

B & L NEWS

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Enterprise Software for Metalcasters

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Phil Laney
President
& CEO

New Website

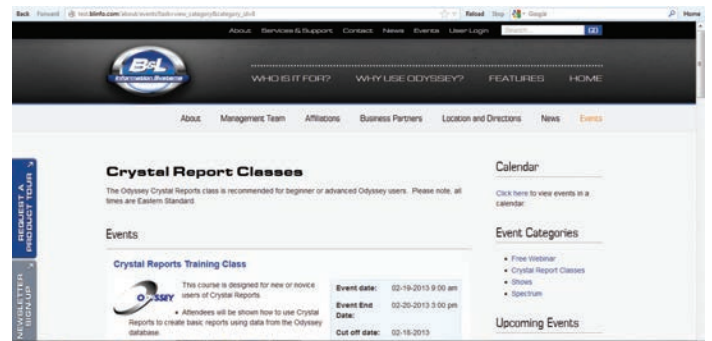
Effective this month, B&L will be launching the new and enhanced version of our website, www.blinfo.com.

We've been working on it for about six months and are extremely excited about the new look and feel, as well as content improvements incorporated. The pages are desktop and tablet device friendly. The new Events section will contain **all** opportunities for customer interaction with B&L staffers, not just Bridgman training classes, but on-line classes, industry conferences and trade show appearances. Spectrum, our annual users group meeting, will have a new, easy to use registration process. Another big improvement is the on-line Community. We'll be using a new cloud-based, forum software called User Voice as the platform for the new B&L Community. We've configured it to streamline and enhance the user experience for submitting, reviewing, and tracking software suggestions. You're invited to check it out and let us know what you think. 

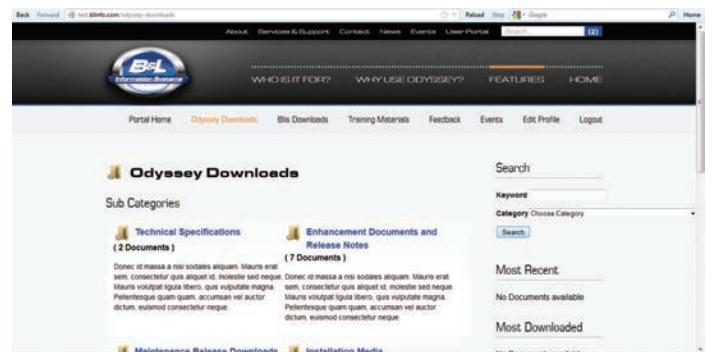
Thank you for your business,
Phil Laney



New website front page.



Improved Events section.



Customer Area with access to downloads, release notes, education videos, etc.

Phone:
269.465.6207

Website:
www.blinfo.com

B&L Welcomes New Clients

Bronze Craft Corporation
Nashua, NH
Foundry - Odyssey SaaS

Custom Castings Ltd.
Winnipeg, MB
Foundry - Odyssey

Cadillac Casting Inc.
1500 Fourth Avenue
Cadillac, MI
Foundry - Odyssey SaaS

On The Horizon

Joe Harmon
Vice President — Technology




The Technology department has been very busy in 2012. Not only have we been managing new and existing

users for the B&L Cloud, we also have been keeping the Cloud infrastructure up and running 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week/ 365 days a year. This is not always an easy task when you have Windows updates hitting once a week, users who do not want to log out (ever ☺), and other activities that impact the Cloud servers.

One of the things that we have implemented and that we are in the process of rolling out to our cloud users is a terminal server (TS) load-balanced farm. This is not your typical farm with oversized cows, goats, or anything like that; but, instead is a way for us to distribute workload across multiple terminal server computers in order to achieve optimal resource utilization, maximize throughput, minimize response time, and avoid server overload.

An additional benefit of using a TS load-balanced farm is that the remote desktop security is enhanced by switching over to a secure (https) channel for communication. This means that every time you connect with remote desktop all of the information between you and our servers is encrypted.

Another added benefit for B&L is that if we were to have a problem with one of our terminal servers or if we needed to do maintenance on a single server, we can easily redirect the user to one of our other terminal servers. As our customer base grows, we are also able to add new servers into the farm without inconveniencing customers with new URL information.

