NEWS RELEASE

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PREDATOR SOFTWARE RELEASES VIRTUAL CNC V3.4
New update provides simulation automation and improved accuracy

PORTLAND, ORE – September 1, 2000 – Predator Software Inc. today announced the release of Predator Virtual CNC version 3.4, a solids-based CNC simulation and verification application designed for programmers to verify their work offline and simulate the manufacturing process prior to releasing any CNC programs or jobs to the shop floor. The latest version, which helps machinist reduce or eliminate scrapped parts and machine tool damage, adds news G- and M-code simulation improvements, third party CAM (computer-aided manufacturing) compatibility, new comprehensive custom macro A & B support for parametric programming, and expanded SDK (software development kit) support, among other enhancements.

The addition of custom macros to version 3.4 will enable programmers to build subprograms and use program logic to eliminate redundant programming of machine functions, such as milling multiple pockets. By supporting basic macro functions, including IF/THEN/GOTO statements, expressions and system and user-definable program variables, programmers will save time and avoid errors in their parametric part programming. This builds upon Virtual CNC's core capabilities and market-leading verification and simulation.

Cycle time accuracy is greatly improved in Virtual CNC by taking into account the simulation of tool acceleration and de-acceleration. Prior to this upgrade, cycle times were theoretical and assumed that a tool started immediately at the programmed feed rate without any ramp up time. Over time, the inaccuracies compound on one another leading to unreliable cycle times.

"Programmers already expect verification and simulation applications to be accurate -- now they can expect extremely accurate cycle times," said Jim Abbassian, Predator Software President and Co-Founder. "Virtual CNC gives programmers an accurate simulation tool. With custom macro support, they have the freedom to dramatically improve their parametric part programming and save time."

Virtual CNC's third party compatibility is greatly expanded. Version 3.4 includes a new C-hook for MasterCAM version 8.0, SURFCAM INC toolpath support, and Pathtrace and Unigraphics support via APT/CL.

More

Version 3.4 includes new APIs for SDK (software developer kit) users. Improvements include support for calculating rest stock curves and remaining material boundaries for 2- through 5-axis milling, turning and mill/turn machining, with support for any tool shape. Support is also available in both solid and turbo models with positive or negative stock-to-leave options. These features are intended for CAM vendors who license the Virtual CNC SDK.

Additional benefits in version 3.4 include new G- and M-code simulation for Lathe Tapping and Threading, Pallet Changes, Clamp On, Clamp Off, and Air Blasts. Improved support for the following CNC controls include Anilam, Bridgeport, Dynapath, Fadal, Fagor, Fanuc, Ferrari, Haas, Hardinge, Heidenhain, Hitachi, Hurco, K&T, Mazak, MDSI, Mitsubishi, Seimens, Toshiba, and Vickers.

Other key features holding over from version 3.3 include, tapered bull-nose tool support, turbo model STL export, CADL, APT/CL and APT/ISO export, solid and turbo model tool display, external sub programs, G10-style work offsets and G65-style macro calls.

APT/CL and APT/ISO formats are available to support advanced CNC functions, including subroutines, sub programs, macro calls, variables, expressions, rotary table indexing and multi-axis simultaneous machining. CADL export can be used to reverse engineer 2- through 5-axis CNC programs to 3D graphical formats. Users can import toolpaths as 3D geometry into their CAD/DAM system and re-post toolpath motion for use on another CNC; plus they can extend the life of proven CNC programs by transferring data from legacy systems and processes.

Virtual CNC provides large CNC program support, solid model rendering, inspection and feature recognition, 4- and 5-axis simultaneous milling simulation, collision detection, stock rotations, STLFIX Utility, and the Repeat Continuously option, as well as the ability to increase the maximum number of tools per job to 1,024.

System requirements for the Microsoft Windows 95/98/2000 and Windows NT operating systems are an Intel Pentium-based processor or equivalent, 64 MB of RAM, and 40 MB of hard disk space.

Current pricing is available through authorized Predator Software resellers.

About Predator Software Inc.

Predator Software Inc. is a privately held developer of CNC verification software, turnkey DNC and shop floor networking solutions, and a suite of manufacturing execution system (MES) software tools, including manufacturing data collection, electronic work instructions, and tool/gauge crib management. Based in Portland, Oregon USA, with offices in Chicago, Illinois USA; Kansas City, Kansas USA; Cambridgeshire, UK; and Barcelona, Spain, Predator Software products are available through a global network of value-added resellers. For information: www.predator-software.com, email: info@predator-software.com, telephone: 503-292-7151 (worldwide), fax: 503-292-7671.

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