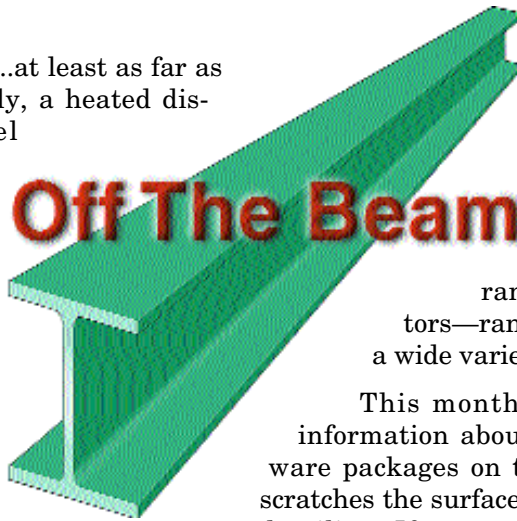


2D or 3D, that is the question...at least as far as detailers are concerned. Recently, a heated discussion on Steel-Link's steel detailing email discussion group (for more information, check out www.steel-link.com) probed the pros and cons of 2D vs. 3D detailing packages.

Essentially, those favoring 2D packages make the point that 2D software is usually less expensive and that fabricators ultimately need 2D shop drawings. As Norm Alterman from Computer Detailing Corporation points out: "Our present production methods of creating fabricated structural steel is still a 2D process and I can't see it changing any time soon. Sure, some of the very large fabricating companies will adopt completely automated methods that will produce fabricated steel directly from the design drawings, but what percentage of fabricated steel is produced by companies that regularly handle projects greater than 4000 tons? And almost all shops today use 2D drawings. 3D drawings must be converted to 2D to be useful, so what is the advantage to creating a 3D view first?"

3D proponents tend to look at the process as a whole, rather than simply the detailing. As Design Data's Doug Evans explains: "3D is as much a concept as it is a solution." The 3D packages combine a graphic interface with a huge database of project



information. The graphic features allow users to more easily catch errors, according to 3D adherents. And the database allows the 3D packages to more easily provide a wide range of information to fabricators—ranging from CNC downloads to a wide variety of reports.

This month's product section includes information about many of the detailing software packages on the market. However, it only scratches the surface for anyone truly interested in detailing. If you want more information, a good source will be this year's North American Steel Construction Conference (May 19-21 in Toronto; to receive more information, fax 312/670-5403 or check out AISC's website at www.aisc.org).

The conference will feature an extensive detailing software demonstration by more than 10 companies in the exhibit hall. In addition, several of the technical sessions are expected to directly address the issue of 2D vs. 3D detailing.

If you have an opinion on the 2D vs. 3D issue (or on any other subject), I'd love to hear from you. Drop me a line at Modern Steel Construction, One East Wacker Dr., Suite 3100, Chicago, IL 60601-2001.

Who's Who at MSC	Advertising in MSC	AISC Officers
<p>Editor & Publisher: Scott Melnick ph: 312/670-5407 email: melnick@aiscmail.com</p> <p>Assistant Editor: Jenifer Golec ph: 312/670-5448 email: golec@aiscmail.com</p> <p>Technical Editor: Keith A. Grubb, P.E. email: grubb@aiscmail.com</p> <p>Editorial Offices: One East Wacker Dr., Suite 3100 Chicago, IL 60601-2001 fax: 312/670-5403</p>	<p>Account Manager: John Byrne ph: 847/699-6049 fax: 847/699-8681 email: jabber10@ix.netcom.com</p> <p>Advertising Offices: 2400 E. Devon Ave., Suite 267 Des Plaines, IL 60018</p> <p>To receive a media kit, call, fax or email</p> <p style="text-align: center;">John Byrne</p> <p>or view advertising information on Modern Steel Construction's web site at:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">http://www.modernsteel.com</p>	<p>Chairman: Robert D. Freeland 1st Vice Chairman: Robert G. Abramson Treasurer: Jerry Milligan Sec. & Gen. Counsel: David Ratterman</p> <p>President: H. Louis Gurthet, P.E.</p> <p>Vice President: Morris Caminer (Finance & Administration)</p> <p>Vice President: Nestor Iwankiw, P.E. (Engineering & Research)</p> <p>American Institute of Steel Construction, Inc. One East Wacker Dr., Suite 3100 Chicago, IL 60601-2001 ph: 312/670-2400 fax: 312/670-5403</p>