GANG-NAIL GUIDELINES No.153

ANOTHER MITEK ADVANTAGE

WORKING HARDER WITH DATA

Ever wondered if the data in your truss and frame software could be better utilised in the factory to improve your production efficiency and end-product?

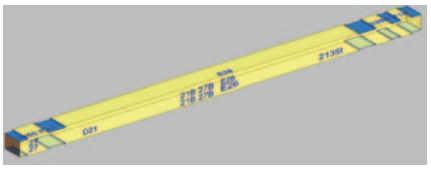
Well it can, and thanks to the ubiquitous PC and factory network, it's getting easier to make that data work harder.

The software packages provided by nailplate suppliers and others to roof truss and wall frame manufacturers are growing ever more powerful.

New opportunities are emerging to extract increasingly detailed product design information from the house model and make it available on the factory floor.

On the hardware front, PC's and Ethernet networks are becoming ever more prevalent in all areas of production including automated machinery and assembly areas with paperless production screens and data collection.

A good example of utilising available data is inkjet marking of product information on wall frame components. This aids both wall panel plant production and house-frame construction on-site (see Fig 1.)



■ *Figure 1: An example of assembly data extracted from design software and printed on a wall frame component.*

Apart from simple cutting and stud trenching locations, extensive information can be extracted from nailplate suppliers' wall framing design software and passed via cutting files to 3rd party equipment, e.g. Hundegger SC-3 Saw.

The Hundegger saw's wall frame component marking options include panel and junction labels, intersecting component locations and labels,

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ribbon plate requirements, ply and steel bracing locations, wall panel junction labels and locations, stud tie locations, not to mention opening data like, window height, sill height and lintel size.

There are also new opportunities to build software 'bridges' between previously isolated systems, increasing the quantity and quality of data communication to production systems and machines.

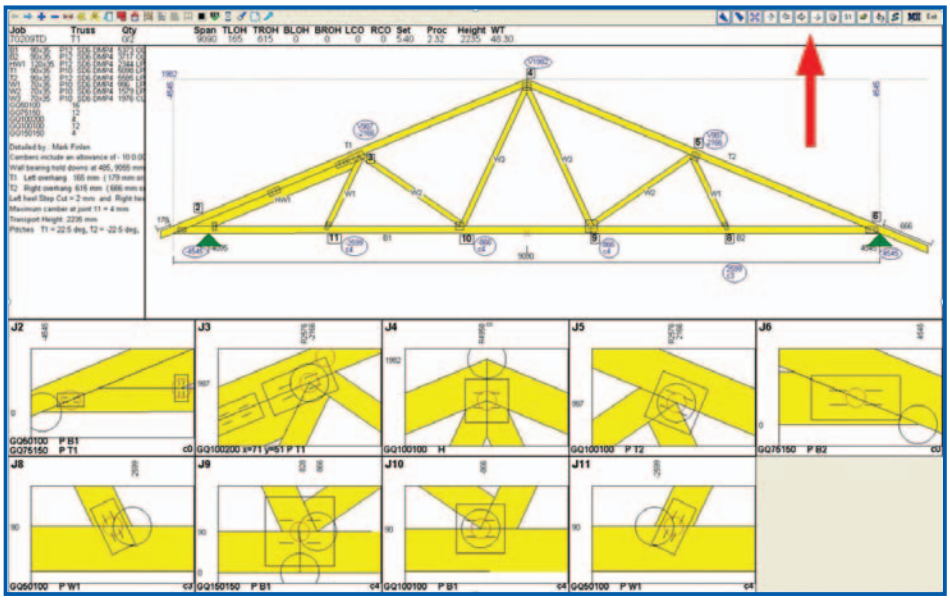
One example is Planx Link software, which creates a data link over the factory Ethernet network between the Matchpoint Planx automated table tooling and (in this case) MiTek's OptiFlow Paperless Jig centre screen.

The Planx Link plug-in appears as a set of buttons in the top corner of the Paperless Jig Centre screen (see Fig. 2) and allows operators to set up the current truss using the mouse, or user assigned 'hotkeys', without having to interact with the Planx PC.

This removes an extra step in the set-up process and the confusion of manually keeping two separate systems synchronised.

The results are obvious: lower potential for assembly errors, faster build time, and value adding by providing marked assembly details for the end-user.

Looking to the future, factory materials handling and tracking systems will continue to be developed and refined with the availability of real-time production feedback from various factory workstations.



■ *Figure 2: The MiTek JigCentre Paperless screen with Planx Link controls (top right) integrates seamlessly with Matchpoint Planx automated tooling.*

So the message is simple:

Factory managers should actively seek opportunities to improve the efficiency of their equipment workstations and processes by utilising the comprehensive and powerful data that is available in their various software packages.

They can also draw on the expertise of their software, nailplate, and equipment suppliers to extract and utilise available data to maximum advantage. TTN