

Friday, 20 January 2017

## Industry bodies agree single process for BIM product data

Three leading construction industry bodies have moved to clear up growing confusion over the process of standardising product information for use in Building Information Modelling (BIM).

The Building Engineering Services Association (BESA), the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE), and the Construction Products Association (CPA) have agreed on the respective roles of the 'LEXiCON' and 'BIMHawk' tools in developing standardised product data parameters and structures. This should resolve the apparent confusion over whether the two initiatives compete or complement each other.

CIBSE has been leading an industry consortium for development of BIMHawk, a project to collect and structure product information in standardised Product Data Templates (PDTs). The CPA – with the support of the BIM Task Group and UK BIM Alliance – has been developing LEXiCON to create, define and record parameter names in a uniform and standardised way and to make those parameters available to all those creating structured data, initially focussing on product data.

A PDT allows manufacturers to demonstrate the features and describe the properties of a product using standard parameters in support of the design, construction, operation and maintenance of buildings. LEXiCON is a process for defining and publishing that information using a single source of terms so the organisations have agreed to work together.

By aligning with the LEXiCON methodology, CIBSE will ensure that PDTs can feed directly and seamlessly into the delivery process. The LEXiCON methodology provides the governance to ensure the properties defined are the correct ones, and these will then be aligned with the buildingSmart Data Dictionary, which is being developed by buildingSMART International in association with the International Standards Organisation (ISO).

CIBSE will also become a 'Senior Relevant Authority' for LEXiCON to further enhance development of parameters for mechanical, electrical and plumbing product data. BESA, CIBSE and the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA) are already working together with many interested parties in the building services sector, and this agreement will further extend the level of co-ordination and collaboration across the sector.

"This is just what the industry has been waiting for," said BESA's David Frise. "It is more than six months since the passing of the government's deadline for BIM to be mandatory on public sector projects and we need to urgently drive forward the process for gathering and transmitting project relevant data. "This collaboration is, therefore, just what we need to move the whole process on to the next level," said Mr Frise.

CIBSE added that this agreement would “further extend co-ordination and collaboration across the sector”. It added that part of its ‘Relevant Authority’ work would be to test the approach with designers and suppliers “to ensure that what is being defined contributes to a useful, practical process, and that the PDTs deliver tangible benefits from digital information exchange”.

The three bodies reinforced the message that being able to provide consistent and trustworthy product data, across the sector, had “undeniable advantages for manufacturers, contractors and designers as well as the sector’s clients”.

Removing the need to translate information between websites, brochures and software models will only increase consistency, remove errors from the system and enable greater use of digital technologies. Traditionally, product performance data has been requested using bespoke forms and web-based interfaces. Now, by using a structured approach, the data will remain valid for all applications until the product is updated.

“As the generation of parameters is done in an organised and structured way and the parameters are all peer reviewed, we can be sure that the information asked for is of value to one or more members of the supply chain and that extraneous data is removed,” a joint statement said.

**ENDS**

#### **NOTE TO EDITORS:**

The [Construction Products Association](#) (CPA) represents the UK’s manufacturers and distributors of construction products and materials. The sector directly provides jobs for 288,000 people across 22,000 companies and has an annual turnover of more than £55 billion. The CPA is the leading voice to promote and campaign for this vital UK industry.

The [Building Engineering Services Association](#) (BESA) is the UK’s leading trade organisation for building engineering services contractors – representing the interests of firms active in the design, installation, commissioning, maintenance, control and management of engineering systems and services in buildings.

The [Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers](#) (CIBSE) is a global professional body with over 20,000 members who design, install, operate, maintain and refurbish the systems which make the built environment habitable, comfortable and productive. CIBSE publishes internationally recognised Guidance and Codes giving authoritative design guidance for engineering services in buildings. The CIBSE Knowledge Portal delivers this Guidance online and is the leading systematic engineering resource for the building services sector.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Peter Caplehorn, CPA Deputy Chief Executive and Policy Director

Tel: 020 7323 3770

E-mail: [peter.caplehorn@constructionproducts.org.uk](mailto:peter.caplehorn@constructionproducts.org.uk)

Emma Salmon, CPA Marketing and Communications Executive

Tel: 020 7323 3770

E-mail: [emma.salmon@constructionproducts.org.uk](mailto:emma.salmon@constructionproducts.org.uk)

Follow the Construction Products Association on Twitter: [https://twitter.com/CPA\\_Tweets](https://twitter.com/CPA_Tweets).