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New and improved NRC web site delivers solutions to construction practitioners

Culhane, M. S.; Gallagher, J. F.

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Publisher's version / Version de l'éditeur:

Toronto Specifier, April, p. 9, 2004-04-01

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VISI-406

Culhane, M.S.; Gallagher, J.F.

April 2004

A version of this document is published in / Une version de ce document se trouve dans:
Toronto Specifier, April, pp. 9, April 01, 2004

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new and improved NRC web site

delivers solutions to construction practitioners

<http://irc.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca>

The National Research Council's Institute for Research in Construction (IRC) is a prime source of information for construction practitioners in Canada, as indicated by the rapidly increasing popularity of its Web site.

The Web site receives over 120,000 "hits" each month and most of these visitors are accessing IRC publications.

"Our site is a key part of our technology transfer and communication efforts," says Mike Culhane, IRC's Head of Library and Internet Services. "With so many people coming to the site for publications, we decided to make more of them available and make them easier to find."

The IRC site contains over 2,000 publications, with many geared towards the practitioner, such as architects, engineers, contractors and builders, specification writers, and property managers. Among the most popular publications are the practice-oriented Construction Technology Updates. The Updates are concise distillations of IRC research results and reviews of building science principles.

Another extremely popular series is the Canadian Building Digests. When IRC decided seven years ago to add its highly regarded collection of 250 Digests to the Web site, it had an immediate impact with practitioners. The

Digests represent a veritable history of building science in Canada covering the period 1960 to 1990, and putting them on the Web was an inexpensive way to keep them accessible to users. Their popularity continues unabated.

Culhane and his staff add new publications on a weekly basis and the Upcoming Events section is updated regularly. In addition, anyone can sign up to receive the list of new publications by e-mail or subscribe to the electronic version of the newsletter Construction Innovation.

A new feature of the IRC Web site is the A-Z Index, which allows users to find information quickly on IRC's 5,000+ Web pages, if they know what they're after.

"For users who are just browsing, there are also links on each page to IRC's main activities: research, product evaluations, codes and publications," says Culhane. Other links include a "Join us" page detailing career and business opportunities, and a list of related sites.

The site contains comprehensive information on IRC's research activities, most of which are carried out with industry partners. Another pivotal part of the site is the section pertaining to building codes. IRC provides national leadership to the codes community in Canada and readers can follow key developments, such as the transi-

tion to objective-based codes, by accessing the IRC site. As well, reports of innovative products evaluated by IRC's national evaluation service (CCMC) can be found in the Registry of Product Evaluations, available on the site.

As Canada's largest construction research organization, IRC also acts as a gateway for Canadians to access global construction technology information. From the IRC site it is possible, for example, to simultaneously search the Web sites of members of the CIB (International Council for Research and Innovation in Building and Construction).

Culhane says the goal is to make the IRC site as active, relevant and useful as possible, a one-stop source of information. To this end, there are plans to add a searchable database of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) addressing a host of technical issues, as well as to increase linkages and information sharing with other national and international construction organizations.

Questions or suggestions about further ways to improve the site are welcomed and can be directed to Mike Culhane at (613) 993-3774, fax (613) 952-7671, or e-mail mike.culhane@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca.

from the engineering officer

MOULD - It is becoming the worst of the unspeakable words in the construction industry. If you aren't living with it you are being blamed for its existence in the living space. It is also the most misunderstood subject by just about everyone. I am not going to elaborate on the microbial world other than to state that there are hundreds of species and only a handful that are considered toxic. Even then, a person's own sensitivity will determine the effects of exposure.

The issue from the construction industry's point of view is insurance. The insurers have

taken the position, thanks to the BC leaky condos, that they don't like mould. Contractors are not being insured for mould claims and designers are either not being insured or have reduced claim limits for mould.

If you are renewing your insurance have a discussion with your broker or carrier and make sure that you both understand the type of work undertaken and what the exposure risks are. This will help to reduce the heartache should a suit ever be filed. It will also serve to help educate the insurance community to the

variations in the coverage required for different disciplines and trades. If anyone can provide further insight into this issue we would be glad to hear from you.

As far as BRRAG Bill 124 is concerned, it is time to start the clock again. The new deadline for becoming certified and having your firm registered is July 2005. Information is available on the Building Branch's website.

Bob Rymell P.Eng.
Engineering Officer