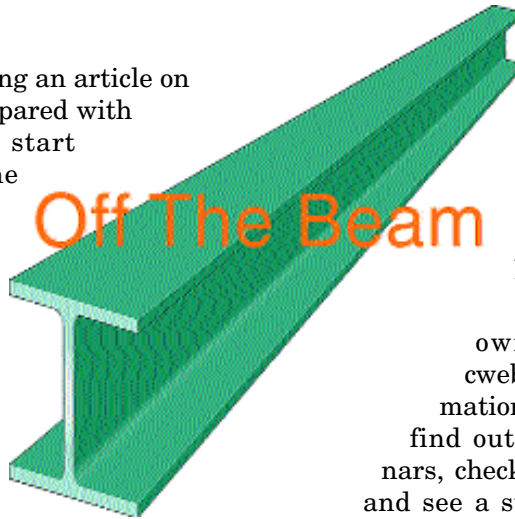


A few months ago, I was writing an article on the benefits of steel conduit compared with plastic conduit and wanted to start the article by quoting from the movie, "The Graduate". I couldn't remember the exact quote, however. So I connected to the Internet and in a matter of minutes found the reference I needed. A few weeks ago, my mother-in-law called and wanted to know what an upgrade to WordPerfect 7 should cost. Once more, I connected to the Internet, checked out the sites for Egghead Software and CDW, and gave her some prices. And almost every Monday night, I play spades with my brother-in-law in Toronto—over the Internet, of course.

While none of these examples are particularly earth-shattering, they demonstrate three common uses of the Internet and the World Wide Web: reference; shopping; and communication.

The web contains a plethora of useful information. Many associations have their own web sites, as do many manufacturers, particularly software vendors. Accessing these sites is extremely simple: All you need is a basic computer, a modem, some software (much of it free), an Internet Service Provider (in most of the country, it is easy to obtain unlimited Internet access for \$20 per month or less) and a telephone line. The trick, of course, is finding the sites you're interested in viewing. A good place to start is with magazine ads; most advertisers with web sites will list the address somewhere in their ad. You can also use one of the



many free search engines available (for example <http://www.search.com>). Finally, you can always simply take a stab at guessing the address by typing <http://www.companyname.com>.

Last year, AISC started its own web site (<http://www.aiscweb.com>). In the beginning, information was fairly limited. You could find out about conferences and seminars, check out an AISC publications list and see a staff directory. But during the past year, AISC's site has matured considerably. This year, you can not just learn about the upcoming National Steel Construction Conference, but also register online. Now you can not only see a staff directory, but also the entire AISC fabricator membership directory (along with a listing of Quality Certified fabricators). AISC's Engineering & Research Department is beginning to post important documents, ranging from the latest information on the Dogbone connection to an AISC advisory statement on the welding of highly restrained connections.

You'll still find an AISC publications catalog, but now you'll also find an expanded calendar section, which lists not just every AISC event, but also many important industry meetings and conferences. And shortly, you should be able to find direct links to many fabricators' home pages. So if you're looking for information on either fabrication or AISC, be sure to point your browser to AISC's home page. Happy surfing.

Scott Melnick
Editor & Publisher

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