

The big Bricsys interview 1 – Why Invite The Press?

[Steve Johnson](#) 6 May 2017 [BricsCAD](#), [Bricsys](#), [Cadalyst](#), [Interview](#), [Other Blogs](#)

This is the first in a series of posts covering an extensive interview with Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh.

On April 26 and 27, I attended Bricsys Insights, a press event in Ghent, Belgium. Other attendees included Cyrena Respini-Irwin ([Cadalyst](#) editor in chief), R.K. McSwain ([CAD Panacea](#)), Ralph Grabowski ([upFront.eZine](#)), Randall Newton ([GraphicSpeak](#)), Roopinder Tara ([Engineering.com](#)), Martyn Day ([DEVELOP3D](#)), Jeff Rowe ([AEC Café](#)), Anthony Frausto-Robledo ([Architosh](#)) and Paul Wilkinson ([pwcom](#)).

Although Bricsys has invited some of these people (including myself) to previous events, this was the first gathering of such a significant number of illustrious industry press, bloggers and observers. So when myself, Cyrena Respini-Irwin and R.K. McSwain had the opportunity to interview Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh, the first thing that we asked was this:

Cyrena (clarifying earlier question): **What was the change that led you to bring in more people for the press event?**

Steve: **Why are we here?**

Erik/Mark: (Laughs)

Cyrena: That's a big question!

Erik: If you look to the history of what we have done and it goes together with what we said in the beginning, that we chose to grow by organic growth, and for a long time we didn't do any marketing, and especially for the American market, because if you do it too early... And really, if we had done that massively, five years ago we would have been categorized as just another clone of AutoCAD. Once you have that, it's very difficult to leave that, and that's exactly what we wanted to avoid.

And so we waited until we had really substantially different product technologies that add a lot of stuff to... if you compare it to AutoCAD, I think that's the moment where we are now. And we decided from that moment on, probably it made sense that we tell it a little bit more to the world. And of course what do you do then? You invite influencers in the market, which is the journalists. That's the reason we invited you all.

We're going to repeat this more and more.

Mark: Just to add to that, just sitting here for just two days with you guys also helps us to really talk about everything. If you go to a conference (you [Steve] were also in Munich), the time is limited and so we don't show the systems behind, the testing system, we cannot show everything.

The idea here was, OK, these are the things we're doing, what you see of course but also what is behind, the people behind the DNA of the company. We thought that's a good idea to do that in depth with an audience like you guys.

Erik: That's an important element as well that we wanted to show: the DNA of the company. It's a bit different from others. That's who we are and it's important to know.

Steve: **You're about 90% developers, programmers. Do you think that's going to change as you put more effort into marketing?**

Erik: I think that the awesome part of the company that has to be improved, and on the marketing side we're going to need to improve... to give you a rough idea we think that over the next two, four years we're probably going to grow to maybe 200-250 people.

Steve: **So where are you now?**

Erik: We're at 130-140. We just hired six new developers here in the office last week so we have to recount where we are in total. Dmitri is hiring in Novosibirsk (Bricsys Russia) as well.

So for sure we are starting what I would call a second life now. There's been a lot of development, but still the majority of people in our company will be developers. I think we're always going to stay around 80% developers. But there's a part of the business, and especially in the marketing, that we will have to improve.

What we have encountered now, with the new modelling techniques we have introduced for BIM, we have to teach all the resellers. We have to produce material to teach the people how to work with it. These are not developers we're going to need. We're going to need seasoned architects that have experience for the last six to ten years with BIM already, maybe with competitive products. But that understand the concept, have experience with it, those guys we are now attracting and we're going to need. Those are not developers, but in that sphere we have to extend and we have to grow. And that's what we're doing. We are hiring.

The focus will always be... what we're good at, is basic research and development. That's really what we're doing, that's the focus, and the results are the products we make.

We have a good partnership network I think, we're going to continue to feed that, so I expect that balance between developers and non-developers to remain always above or about 80%.

If you have a look at the system, how we sell and support our products, we are scalable, to maintain that balance of a high level of developers. There's no need for us to change that model. But in certain aspects we're going to have to extend.

BOA (Bricsys Online Administration) is helping us tremendously to be scalable. If we were to double our revenue we wouldn't need that many more people to manage that. We are constantly investing in automating all the systems we have, and it pays off big-time.

Cyrena: So that very heavy R&D investment you've sustained thus far will be scaled back a little in order to invest in other areas such as marketing?

