

DeskArtes

Expert Series 12.1

Quick Start Guide for

- View Expert
- Dimensions Expert
- 3Data Expert Lite
- 3Data Expert
- Sim Expert

Expert Series 12.1: Quick Start Guide

First Edition

Ismo Mäkelä: "Expert Series 12.1: Quick Start Guide".

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Foreword

The *Expert Series 12.1: Quick Start Guide* document provides an introduction to the basic 3D model handling: triangle model repair and model splitting with *View Expert*, *Dimensions Expert*, *3Data Expert Lite*, *3Data Expert* and *Sim Expert* software products for Additive Manufacturing.

There are two simple lessons and it should not take more than 15 minutes to go through the examples.

The first lesson fixes an erroneous STL model for 3D Printing using the Auto Repair process available with Expert Series 12.1 software.

The second lesson describes methods to split and combine STL parts for 3D Printing. Large parts must be split and pins have to be added to be able to attach the manufactured parts correctly with Expert Series software.

The split and repaired data can be transferred directly to downstream AM processes through new plugin interface.

Expert Series software

DeskArtes Expert Series software suite consists of several products targeted from home and DIY use to education and professional Additive Manufacturing:

- *Free View Expert* is entry level tool targeted for viewing, verifying, repairing, dimensioning and communicating 3D geometry information. Free View Expert allows you to input triangle models, create consistent topology, check errors, orient normal, repair gaps and self-intersections, edit triangles and output STL data for 3D printing without any cost.
- *AM Expert* module (option to *Free View Expert* and *3Data Expert*) provides automatic AM process selection based on part requirements (material, size, accuracy, tensile strength and post processing). *AM Expert* database currently includes 129 professional AM systems and is regularly updated.
- *Dimensions Expert* is a simple, economical and user friendly tool for STL repair and 3D model splitting for machines with a smaller build area. Tools include Repair, Splitting and Connect with Pins or Lap Joint.
- *3Data Expert Lite* includes all standard 3D model preparation tools for 3D Printing and Additive Manufacturing. Available tools include geometry generation, Boolean and 3D markup commands, Offset, Hollowing, Coloring and Texturing, Solidify (aka “shrink wrap”) as well as Slicing and Tool compensation. Optional 3D Nesting makes *3Data Expert Lite* a perfect 3D data preparation tool for powder based AM systems.
- *3Data Expert* is professional tool for preparing 3D models for Additive Manufacturing and Simulation applications. There are several commands for manipulation of both 3D surface models and 3D faceted models. These

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- commands include Surface triangulation, STL verification and repair, STL Offsetting, Splitting, Connecting, Decimation, Smoothing, Solidify, Boolean, Part subdivision, 3D Nesting, Z Compensation, Slicing and Tool Compensation as well as STL Coloring and Texturing. Supports can be generated for DLP, metal and stereolithography processes. Special Sand Support command creates supporting plates for delicate sand parts with a push of a button.
- *Sim Expert* is a dedicated tool for preparing 3D models for Simulation applications, with triangle count reduction and triangle aspect ratio improvement functions.

Expert Series tutorials

Full tutorial set for Expert Series contains several documents which cover different aspects of model repair, coloring and print preparation. The tutorials are available in the software distribution package through the *Help > Tutorial Documents* menu:

- *Expert Series 12.1: Quick Start Guide* gives a short introduction to model repair and splitting for 3D Printing with 3Data Expert, 3Data Expert Lite and Dimensions Expert products. Estimated completion time 15 minutes.
- *Expert Series 12.1: Tutorial 1 – Working with 3D Models* introduces basic viewing, measuring, automatic repair, split, connect, hollow, offset, 3D Text, Boolean, cut, reduce, 3D nesting, surface triangulation and other model manipulation functions available for STL files. Applies to All Expert Series modules. Estimated completion time is 3 hours.
- *3Data Expert 12.1: Tutorial 2 – Working with Colors* introduces basic automatic repair and coloring for 3D Color Printer users. For 3Data Expert, 3Data Expert Lite and 3DEdit Pro. Estimated completion time is 1 hour.
- *3Data Expert 12.1: Tutorial 3 – Separating Shells* describes the use of Shell Separation commands in 3Data Expert. These commands enable separating a part into several shells for different material (shore value) or color definitions in a single part. For 3Data Expert only. Estimated completion time is 30 minutes.
- *3Data Expert 12.1: Tutorial 4 – Generating Supports for AM* explains the use of new Generic Supports command and Sand Supports command. The support generator can be used to generate supports for DLP, metal, stereolithography and sand based processes. Adding extra connectors to prevent parts from warping and bending during the build is explained. Also, new slicing, slice preview and slice filling is demonstrated. Estimated completion time 1 hour.
- *Expert Series 12.1: STL and VRML repair examples* document includes more advanced model repair operations with 3Data Expert. Applies to

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3Data Expert module and mostly to 3Data Expert Lite, Dimensions Expert and Sim Expert modules. Estimated completion time with 3Data Expert 2 hours.

The tutorial documents and the geometry files for the tutorial examples are found in the *Tutorials* folder and its sub-folders (*GeomFiles*, *Tutorial 1*, *Tutorial 2*, etc.) in the 3Data Expert (or product in question) installation directory.

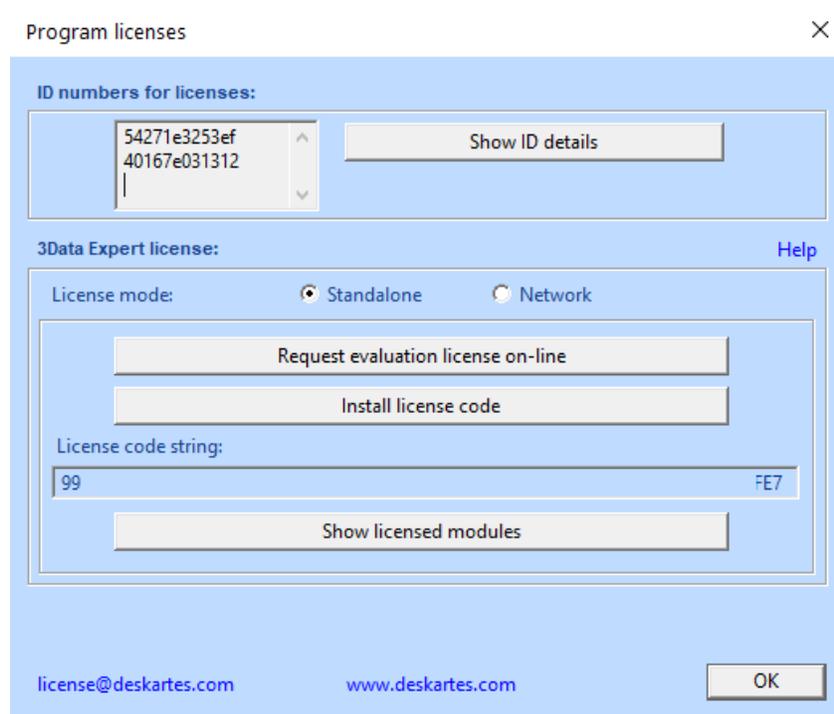
Lesson 1 – Fully Automatic STL fixing

Welcome to Expert Series 12.1 tutorial Lesson 1. Expert Series 12.1 is a 64 bit implementation allowing you to handle huge models for Additive Manufacturing (AM) and Simulation applications. But let's start with more simple models.

