



TED MORT



USIBD™  
U.S. Institute of  
BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

# What I Didn't Expect to Learn at USIBD's 2017 Symposium

**T**he hotel staff rushed around us preparing the sound, lights, and furniture, while putting all the final touches on the room for what would be the most attended Symposium yet.

As I and my fellow event committee members set up for the Symposium, I stood back and realized a newfound appreciation for where we've come as the Building Documentation industry. You see, three years ago we imagined a new kind of show, a show that would address and embrace subjects that would instigate change by talking about conflict, value and disruptive thinking... what's developing is something we couldn't expect.

In Dallas Texas, November 2017 we held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual USIBD Symposium in conjunction with the BIMForum, SEI, and AGC BuildCon. While the Symposium provides a great platform for Building Documentation industry stakeholders, the joint arrangement had quite a few unforeseen benefits for me.

First, it brought together a larger group of presenters and exhibitors who were excited to discuss how their products and services have the potential to bridge a series of gaps that exist between stakeholders and building lifecycle stages. Both presenters and exhibitors found an opportunity to speak with a diverse attendee group that represented owners, operators,



Symposium venue, the room where it happened.

builders and service providers. The mix of attendees also prompted conversions at the booths, which revolved around the perspectives of groups who exist on different sides of the gap they're working to bridge. This type of constructive and often passionate conversation wouldn't exist anywhere else.

Second, I didn't realize how many of my clients would be in attendance! Several of my fellow USIBD members mentioned the same thing and were able to leverage the opportunity into dinner and networking following the day's events.

Third, and potentially the biggest surprise, came from the presentations I had the privilege to moderate during the day. The event was broken into 3 segments: a "Ted Talk" style series with



Materials boards created for the Scanner Shoot-Out comparisons.

multiple presenters, which concluded with a panel discussion where things got real. The next two segments were focused on the technology of Building Documentation, specifically the hardware and processes.

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Our first segment was an incredible cross section of industry perspectives from true thought leaders.

Everyone's presentation had to take place in under 20 minutes, and let me tell you, 20 minutes goes fast when it includes introduction and speaker swap! Even in the midst of tremendous time constraints the speakers were able to deliver their perspective on a specific and intertwined subject theme. When we entered the panel discussion these speakers had a chance to debate each other on differing opinions and conflicting positions. I personally found it refreshing to see so many passionate, intelligent game changers engage constructively on a platform like this... so often it seems that we become overly concerned with offending and ultimately have a vanilla conversation when it could be fierce and respectful.

After a short break we were treated to a first-of-kind head to head hardware comparison, the *Scanner Shootout*. More than 6 different laser scanners were used to document a variety of sample materials in a controlled environment. The results blew me away. I always believe, "Laser scanners are like hammers, one isn't better than another but they each have a purpose that they excel at and you can definitely pick the wrong hammer if you're not aware of the difference." I'm excited to see how far the USIBD takes this type of testing. Our goal is that we'll be able to make that information available soon to the public on USIBD's website.

The final segment didn't disappoint either. Several manufacturers and service providers agreed to measure one of the conference rooms in the venue, for the "Intent Defines Process:

Use the Right Process for the Project" session. The parameters were based on an intentionally vague scoping document in order to compare the results.' They quantified the amount of time spent working, the deliverable product (2D floorplan) and the resulting area measurement. No surprise that we saw differences in the results, but I wouldn't have expected them to be so different. Ultimately, the moral of the story is that the quality and predictability of a product is often determined by the process in which we convey our goal (through the scope). This is the intention of USIBD's RFP document, available for purchase at USIBD's [eStore](#).

Three reasons I wouldn't miss the next show:

1. So much info, so little time!  
Seriously, a full exhibit hall and over a dozen presenters in a day... bring an appetite for knowledge and be ready to disagree as much as you agree.
2. Networking. Period. Peers, competitors and clients all together and ready to engage.
3. Trajectory. Based on the year of year growth of this show, there's obviously something exciting going on. Get in on it now before it gets too big.

I'm looking forward to taking this show to the next level in 2018—you better be there! ■

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**Ted Mort** is the Vice President and Operations Manager of Eco3d and provides direct oversight for the full scope of laser scanning and modeling on all projects.