

# Ford adopts PLM

UGS Corp., a leading global provider of product life-cycle management (PLM) software and services, has said that Ford Motor Company has deployed UGS' in-vehicle software data management solution on 57 worldwide vehicle programmes, including the Ford Explorer, Mustang and Escape Hybrid.

UGS, working closely with Ford, developed the in-vehicle software data management solution to help Ford track embedded software content, associated with an electrical control unit (ECU).

Based on Teamcenter software, UGS' digital life-cycle management solution, considered the world's most widely used PLM portfolio, the solution allows content to be tracked throughout the lifecycle of a vehicle and coordinates its use and function as a part of the overall system.

In-vehicle software management enables Ford to leverage its global innovation network, enhance enterprise-wide collaboration and standardise product data management associated with the growing volume of embedded software it is building into its fleet of increasingly intelligent vehicles. As vehicle designs continue growing in complexity and sophistication, this solution provides a critical process improvement.

Ford, a leader in the automotive industry, is committed to using innovation to improve the driving experience of its customers and this innovative PLM technology will help Ford realize significant cost savings,' said Chuck Grindstaff, executive vice president, Products, UGS. 'With its initial success at Ford, this solution has the potential to address a much broader and rapidly growing market, as the use of embedded software becomes more commonplace in products from washing machines and cell phones to automobiles and aircraft.'

As Ford continues to increase the amount of intelligence in its vehicles – from anti-lock braking systems to on-board global positioning systems and more – it also increases the number of tiny computers, known as electrical control units (ECUs), on board each vehicle.

A typical ECU includes the appropriate electronic circuitry for its designed function along with the embedded software necessary to provide controls and added features. Today, there can be as many as ten times the 4 or 5 ECUs that used to control a single vehicle and each one must be tracked as a single component or "part" in the vehicle's bill-of-materials (BOM). ■