This lesson shows you how to fix an erroneous STL model for AM using the automatic tools with 3Data Expert, 3Data Expert Lite, Sim Expert or Dimensions Expert software. Before starting the lessons please make sure you have received and installed the software evaluation license from DeskArtes. If you do not have a license yet, it is very simple to request an evaluation license. First start the program from the desktop icon:



Then go to the *Program licenses* dialog through *Help > Licenses* command. There you can find the *Request evaluation license on-line* button.



Press it and it will open the DeskArtes license request page on your favorite web browser. Fill in the required fields and press *Submit evaluation request* button to send the license request to DeskArtes.

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Evaluation license request for: 3Data Expert 12.1

Please fill your email address:

| | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Your name: | <input type="text"/> | |
| Your email address: | <input type="text"/> | |
| Verify email address: | <input type="text"/> | |
| Select optional input formats: | <input type="checkbox"/> Catia 4 | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Catia 5 | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Catia 6 | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> STEP | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> NX Unigraphics | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> SolidWorks | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid Edge | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Inventor | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Creo ProE | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> JT | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Catia CGR | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Parasolid | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> IGES | |
| System ID list | Value | Description |
| | 54271e3253ef | (THE BROADCOM 802.11 NETWORK ADAPTER |
| | 40167e031312 | (THIS QUALCOMM Atheros NETWORK CONT |
| Comments: | <input type="text"/> | |
| <input type="button" value="Submit evaluation request"/> | | |

You will receive a 15-day evaluation license within 24 hours.

When the license arrives, press *Install license code button* in the *Program licenses* dialog and *Copy/Paste the license string* into the input field that appears:

The dialog box titled "Expert Series license" has a close button (X) in the top right corner. It contains a text prompt "Copy/Paste or type license code string here:" above a large text input field. At the bottom right, there are two buttons: "OK" and "Cancel".

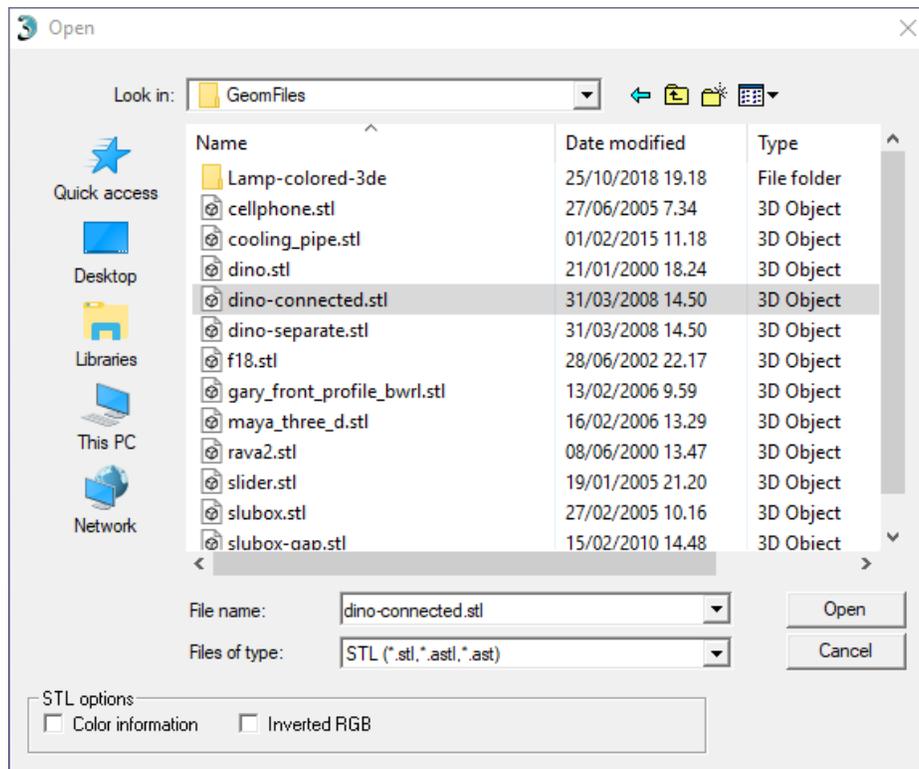
Then press *OK* as requested to accept the license. Finally, *restart* the software. Now you are ready to go ahead with the lessons!

Auto Repair process for STL files

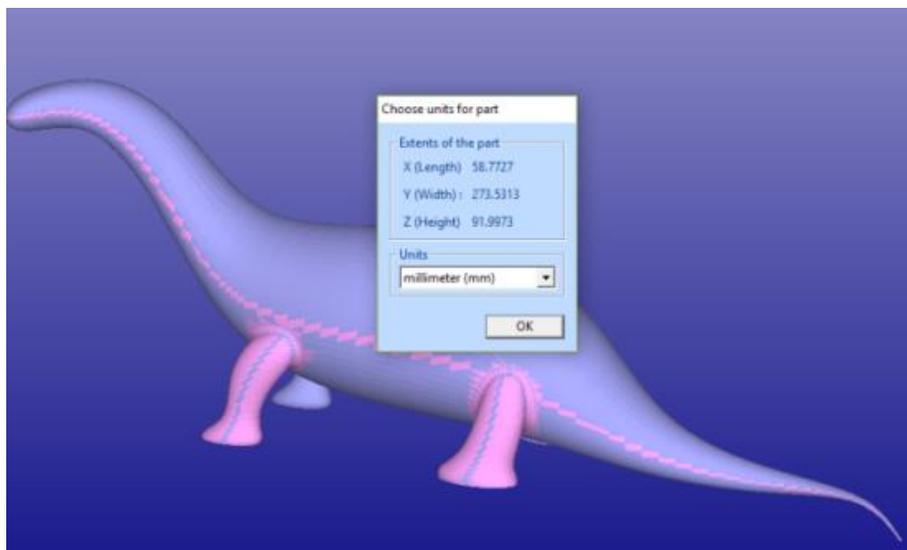
When inputting a triangulated model into Expert Series software, an automatic analysis and repair process is started. In normal everyday use you can verify and correct most of the models using the Auto Repair process. Now we will show how the Auto Repair process works.