Erik: Yeah, but it doesn't mean we will scale back from development. We will grow in development as well, but the balance will be a little bit different; the proportion is different. We will grow tremendously, even more still in R&D when it comes to number of developers than in any other area over any other field or kind of employee that we have.

The Big Bricsys Interview 2 – Making Money

[Steve Johnson 8 May 2017 BricsCAD, Bricsys, Interview](#)

This is one of a series of posts covering an extensive interview with Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh. In this post, I ask about Bricsys' profitability and growth.

Steve: Do you publish your numbers?

Erik: No we don't. We are a private company.

Steve: Can you give us an indication of what's happening with your sales at the moment?

Erik: Last year we grew in revenue 25%. First quarter this year was up 27% over the same quarter last year. If you compare the sales in total of 2016 compared with 2015, it was 25% in growth. It means that the growth is going faster and faster and faster. That's what we expect normally as well.

This is without any sales to Intergraph. We expect that the Intergraph deal will have an impact on our growth for sure. Mark as COO is responsible for sales and managing of that network. [To Mark] And I see you're very occupied!

Mark: That whole Intergraph network is coming to us. It's huge.

Erik: It's more than doubling what we have, on sales partners.

Mark: Just to add to the numbers, we are very profitable: 24, 25%. We have very good profitability which is also significant. We're not burning money.

Erik: Year after year.

Steve: **So you're making money every year and that's increasing every year?**

Erik: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. The percentage is always around 24-25% but as we're increasing revenue it becomes exponential.

Mark: We started in 2002 and I think we have always been profitable.

Erik: I think the first two years are what we call a black zero. We have started with an investor, but we have always kept a majority within the company. I won't give the total shareholders but you must know that most of the people here, if somebody works here two years they get stock options and becomes a shareholder. The goal is we always keep the majority with the employees and the management.

We have a good partner investor. He's satisfied with the growth, of course. There's no big deal.

The Big Bricsys Interview 3 – Looking After People

[Steve Johnson 9 May 2017 Autodesk, BricsCAD, Bricsys, Interview](#)

This is one of a series of posts covering an extensive interview with Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh. In this post, I learn about Bricsys' astonishingly good staff retention record and the reasons behind it.

Autodesk likes to periodically pat itself on the back for being a great employer, but history shows it's a company that discards about 10% of its workforce every few years to keep the share market happy. I suspect another round is coming up soon, unfortunately. There's a stark contrast between a company that disposes of its chattels in that way and one with a CEO that says, *"...every time somebody leaves the company that's really, really bad."*

You as a customer may not think that matters to you, but it does. I believe there is a direct correlation between Autodesk losing knowledgeable staff and Autodesk repeating old mistakes and breaking things. If today's developers don't know why some things in the software are the way they are, or why most changes should automatically come with an off switch, or why some

things shouldn't be done at all, or even how a feature can be maintained (e.g. Visual LISP), then the product suffers. AutoCAD users have to deal with the consequences of those knowledge holes with every release.

As in so many other areas, Bricsys proves to Autodesk that it doesn't have to be like that; there is a better way.

Steve: Speaking to your people, they appear to like working here and they stick around. What's your staff turnover like?

Mark: It's very low, very low.

Erik: Job-hoppers, you mean? People who leave? I think in the last fifteen years... maybe five, six, something like that?

Steve: Wow.

Mark: I remember the reasons, maybe two or three times here, maybe having to leave to move to another city or another country. There as well, we try to find solutions.

We really have a good team atmosphere and if those people can work, if they're a developer for example, people can work from remote areas. We have a guy who has been working for us for years who is now working from Turkey. That was the discussion we had, "I have to leave because I'm moving to Turkey now." No, you don't have to leave, just work from there.

Erik: I will add that in Novosibirsk (Bricsys Russia) it's more difficult to keep the people. We are growing very fast there. We started when we took over the LEDAS team with 3D modelling, we started there with six or seven people. We now have thirty. Along the road for the last four or five years, maybe five or six left. In percentage, that's way more than we have here. We are stopping the bleeding now!

Steve: That's still fairly low!

Erik: That's still fairly low but every time somebody leaves the company that's really, really bad. We are investing a lot in making it comfortable for our people. To give you an idea we have a culture here of every Friday, we go to the pizzeria for lunch here. We have our own floor there in the restaurant every Friday. Sometimes we talk about software but sometimes we talk about politics and sometimes just rubbish and nonsense and a lot of fun.

