

Chavant News

*Editor Ward's Auto World
Holography Hits a Road Block
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At a University of Michigan seminar in the early 1970's wide ranging possibilities for computer aided design were discussed and demonstrated. Included in this was the potential of having full size holograms of automobile designs that could be viewed by a group of people from any angle.

These many possibilities, including holography, put forward by computer scientists and specialists were picked up by the automotive journalists who began to predict the end of the need for styling clay models. Indeed, computer aided industrial design has greatly improved the design process by transforming designer idea sketches into dimensionally correct images and data. So called, 3-D computer modeling developments are now used to sort out and work out the hundreds of stylists sketches replacing the laborious styling clay modeling tasks previously used to develop idea sketches. Dimensionally accurate styling clay model surface is now modeled from this computer developed data. These systems have reduced the time from design sketches to approved clay models.

Assuming that size holograms do evolve, they will add a true three-dimensional presentation medium to the existing 3-D computer modeling developments. But it is unreasonable to believe that holography can take the place of styling clay modeling or that management would be comfortable approving a program based on holographic images. Also, to be effective in a presentation, it would be necessary to create two, three, or more full size holographic images at the same time to display various design studies. If a holographic image did receive design approval, it may still require final surface prove out on a styling clay model.

Styling clay models are not going away. Design offices having difficulty constructing and maintaining stable models and transporting them need improved design modeling technology. Greatly improved systems were developed a number of years ago and the kind of problems mentioned in the article should not exist. Perhaps too much time, cost, and effort have gone into holography studies at the expense of design model technology improvements. Instead of trying to eliminate styling clay models, effort should be made for these systems to work more closely together.

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Computer specialists may be able to create a hologram of an automobile design in 2 seconds if all of the data is available, but this is misleading and unrealistic. In the first place, to develop all of the details of an all new design would require a lot of computer time, study, and redevelopment just like on a styling clay model. Second, there are advantages in having modelers work out these details on a model. Design modelers and sculptures who are trained to work on three-dimensional forms normally do this detail development work. Third, there are advantages to the design in having time to finish a model. The continuous work by the modelers and the occasional gaze and direction given them by the designers results in the tuning of a model that can create a great design. There is an advantage for team development on a styling clay model.

For more information on these subjects see my book to be published by TAH Productions, Automobile Design Techniques and Design Modeling, the Men, The Methods, and The Materials.

Frederick E. Design Consultant - Automotive Historian
Retired: Manager Design Systems: Ford Design Center, Dearborn

1 800 CHAVANT
1 800 242 8268