

## Notes from the Editor's Desk



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**W**hen I heard about the announced merger of AOL and Time Warner, I started thinking about how intertwined my life has become with the Internet and was really quite surprised. Five years ago, how many of us had even ever been on-line?

Yet...

...Every Wednesday night at about 9 p.m. CST, I fire up my home computer, log onto the Internet and surf on over to a site called [www.zone.com](http://www.zone.com) where I meet up with my wife's little brother—who lives up in Toronto—and enjoy an evening of competitive spades (for anyone interested in a game, my screen name is "leets"). Afterwards, we usually spend 15 or 20 minutes chatting using ICQ (my identification number is 1148485).

...To help facilitate communications between members of the planning committee for the North American Steel Construction Conference, I've set up a simple list serve using a free service provided by "[www.egroups.com](http://www.egroups.com)". It lets us send messages to the entire committee at once, it has a calendar section for posting upcoming meetings (it will even send out automatic reminders) and an archive for posting up to 20 megs of documents for free. (One of my friends is even considering using egroups for a monthly get-together that she holds.)

...I'm contemplating buying a mini-van and I'm conducting my initial research at the web site "[www.edmunds.com](http://www.edmunds.com)". It provides reviews of different makes as well as the invoice and MSRP of different models and options.

And I think we'll soon see even more activity on the Internet by fabricators, engineers and others involved in the design and construction of buildings and bridges. The latest innovation on the Internet is the development of powerful project management web sites. These sites allow you to monitor RFIs, readily exchange project data, and maintain a repository of project information. A large

number of these site are popping up, ranging from the powerful [www.bidcom.com](http://www.bidcom.com) site to the free [www.buzzsaw.com](http://www.buzzsaw.com) page to the highly customizable [www.frametech.com](http://www.frametech.com) site. Others include: [www.cubus.com](http://www.cubus.com), [www.mps.com](http://www.mps.com), [www.bluelineonline.com](http://www.bluelineonline.com), [www.buildingteam.com](http://www.buildingteam.com), [www.ebuilder.net](http://www.ebuilder.net), [www.inetonsite.com](http://www.inetonsite.com), [www.artemispm.com](http://www.artemispm.com), [www.thebluebook.com](http://www.thebluebook.com), [www.thepigeonhole.com](http://www.thepigeonhole.com) and [www.thepowertool.com](http://www.thepowertool.com).

If you're involved in project management and have access to the web, take a few hours and check out some of these sites. Or, if you really need to know more, take a few days and head over to this year's North American Steel Construction Conference in Las Vegas (February 23-26). Paul Doherty's session, "E-Steel: Using the World Wide Web to Improve Your Business," will include a plethora of information on web-based project management, as well as e-commerce, e-security and e-invoicing. (If you're really heavily into project management, check out the four-hour short course on Project Management offered on February 23. While it will include information on web-based project management, it will look at other current methods as well as present a case-study approach.)

If you'd like more information on the North American Steel Construction Conference, visit AISC's redesigned web site at [www.aisc.org](http://www.aisc.org) or, if you don't have access to the Internet, call 312/670-5421 and ask to have conference information faxed to you.

Remember, you can always reach me at [melnick@blacksquirrel.net](mailto:melnick@blacksquirrel.net)—or playing spades on Wednesday nights at [www.zone.com](http://www.zone.com).