Mark: Mostly!

Erik: But we give a budget to all our teams. In Novosibirsk they do that as well. So they have a budget and we force, well, encourage them very strongly to do that.

Mark: Same in Singapore, [inaudible], all our teams.

Erik: Every year, with all the families, we go to a chateau near Paris for three to four days. In Novosibirsk they have a budget to go for a trip with their families once a year, if there is a special occasion. That's investing in your people.

If anyone has a problem, everyone knows that all doors are open, that we will try to find a solution to make you comfortable. We always say to our people here that the last thing we want is if they are stressed. It doesn't work for developers and for a company like ours. No stress.

I was really sorry with Dieter yesterday [one of the presenters at the press event]. They only told him the day before to give a presentation! He's not used to doing that. He was really good about it as you all saw, but he was really stressed. We will avoid putting him in that situation ever, ever again. It doesn't work.

But for the rest, even with deadlines, we change priorities then, but we don't want people stressed. And that has a very good result. If you see where we are coming from, what we have, in fifteen years, millions and millions of lines of code, of testing code as well, it's a ton of development that is done, quality that we have developed. So far, so good, without stressing our guys. Why would we change that?

Mark: Also, the transparency we show to the outside world with the bug reports and so on, that's also done internally. Everything here is open. On a quarterly basis we get everyone together, we show the numbers, it's no secret at all internally. So everyone knows how the company is going, how things are moving, new projects that we are doing, and that feels nice with people.

The Big Bricsys Interview 4 – Thank You, Autodesk

[Steve Johnson](#) [10 May 2017](#) [Autodesk](#), [BricsCAD](#), [Bricsys](#), [Interview](#), [Rental](#), [Subscription](#)

This is one of a series of posts covering an extensive interview with Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh. In this post, we learn that Autodesk's move to all-rental has helped drive BricsCAD sales higher and continues to do so.

Cyrena: Backing up just a step to sales, were you able to track any impact on your sales numbers with the chronology of Autodesk's announcements of ending perpetual? Did you see an effect that you could map to that?

Erik/Mark (together): Yes.

Erik: We see that especially with large companies. I hear it from Mark always!

Mark: That's what I wanted to explain this morning too, although we have an indirect sales channel, we have our resellers at work out there, especially with the large deals, we are involved always. So there's always one of our guys, a business development manager together with the local sales person in touch with those larger corporations.

In the last few weeks, we have received tons of emails from large corporations; of course it's hard to disclose them, but... [names a corporation]. It doesn't mean they will switch right away, but we have meetings where they say that, "Our contract with Autodesk ends in July, August, whatever, that's the time we will not extend it. We will not renew it, we will not go to subscription, and we are looking for alternatives." These are really big, big, corporations. So yes, yes, we see an impact.

Erik: When it comes to alternatives, and with all respect to our colleagues [competitors], we are not the only alternative, but I think we are in a good position. If you see what we have to give people a perspective beyond AutoCAD, well...

If we would only be an AutoCAD clone, and AutoCAD stops further development, it would mean the clones stop further development more or less as well. And all of a sudden the market is going to 3D mechanical, 3D BIM, etc., then it's a problem. I think that's where we can play an important role.

The DWG market, the DWG community, if they really want to move on slowly, slowly (and everyone makes his own choices about staying on 2D AutoCAD-based, fine as well), but at least there is a growth path. And I see that BricsCAD is the only product that goes in that direction. All the other alternatives more or less stay around what Autodesk is presenting, with a few differences here and there.

But it's not really mainstream that there is investment in R&D or really a big jump of other stuff than just being compatible with AutoCAD. It makes a difference.

The Big Bricsys Interview 5 – Perpetual Licensing and Choice

[Steve Johnson 11 May 2017 Autodesk, BricsCAD, Bricsys, Interview, Rental, Subscription](#)

This is one of a series of posts covering an extensive interview with Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh.

In this post, Erik confirms the Bricsys commitment to perpetual licensing. That's a statement important enough to preserve, so [here's the recorded audio](#) for posterity.

Audio Player

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[Use Up/Down Arrow keys to increase or decrease volume.](#)

We also learn what proportion of CAD customers choose perpetual licenses over rental when given fair pricing and the choice. Hint to Autodesk: it's not 0%.

Steve: Are you committed to the perpetual licensing model?

Erik: Yes, yes. We are committed to choice. If somebody wants another way of licensing our stuff, that's fine as well. I mean you can hire our stuff, you can pay per month, it's possible.

