Google SketchUp Presentation Graphics: Creating Effective Images and Animations
Friday September 10th, 2010, 8:30 a.m. - 10: a.m.
By Daniel Tal

Introduction
3D tools, like SketchUp, are playing an ever expanding and important role in landscape architecture. The session will explore a variety of design visualization topics and SketchUp’s related role. Each topic described below will focus on real world project examples. The session will include a discussion of the importance of digital graphics and the function they play in the profession, how they help improve design abilities and the accessibility of these tools to the landscape architecture community.

The session will include a live demonstrations and an abundance of examples, including a REAL TIME demonstration of creating a photorealistic rendering in SketchUp.

TOPICS
- The role of Google SketchUp and 3D graphic programs in landscape architecture
- Google SketchUp, 3D tools, design process and workflow
- Google SketchUp still graphics and entourage
- Google SketchUp animations
- Photorealism (renderings), hand graphics and SketchUp
- SketchUp Pro, Layout and Construction Drawings
- How these tools affect the profession, clients and being competitive

The role of Google SketchUp and 3D graphic programs in landscape architecture
The session will start with a discussion of why these technologies and design visualization tools are important to the profession. The topic includes how these tools can assist the profession to remain competitive and help educate the general public on landscape architecture.

Example of image exported from SketchUp with minimal post production work in Photoshop
Google SketchUp, 3D tools, design process and workflow
The topic will explore a project from start to finish and how Google Earth, Microsoft Bing, SketchUp and AutoCAD were used to help complete each stage of the project. The topic will focus on a real world case study of a plaza design competition and how digital visualization was used in a sequential process from concept design to design development. The various programs provided spatial and contextual understanding and final presentation graphics.

Google SketchUp still graphics and entourage
SketchUp can be used to create highly detailed and rich images to express design. Many SketchUp users do not take full advantage of SketchUp’s ability to produce composed still graphic images. The topic will explore how to quickly set up a scene and will include important entourage elements, like people, cars, vegetation and site amenities. All the images and graphics are from real world and current projects.

![Example of using SketchUp for concept design, schematic design and design development on a plaza project.](image)

Google SketchUp Animations
Animations are the most effective way to convey design ideas to internal design teams, clients and the public. Like detailed SketchUp images, designers do not take full advantage of SketchUp’s ability to create clear animations. This portion of the seminar will explore several real world projects that used SketchUp animations to convey space, design and sequence to clients and the public. The demonstrated animations will review the Denver Justice Center, various community planning and parks projects and animations created for the sustainable sites initiative.

![SketchUp can be used to create clear graphics using a wide variety of entourage elements like trees, people and other amenities](image)
Photorealism (renderings), Hand Graphics and SketchUp
The highlight of the session will be a discussion on photorealism. A quick definition of photorealism is: Photorealism is the genre of graphics used to create an image that appears to be very realistic like a photograph.

Photorealism is quickly becoming the standard medium for client presentations. The session will explore what photorealistic renderings are, why they are important and the various software programs that can be used with SketchUp to create photo-real renderings for landscape architecture.

During the seminar, a REAL TIME demonstration of using SU-Podium rendering program with SketchUp will be completed. The intent is to demonstrate that rendering programs are no longer outside the reach of the average professional and creating photorealistic images can and should be part of the design process.

The session will include a discussion on how hand graphics, SketchUp and Photorealistic renderings can work with each other to create client presentations.

SketchUp models can be rendered to create photorealistic images like the example of this courtyard plaza. Above- SU Podium Render.
SketchUp Pro, Layout and Construction Documents

The session will include a quick review of Mitchel Stangl of Stangl Associates and his use of SketchUp to create construction documents of processing plants and related equipment. Mitchel has pioneered the use of SketchUp in multiple fields and exclusively uses SketchUp and the associated software Layout to create complex detail documents.

How these tools affect the profession, clients and being competitive

The session will end with a synopsis of how all these tools work together, how they fit within existing workflows and diminishing budgets and how a firm or individual can go about learning these methods, programs and techniques. The conclusion will focus on client expectations and desire for specific graphic types and why it is important for landscape architects to embrace these new technologies.

SketchUp Pro and Layout can be used to create detailed drawings. The two images above are examples of Construction Documents created by Mitchel Stangl for processing plant equipment. The model is in SketchUp and displayed and annotated in Google Layout.
Google SketchUp can be used to create a variety of graphics and images. Example of USDA building and landscape at Mall of the Americas, Washington, DC.
Google SketchUp scene of park and waterfront. The SketchUp model was imported into rendering program to create photoreal image below.
Resources

Classes and Seminars
Daniel Tal offers seminars and webinars on SketchUp, photorealism and other topics. www.danieltal.com. Please note, the website will not be active until September 5th.

Recommended books
Google SketchUp For Site Design - By Daniel Tal
Google SketchUp for Dummies - By Aidan Chopra
Digital Drawing for Landscape Architecture - By Bradley Cantrell and Wes Michaels

SketchUp Software
www.sketchup.com
There is a free and pro version. The only difference between the free and pro version is that SketchUp Pro allows you to import and export DWG, DXF, 3DS and other file formats. Also, SketchUp Pro comes with Style Builder and Layout - two additional programs.

Photorealism and rendering software**:
Instead of providing a URL, please do a Google search as described.
**SU Podium – recommended: http://www.suplugins.com/ - Google search: SU Podium
VRAY Plug-in: Google Search “Vray SketchUp plugin”
3D Max: Google Search “3DS Max”
Vue landscape render by e-on software : Google Search “Vue render”
Render Plus: http Google search “Renderplus”
Thea: Google search “Thearender”

**Please note this is only a partial list.

On-line Forums - search for each term
Land8Lounge – SketchUp Group
SketchUcation
SU Podium Forums

SketchUp and Construction Documents
Mitchel Stangl Associates: http://stangl.com/
Select SketchUp Pro from the Pages links on the left.