1. Introduction
All medium to large CGI productions require a pipeline of skilled people, hardware, software, standard procedures, and automation in order to ensure timely delivery of a final product. A manager or liaison is needed to coordinate all of the contributors and users of the pipeline, and making the pipeline scalable enough to handle increasing demands for more and larger data sets. Most importantly, the pipeline must be built around the data if the production is to realize greatest efficiency gains.

2. From a Data-centric Perspective
In the automotive world, photo fleets have traditionally been built as a collection of physical prototypes at tremendous expense to the company, and shipped all over the world to be photographed for marketing materials. DaimlerChrysler now builds most their photo fleet first as CG, rendering with HDRI or compositing the renders into photos and video, whenever it makes sense to do so. Very little of the marketing material produced uses physical prototypes, allowing them to be used for more shows and events, instead of being tied up in photo shoots. This saves millions of dollars each year. Last year, Dodge produced its catalog for the Caliber with 80% of the vehicle imagery being CGI, and this year they produced their first 100% CGI catalog for the Avenger.

This change in focus on data requires greater communication within DaimlerChrysler and with vendors, as well as a more streamlined process. Managing a visualization pipeline requires much more than basic IT knowledge. It requires coordination between dozens of internal and external groups, sophisticated asset management, understanding of art direction concepts, a physical layout that facilitates rapid access to people, and a corporate culture that enables quick decision making through empowerment, trust, and change. With the newly created position of CGI Liaison, DaimlerChrysler has been able to make full use of all of these criteria and, as a result, are realizing savings in time, effort, and cost.

3. Proposal
DaimlerChrysler proposes a sketch at the 2007 Siggraph Conference that will use a 3D application to illustrate the talk in a dynamic, real-time manner that gives added depth to an already informative and intriguing “slide” show.

Virtual Fleet Manager Tom Haynes will deliver a presentation on the history and current use of CG at DaimlerChrysler, including an overview of the tools, workflow, and data management, as well as the keys to managing a visual pipeline successfully.

DaimlerChrysler has made a cultural change that makes CG the mainstream of their visualization process. This sketch will entertain and inform, giving attendees a rare view into the digital infrastructure of a world leader in automotive design and manufacture, and guide them on their own path to a faster, cost-effective visualization.

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