Steve: That's not in all markets, is it?

Erik: We don't promote it, but it's possible if somebody contacts us, no problem. It's choice, and we believe in choice. It's not up to us to impose how people work with our stuff. But perpetual, it's fair, I think. Somebody buys software, it's always been like that, and we have to continue that. And we will continue that. Read my lips! We will continue.

All: (laughs)

Cyrena: Speaking of choice, can you talk about the type and portion of users who go for rental rather than perpetual?

Mark: Of course the vast majority go for perpetual.

Erik: 95% buyers.

Mark: When you see these clients in Russia that have these big oil projects in Siberia for six months or whatever, then it [rental] might make sense. But with the channel... 95, 97, 98% is just perpetual.

But what we see more and more is people are asking about it [rental] more and more, because of course in the Autodesk world there is no other option. So of course people just want to compare apples with apples.

Steve: So they're just asking for the numbers?

Mark: Yes, for the numbers, “What would it be?” That’s the feeling that we have, ultimately when they make a decision they’re going to go for perpetual.

Erik: Because the price is acceptable as well, I think. It’s not that high a price for a substantial amount of software, so it’s not a problem.

Mark: Our price levels are completely different, of course. It’s affordable.

The Big Bricsys interview 6 – Lean and Focused

[Steve Johnson 12 May 2017 Autodesk, BricsCAD, Bricsys, Interview, Rental, Subscription](#)

This is one of a series of posts covering an extensive interview with Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh. In this post, the dynamic duo explain the mystery of how Bricsys can sell smaller numbers of a more capable product than AutoCAD for a fraction of the cost – and still make money.

Steve: It’s kind of interesting that your product is so much cheaper than AutoCAD, and more capable. They’re making a loss and you’re making increasing profits. How does that work?

Erik: I think it has to do with being lean and being focused. I mean, we’re talking about Autodesk, and we’re talking about AutoCAD and Revit and Inventor, but did you have a look at all the products they have? The managers that have to work on those products... I don’t study the detail of their annual figures, but I think it’s obvious that if you have that ton of products, not all of those products are profitable. Of course, not all of them are losing money, but you can’t call it lean.

What we are doing is... we are forced to be profitable. We force ourselves to be profitable. And then we have to be lean. We have four developers that constantly automate our systems, and that four will be extended again. That pays off big-time. It’s an investment; continuous, continuous, continuous. To invent new things where we can improve to be lean as well.

Mark: Stressing again that Autodesk has one hundred products, we basically have one product. We can see for mechanical, we can see for BIM, basically it’s one product.

Steve: It’s the same core.

Mark: It's the same core, absolutely. So when we started to develop BIM, we used the same toolset as we used for sheet metal; exactly the same. Of course it's tweaked to be used in BIM or sheet metal, but in the ground it's the same.

The big Bricsys interview 7 – the applications ecosystem

[Steve Johnson 15 May 2017 Autodesk, BricsCAD, Bricsys, Development, Interview, Rental, Subscription](#)

This is one of a series of posts covering an extensive interview with Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh.

In this post, Erik discusses the Bricsys efforts to work with and assist third-party developers. He does this without being prompted by a question – it's obviously very important to him.

Erik: For our future growth it's very important, the ecosystem of the applications we have now. We have talked a lot about what we are doing and about our own products, but we should maybe have spent more time on the importance of the ecosystem. The worst thing we could do is forget the application market for us.

We will not, and we are not able, to develop another HVAC system or a [inaudible] system. We are limited in our resources and focused too much in our development. We believe that if there are five or ten HVAC packages, one in Germany, one in France, one in the US and one in Australia, all those guys understand their local markets and it's very difficult to take an HVAC package made in America and sell it in Germany. The last thing we want to do is destroy that diversity of the application market. On the contrary, we're going to encourage it. Therefore we will continuously provide APIs to the application market and invite and encourage them to become more professional. This support is so important. That's where we can make a difference with many of our colleagues, and we should bring the application market to the same level of professionalism. That's where we are investing as well. They can use all our systems for free.

It would be a great and a wonderful world if you as a customer if you come to our website or you go to an application website and finds the same systems and buys something, and communicates... if there's a problem, it's our problem. He can tell us, the application partner can tell us, if it's an application problem we will tell them or the customer will tell them. But that kind of trio between the customer, us and the application market is so important. We need that.