If you are using Odyssey SaaS along with B&L's Cloud offering and have not yet upgraded to the TS farm, please contact our technology department at technology@blinfo.com for more information. We will also continue the process of contacting each of you to get this installed at your site. And as always, remember "the biggest room in the world is the room for improvement." Unknown, Source 



R&D

DEVELOPMENTS


Doug Hinman
Vice President — Research & Development

Here's another example of it being a small world. My son Adam gets e-mails from Odyssey. Actually, he used to. Adam used to work for an automotive supplier in Holland, MI. One of our aluminum foundry customers in nearby Muskegon, MI that runs Odyssey supplied brackets for one of his company's jobs. So, Adam would get shipping notices generated by Odyssey. It made interesting conversation over Thanksgiving dinner (the rest of the family had no idea what we were talking about, though).

Adam now works for a very small company in Grand Rapids that sells vision systems for commercial vehicles. They are growing but are currently only 30 employees and about 4 or 5 million in sales. He is

now in a position where he determines sourcing of materials. He wondered if he could locally source a bracket they buy from China. The bracket is machined out of a solid block of aluminum, and even though it only weighs a couple pounds, the shipping costs are very high.

So he visited our foundry customer he was already familiar with and got a quote. He also got a plant tour which included being shown how the foundry uses the Odyssey shop card. Naturally the quote included tooling. He understood what the pattern was but wasn't sure about the core box, so I gave him the explanation.

Adam already understood materials and costs, but this experience has reinforced what we already know. That is, the North American metalcasting industry has a lot to offer, even to small companies. The volume is low, and even with up front tooling costs, his company will save money by sourcing the bracket locally. And, he will start getting e-mails from Odyssey again. I just hope he doesn't think he can pressure me to enhance Odyssey for him. 

2012 In Review


2012 was an extremely busy years for all departments, but there are some activities that happened this year that we won't soon forget, including:

In 2012 we realized a 44% increase in new accounts compared to 2011. One very interesting 2012 statistic is Software as a Service (SaaS) accounted for 47% of sales. The trend of metal casters understanding benefits of SaaS continues and we are glad we are part of that movement.

Sandy Warren retired after 23 years. Up to her last day (December 14th) Sandy continued to work on our User Conference and this newsletter. Sandy will be missed, but we wish her the best in her retirement!



Starting in January, 2013 we will have a new position within the Business Development Department called Brand Coordinator. The goal of this position is to improve our external and internal communications.

Reviewing 2012 wouldn't be complete without reviewing our "Go Live" milestones. In 2012, 11 metal casters went "live" but that doesn't tell the whole story. Numerous Phase II and Phase III projects were implemented and in January 2013, we have four additional customers scheduled for going live! The Client Services Department has done a tremendous job of implementing, training and supporting our diverse and growing customer base. 



Dear Brenda

Brenda Povlock
Vice President — Client Services



Odyssey

Dear Brenda,

I use quite a few formulas in DE/IV when I'm creating views. I use the wizard, and when I get to the Totaling and Functions Summary page they all show as "Non-Database-FormulaX" where X is just a number that gets put on it. I then have to remember or write down which formula I created 1st, 2nd, etc. Do you know if there is a way to show a label for a non-database-formula in the summary/totaling screen when using the DE/IV Wizard?

Labeling over this problem

Dear Labeling,

I'll try to shed some light on your situation which, hopefully, will give you some relief! When setting up a non-database-formula, you can modify the label which will be displayed as the column label when running the data view/intelligent view. (See Figure 1)

You can also change the non-database ID field from a number to a text value (possibly the same name as the label). This text is what is used as the suffix on the non-database-formula field name. (See Figure 2)

So, if you change the non-database ID from 1 to TextA, the system will change the field name of the non-database-formula field from `_Non-Database-Formula_1` to `_Non-Database-Formula_TextA`, then the field name in the summary and total screen will reflect the new field name that is now more descriptive. (See Figure 3)

