



NEWSLETTER

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Power of The Internet

By Don Frey

The use of the Internet has become so commonplace in many of our daily lives that it is hard to believe that it has only been widely used for about ten years.

However, the Internet has been around for a long time. The concept was presented by DARPA, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, in 1962. The concept was to *globally interconnect computers to share data and programs*. At the outset, the Web would consist of defense and academic institutions like MIT, Stanford, and Cal-Tech. It took almost ten years before a demonstration was presented to the public in the form of interconnectivity and e-mail in 1972.

The 1980s brought inexpensive computers to the masses, helping the network to grow. Unix, a computer operating system, lent itself to the Internet because it was generic. It would take another decade for the Web to grow to the point that it would be embraced by the general public.

In 1995, the *Information Super Highway* had evolved and commercial vendors were providing connectivity. E-mail had become significant. Since that time, connection speeds have grown exponentially, giving us the means to greatly expand the uses of the Internet.

It has been said that the Internet *is a creature of the computer, not the traditional network of the telephone or television industry*. Today, if you have a high speed connection, you can easily receive audio and video on your computer. You can get *streaming* video which is like a movie. Streaming audio allows you to receive a radio broadcast almost anywhere in the world. Laptops and other devices, like PDAs and cell phones, have the ability to connect to the Internet, which means you can connect with the Web from almost anywhere. Wireless connections have made the Internet truly portable.

VOIP, Voice Over Internet Protocol, allows you to use the Internet infrastructure to connect *free* almost anywhere in the world. This has become very popular with people communicating with other countries.

Speed and connectivity have always been key issues in the expanded use of the Internet. Use of the electric power lines as a part of the Internet infrastructure is now coming into more common use. Soon, any home with electricity will have the ability to obtain high speed Internet service. The main obstacle here will likely be legal issues because of *turf* wars with other service providers.

How has the Internet impacted the way Frey and Company does business?

In 1995, we obtained our domain, drfrey.com and created our first Web page. It was not long before we discovered that *content* was very important. People were searching the Web for information. The Frey site was expanded with Power-Point presentations, white papers on software and the industry, and *downloadable* demonstration programs. Our site was submitted to the major search engines, like Yahoo and Microsoft. All of these actions greatly increased our exposure. In the period 1996 to 2004, our Internet traffic increased over fifteen-hundred percent.

In 1998, we began providing our clients with interim updates via the Internet. Now, if we discover a problem in our software, we can make changes and send updates very effectively. Before, it was almost impossible to make updates easily because of the complexity in distributing them.

In the following years we have added live Internet demonstrations, Internet training, support connectivity, and Web conferencing. Our software products have been expanded to provide Internet account inquiry and payment options.

What uses will expand in the future?

The virtual reference library will continue to expand both in content and searchability. Search engines are improving all the time.

Internet marketing is one of the most powerful and inexpensive mechanisms available today. It is ideally suited for niche products, like ours. It will continue to grow rapidly.

Streaming audio and video are terrific for both entertainment and education. You can attend a virtual lecture at anytime on the Internet. You can even listen to your favorite radio programs anywhere in the world, if they *stream*.

Remote medical treatments are now being conducted. X-rays are routinely being sent via the Web around the world to India for experts to interpret them.

Video conferencing and training are widely in-use and improving rapidly. The need for business travel has diminished significantly. Perhaps this is contributing to the airlines' industrial slump. Business airfares were always at a premium.

With the *power of the Internet* comes some concerns. Theft of credit cards, bank accounts, and other private information is a serious issue. We were very cautious when we implemented our customer payment system. We eliminated all sensitive data and encrypted the remaining information. Hackers often try to violate sites for amusement and destruction. Keep your firewalls up and don't leave sensitive information on your site. One comment, be realistic. Some computer people get so preoccupied with security that they almost render their systems unusable.

Terrorists will try to disrupt entire networks. This is no different than taking down the utility systems like your water supply and power lines. If you heavily depend on the Internet, take the necessary steps to protect it by providing alternative solutions. Finally, be concerned about internal sabotage. Disgruntled employees can devastate your operation. Your best protection is to be very guarded in your hiring process and be a little paranoid in your office security. Like anything else that is powerful and useful, the Internet must be properly managed to avoid potential difficulties. ☹



CUBIC 9.3 Release in Beta Testing

The next release of CUBIC is now in *beta* testing. Below are a few of the new optional modules and features that will be available. All improvements are provided as a part of your annual support agreement. New modules are available and can be purchased within sixty days of the release without incurring an upgrade fee.

Customer Maintenance: Customers has had seven enhancements added. They include additional service address information, penalty exemptions, phone numbers, etc. We have also added a new security feature that prevents users associated with a *field* security group from having

access to financial, social security number, and bank account information.

Customer Notes: Four enhancements have been made. Among them is a new feature with note alerts that will allow a user to ignore all note alerts until the next time they log into CUBIC. There is also a new Copy Preference that is assigned to a note. This new status will determine if the note should stay with the customer, with the location, or with both when a customer is copied.

Billing Entry: **NEW!** There is a new option for Estimating bills. You can choose the current, weighted average, estimation method or the new prior month's estimation method. With this new method you can select the number of previous months you would like to use to estimate a customers usage.

Bill Print: In system controls, on the preferences tab, there are new fields that will allow you to override the tax abbreviations that print on the bills. Currently the abbreviations are TX1, TX2 and TX3 and these can now be overridden.

Adjustments: When entering an adjustment for a metered service, there is now the ability to adjust the usage for the service. This adjustment will create a usage entry in usage history and adjust the current reading so during the next billing the previous reading will be correct. There is also a new feature that will carry forward the comments to the next adjustment, similar to the cash receipts with retaining the reference field.