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First open the **dino-connected.stl** file in the *Tutorials/GeomFiles* directory with the *File > Open* command. Make sure the *Files of type* is *STL*:



Press **Open** to bring the model into the software. You will be prompted for the units, accept the proposed units *Millimeters*:

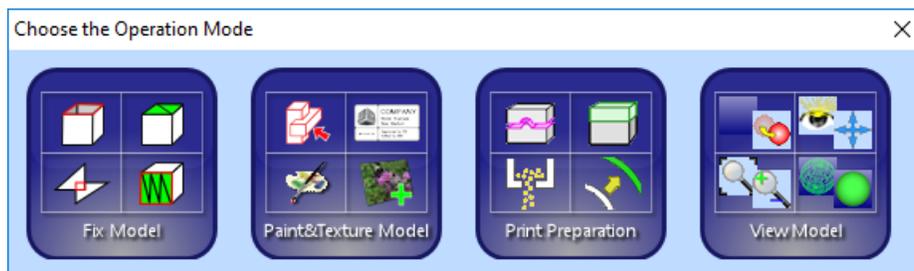


Press **OK** to continue and you will be prompted for the Operation Mode. 3Data Expert has four main operation modes: *Fix Model*, *Paint & Texture Model*, *Print*

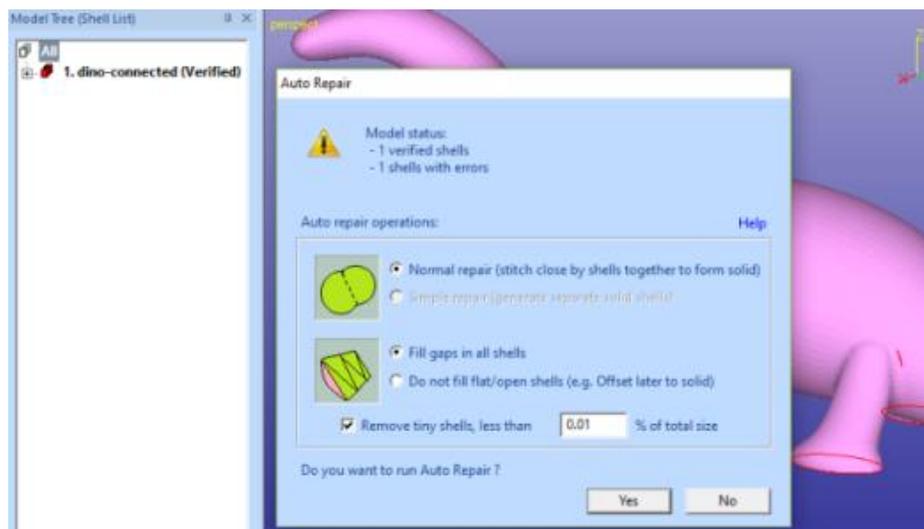
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Preparation, and View Model mode. Note: The contents of the Operation Mode window depend on the Expert Series module you are running. The different modes are used for specific tasks:

- *Fix Model* takes you to automatic model verification and repair, and contains shortcuts to the main tools used for repair work;
- *Paint & Texture Model* displays the tools for painting and texturing. These tools check the model for errors and set it to “what you see is what you get” display color mode;
- *Print Preparation* shows tools for model manipulation, such as hollowing and splitting. These tools also check the model for errors;
- *View Mode* minimizes the Operation Mode window and allows you to view the model and then return back to Operation Mode selection when clicking the minimized window again.



The normal way to begin repairing a model is to start with the Fix Model mode. To start fixing **press the Fix Model button** in the Operation Mode dialog now. *Expert Series* will begin automatic model verification (*Fix Model > Verify Shells* command). A progress bar appears. When the analysis is ready, the *Auto Repair* dialog with *Model status* message is displayed:



The model is verified for errors and divided into separate shells during verification. In this case we only get one shell (*1. dino-connected (Verified)*), which also contains errors. The display shows red *Gap curves* through the surfaces. You can use different viewing commands when Auto Repair dialog is visible (see page 12). Gaps are an error type you must fix during the repair process of *dino-connected.stl*.

The shell has errors (i.e. gaps), which is indicated by the red icon  in the Model Tree (correct shells would have green icons ).

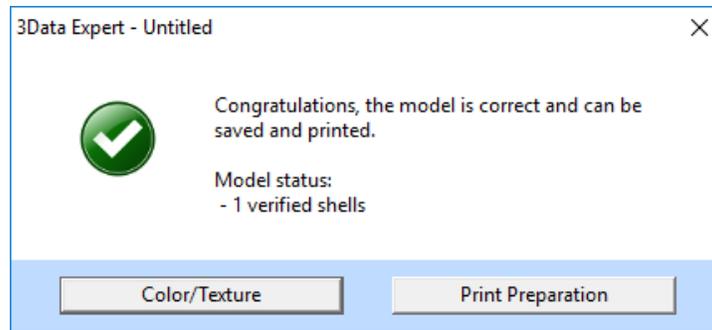
On the right hand side of the graphics area you will see the *Tools Window*. *Fix Model Tab* on the *Tools Window* provides shortcuts to the commands available for repair, like Repair Shells, Offset, and Fill Gaps commands. The *Help text* window at the lower part of the Tools Window also contains information for required repair actions. Command icons are greyed out while in Auto Repair process. We will learn more about these commands in the Tutorials, now we will follow the Auto Repair process.



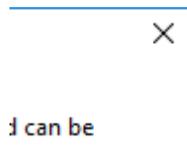
Auto Repair is the best path to follow when repairing everyday models. Auto Repair will attempt to fix all shells with errors in the Model Tree. Especially when you only have one shell, like now, you should always try Auto Repair first. The parameters for Auto Repair are automatically set based on the model properties. *Normal Repair* is set because there is only one shell to repair and *Fill gaps in all shells* is set because there are no open/flat shells in the result (which may require offset or some other fixing methods available in Expert Series).

Press the Yes button to initiate Auto Repair now.

