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Use of BIM software on the rise in Chile construction sector

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Building Information Modeling (BIM) software is now being used by 69% of construction, engineering and architectural firms in Chile, up from 53% in 2016, according to a study by Universidad de Chile's architecture and urban design faculty (FAU).

The figure includes firms that make occasional use of BIM or hire a third party to do so, but the core group of firms that use this software as standard procedure has grown to 34% from 22% in 2016.

The FAU study found that these firms generally use the software for visualization during the design phase, coordinating project phases, and as a means of record keeping. However, in most cases the software is not being used by the construction teams or project inspectors, nor for advanced functions such as structural analysis or checking a building's energy consumption properties.

This means Chilean firms and consumers are missing out on important benefits that BIM enables, according to Kenny Tew, CEO of Singaporean BIM vendor Magicsoft.

For example, Singapore government policy mandates the use of BIM during the manufacturing and delivery of prefabricated modules and then during construction, which means inspectors can instantly check whether these stages conform to the design originally registered in the BIM platform, Tew told BNamericas.

This "integrated digital delivery" model ensures that contractors do not skimp on materials or take procedural short-cuts, and has been shown to reduce construction time from 32 months to 28 months, Tew said, adding that contractors can also benefit because the government may return credit to them if a project is completed ahead of schedule, as proven by the BIM system.

Digitization through BIM also opens the door to applying AI to the amassed data, which allows risk assessment for similar projects, analysis of the manpower assigned to the job or real-time exposure of planning errors.

But even without AI, centralized management of project data in a BIM platform allows site managers to clearly determine when work can commence, whereas in the absence of this technology workforces may spend small periods of each day waiting for the green light, something that adds up to thousands of man-hours for a year-long project.

Magicsoft also works with local governments to install underground sensors that can provide geological profiles, which helps developers plan building stability in areas prone to earthquakes.

