



Scott L. Melnick

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other word would smell as sweet.”

—William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

Years ago, one of my college professors told me that my surname translated to Miller, from which I surmised that my ancestors once practiced that profession—and took as a partial explanation for why so many people call me “Steve Miller.” But while we’ve for the most part lost the meaning behind our proper nouns, understanding remains behind the names of objects and concepts. So while we’ve lost the antecedents to the word “rose” (though it probably relates to the Greek “Rhodian” or “from Rhodes,” but may relate to an earlier word meaning “bramble”), the word is in most minds evocative of a particularly fragrant blossom.

Unfortunately, not all words so readily summon a mental image. For the past few years, AISC has been promulgating the benefits of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). But the term never really caught on within our industry. And since other industries have moved to a different term—“interoperability”—the structural steel industry is doing the same.

Interoperability is the ability to manage and communicate electronic product and project data between collaborating firms. It allows the exchange and management of electronic information, where individuals and systems are able to identify, access, and integrate information across multiple systems. The goal of interoperability is to create greater efficiencies by eliminating the manual reentry of data, duplication of business functions, and the continued reliance on paper-based information management systems. The steel design and construction industry uses the CIMSteel (CIS/2) neutral file format to enable interoperability.

Interoperability is one of the tools that fabrica-

tors (or, to use a term coming into popular usage, “specialty steel contractors”) and designers can use to reduce the cost of steel-framed buildings. For fabricators who want to learn more about taking advantage of interoperability (and other early involvement tools), I recommend you attend the full-day workshop sponsored by AISC and the Design Build Institute of America (DBIA): “Steel Fabricator Empowerment—Partnerships, Integration, and Technology.”

The program is designed to help fabricators improve profitability in today’s volatile marketplace. The schedule and speakers look fabulous! The session focuses on:

- Lowering risk for fabricators and their clients during these volatile pricing times
- Increasing fabricators competitive edge with design and construction industry partnerships
- Utilizing early involvement tools to ensure more complete contract documents
- Taking advantage of a volatile market to position fabrication companies for improved profitability.

For more information, or to register, visit [www.aisc.org/fabricatorempowerment](http://www.aisc.org/fabricatorempowerment). I hope to see many of you in Chicago on November 2!

P.S. While I’m certainly not condoning (or condemning) alcohol consumption...I would like to nominate Iron City Beer—in its new metal bottle—as the official beer of *Modern Steel Construction!*

#### Editorial Offices

Modern Steel Construction  
One E. Wacker Dr., Suite 3100  
Chicago, IL 60601  
312.670.2400 tel  
312.670.5403 fax


#### Editorial Contacts

Editor & Publisher  
Scott L. Melnick  
312.670.8314  
melnick@modernsteel.com

Managing Editor  
Keith A. Grubb, P.E., S.E.  
312.670.8318  
grubb@modernsteel.com

Assistant Editor  
Hillary A. Lichtenstein  
312.670.8316  
lichtenstein@modernsteel.com

#### AISC Officers



Chairman  
James A. Stori  
Vice Chairman  
Stephen E. Porter  
Treasurer  
Lawrence A. Cox  
Secretary & General Counsel  
David B. Ratterman  
President  
H. Louis Gurthel, P.E.  
Vice President, Finance & Technology  
E. Joseph Dietrich  
Vice President, Engineering & Research  
Louis F. Geschwindner, Ph.D., P.E.  
Vice President, Communications  
Scott L. Melnick  
Vice President, Marketing  
John P. Cross, P.E.  
Vice President, Certification  
Roberta L. Marsteller, P.E.

#### Advertising Contact

Account Manager  
John A. Byrne  
847.699.6049 tel  
847.699.8681 fax  
byrne@modernsteel.com  
1400 E. Touhy Ave., Suite 260  
Des Plaines, IL 60018

To receive advertising information, contact John Byrne or view it online: [www.modernsteel.com](http://www.modernsteel.com)

#### Address Changes and Subscription Questions

312.670.5444 tel  
312.670.5403 fax  
admin@modernsteel.com