

# B & L NEWS

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Enterprise Software for Metalcasters

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www.blinfo.com

## B&L Information Systems Launches New Website

*You asked for it and we came through!*  
by Matt Gacek, Manager – Business Development

If you have visited our website recently, you may have noticed a small change. OK, it is not so small; we blew up the old website and in its place created a brand new website. Why? We needed a more user-friendly website, one that is search-engine friendly, is easy to manage, and best of all, connects us closer to our customers. We feel the new site has succeeded in all of these areas!

Over the past six months I had many conversations with you, the B&L Managers, and various website gurus. These conversations turned into a website requirements document that was much bigger than I first anticipated. We also interviewed six website companies before choosing the one that best fit our demanding requirements, BKR Studios, Inc. (BKR Studios is located in South Bend, Indiana.)

Probably the biggest change to the B&L website is the **B&L Community**. In the past, the B&L Community consisted of downloads, the Enhancement Request System, and training videos. While all of the features are still available, we added the **B&L Forums**. Much time and effort went into the forums. Many of you use our software in some pretty amazing and clever ways. We always wanted to open this up so all of our users can benefit from each other. Now, we finally can! What type of topics? B&L Users Conference, Software Enhancement Requests (See Doug's column for details), Technical Discussions, and just about anything else related to B&L software and services.

Any end-user can join the B&L Community. However, those users will have various levels of abilities. While everyone can post a question or view an educational video, not everyone will have (nor should they have) download rights!

To join the B&L Community (Customers Only) go to the B&L Community section of our website and click join. Sandy Warren is the Community Administrator and will grant you access shortly thereafter.

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding the new B&L website or the B&L Community, please forward them to mgacek@blinfo.com. ■

## Is SaaS Secure?

Software as a Service, or SaaS, is the idea of delivering software applications over the internet. Instead of loading software and data on your company's servers and accessing it via your internal network, you access the software and your data via a web browser over the internet. The question arises, "Is my data secure using the SaaS model?" That is a completely legitimate and important question to ask.

One aspect of security where the end user has direct control is password policy. Passwords scale from weak to strong, depending on the length, mix of characters, and frequency of change. The trick is to strike a balance between security strength and ease of use. You don't want to deploy a password policy that is overly complex where the end users are always forgetting passwords and become frustrated



Phil Laney  
President, B&L

*Continued, page 2*

THE BROWN HOTEL  
Downtown Louisville, KY

SPECTRUM '10  
October 3-5

REGISTER NOW  
AND SAVE!

## Spectrum '10

### An Educational Extravaganza in Louisville

Excitement is building for Spectrum '10, which will be held on October 3-5, at the elegant and historic Brown Hotel in downtown Louisville, Kentucky. We have an exciting agenda planned for you. With over 30 educational and networking opportunities plus the Cyber Café, Spectrum '10 offers you plenty of take-home value!

And of course there will be time for some social activities such as the Customer Appreciation Dinner which will be held concurrently with the Business Partner Expo on Sunday, and the Monday evening dinner event which has not yet been determined, but rest assured it will be filled with fun and good food!

**Register now and save \$100!**

**For more information or to register go to  
www.blinfo.com/events.cfm. ■**

Is Saas Secure?, continued from page 1

with the system. Conversely, you don't want weak passwords, such as birthdays, anniversaries, etc. that can be compromised. Seek advice from professionals when establishing your password policy.

