



NEWSLETTER

Number 69

Established 1974

April 2007

Exploiting Technology, Usability

By Don Frey

For years, we have been adding new features and greater usability to all of our products. We are now extending the scope of the products by adding new capabilities that range beyond those of the immediate application.

Microsoft SQL database versions of all products are now available for those interested in that processing model. Translation programs are provided to convert from our Vision database to SQL.

This past year, a new interface was introduced for all applications. Users saw a more pleasing graphical presentation along with greatly improved user-definable *preference* settings. Embedded spelling checkers are now a part of all applications.

CUBIC utility billing has seen a myriad of changes that have altered how customer service is delivered. Several years ago, we introduced Internet Inquiry. Initially, it was slow to be accepted. Now many of our customers have implemented this option. The Inquiry feature has caused a marked reduction in the number of phone calls requesting usage history and current balances.

We implemented the Internet functions in a *Hosted* environment. That is, we provide the service on a dedicated server maintained for Frey & Company. This became a truly cost-effective solution for everyone. You don't need a dedicated Internet server to provide these services.

On-line payments are available as a part of the Internet Inquiry option. However, on-line payments are not mandatory. There are two payment options. In the first option, the customer assumes a *convenience fee* when making on-line payments. The second is for the utility to assume the cost of the service charges. On-line payments have substantially reduced shut-offs and is an added convenience for customers.

E-billing is a new alternative to mailing bills. Customers are sent an e-mail with a link to a copy of their statement format bills. We chose this method because it not only delivers a copy of the bill to the customer; it also makes the last bill available on the Internet Inquiry Web site. E-bills eliminate postage, forms, and handling expenses. It is also very convenient for those who are away from their residence. One client who studied the costs said they were about forty-cents per item. With another postage rate increase coming, E-billing just makes "cents".

The scope of CUBIC has been expanded by offering Backflow testing and Meter Maintenance optional applications. These functions are adjunct systems for the distribution side of the operation. They are totally integrated with CUBIC and provide all of the controls needed to service these functions.

Meter Maintenance tracks details of the meter's history and schedules testing at the desired intervals. Testing results are recorded and attached to the meter history record. Appropriate reports are also available. Water, Electric, and Gas meters can be serviced with this option.

Backflow prevention testing is a mechanism that schedules the periodic testing of backflow devices. These tests are performed either by the utility or by a plumber licensed to conduct the tests. Test requirement notices are prepared and sent to the party responsible for the testing. If the test has not been completed in the allotted time, *Late Notices* are then prepared. Finally, *Shutoff Notices* are then sent to those who fail to comply. When a testing report is received, it can be imaged and incorporated into the testing history data. A variety of reports are also available.

Soon, we will be offering an IVR, Interactive Voice Recognition option. This capability is currently in the pilot stage

and should be available later this year. IVR can process incoming calls and give customers information about their account balances and usage. It can also produce outgoing calls, informing customers about actions such as shut-offs and service outages.

BUCS Fund Accounting has received a number of new capabilities that go beyond routine bookkeeping functions.


ACH for accounts payable is offered to streamline the processing of invoices for payment. ACH eliminates postage, forms, and handling costs. ACH electronically pays bills by money transfers rather than by checks. This module offers real time and cost savings opportunities.

The Positive-Pay module electronically sends a list of checks being issued along with their dollar amounts to the bank. When checks are received, they are compared to the list for accuracy. This prevents check fraud by validating amounts.

CC-Tracker is another new module designed to streamline and enhance the processing of business credit card transactions. Charge slips are entered as invoices and marked as credit card transactions. When the statement arrives, all slips are presented for reconciliation. This provides a true picture of vendor activity and highlights misuse of credit cards. Clients using this module are very impressed with how it improves workflow and control.

CHIPS Fund-based Payroll has received over two dozen improvements this year. Improvements include the new interface, embedded spelling checker, and the updating of federal tax tables via the Internet.

A Positive Pay module is now offered for payroll. It electronically sends a list of payroll checks being issued along with their dollar amounts to the bank. When checks are received, they are compared to the list for accuracy. This prevents check fraud by validating amounts.

Security has additional features regarding passwords. These features include options to force a password for every user, force the user to change their password periodically, and an option to not allow the user to change their password. 



2007 User Conference User-Centric Software, A New Vista

This year's user conference will focus on *A New Vista, User-Centric Software*. The dates are set for August 12–14th at the Embassy Suites Hotel, Covington, Kentucky.

