A prototype of a documentation system that supports the development and maintenance of product configuration systems

Product configuration systems (PCSs) can be defined as product-oriented expert systems that allow users to specify products while restricting how different elements and properties may be combined. For several companies the use of PCSs has led to improvements of product specification processes, such as shorter lead times, reductions of resources needed and fewer errors. A procedure for the development and maintenance of PCSs, which has been applied in configuration projects for more than ten years, includes three main modelling techniques to support the development and maintenance of PCSs. Unfortunately, no software exists which supports all three techniques in an integrated fashion. This means that when developing PCSs based on this procedure there is no automatic integration between the created models. Therefore, for some years, researchers have worked on creating a basis for developing a documentation system that supports the development and maintenance of PCSs. This article describes how some of this research has been converted into a prototype of a documentation system and what has been learned from the evaluation of the prototype.