The other aspects of SaaS security are out of direct control of the end user and are determined by the SaaS provider or their partner. Some things to ask the provider are: Who has access to the building & server racks where my data resides? Biometric scans (vein, retina)? Lock down of servers in rack? What type of building security is deployed? 24 hour video surveillance, monitoring? What are the safeguards against unauthorized

electronic access? Firewalls and protection against viruses, worms, Trojans, rootkits, spyware and other malware. As I mentioned, these things are out of your control...but that may not be a bad thing. Outsourcing security of your corporate business data to professionals in many cases is an advantage. The idea that your data is safe just because it resides on a server within your walls is not necessarily the most secure option. How knowledgeable and diligent are you in terms of security? Do you want to become a computer security expert or concentrate on making the world's best castings? ■



## R&D DEVELOPMENTS

Doug Hinman, Vice President, R&D

The new B&L website features several community forums, including forums for enhancement requests. Our plans are to replace our current enhancement request systems with these new forums. Prior to this, BLIS requests were handled by the Web Request system on our old website. We actually programmed that system ourselves and it included voting and notes capabilities, but it is nowhere near as useful as the new forums are. The Odyssey requests followed a more informal process. Your B&L contact (Support Desk or Project Consultant) was your advocate who presented your requests to other B&L staff members for possible acceptance. The list of accepted requests became very large and beyond our available R&D resources. This basically handcuffed our ability to decide which requests to actually turn into Odyssey enhancements.

One of the original goals of the old BLIS Web Request system was to foster interaction among our clients (i.e., the Notes feature). The very limited participation has been a disappointment. On the Odyssey side, the interaction was only between the client who requested the enhancement and B&L personnel, resulting in a limited "conversation."

We expect much more activity from the new web forums compared to the past. Interaction between the requester, B&L, and other clients will provide better input to the R&D department. When you enter a request on the forums, or add your two cents to someone else's, be sure to be as specific as you can. Including your business reasons for the request is also very helpful. Having several of you add input to a request also means we can design enhancements that fit a broader spectrum of companies. While the ultimate decision about which enhancements to include in Odyssey and BLIS can be subjective, we see the forums being a great tool for determining how best to utilize R&D resources.

Look for announcements about when the new enhancement request forums will be ready. Think about which people in your company you want to access the forums. The new B&L website will provide pretty robust security by individual user. ■

## CONGRATULATIONS to the following B&L customers!

### CERTIFICATIONS

The Buck Co.  
Quarryville, PA  
ISO 9001:2008

Bradken-Amite  
Amite, LA  
(ABS for marine applications)

Sawbrook Steel Castings Co. LLP  
Cincinnati, OH  
ISO 9001:2008

## B&L Welcomes New Clients

Customer	Location	Product
Quaker City Castings	Salem, OH	Odyssey SaaS
Ashland Foundry and Machine Works	Ashland, PA	Odyssey SaaS
Stahl Specialty Company	Kingsville, MO	Odyssey SaaS
AFW Foundry, Inc.	Lannon, WI	Odyssey



# Dear Brenda

Brenda Povlock  
Manager, Client Services



## Odyssey

Dear Brenda,

During the process of quoting a job and getting the order, a drawing is made. We would like to be able to have that in Odyssey as history, as well as having it available to everyone to view. Is there anyway to do that in Odyssey?

Future Visions

Dear Future Visions,

Since it sounds like this drawing is associated with the customer order, what you could do is use the link tab on the item (see figure 1) and attach it right to the order (see figure 2). If you don't want it there, you could use the links tab in the Product Master or Customer Master, or anywhere you find a link tab in Odyssey. This is a great step toward a paperless future! ■

