



B&L NEWS

ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING FOR METALCASTERS

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From the CEO's Office



Celebrating our 40th year in business this April, B&L has changed, evolved and grown over that time; that's what sets us apart from our competitors. From the starting days on the IBM System/32, then the S/36, AS/400, Windows, and now Cloud - we have demonstrated a solid track record of technology adaptation and renewal. Successful businesses are prone to becoming obsolete, with their greatest strengths cruelly become their greatest weaknesses. We never change our values and principles, but technology is constantly changing; and we always look for the most effective

methods available to deliver world-class metalcasting ERP software to our customers. Additionally, we are sensitive to our customers' investments in B&L software products. **B&L has never really discontinued a product line.** They usually just go away because customers have chosen to upgrade to the latest and greatest from B&L. For example, BLIS-400 is 27 years old; we still have customers successfully running their business with it, which is actually a testament to BLIS's durability and reliability. **Customers upgrade on their timeline, not ours.** And we provide mechanisms to migrate data, both active and historical, to the new platform.

As for the future, this Cloud thing is for real. More and more businesses are moving their operational applications to the Cloud. Cloud software deployment is expected to grow 6X faster than on-premise deployments by 2020, according to research from IDC Research. And while it may not be in the immediate plans for all businesses, a vast majority are realizing the benefits and savings of cloud computing. Also, coming down the road from B&L will be more analytics (e.g., big data, dashboards, etc.), production equipment integration, and mobile computing. But first things first - the new Web User Interface (UI) is our top priority, and we'll be working on fine-tuning it throughout 2016.

It's been a wonderful 40 years, and I'd like to thank all our customers and employees, both current and retired, that have made it all possible. Here's to another great 40 years!

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Odyssey Go-Lives

We ring in 2016 with go-lives at
Carteret Die Casting (Somerset, NJ);
Federal Bronze Casting Industries, Inc. (Newark, NJ);
OSCO Industries (Portsmouth, OH);
and Urick Ductile Solutions (Erie, PA).
Welcome to the Odyssey family!

Update from R&D



Here's what to expect from the R&D department in 2016 – Release 5.0. Five-0 is the latest for Odyssey. It also is the GA release (general availability) of the new Web UI.

But, we already have several clients live on the Web UI.

And, our newest clients in the midst of their Odyssey implementation projects are also using Web UI.

Plus, we have some Windows UI clients previewing the Web UI.

However, we are not pushing Windows UI clients to convert.

Rather, we will be strategic about who converts when.

Because, we plan to make many more improvements to the Web UI in 2016.

Conversely, we do see an opportunity for Windows UI clients to run selective Web UI functions.

For example, schedulers may want to use the new Web UI Shop Planner alongside their everyday Windows UI scheduling screens.

Maintenance Releases (MRs) to release 4.7 not only contain fixes but also include lots of enhancements. Delivering those enhancements via MRs was driven out of the need to get clients on the Web UI prior to 5.0. Those enhancements are not just for Web UI. Examples include: automatically create containers (boxes) along with a master container (pallet) with one transaction; and the ability to return metal from scrapped assemblies (machined parts, etc.) back to material inventory. There are also nice

enhancements you'll have to upgrade all the way to 5.0 to get, such as Financial Statements by Segment (columns that are departments or plants); and the ability to automatically create a rework shop order from failed inspection transactions. You can find out details by downloading the Odyssey 5.0 Enhancements PDF from the Odyssey Downloads → Odyssey Release Documentation page from BLInfo.com.

You can also expect selected enhancements delivered in MRs to 5.0 in 2016. There may not be as high a percentage as MRs to 4.7 but there will likely be several. Be sure to download release notes for MRs when they come out so you can check out the enhancements that you can start using without waiting a full Odyssey release cycle.

I mentioned that Windows UI schedulers can benefit from running Web UI alongside. (Note that there are no licensing implications for a user to run both Windows UI and Web UI simultaneously.) Another useful example is Windows UI users doing their normal work in Windows while having Web UI open for running reports. In Web UI they can use the Submit to Queue option for reports and have them e-mailed to themselves for less disruption of their Windows work. Windows users can also use the Web UI for inquiry purposes. Web UI not only includes dashboards with charts and graphs, but the typical inquiry screens are more flexible than Windows UI because of advanced filters and operators. There are also many more inquiries in Web UI that allow downloading directly to Excel.

