



## **CAM Software**

### **Darren Smith**

I have recently reviewed some software, created by Darren Smith, designed to assist CNC part programmers. My initial reactions were very favourable. It's simplicity of use combined with it's immediacy of response was very impressive.

A high proportion of CNC machines in use, by SMEs, are run by programmer, setter, operators, programming repetitive routines. These highly skilled operators can both read and write CNC code for their own machine, often with the help of conversational programming built into the operating system. A competitively priced piece of software, which can be used away from the machine, can be beneficial, especially if there are several post processors available to match available machines.

The part programmer is required to type in the post processor, machining routine required, followed by the coordinates. This information is shown down one side of the screen. The part program is generated in real time down the other side of the screen. An experienced part programmer will read the part program as it is being generated and can usually verify it. This is in real time and will not only save programming time, but help to eliminate calculation and syntax errors. If a particular machine is busy, but a comparable machine is becoming available, then it is very simple to change the output to a different post processor. For example from Fanuc to Heidenhain or back.

The majority of CAM software uses graphics to verify tool path and collision detection. This software does use graphics for verification. Graphics are not always required for simple, short machining routines. The programmer's skill and experience is usually enough to verify the program.

Overall, my opinion is that this software can only be beneficial to the manual part programmer, helping to speed up program creation and eliminate errors.

Jim McGovern

Project Engineer

*Any opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily the opinions of the University.*