PLM has an element of confusion. How does PLM fit with other TLA enterprise solutions? CAD/CAM, PDM, ERP, MES, CM, SCM, CRM, ECM, CAE, NPI, and on and on. Purdue University Department of Computer Graphics Technology developed a Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) Certificate Program over 10 years ago. Changes have been made in course length, course format and course delivery technology. There are two notable distinguishing features in the Purdue Program that have been mainstays: (1) target audience (2) experiential labs.

Other PLM certificate programs are geared towards executives and stay at the 30,000 foot level. The Purdue program covers PLM concepts but blends them with enough real world issues to get down to a practical level. Combine that with an opportunity for participants to kick some tires and actually try a few things out themselves in hands on exercises. That brings another layer of complexity since PLM uses client/server tools.

- How can client/server tools be made available for an online class?
- What kind of computers are accessible to the participants? OS, graphics, RAM, disk space, etc.
- What about licensing?
- How can client/server tools be made available if the courses are self paced?
- How will the students get help when needed?

Purdue is able to provide an interactive computer lab environment for participants from coast to coast by using virtual machines in the cloud.

The certificate program is intended for working professionals outside of a degree program. The courses utilize the Siemens PLM Software suite of tools (NX for CAD and Teamcenter for PDM) for lab examples of PLM methods. However, the core processes and methods apply to any PLM toolset. As a result, anyone looking to enhance their knowledge of PLM toolsets and process would benefit from this program.