Finally, I'm compelled to plug Spectrum coming up in September. You should definitely download the 5.0 release notes, but to hear more about the enhancements you should attend **Spectrum 2016**. We present key enhancements, plus you can get insights into how the developers thought through the business logic of Odyssey. There is a good possibility that we'll have classes on the new Web UI scheduling tools like the Shop Planner I mentioned. Both Windows UI and Web UI users will benefit from those classes.



Increased Security - HTTPS vs HTTP

As technology moves forward, so does the need to increase the security of technology and your data. By release of V5.0 we plan to be implementing HyperText Transfer Protocol with Secure Sockets Layer (HTTPS:) versus the same without the Secure Sockets Layer for B&L's Web UI. There are two primary differences between an HTTPS and HTTP connection: 1.) HTTPS connects on port 443, while HTTP is on port 80. 2.) **HTTPS encrypts the data sent and received with SSL**, while HTTP sends it all as plain text.



Note: Existing Windows users using B&L's Terminal Server Farm environment are already using the Secure Socket Layer (port 443).

New Vice President at B&L



B&L Information Systems is pleased to announce the promotion of Kristine Craft to Vice President – Professional Services. Craft has been with B&L since 2005 and has held various positions within the Professional Services Department, including manager for the last two years. Craft joined B&L as a Project Consultant with an extensive background in business administration and finance for manufacturers; she holds a B.S. from the Indiana Institute of Technology as well as numerous certifications.

Philip Laney, B&L's CEO said this about the promotion: "Kristine has performed admirably over the last two years managing the group responsible for ERP implementations here at B&L. In that time **over 28 Odyssey implementation projects** have been executed under her leadership.

Her team building, attention to detail and focus on creating successful, repeatable implementation projects has resulted in tremendous value for metalcasters choosing Odyssey for their ERP system. She also manages B&L's annual users' group conference, Spectrum, and our on-line customer community. Kristine is a key member of our management team. It's great working day-to-day with a results-oriented VP like Kristine, but our customers are the true beneficiaries of having her in this role."

Spectrum 2016

As B&L celebrates our 40th anniversary, we're bringing it home to Michigan. This year's Spectrum will be hosted near our Bridgman, Michigan company headquarters in beautiful St. Joseph, Michigan.

NEW for 2016 - Since the Web User Interface works well with tablets as well as laptops, we are going to have offer more "hands-on" sessions in 2016. Please bring your devices to follow instructors through various screens during the Web UI mini-sessions. We will still be offering the standard mini-sessions in Odyssey Windows. All sessions will open the opportunity to learn how to use more of your systems and learn what other Odyssey customers are doing! September 18th – 20th, 2016



Pentiction Foundry



"Odyssey gives us the ability to control margins, ensuring we remain profitable across all our different types of products. We feel we haven't even begun to unlock the system's potential. We know there are so many more capabilities of Odyssey that will have a positive impact on our business as we grow and change moving ahead."

— Ryan Morcombe, Controller

See the whole Pentiction Case Study at www.BLInfo.com/Pentiction

One of the biggest challenges in implementing Shop Floor Data Collection (SFDC) is simply to know where to start.

Read more about starting SFDC: foundrymag.com/ShopFloorEra

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Spring/Summer Odyssey Education Opportunities

BootCamp

New to Odyssey? Staff change? Odyssey Boot Camp may be the answer! This class overviews the entire Odyssey software system and includes hands-on demonstrations of various methods used to enter data. The small class size lends itself to a “bring your questions” format where company-specific questions are answered.

May 9th – 10th (Web UI) August 8th – 9th (Windows UI)

Crystal Reports

There’s a report for that! A Crystal Report, that is. The modern basis of business reporting, Crystal Reports can be a little intimidating and time consuming. Whether you’ve built zero or dozens of Crystal Reports, in this class we’ll dive into how to make Crystal Reports plumb the depths of Odyssey’s data to give you better information, faster.

May 11th – 12th August 10th – 11th

Accounting

Learn to do more in less time! Whether your job is A/P, A/R or CFO, we will help you figure out how to leverage Odyssey’s finance modules to streamline processes and free up your time.

April 12th – 13th (Windows UI) June 14th – 15th (Web UI)

Intro to Manufacturing & Inventory Application

A little work in the front end will save time, energy, costs and aggravation from the back end. We’ll show you how to set up your products, routings, production screens as well as following those products from scheduling to production to inventory control. Bonus? The instructors for these classes “know your pain”; each one worked in the manufacturing sector prior to joining B&L.

April 5th – 6th (Windows UI) June 7th – 8th (Web UI)

Register at: www.BLInfo.com/Events



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