When Auto Repair is started each shell is run through the automatic repair command (*Fix Model > Repair Shells* command) using automatically calculated parameters. For each shell, a progress bar shows the progress of the repair. After the Auto Repair process the following Model Status message is displayed:

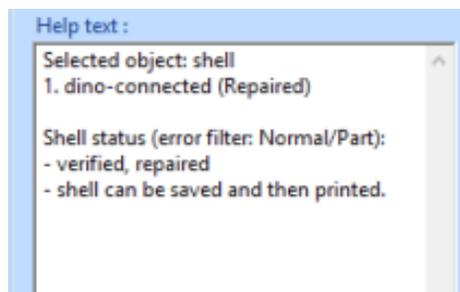


This time we want to learn more about the viewing commands, not to change to model coloring or print preparation, so you can close the status message box by **pressing Close button** on the upper right corner of the dialog.



During the Auto Repair, Expert Series fills all gaps and removes non-manifold triangles (overlapping triangles, multi-edge triangles, duplicate triangles, triangles having less than three neighbors, etc.) from the model. Overlapping and duplicate surfaces are analyzed and connected in the optimal way. When you want to learn more about triangle errors, please see the “Triangle errors” page in the Online Help chapter “Handling Faceted Files”.

The *dino-connected.stl* model only has simple errors, like inverted triangles and gaps, which are all fully repaired during the Auto Repair process. The model is now correct and can be 3D printed (or taken into simulation software), as is indicated by the status information in the Help text window below the Fix Model Tab on the right hand side of the screen.



Basic viewing commands

You have just fixed your first model with Expert Series software. Now try the following commands to become familiar with viewing operations.

Note that the commands below do not alter the model’s true 3D coordinates. They only alter the eye-point location:

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- **Rotate** the model on the screen by pressing the *middle mouse button (MMB)* and moving the cursor. MMB rotation is always available. *Left mouse button (LMB)* rotation is available most of the time except when working with painting, texturing, curve editing, and transformations (LMB is mostly used for selecting objects as shown later).
- **Rotate** the model around a selected surface point by pressing the *right mouse button (RMB)* and moving the cursor. A blue cross indicating the rotation middle point appears on the part surface if the cursor is on top of the model when the *RMB* is pressed.
- **Pan** the model by dragging with the *Shift + MMB* (or *LMB* most of the time) (*Shift + MMB* means pressing the Shift key and dragging with the mouse).
- **Pan with rubberband** by dragging with *Shift + RMB*.
- **Zoom in/out** by rotating the *mouse wheel*.
- **Zoom in/out with Ctrl + MMB** (or *LMB*).
- **Zoom to box** with *Ctrl + RMB*.
- **Hide all** by pressing the  icon with LMB (or *F5*)
- **Show all** by pressing the  icon with LMB (or *F6*)
- **Fit the model** by pressing the  icon with LMB (or *F7*).

The main viewing command icons reside in the *Viewing Toolbar*.



Try them out now. The tooltips provide a short description of each icon (let the cursor remain on top of the icon for a couple of seconds to see the tooltip):



Also, the *Viewing Planes* toolbar allows you to select any projection direction as the viewing direction with *LMB*:

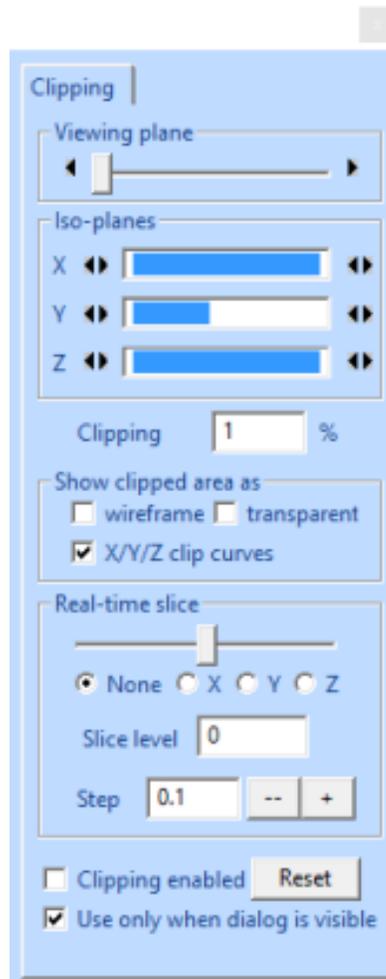
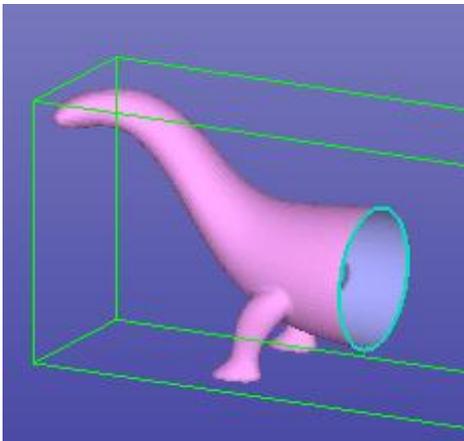


You can show the green selection box around the selected object by pressing the Show Bounding box icon in the Viewing Toolbar:



Try also Clipping functionality through the Clipping Tab to look inside the model. The Clipping Tab is opened with the  icon. The clipped area can be displayed with different ways, like with wireframe or transparent.

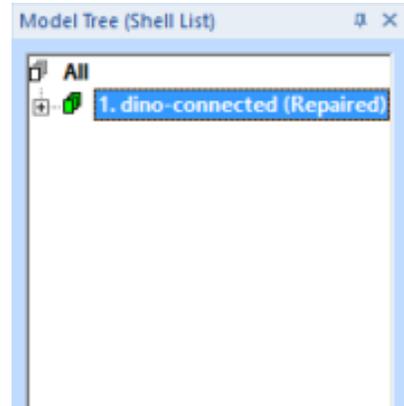
Clipping also enables to extract real time slice information on the model. *Real time slices* can be used to visually check the model quality or be copied to the Model Tree for internal model dimensioning with the *Edit > Save Clip curves* command.



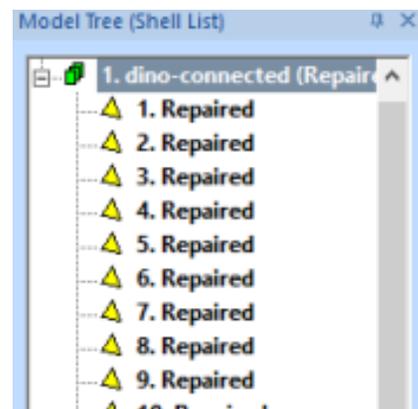
Selecting objects

On the left hand side of the Expert Series software window you can see the Model Tree tab.