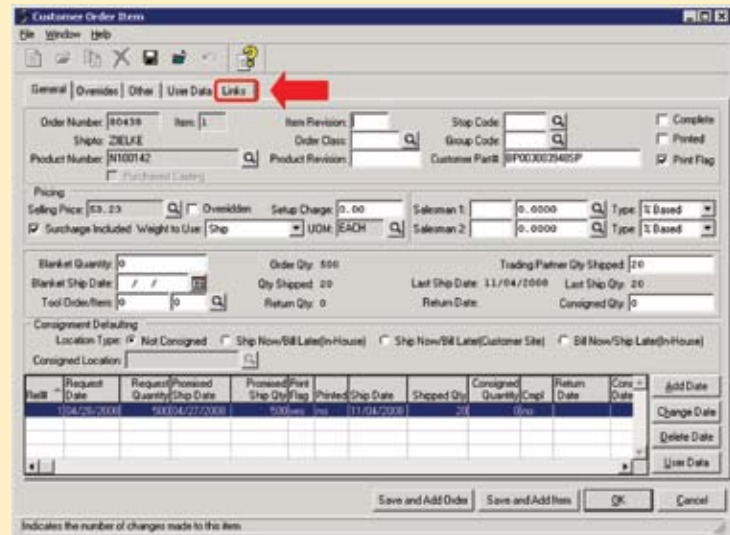


Figure 1

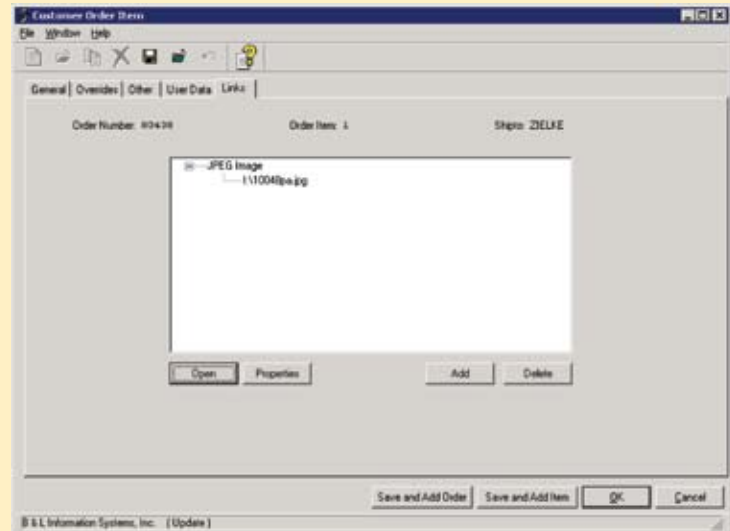


Figure 2

## BLIS-400

Dear Brenda,

We use the standard help quite a bit, but I would really like to add some custom help on certain screens to tell users how "we" want certain fields filled in. I want my users to be able to see both the standard help text as well as my custom help. Right now, I have to add the standard help to my custom help and I don't want all the work of keeping it updated after each release. Do you have any suggestions?

Help Wanted

Dear Help Wanted,

I can certainly understand not wanting to do something that is going to cause a headache down the road, but you can take that "Help Wanted" sign down now. You are correct that once you created custom help in the past, you lost the standard text unless you copied everything in. However, a new enhancement was put in 7.1 that allows you to toggle between custom help and standard help. In System Control under the General Systems Definition section is a new control called "Display Custom Help First" (see figure 1). If you have that control set to Y (Yes), when the help key is pressed any custom help will be displayed on the screen first, and there is a function key (F15) to toggle between the standard help text and the custom help text you created (Figure 2). ■

