I have a certain fondness for pop star Madonna. No, no, not that kind of fondness. I like Madonna because she's managed to stay, ah, relevant for a quarter century in the notoriously mercurial music industry. That's a neat trick by the “Material Girl.” Of course, Madonna is not the only one to have managed such a parlay. All of us try to do it. Every day. Staying relevant in one's job for the long term is the greatest challenge of any given professional in any given industry at any given time.

I've been pondering the nature of staying relevant in the long term as this month marks my 25th anniversary as an employee of TMS and role player with *JOM*. Is this continuity a sign of ongoing relevance or just being really good at hiding my deficiencies? I don't know. (Actually, I do, but I'm not telling). I will say that I've witnessed a lot of change at TMS over the years.

What did TMS look like in 1984? Different.

- “TMS” was “TMS-AIME,” meaning “The Metallurgical Society of the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers.” “*JOM*” was “*Journal of Metals*.”
- There were no technical divisions; instead, there were five Board of Director positions with oversight of the following technical areas: “Basic Science,” “Extractive,” “Materials Development,” “Special Emphasis,” and “Materials Fabrication.”
- No one at headquarters had a personal computer on his/her desk. I got the first and only one on staff in 1985—a new IBM with two floppy disk drives, no hard drive, no mouse, and a monochromatic monitor—and my world view changed forever.
- Books and technical programs were produced by authors *typing* their manuscripts (using a *typewriter*) on template pages that were then photographed and printed.
- Also, lest we forget, no faxes, no e-mail, no web sites, no PDFs, no word processing, no Excel, no PowerPoint, no voice mail, no mobile devices or wireless, no virtual meetings, no millennials, etc. . . . We did have plenty of dinosaurs, though.

From this baseline, the society has responded to emerging opportunities in a variety of ways, including recalibrating from a metals-only focus to a broad materials focus and by creating five strong and unique divisions. Likewise, the members and staff have adopted all of the new communication technologies necessary to coax greater value and reach from their endeavors. I don't know that we work harder, but I do know that we are infinitely more efficient.

What's next? Many amazing and challenging things. Technologically, what does nano mean to TMS? How about integrated computational materials engineering? Let's not forget materials in energy. Organizationally, what does the growth of social networking mean to professional societies? Do millennials value professional affiliation in the same way that Boomers and earlier generations have? What does continued global diversification of the materials community mean to us all? I can't wait to learn the answers . . . and the new questions that will nucleate from those answers.

A final thought: Beyond October being my silver anniversary at TMS, it also marks the occasion of my 250th IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS. That's more than 150,000 words of me doing nothing but express my opinion. To you, *JOM*'s long-time readers, I compliment you on your stamina for reading as many of these columns as you have. To myself, I compliment my stamina for writing all of them. And to Madonna, I compliment her for providing the opening quote; it is now my epitaph of choice for that inevitable, and hopefully distant, day when I finally hang up my columnist's crayon.

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