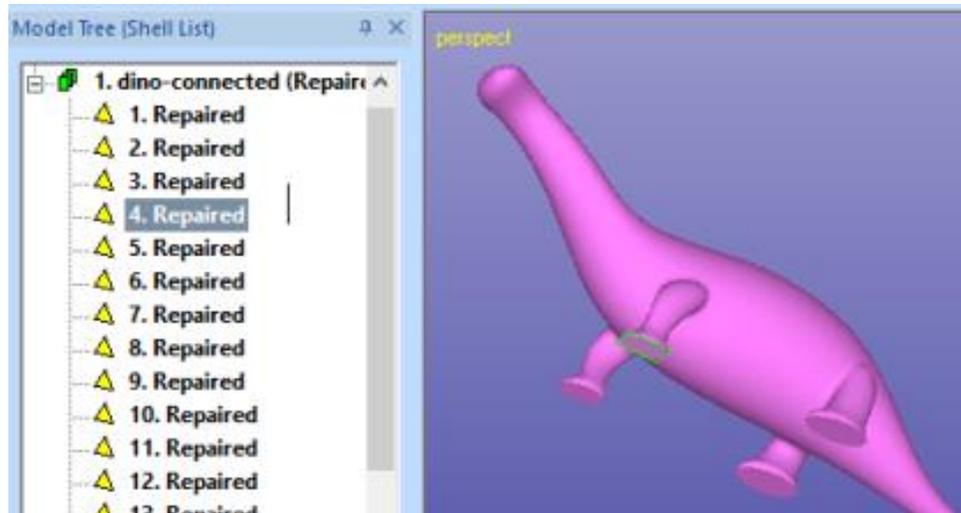
This tab tells you the current contents of the program database. With this example you can see one *shell* (aka node, group) *1. dino-connected (Repaired)*. The node 1. includes the correct dino model, as indicated by the green  icon with the shell. The *(Repaired)* text describes the last command run on the surfaces, which in this case is repair.



If you click the *+icon* at the shell 1. it will open and display the separate triangle surfaces the *dino* model is made of. During the repair process the model is subdivided into separate surfaces along sharp edges. Triangle surfaces are indicated by a yellow triangle  icon and the last operation name, i.e. *1. Repaired* for the first and largest area triangle surface in the model and so forth.



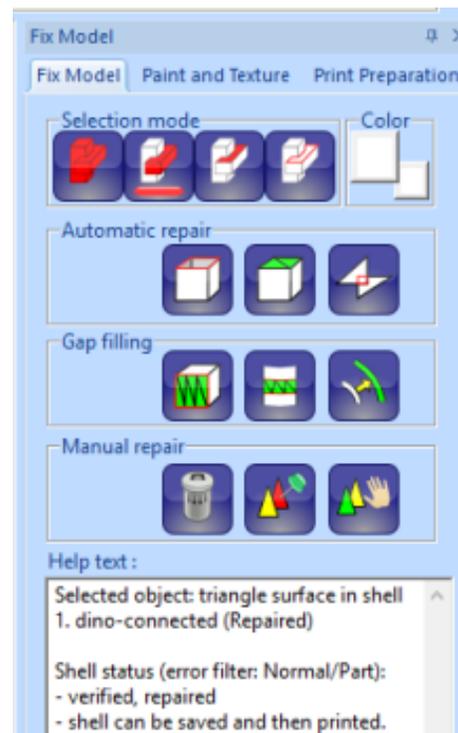
You can select objects at different levels either directly from the Model Tree with LBM click or graphically from the display area. For example, the surface 4 selected from the Model Tree corresponds to the sole of the front right leg of the *dino* model. This is indicated with highlight and green bounding box around the selected surface in the display area:



Different objects can be selected also graphically from the display area with LMB. On the right hand side of the screen you can see the Tools Window which includes the *Selection mode* icons.

The *Selection mode* icons allow you to set the graphical selection level to *All*, *Shell*, *Surface* or *Gaps*. The default mode is shown in the image right and it is the *Shell* level. If you now click on the dino model on the screen with the LMB the shell *1. dino-connected (Repaired)* will be selected in the Model Tree.

Generally, the Tools Window contains handy shortcuts to the available commands in the selected Operation Mode as well as *Help text* window for the selected object or for the command in progress.



With Expert Series software you normally should select an object and then run the desired command to it, as seen in the next lesson.

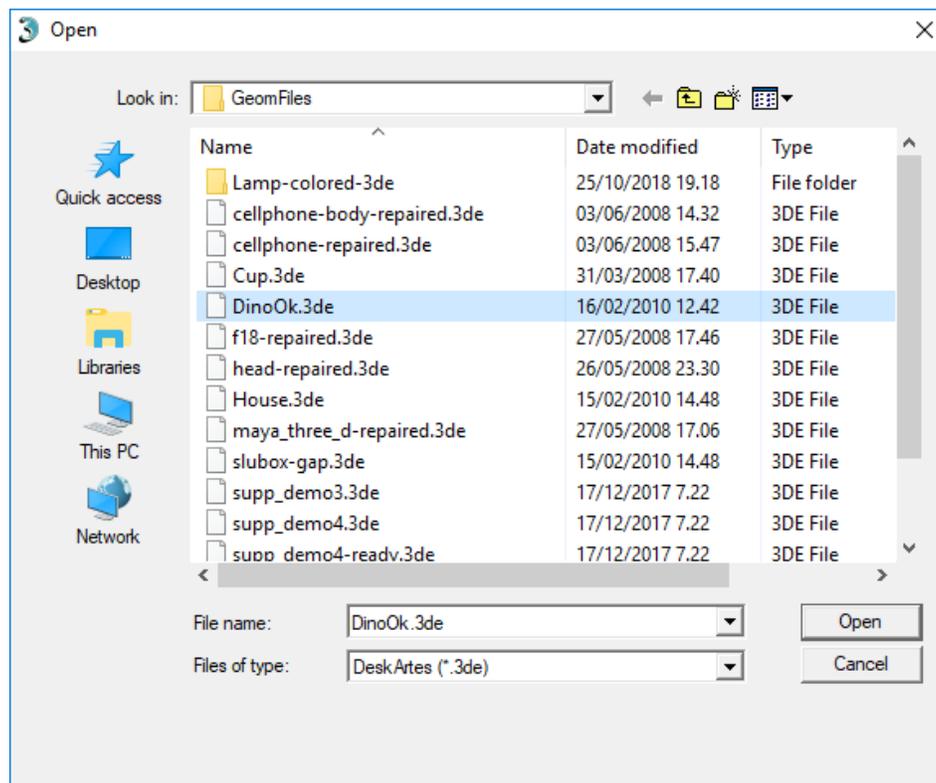
Lesson 2 - Splitting and Combining STL

One of the most common tasks with 3D Printing is to split a large model into smaller pieces to fit into the build area. This lesson shows you how to split large STL models for Additive Manufacturing. Sometimes building a very tall part is more expensive than building two shorter parts simultaneously. Also, the building area may not be large enough for a very big part. Correct joining of the split parts is ensured by adding guiding pins to the models.

