

mechanical engineering

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COMPUTING

This section was written by
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ONLINE LIBRARY

John Preston reckons he has something in common with many other mechanical engineers. “We all have 20 million reference books, and they’re all out of date,” he said.

So when Preston, who works as a mechanical engineer for the Shaw Group Inc. in Charlotte, N.C., recently needed pertinent information about how an HVAC system would respond to the Texas climate, he turned to an online reference guide.

The online reference guides are invaluable because the Shaw division that Preston works for designs many different types of power plants and maintains offices at three separate locations.

“When I’m working on that plant in Texas,

I could be going back and forth with the guys in Denver many times, but now, we’re looking at the same references and we’re all connected through the Internet,” Preston said.

For the past three years, Shaw has used Knovel, an online reference tool from the company of the same name in New York. The Web-based application integrates technical information with analytical and search tools.

The reference tools also help get newer engineers up to speed, Preston said.

“I’ve got a bunch of reference books I’ve acquired over time, but some folks right out of school haven’t started their collection yet,” Preston said. “I can now say, ‘Here’s where you can go find this stuff.’ ” ■



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