A design based around the user's needs is called a 'user-centric' design process. User-centric designs provide better solutions. They constantly draw information from users on what they need and like. The design continues to be refined to incorporate those improvements.


Technology also plays a roll in the design process. As new technology become available that would improve upon the user-centric design, it is incorporated into the solution. However, it must be done in an orderly fashion. It should not

intrude on the user-centric design in-place to the point of being disruptive.

Donald R. Frey & Company focuses on providing easy-to-use software solutions while improving on useful technology. We strive to maintain a balance between technology, familiarity, and usability.

With the advent of Microsoft's Windows Vista operating system, we are presented with a new, unfamiliar, environment. Do we wholly embrace the new user interface, or do we take a measured approach to the changes? We will critique Windows Vista and determine what impact it will have on how we do things. We will also discuss some of the hardware and other software components of this new release during our user conference.

We will provide sessions on all Frey software applications. These sessions will describe new extensions and enhancements. Discussions will be conducted designed to stimulate *Thinking Out-of-the-Box* about how to improve our software tools. Information derived from these sessions routinely forms the *core* for future product improvements.

Our evening event this year will be held at the Cincinnati Historical Society's Museum. It is one of the largest and most significant urban history museums in the country. The Museum displays materials and related aspects of the history of Cincinnati and the surrounding region. Dinner will be served on a re-creation of the Cincinnati Public Landing of the late 1850s, where you can step aboard a 94-foot side-wheel steamboat. Visitors can also see a model of the city of Cincinnati from 1900s to 1940s with working trains and inclines, as well as interactive computer stations. Visit their Internet site at www.cincymuseum.org 



BUCS[®] Release 10.1 In Alpha Testing

The next release of BUCS is now in Alpha testing by the support staff. Below are some of the highlights:

- Depreciation History has been added to Fixed Assets
- New option for check print that will print a second copy of the stub at the top of the check document.
- Fund Control data has been expanded to include note, follow-up alerts, etc. This is handy when tracking grants.
- Reminders have new frequency options along with the ability to create miscellaneous reminders.
- Checks voided that were encumbered will now have the encumbrances reestablished.
- The accounts payable invoice file has been split to improve performance and save space.
- A/P Invoices now have the ability to have notes attached. The note can be viewed and printed on the invoice report. Up to 256 characters are available.
- Year end processing of encumbrances now has the option for *backing out* the encumbrance and re-encumbering it in the New Year. Some agencies require this procedure.

Almost four dozen features and improvements are in the update. The extent and volume of these improvements un-

derscores Frey & Company's commitment to providing you the finest software available. 📄

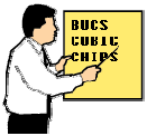


Credit Cards Coming For Utilities?

An article appearing in the December 6, 2006 edition of the Wall Street Journal stated the "Utilities are dropping their longstanding opposition to plastic as new competition looms in states that have deregulated the former monopolies".

This attitude does not apply to most of our clients because most of them are governmental agencies. However, some of the big credit card companies are beginning to court utilities. One company introduced a plan that would charge a flat fee for any debit or credit card transaction. Accepting credit cards just makes sense for this type of business transaction especially when offering web services.

Frey's Web based payments allow the utility to select from two options: charge the customer a *convenience fee* or charge the utility company a transaction fee. 📄



Tips From Your Support Staff

By Adam Best

CUBIC: Batch receipts works like interactive billing. They are a part of the productivity module. Batch receipts allow users to enter in all of the receipts, and then print an edit list. This allows you to locate errors before posting the receipts. It also provides a quick pay option. This is only for customers who pay off their entire balance. Click on the quick pay option and enter in the book and account, or scan the bar code. To update the batch receipts, click on receipts, batch receipts update.

BUCS: The Bank Reconciliation report has two different ways of working. Through the menu option Payables, bank reconciliation, reconcile statement will bring up a bank reconcile statement that will allow users to see what will be on the bank reconciliation statement without posting it to BUCS. That way if something doesn't look right to users it can be changed and run again. In check reconciliation there is a reconcile button. This also runs a bank reconciliation report, but this will post to BUCS.