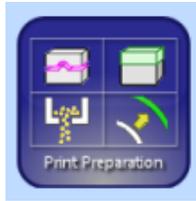
This lesson does not apply to Sim Expert users or Free View Expert users.

Splitting the *dino* model

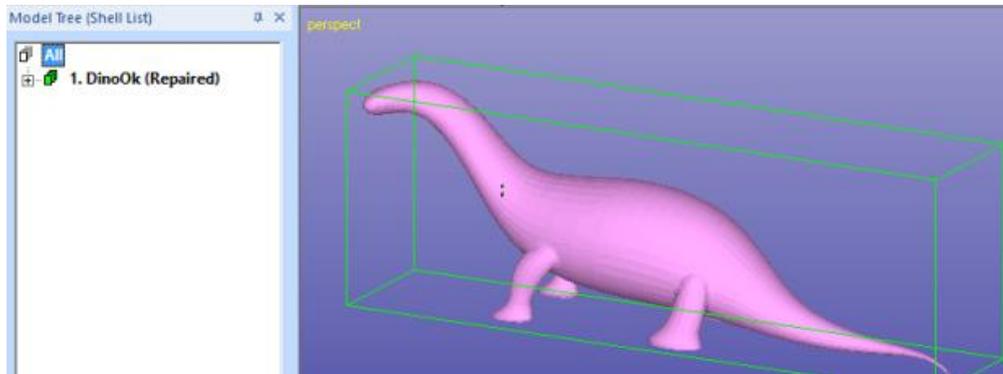
Start by inputting the DeskArtes geometry file *DinoOk.3de* in the *Tutorials/GeomFiles* directory. **Give the *File > Open* command.** During the input you are prompted if the previous *dino-connected* model should be stored into *.3de* (DeskArtes proprietary format) file. You should press *No* when prompted for it and continue to the file Open window. Set the correct *File of type (.3de)* and **select the *DinoOk.3de*** file for input.



The file includes a correct triangulation for the familiar *dino* model. You should accept the proposed units and **go directly to the *Print Preparation* mode** by pressing the

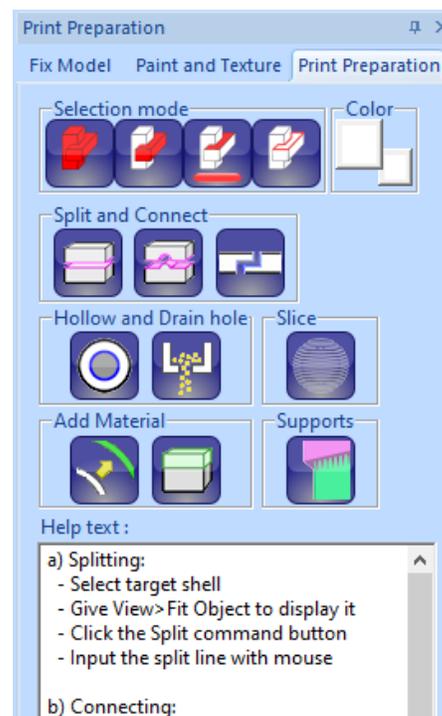


button in the Operation Mode Window. You should see the following dino model:



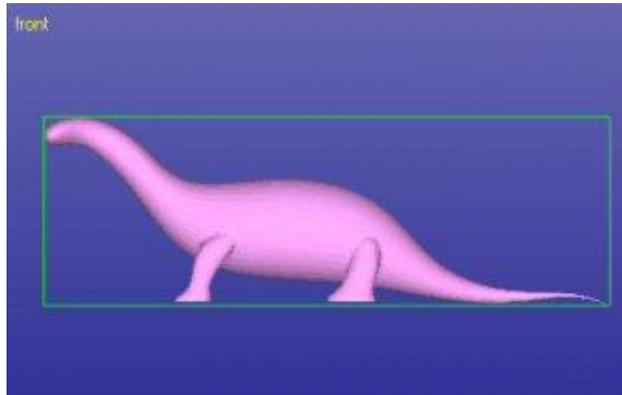
with the Print Preparation Tab on the right hand side of the screen.

The Print Preparation Tab gives shortcuts to the mostly used print preparation commands, like split, connect, add lap joint, hollow, offset and drain hole. The Help Text provides context sensitive help to the commands.



Select node **1. DinoOk (Repaired)** by clicking it with the LMB in the Model Tree. Before the splitting we must take a correct view to the model because the splitting plane is generated by extruding a user defined split polygon away from the viewer. With 3D Printing the correct way normally is to split the model perpendicular to the z-axis to make the part lower. Thus, **take a view from the x-**

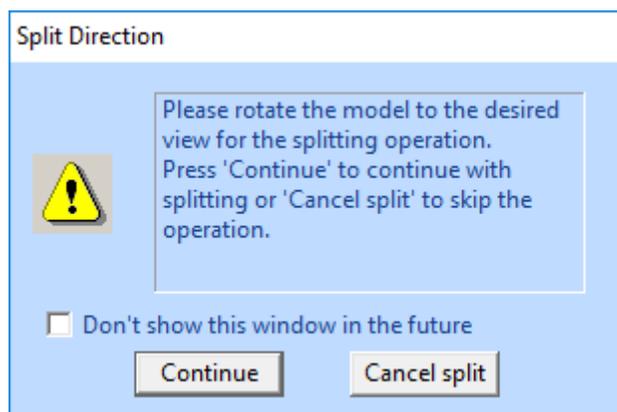
axis direction with  **+ LMB (or View > Ortho View > Front (+X)).**



The splitting is started with command **Print Preparation > Split** or with the command shortcut in the Print Preparation tab:



