

# Q&A

**Giles Gaskell**

NORTH AMERICAN SALES MANAGER  
3D IMAGING PRODUCTS  
WENZEL/XSPECT SOLUTIONS, INC.

for this technology, in fact, and in 2005 I relocated to the United States as director of business development for NVision, Inc., to help them expand their customer base and to keep promoting non-contact measurement and 3D imaging hardware and software. From there I moved to GKS-Laser Design, Inc., as business development manager over their 3D laser scanning quality management and CAD services.

**GS: And then Wenzel/Xspect Solutions came calling?**


**GG:** Yes, and quite literally. I first encountered Wenzel when I demonstrated a non-contact measurement device to a gathering of Wenzel directors in 2008. Within a year they'd acquired the company that made it, and three additional companies with leading proprietary non-contact technologies. Having been a huge advocate of 3D imaging for many years by then I was gratified by their shared belief in its potential, and I saw their investment as a clear indication of their commitment. Wenzel is a company that's been a global leader in conventional measurement technologies for many years now, and almost overnight they have become one of the leading providers of non-contact measurement technologies as well, so I was very impressed. When they offered me this position I saw it as an opportunity to join a company that, whilst firmly rooted in the past, is actively engaged in the future of industrial metrology, and I definitely wanted to be part of that. This is a dream job for me, really.

**GS: Tell us more about this technology.**

**GG:** This is an especially exciting time to be involved in non-contact scanning and mea-

surement because of the tremendous progress being made. The three central concerns involve cost, ease of use, and accuracy, and improvements are being made on all three fronts. These devices are becoming more affordable all the time, and more flexible as well, especially since we can now scan parts with shiny surfaces without advance preparation, which was the case before. Being able to scan shiny surfaces represents a significant breakthrough, as well as reduced scanning times, which have been slashed from hours to minutes. We have one customer who manufactures gears and uses it to spot-check parts in process to make sure they're within general tolerance, and we're working

**“You could wave this device over an object to create a 3D image, so I immediately saw its potential and became something of an evangelist for this technology.”**

to increase accuracy so that 3D scanners will be able to measure to the submicron level that gear makers sometimes require for final inspection. The latest versions of the systems are designed to be used in shop floor environments, and they are so simple to operate that special training isn't necessary. So we're right on the cusp of a revolution in the field of metrology, and it's our job to constantly improve the technology while educating our sales network and clients on the benefits of non-contact scanning and measurement. 

**GS: I understand that you studied mechanical engineering. What led you to metrology?**

**GG:** Once I'd graduated from the University of Aston in Birmingham, England, I actually worked in computer-aided design for a number of companies, and finally for the Parametric Technology Corporation. At that point I launched my own consultancy in 1995, Professional Engineering Support Services, which provided CAD software training. Our clients wanted to be able to design their own products in three dimensions, and they believed what was standing in their way was complicated software and inadequate training. I came to a different conclusion, deciding that often the problem had more to do with the accuracy of the measurements they were using. In other words, it wasn't a design problem at all; it was a measurement problem. It seemed to me the best way to get accurate measurements would be to use a 3D scanner of some sort, so I set out to find one and was surprised that they weren't readily available. I finally located a company that had invented the first handheld 3D scanner, so I changed my company's name to 3D Scanners (UK) Ltd. in 1998 and became the first distributor of this technology in the United Kingdom. This was a device that you could simply wave over an object to create a 3D image that you could incorporate into your design process, so I could immediately see that it had huge potential. I became something of an evangelist

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