We need those kind of applications working with our system. And they are there! For over ten years they have wonderful applications. The point is, they lacked, for the moment, the technology to grow into IFC and the BIM market. That's what we are developing for them now. Right now we need the apps, and we're delivering to them. But it's a very important thing for us,

that ecosystem. And again I think that's another difference between us and many, er, alternatives (laughs).

Steve: Not saying “the A word” there...

Erik/Mark: (laughs)

Steve: It's something I've noticed for years, actually, that you guys look after the third-party developers whereas Autodesk sees them as a revenue source.

Erik: Absolutely. We are convinced we need them. They have to say they need us as well. That's a very good symbiosis. And the top of that is Intergraph. For us, it's an application partner, right? There's scalability a bit more than before. If Intergraph takes this step, let us invite every other application developer to do the same.

The big Bricsys interview 8 – boundaries and BIM

[Steve Johnson 16 May 2017 Autodesk, BIM, BricsCAD, Bricsys, Interview](#)

This is one of a series of posts covering an extensive interview with Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh.

Erik discusses where Bricsys can go in future and the place BIM has in that.

Cyrena: So what is your vision, ultimately, of what Bricsys will become in tandem with your partners? Do you have limits or boundaries of which markets you will address and which you won't? Are you going to be bigger than... “somebody else” one day?

Erik: If it comes to the number of customers, challenging AutoCAD is difficult. 12 million registered users. If you count illegal users it might add up to, I don't know, 20 million, 30 million? I don't know, nobody knows.

What are the boundaries of where we can go? It's more or less dictated by the application markets. We have application developers in GIS, we have them in AEC, we have them in mechanical. In Mechanical 3D, AutoCAD was not present. They were present with AutoCAD Mechanical, but that's a 2D product. If for a moment I leave Inventor out, because it's another file format, but for DWG, the market for sheet metal and the things that Solidworks and others do, you don't see third party applications with power participating in that market, with AutoCAD. With all the other markets, there are plenty of other applications: GIS, AEC, it's endless. We

want to bring everyone who wants to work with us, we're going to feed and help them, and that's more or less the boundary of where we can go.

For BIM, that's something we are driving ourselves and it's a huge market. There's a lot of attention being paid to Revit [by elements of the press]. We think there are a lot of DWG users that want to move to BIM, but first of all Revit is too expensive, it's too complicated by far, and it's another file format. These are hurdles that not everybody wants to jump at the moment. It's fair to say that we are working to eliminate all those hurdles. An existing DWG user, AutoCAD or BricsCAD already knows 80% of our BIM product. He has to learn 20% extra and he can participate, probably in an easier and more intuitive way than he can ever do with Revit.

We didn't talk a lot about the differences between Revit and our BIM solution. I think in six months and a year we're going to spend more time to really explain the differences. BIM is hyped, but there are studies that show that 19% of the people who talk about BIM are actually using it. It's a couple of hundred thousands, it's not millions already. There's a lot of hype around it but the real challenge is to bring five or six million people on DWG in the AEC space into BIM. That's our goal. If they want to stay on DWG, we are their only chance. For that part only, that's already a huge start. If you then count all the applications on top of that and around it, the addressable market for us on that is immense.

The big Bricsys interview 9 – treading on developers

[Steve Johnson](#) [17 May 2017](#) [Autodesk](#), [BIM](#), [BricsCAD](#), [Bricsys](#), [Interview](#)

This is one of a series of posts covering an extensive interview with Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh. Erik explains that Bricsys won't trample over its application partners in Autodesk-like fashion, except...

Steve: Autodesk is known for treading on its third-party developers and replacing their market. Can you tell us about your attitude to doing that?

Erik: We have always said that we are not stepping into any application market. We will not do it.

There's only one exception, that's where there is no [other] possibility. There was no sheet metal. There is no viable [third-party] DWG sheet metal product in the market today for sheet metal. Then we do it, of course.

For BIM, there are. There is a German product. We have talked to those guys, but the problem is, for BIM the way we do it, it's so deep in the core, the direct modeling engine that we have build... there's no way that we could expect, of all the partners that are working on AEC, that one would have the strength and the force to bring the product where it is today. We have

worked with maybe 30, 40 people for three, four years to do that. I don't know of any application partner that has more than ten employees. And then those ten employees do everything.

Mark: Except for Intergraph, of course!

Erik: Except Intergraph! Except Intergraph! In the AEC space, I mean. When it comes to making an architectural modeler, there was no other possibility but to do it ourselves. Then we do it. But what we do then is provide all the APIs so the rest of the AEC community can profit off it. Otherwise, I think we would have lost the AEC space. If we didn't do that, with what we have shown you today on BIM, we would lose the AEC space completely. That could not happen.