Balance Transfer: **NEW!** There is a new feature that allows the user to transfer the balance from one account to another.

Internet Inquiry/Payments: **NEW!** The internet inquiry module has been expanded by the ability to process payments online.

NSF Charges: When NSF charges are charged, a comment is on the bill/pay history saying it's a NSF charge.

Delinquent Notices. **NEW!** There is now an option to print postcard delinquent notices.

Penalty History Report. **NEW!** There is a new penalty history report that will list penalties that have been posted.

Reports: **NEW!** For users with the data dictionary module, there is now the ability to export the billing journal, cash receipts journal, penalty journal, penalty history report, delinquent journal, balance transfer journal, discount journal, A/R reconciliation report along with the trial balances to Microsoft Excel®. These reports can also be sent to Excel® using the report scheduler. There is also an option added to reports that will suppress the printing of the print options page.

A/R Reconciliation Report. There is a new option that will only show accounts with a negative service balance. This report was also added to the report scheduler.

Work Orders. Work Orders has received numerous enhancements. There is a new option for when a work order is completed, that it can assess charges to an account. For example when a service is turned on, a connect fee is always charged. The job code gets a rate code assigned so that the

system knows to apply the new charge. There is a new appointments feature that allows you to assign a technician to a work order appointment. The technician can then check their work order appointments in CUBIC to see which work orders they have assigned to them.

Technical Support. **NEW!** There is now a Toolbar option to e-mail technical support. You can also e-mail technical support at anytime while in CUBIC by pressing the CTRL-S buttons.

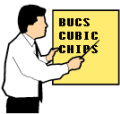
Release Letter: **NEW!** We have added a feature that will display the Release Letter to all CUBIC users on-line. The display can be discontinued after the user cancels it. This was done in response to comments from users that they don't see the Letter and are unaware of new and improved capabilities.

Almost four dozen new or improved features were added to CUBIC this year. Frey & Company is dedicated to provide state-of-the-art software and timely competent support at affordable prices. 📧



CHIPS Payroll Release 9.3 Coming Soon

The next release of CHIPS is in development and will be released before the end of the year. Over two dozen enhancements and features are scheduled for the update. One of the highlights will be Microsoft's SQL database as a new option. 📧



Tips From Your Support Staff

By Dean Eldridge

CUBIC: There are a number of items that will prevent a customer from being billed. Some of these are: Customer or Service is not active; Date Moved In (on Service Location screen) is later than the Read Date; on the Services screen, a cycle code is being used that shouldn't be; also on the Services screen, the last Due Date is not less than the Due Date we are trying to use now; or there is already an un-updated bill or adjustment for this customer (print the edit list for this customer, leave everything checked, to verify this).

BUCS: Journal Entry Transaction log reprint; if this report is lost or printer problem occurs; this can be re-printed by going to FILE-UTILITIES-TRANSACTION LOG REPRINT. Select the date of the Journal Entry & Preview or Print.

CHIPS: If Deductions do not need to be taken out for a particular payroll, from the Calculate Payroll screen, unchecks the frequency of deductions that don't need to be taken out for this pay period. It's not necessary to go to the employee screen and delete the deductions for them not to be taken out.

By Mike Emmerich

CHIPS – When **changing the pay rate** for Hourly or Salary Employees, you **must** enter through the Regular Rate, Overtime Rate and Special Rate fields by using the Enter or Tab keys, before clicking on OK to update. You must enter

through these fields, so CHIPS will perform the calculation to change the overtime rate and special rate of pay, per hour. It is extremely critical to change the rate of pay this way, otherwise when you are paying people for the various categories of regular, overtime or special pay, the pay rate could be at the "old" rate of pay.

BUCS – Auditor Tools – Many of our customers have requested that we give them the option to Export the General Ledger (Posting – Analysis – Print) for the entire fiscal year to Excel, so they can give the yearly activity to the auditor in a file, versus paper. This is a great time saver for the auditor and could save on auditing fees. This option has been added into BUCS 9.3. The Data Dictionary Module is required. For those of you that haven't purchased the Data Dictionary module yet, this is your reason to buy it.

CUBIC – The CUBIC 9.3 release offers an **Internet Inquiry** module with **payment option** via credit card. This option is a very effective way to collect on Delinquent Accounts along with Final Accounts. It's particularly useful for customers that forget to mail in their payment and want to do a quick payment via credit card, right before the due date, to avoid the ten percent penalty.

By Jeff Koors

BUCS: BUCS has lengthened the description field for journal entries. By clicking on the note icon, you can now enter a 256 character description.

CHIPS: When printing the Pay Rate History Report, you can select which department or range of departments you wish to print instead of having to include all employees on the report.

By Kyle Reinhardt

BUCS: Some customers have expressed a need to reprint bank reconciliations. The new BUCS 9.3 version now has the ability to do this. In the utilities menu, you will find a reconciliation report reprint option. Prior period bank Reconciliations will be stored here, very similar to the way that transactions logs are stored inside the transaction log reprint. Once you have a reconciliation in balance and the report prints, the system will automatically save it for you. It can hold up to 50 at a time. Please note - In order to be saved, they must be done in BUCS 9.3 or later.

CUBIC: If you charge your customers a fee for NSF checks, CUBIC has the ability to automatically apply that charge to any transaction marked as NSF. First, setup an unmetered rate code for a flat amount, equal to however much your NSF fee is. Then edit system controls and click on the cash receipts tab. In the bottom left corner put a checkmark in the box which says Automatically Add a Charge for NSF Transactions. Then in the box below that put in the rate code of the NSF fee that you just set up. Next time you mark a transaction as NSF, not only will the money be reversed, but you will also see the NSF fee applied to the customers account. 📧

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