By Dean Eldridge

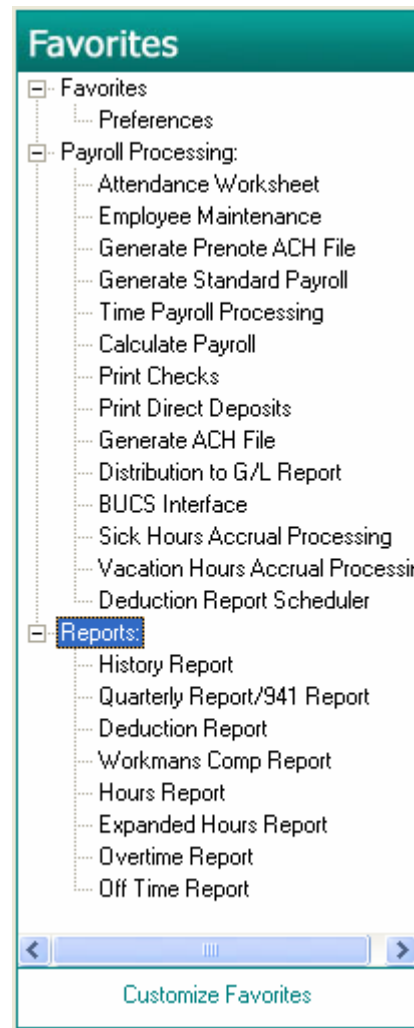
CUBIC: In CUBIC 10, the Follow-Up Alerts option has been enhanced to show Not Completed notes with follow up dates on or before the current date. The options are defined by user login preferences. Go to the Preferences, and into the Customers option. Click on the Follow-Up Alerts option. Within this option a user can define to only show follow up alerts for the current date, to show all alerts on or before the current date, or to show all. The user can also select Completed or Not Completed as well as to exclude notes with no follow up alerts. Each user may set up their personal preferences concerning this option.

BUCS: Default General Ledger account for vendors: In Vendor maintenance, a default general ledger account can be assigned that will automatically come up when entering an invoice. This will save the user time when trying to remember which g/l account to use for a vendor when a specific account is usually used for a vendor.

By Mike Emmerich

BUCS: Requisition Control – The Purchase Order Print program contains a fairly new option that allows you to print Purchase Orders that have been approved within a date range. The "**Approval Date Range**" option will allow you to print all Purchase Orders that have been approved since the last time you printed the "approved" purchase orders. Example: Approval Date Range: From: 03/31/2007 to: 04/06/2007. Using this option can save you thirty to sixty minutes a week.

CHIPS: Customize Favorites – It's a good idea to use the Customize Favorites option to set up a list of steps you follow to process payroll. Click on Customize Favorites – Add Group such as Payroll Processing, and then add the items you typically use such as (Attendance Worksheet, Employee Maintenance, Generate Pre-note ACH File, Generate Standard Payroll, etc.) as shown below:



GOVERNMENT ♦ NONPROFIT ♦ UTILITIES

Fund Accounting, Payroll, Utility Billing

ESTABLISHED, in 1974 with installations throughout the US and Internationally. We *understand your business and special needs!*

EASY TO USE, Microsoft Windows interface with on-line Help, ODBC and extensive *search* tools. *Programs that make your work easier and more enjoyable!*

RELIABLE, withstood the rigors of audits in dozens of states for years. *Problem free, accurate programs!*

ECONOMICAL, unique pricing models let you purchase just what you need. *More value for your money!*

PORTABLE, designed for multi-user systems and personal computers. Frey applications run on hundreds of computers and can easily be moved from one to another. *Freedom of choice for you!*

ADAPTABLE, programs that can grow with your needs! Our updates keep your programs tuned to the latest in technology. *Software that is always state-of-the-art!*

SUPPORT, help when you need it! A **Free** 800 number for your convenience. Internet update services. *Support you can swear by, not at!*

INTEGRATED, applications that talk to each other. ODBC and Crystal Reports allow you to easily transfer data from Frey packages to spreadsheet, word processor and other application systems. *A team approach to your needs!*

SPECIAL SERVICES, custom designed modifications; full range of computer related consulting services. *Professionalism and competence on which you can rely!*

Call Toll Free	1-800-659-3739
Internet	www.drfrey.com
E-Mail Sales	sales@drfrey.com
E-Mail Support	support@drfrey.com



40 N. GRAND AVENUE, SUITE 303
FORT THOMAS, KY 41075-1765
859.441.6566 * 800.659.3739
859.441.7152 FAX
www.drfrey.com

Systems and Software Engineering

NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE:

**Exploiting Technology, Usability
2007 User Conference Coming
BUCS® Release 10.1 Coming
Credit Cards Coming For Utilities
Support, Tips For Users...**