies. This is why COM/FOX offers an optional data optimizer, with which developers can specifically reduce the data stored for certain models. The exact surface form of the CAD object can be retained, while the interior is removed. This 'hollowing' process allows for manageable file sizes and simultaneously provides an efficient expertise protection mechanism. It becomes unnecessary to carry out a laborious manual adaptation of the model before it is delivered to a development partner – COM/FOX carries out this task automatically and safely in over-night batch mode.

Companies already familiar with the numerous advantages that COM/FOX offers no longer willingly do without "The tool is easy and quick to install, simple to use and the support services are outstanding," says Roland Traub of EADS Astrium in its praise. The company, based in Friedrichshafen on Germany's Bodensee, specializes in civilian and military space systems and space-based services – and uses COM/FOX trans-nationally in the development of its products.

The COM/FOX success story will continue to be written by T-Systems. The data converter plays a pivotal role in the planned PLM product suite, which aims to support companies in the manufacturing industry along their entire product lifecycle. "The efficient exchange of development data between manufacturer and supplier is a pre-requisite for the later success of the product," explains Markus Vogelmann. "The more specialists collaborate in an engineering network, the more difficult it is to realize short go-to-market times. This trend is reversible – and that is the basis of the increasing demand for COM/FOX."

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