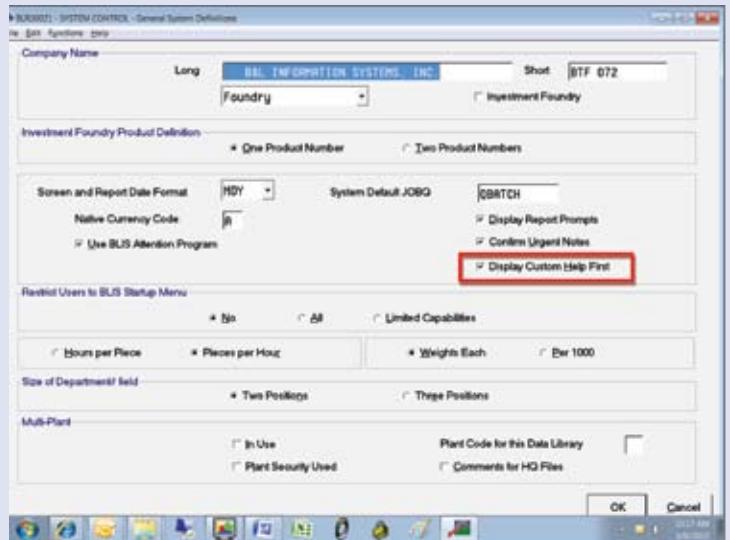


Figure 1

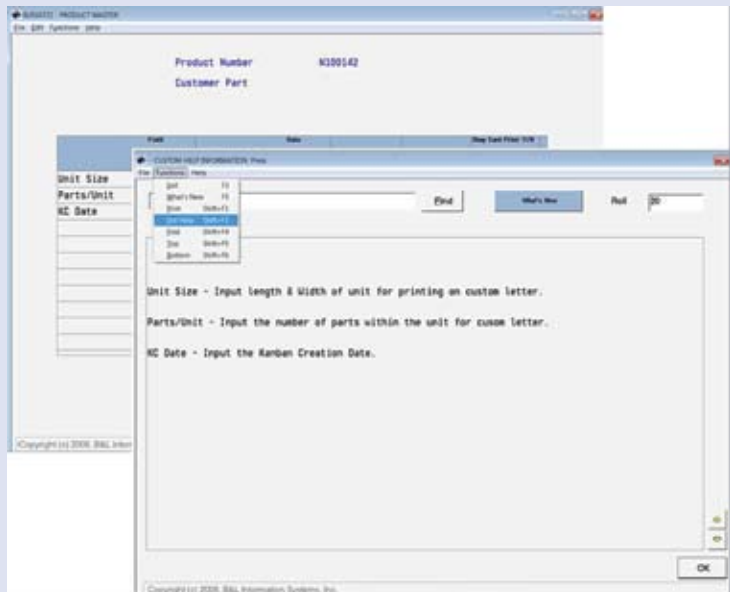


Figure 2

Dear Brenda continued from page 3

# BLIS/Odyssey

Dear Brenda,

I attended one of B&L's Free Monthly Webinars, but one of my co-workers missed it. I looked on your website for the recorded version because I thought someone said it was supposed to be there, but I can't find it. Can you tell me how to get to it?

Knowledge Surfer

Dear Knowledge Surfer,

I'm glad that we have smart clients who want to increase their knowledge of our software! The first thing you need to do is go to [www.blinfo.com](http://www.blinfo.com) and log in using the customer login button at the top. If you don't have an account yet, follow the instructions below to create an account. Now, click the Community button at the top and scroll down the page until you see the forum called Training. You will see various sub-forums for the different videos. Click on any of the sub-forums and there you will see the various threads of videos. Click the one you want to watch. You can subscribe to any of the forums so that they show up on your account page as well (see screen shot), that way they are a click away and when a new video gets added you will receive an e-mail notifying you. One more thing, we not only have the free webinar videos but there are some additional videos that haven't been done as a webinar, and we are working on getting even more out there.

To create an account, click the login button at the top of the screen. Click the link to create a new account, fill in the information on

the screen and click save. Normally, within an hour you will have received confirmation that you've been signed up to use our community. Now follow the instructions above to view videos. ■



## Upcoming Events

Event	Date	City,State	Booth
SPECTRUM '10	Oct. 3-5	Louisville, KY	
NFFS Annual Meeting	Oct. 8-11	Hilton Head, SC	
ICI 57th Technical Conference & Expo	Oct. 10-13	Dearborn, MI	Booth #74

**TRAINING:** Training videos are available in the B&L Community. Go to [www.blinfo.com](http://www.blinfo.com) and click on Community. For access to these videos, go to [www.blinfo.com/Customers/htm](http://www.blinfo.com/Customers/htm). Contact [support@blinfo.com](mailto:support@blinfo.com) for your password. For any other training needs, contact Brenda Povlock at ext. 321.

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