

Dr Alain de Rouvray

PhD



Graduated from Ecole Centrale de Paris and Sorbonne University (Economic Science), Fulbright scholar, Alain de Rouvray earned his PhD in Civil Engineering from the University of California at Berkeley (1971) with a thesis on IT applied to Engineering. This founding choice was attributable to a desire to offer engineers concrete and attractive IT solutions, a visionary break from the past, with exceptionally vast industrial potential.

Alain came back to France in 1972 to work as research engineer in the Solid Mechanics lab of Ecole Polytechnique where he was able to deploy his expertise in digital modeling. He subsequently became Head of the Advanced Mechanics Department of Société Informatique Internationale (“2I”) until 1976, when 2I became the international software subsidiary of CISI Group and the French Atomic Energy Commission.

In 1973, with the help of 2I, Alain de Rouvray set up Engineering System International (ESI), along with three PhD peers from UC Berkeley – Jacques Dubois, Iraj Farhooman, and Eberhard Haug. Alain was CEO and Sales Director of ESI from 1973 to 1990. ESI’s first contract wins focused on sophisticated high-powered simulations for major national industrial projects in the nuclear (defense), aerospace (launchers and satellites), and energy (Super Phoenix) sectors. ESI’s pioneering approach was a big hit with senior executives in charge of nuclear programs who were the first to grasp their potential. In its first 10 years, ESI developed its own software, and was mainly involved in consulting and services, before setting off to break into European markets.

In the early 1980s, a few European automakers started to apply ESI technology to crash test simulations. In 1985, ESI and Volkswagen successfully carried out the first ever virtual crash test on a VW Polo. This project culminated in ESI’s flagship product, PAM-CRASH, which was rapidly adopted by major automakers across the globe.

In 1991, in order to develop the company’s software branch for industrial applications, Alain carried out a share capital increase with the California-based venture capital firm Burr Egan Deleage, which agreed to invest 3 million US Dollars. Alain became CEO of the new holding company – named ESI Group – which developed internationally with the opening of subsidiaries in Europe, Japan and the US.

In 2000, to further accelerate its development through external growth, ESI Group joined the Paris stock exchange and raised 30 million Euros.

With more than 20 acquisitions under its belt, mainly technological bricks, the original strategic vision is now accomplished: support industrial manufacturers in their digital transformation, by

delivering Virtual Prototyping solutions, to design and manufacture products “right the first time”, and allow them to become smart and autonomous.

40 years after setting up the Company, Alain de Rouvray has returned to San Francisco in the Silicon Valley, intensive source of innovation for all sectors, in order to federate a new ecosystem around ESI Group and ensure the company’s continued growth.