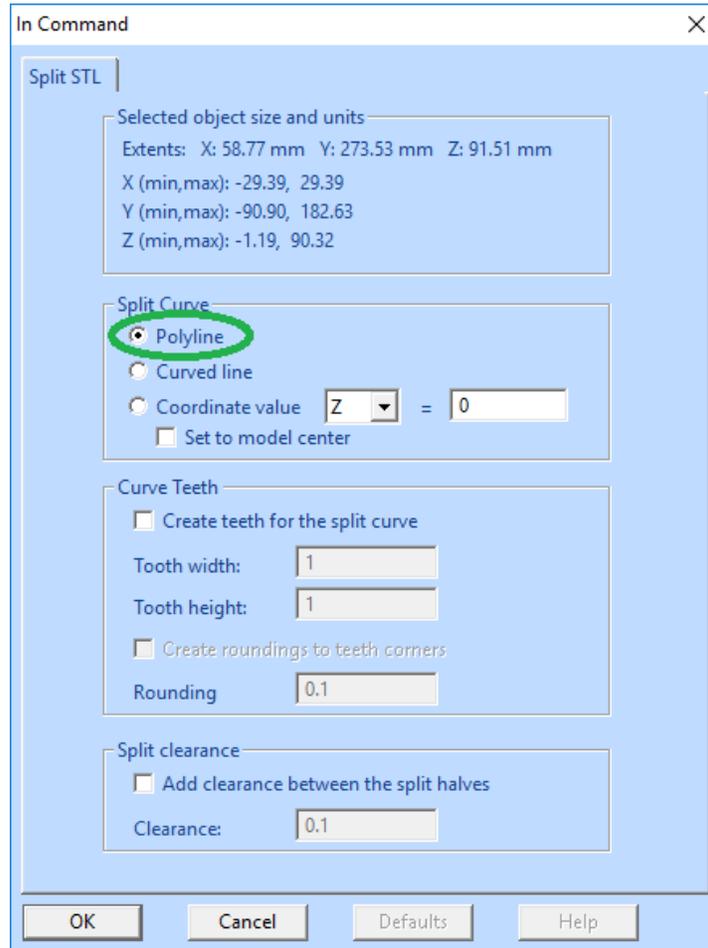
The system prompts you to take the correct view direction if no yet set:



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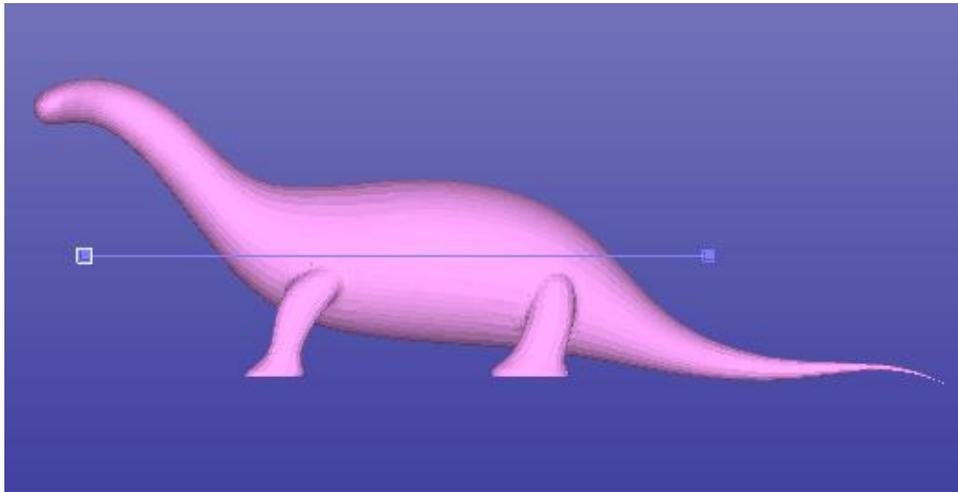
When the view is correct you can **press Continue** or Cancel to quit. You may hide this window permanently if necessary by ticking the “*Don't show this window in the future*”.

The *Split STL* parameter dialog appears. The system asks you if you wish to use a *Polyline (linear)*, *Curved split line* or *Coordinate value*. We will **select Polyline** for this exercise:

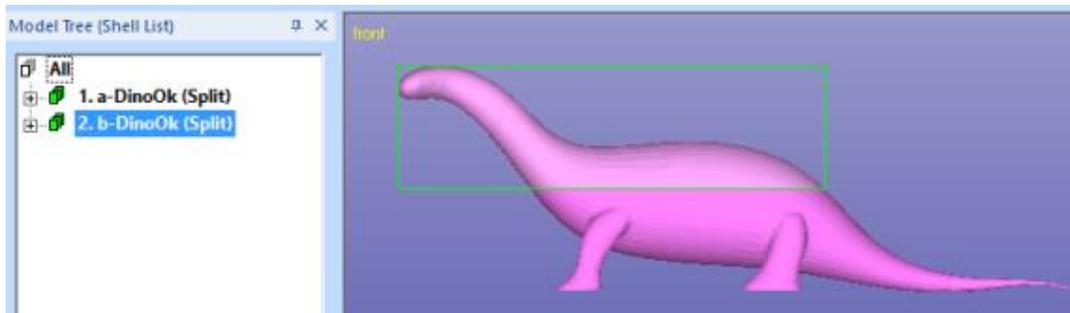


After pressing OK the system goes into the curve edit mode where you can define the shape of the splitting surface. **Press OK** now to start the curve edit mode.

In the curve edit mode you can draw the shape for the splitting surface. **Draw a horizontal line by giving two points with the LMB clearly outside of the *dino* model** as seen in the image below:



The curve editing is finished by **pressing the RMB** (or *ESC* key to cancel). When RMB is pressed the model is split along the plane defined with the polyline. After a while the result is available in the Model Tree. You can **select the upper part** with LMB click on the graphics area or selecting the correct shell from the Model Tree.



The two halves are named with *a-* and *b-* prefixes to distinguish between the shells above the split line and below the split line.

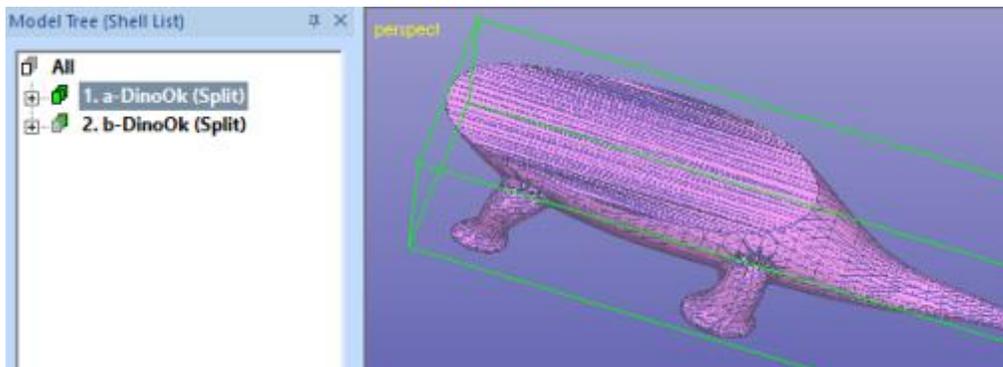
Creating the pins

The separate parts of the model could now be positioned and stored into .stl files for 3D Printing. However, the precise joining of the ready parts would be difficult or impossible. To be able to position the parts accurately we shall add pins in the models to connect them accurately together after finishing the build.

