Basic Instructions for using a 3D PDF file

The 3D enabled PDF files load in Acrobat Reader Version 7 and later. They do not appear any differently at first glance but offer a number of features. This document is intended to serve as a primer for working with 3D data presented in such a file.

Loading

Loading a 3D PDF file is identical to loading a normal file. Once the main screen is displayed, moving the mouse cursor over the image shows a small text box in the left upper corner with "Click to activate…" in it. Clicking it changes the view to the 3D enabled state.

Interaction

Once in the 3D state, the part can be virtually rotated by holding down the left mouse button and moving the mouse at the same time. Similarly, using the right hand mouse button while moving zooms in and out. Moving the view up/down and right/left is achieved by holding the Ctrl key in combination with the left hand button and moving it.

Assemblies

Some bodies consist of multiple parts. In order to access the structure of the multi-body parts and show/hide different parts as well as see the part names, the model tree needs to be activated. The toggle to do so is located by default in the button panel immediately above the main 3D image (if it isn't visible, move the mouse over the image), to the right of the "Views" drop down box. Expanding levels (with the "+" tab), shows parts that are linked below the top part. Successive parts are handled the same way. By toggling the check mark next to a part name allows the part to be hidden/shown.

Changing the display mode

Different options are available which are best experimented with. By clicking on the box with the colored square in the tool bar immediately above the image, different view modes can be selected to best suit the need. A frequently used mode is the "illustration" in combination with a white background. A number of other display options are available together with a selection of lights and background colors which can be mixed to best suit the required display. A "Solid Outline" is often preferred for engineering applications since it shows edges of parts clearly.