The big Bricsys interview 10 – platforms

[Steve Johnson](#) [18 May 2017](#) [Autodesk](#), [BIM](#), [BricsCAD](#), [Bricsys](#), [Interview](#)

This is one of a series of posts covering an extensive interview with Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh.

In this post, R.K. McSwain asks about BricsCAD running on three different platforms. Erik explains why BricsCAD for Mac (and Linux) is so much more complete than AutoCAD for Mac, which has more holes than a block of Swiss cheese.

R.K.: Do all three platforms (Windows, Linux, Mac) contain the same functionality?

Erik: Yes. Sometimes it's a bit hard with the Mac to bring it along but so far, so good. The only problem sometimes is in the APIs.

We are using [wxWidgets](#) and not the Microsoft classes. This gives us the ability, with the same source code more or less, to serve Mac, Linux and Windows. By far Windows is the most important one. By history, all the applications are on Windows, because AutoCAD was only Windows. What we have as APIs, and the most important ones are BRX and .NET. If you want to port an application to Mac, it means our API must support that as well. BRX is doing that for 90 to 95%; there are a couple of functions that only work on Windows. For most of the applications, they can port their application to Linux or the Mac without any problems.

Steve: And you support the Visual LISP COM functions as well, right?

Mark: Yes, we cover them and they are also available on Mac and Linux.

Steve: You have a solution there that Autodesk doesn't, which gives us the strange situation that BricsCAD for Mac is more AutoCAD-compatible than AutoCAD for Mac.

R.K.: AutoCAD for Mac leaves a lot of holes.

Erik: That's because they rewrote the whole interface for Cocoa, and we didn't. We are using one code base. You can be more Catholic than the Pope, yeah? If you rewrite AutoCAD completely for the Mac, the result is many holes, no applications possible, it doesn't help anybody. We're better off being pragmatic and doing it the way we did it.

Still, we must say that applications availability for Mac and Linux is not much. That has to do with 95% of our sales being on Windows. We expect that might change for BIM, because more architects are Mac users, partly because the first version of ArchiCAD was on Mac, Vectorworks is, so it's really an Architect's machine. We expect that maybe for BIM, it might change and we might sell more versions on the Mac.

Steve: Autodesk doesn't have a competitor there, does it?

Erik: No, absolutely not.

Mark: I should mention that all of our keys are cross-platform. So when you buy a key, you can run them all. So every time you on decide to run on Mac and later on you decide to switch it to Windows, we don't have any problem. You can switch whenever you want, from one to the other, on to Linux if you want.

Erik: Again, choice. It's up to the users.

The big Bricsys interview 11 – free viewer?

[Steve Johnson 19 May 2017 Autodesk, BIM, BricsCAD, Bricsys, Interview](#)

This is the final post in a series covering an extensive interview with Bricsys CEO Erik De Keyser and COO Mark Van Den Bergh. If you've made it through to the end of this series, congratulations! I hope you found it illuminating.

In this post, R.K. McSwain asks a question about a possible BricsCAD-based DWG viewer, which turns into a brainstorming session!

R.K.: Do you guys have a viewer? A read-only viewer? Is it something you're looking to do?

Erik: No. BricsCAD classic costs, you know, \$400.

Steve: Autodesk is giving one away anyway.

R.K.: They give it away, but you know what it is. It's almost a 1 GB download, I was thinking as maybe a way to get people interested in BricsCAD? Here's a viewer, I wonder what else it can do...

Mark: What? (disbelieving) The viewer is almost one gig?

Steve: It's about 800 MB.

Erik: It's a matter of choices and priorities.

Steve: It is a marketing opportunity. A viewer that's easier to use, because you can download and install it within five minutes. And you could be providing them with basically BricsCAD with stuff disabled. You could even have a Buy Me button that un-disables that stuff.

Erik: Yeah, yeah!

Steve: This isn't an interview now, it's a product brainstorming session!

Erik/Mark: (laughs)

Mark: Let's continue! Let's continue! As you know, you can download our software and evaluate it for 30 days (and you can ask for an extension) but one of the options we've discussed is that after the 30 days it turns into a viewer.

Erik: Maybe we'll do that.

R.K.: That gives them the 30 day window up front, even if they're just looking for the viewer.

Erik: Yeah.