

Detailing Pet Peeves

Thanks for including Darin Gillies' Top Ten list in the May issue of *MSC* (Notes from the Editor). His points are well taken.

I had the good fortune early in my career to work with an American Bridge engineer who steadfastly insisted that the only document the erector should have was the erection plan. All pertinent information was to be provided on the erection plan. Copies of details were to be used only to research errors in the field.

Unfortunately, attention to detail has taken a decidedly reduced position in the current industry market. It is difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate the costs to the erector, fabricator, contractor, and owner of not having this information readily accessible.

Keep up the good work.

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Interoperability Liability

I just received the June issue of *MSC*. After reading articles that mentioned the concept of interoperability (Notes from the Editor; Steel Mail, "EDI: From Vision to Practice"), I'm looking for ways to incorporate it into work plans.

I work for an international company and we have been utilizing the transfer of neutral files to our fabricators for some time now. We have recently performed "paperless" projects out of our Calgary, Canada, and Poland offices. The U.S. offices are trying hard to push work processes in that same direction.

Have you heard any discussion about registration laws as they apply to stamping calculations and drawings, and how they would affect the reality of a totally paperless world? Hopefully professional engineering organizations are trying to address the use of electronic stamping. The issue of stamping drawings is a major dilemma in our industry, and I would be interested in knowing your thoughts.

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Luke Faulkner, Director of Information Technology Initiatives at AISC, offered this response:

There has been some discussion, which usually generates more questions than answers. Those who have used this technology are generally finding that the legal issues people were worried about have not arisen.

As of now, half of U.S. states have laws that allow for electronic signatures and stamping of drawings and legal documents. Several more states have pending laws. The National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) Model Rules (August 2004 Revision) state that a digital signature is acceptable if it is:

- Unique to the person using it
- Capable of verification
- Under the sole control of the person using it
- Linked to a document in such a manner that the digital signature is invalidated if any data in the document is changed.

For the complete rules visit the NCEES web site: www.ncees.org/introduction/about_ncees/ncees_model_rules.pdf

Also, the American Bar Association has a tutorial on how an electronic signature actually works www.abanet.org/scitech/ec/isc/dsg-tutorial.html.