

## editor's note



### SITTING AT LUNCH TODAY WITH MY SON JOSHUA, WE GOT TO TALKING ABOUT TECHNOLOGY AND HOW FAST IT'S CHANGING AND WHAT THINGS WILL BE LIKE IN THE FUTURE.

Christina Sterbenz recently compiled a list of the 16 most impressive predictions of all time for [www.businessinsider.com](http://www.businessinsider.com). They ranged from Robert Boyle's prediction in the 1600s that we would be able to transplant organs in the future to Nikola Tesla's 1909 musing on a future with cell phones to a 1993 AT&T ad campaign that featured tablets eerily similar to those commonly used today.

Joshua and I talked about advances in biochemistry helping to cure different types of cancer, of 3D printing and how drones are becoming commonplace. And we talked about whether new technology replaces old or is just an evolution. (Did cars replace buggies or are they just another step on the evolutionary chart for transportation?)

Earlier this week Jacques Cattán, AISC's vice president in charge of our Certification program, and I had some free time at an event we were attending and decided to go for a drive and explore the area. It wasn't long before we drove by one of AISC's fabricator members. We stopped, introduced ourselves to a nice lady in the main office, borrowed a couple of hard hats and gave ourselves a tour of the facility.

It was a fairly conventional facility with a pretty linear workflow. My eye was drawn to an old drill press, perhaps the oldest piece of equipment in the facility. While there were newer beam lines and saws in the shop, I loved looking at a still functional relic. But Jacques was interested in something else. There were no shop drawings hanging on the wall. No clipboards with drawings or gather sheets. Instead, we saw shop workers looking at iPads.

Did the iPad replace the clipboard, or was this an evolutionary change? What about XML data exchange? Or even ASTM A1085 instead of A500 for HSS?

Sterbenz quoted Arthur C. Clarke as saying: "If by some miracle, a prophet could describe the future exactly as it was going to take place, his predictions would sound so far-fetched, so absurd, that everyone would laugh him to scorn." But I'm not sure he's right. Of course there will inevitably be revolutionary and unpredictable changes. But most of the future will look like today, just improved (though I'm still waiting for my flying car!).

When I was born, structural steel had a typical yield point of 33 ksi, which soon thereafter jumped to 36 ksi with the introduction of A36 in 1962. That doesn't seem so impressive, but keep in mind that this is more than a 9% increase. By 1982, A572, with a yield point of 50 ksi (a 72% increase!), was available for all shape grades. But would anyone who worked with steel in 1960 not recognize a piece of wide-flange today?

A lot of people seem nervous about the technology changes being introduced today—changes in contractual relationships, changes in specifications and changes in modeling and data exchange. But these aren't revolutionary changes. They're evolutionary. Yes, tomorrow's steel industry will be different from today's. Embrace the changes and be proud to be part of them.

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