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First we will locate the necessary primitives (sphere, cone, cylinder) which will connect the two parts together. For that we will need a nice view to point the pins on the model. Here we are also using the shaded+wireframe view mode available with the  icon.

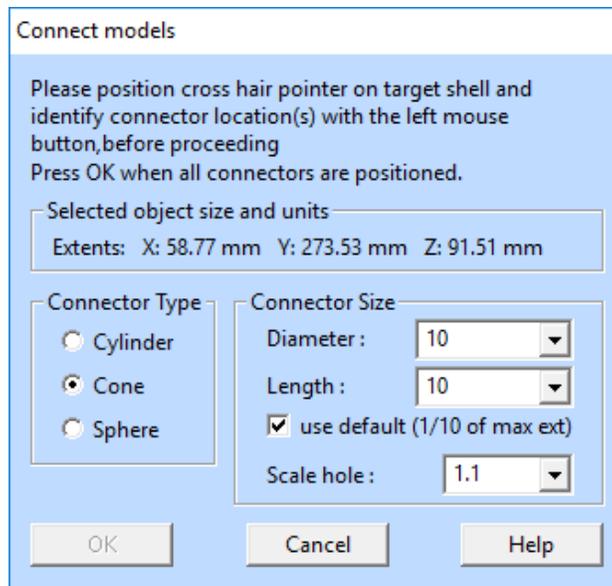
Let's start. First **rotate the model, erase the screen and display the lower part of the dino**. Zoom in to the front end of the model to be able to accurately position the connectors with the next command.



The pins are now **created with the *Print Preparation > Connect* command** or using the Print Preparation Tab shortcut

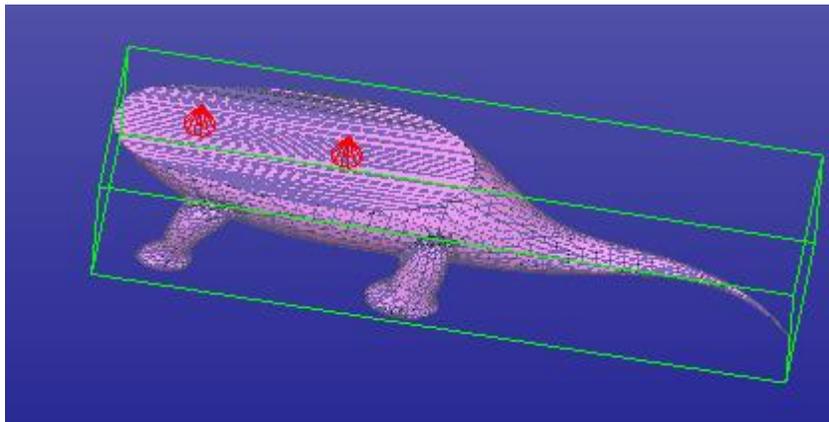


After the command is given, it is possible to give the *shape* and the *size* for the pin to be created. The software computes default values based on the model bounding box when *use default (1/10 of max ext)* is set. Now set *Diameter* and *Length* both to 10.0, as seen below:

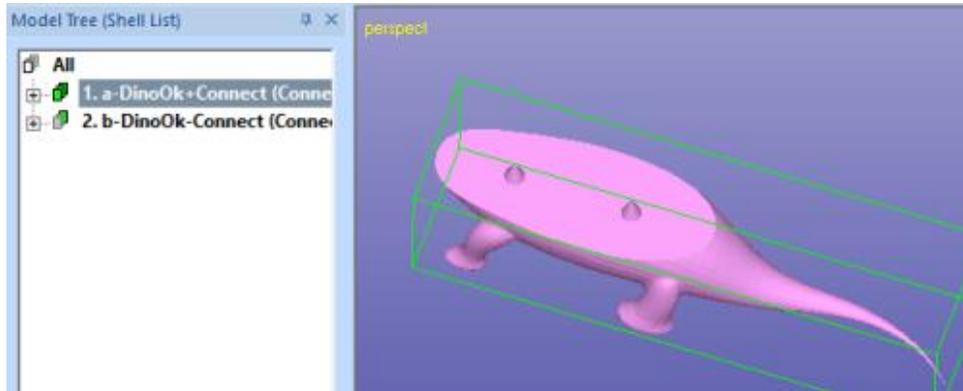


The pins are positioned with LMB clicks on the display area on top of the dino model. Give two locations, the positions for the red conical pin location indicators should look similar to the image below when set. Note that you can use the MMB zoom and MMB rotation to change the view point when locating the connectors.

If a connector location is not correct you can remove it by clicking on the red indicator cone again. Then reposition with another LMB click on the correct location.



When ready **Press OK to generate the connectors.** After a while you will see the connectors added to the selected shell (in shaded mode again with  icon):



Corresponding holes are automatically created to the *a-DinoOk-connector* shell.

Transferring the result for 3D Printing

You can save both files into the same STL file by selecting the Model Tree root *All*. Anyhow, you normally want to build and position the parts separately in the 3D Printer. For that select each shell separately and **output** it to a proper STL file with **File > Save As** command.

If you wish to save the two parts into one file, you should move the shells apart from each other with the *Transform or Print Preparation > Move Platform* menu commands prior to outputting the model for 3D Printing. To output one file, select the Model Tree root *All* before the *Save As* command.

Further Reading

This *Quick Start Guide* has given you the skills to verify and repair models with moderate or few errors for 3D Printing. Also, model splitting for building with systems with smaller build areas when compared to the part size is presented. Repaired data transfer to further processes is explained.

Each Expert Series software comes with a set of useful tutorials available through *Help > Tutorial Documents* menu.

More information and other STL manipulation tools can be found in the *Handling Faceted Files* section of the application Help pages. These pages contain information on model verifying, repairing, splitting, offsetting and hollowing for Additive Manufacturing.