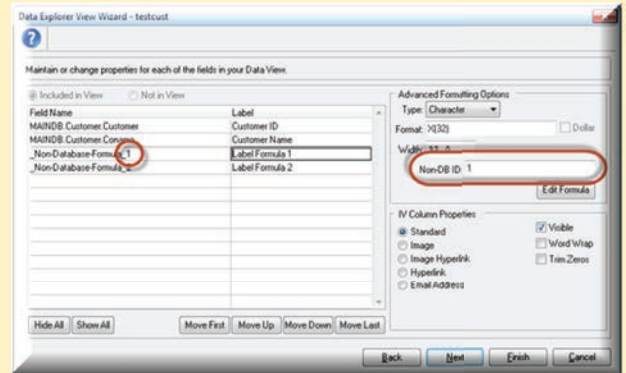


Figure 1

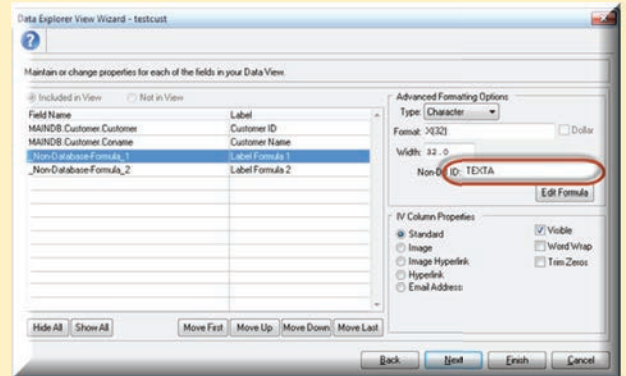


Figure 2

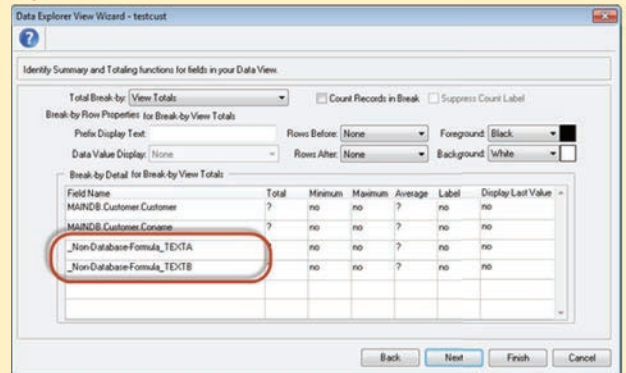


Figure 3

BLIS-400

Dear Brenda,

We are trying to use scheduling and we have a lot of outside operations. Currently the start and end fields for outside operations rely on existing previous operations, and we find it difficult to get the schedule to calculate correctly for our shop orders. Do you have any ideas on how to get more accurate times on our shop orders? We really need to save people's time messing with those dates every time a new shop order is created.

Time is of the essence

Dear Time,

You may not realize this, but a new field was added to the Operation Master to allow scheduling operations for a specific number of days. It was put in specifically to help with outside operations. If you enter data into this new field and schedule a shop order, none of the old logic will be used to schedule that operation. Instead, we will use that number of days as the elapsed days between the start and complete date in the shop order routing. A system control was also added to determine which days to use, shop order calendar working days or all calendar days. For more information, see your documentation CD, or for a quick review press help on the operation master screen and review that field.



Spectrum 2012



2012 Company Christmas Party

Upcoming Events & Training

Date	Show/Event/Webinar	Location
2/28 – 3/1/13	75th Annual AFS Wisconsin Regional AFS Foundry Conference & Expo – Booth 205	Crowne Plaza-Milwaukee Airport Milwaukee, WI
4/6 – 4/9/13	CastExpo & Metalcasting Congress 2013 - Booth 2080	America's Center St. Louis, MO
4/24 – 4/26/13	62nd Annual NW Regional AFS Conference	Vancouver, BC

TRAINING - There are recorded training videos available on-line at no charge to customers on maintenance. For access to these videos you will need to sign up for the B&L Community. Please visit the Events page of our website for a complete list of training options, including: free webinars and Crystal Report classes. If your company has special training needs, please contact **Brenda Povlock at ext. 321.**)

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www.blinfo.com

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