



Preview of SpecLink+ the future of BSD SpecLink

The current CD-ROM contains the beta version of a brand new BSD SpecLink. Although the product is not quite complete, we wanted to give our current subscribers a preview of the new 32-bit version of SpecLink that will begin distribution in the Spring of 2000.

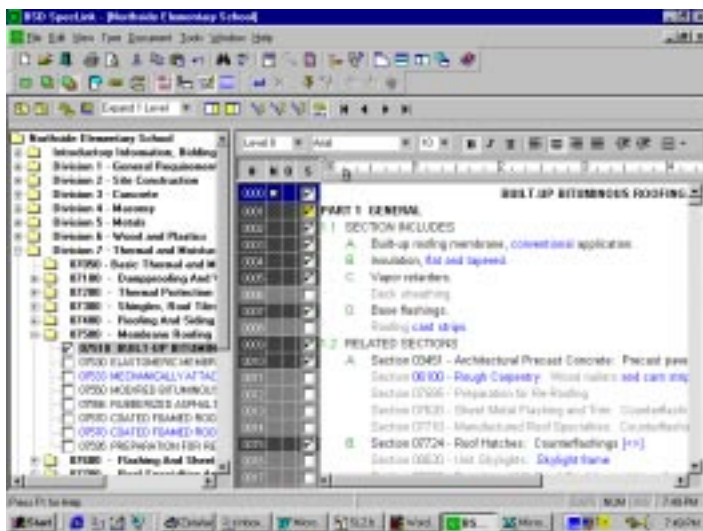
The new user interface closely resembles that of PerSpecView™, the performance specification system BSD developed for the CSI/DBIA Joint Venture. In place of the separate Project Window and Section Window, the new software has an Explorer-style navigation tree and a Document Panel that can be open simultaneously in a single window. The Document Panel, which displays the section text for the document selected in the tree, was designed to be as WYSIWYG as possible, resembling word

processors like Word. Instead of a separate Edit Panel, you now edit text directly in the document, where you see the full text of all paragraphs.

A single mouse click selects a section in the tree or selects a paragraph in the Document Panel. Grid lines designating the individual paragraphs can be turned off for faster operation, further increasing the resemblance to a word processing interface. Paragraphs in the section are automatically numbered as text is selected, or this feature can be switched off to increase processing speed. Fonts can be globally changed by text level, as in the current product, but in the new software you can select text and change fonts within any paragraph, as well. Embedded choices show up in color in the Document Panel. Green text indicates global options like units of measure, which can be changed only in the Summary Info dialog box. Blue text indicates choices that can be changed within the document itself. Double clicking on an embedded choice opens a small

processors like Word. Instead of a separate Edit Panel, you now edit text directly in the document, where you see the full text of all paragraphs.

See *SpecLink+* page 2



New WYSIWYG interface makes text review easy.



Y2K at BSD

Worried about Y2K at BSD? Don't be.

The news articles are really heating up about how some software programs will not be able to handle dates after the year 2000. Some predict that all work done on computers will come to standstill. We are happy to report that with minor exceptions, described below, the BSD product line will not be adversely affected by dates later than 2000. The list below notes certain areas in BSD products where 2 digits date fields are currently being used and what impacts you can expect.

BSD SpecLink - all versions:

- CD Effective Date – all dates in BSD SpecLink are stored in long number format, meaning that the number stored is the number of days since January 1, 1900. This way the software does not rely on interpreting dates and date formats but instead deals only with numbers.
- Updated field – same as above
- Report Date field - same as above

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dialog box that allows you to change the selected option. Fill-ins are indicated by red brackets, and a single click within the brackets blocks the underline and allows you to type a replacement.

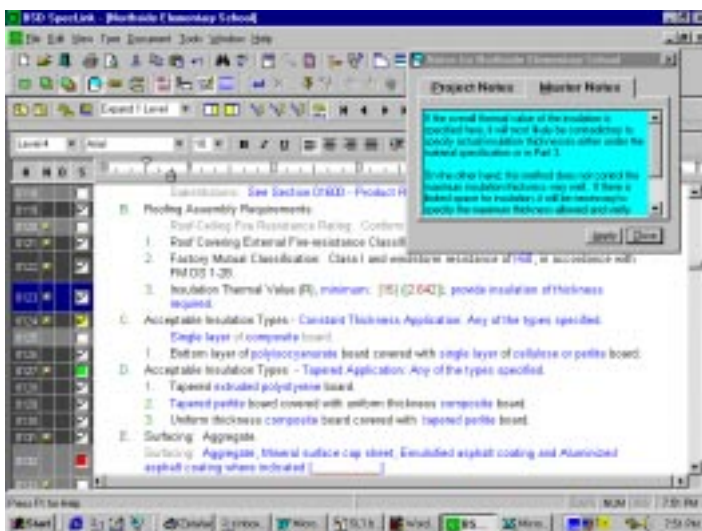
Because the text now appears more like a document in word processing (on a white background), active text that will print no longer is indicated by a change in background color from gray to white. Instead, there are a number of cues that indicate selected, active text. First of all, the X in the status box of the current product has been replaced by a checkmark to show user selections (links still show up as green, yellow, or red). The color of the status columns changes from light to dark gray when a selected paragraph is active. If autonumbering is turned on, paragraph numbers appear only at active text. And finally, the light gray text of inactive paragraphs turns to black when the paragraph is active and will print.

Notes now appear in a separate, "floating" window that can be moved and resized. Clicking the *Close* button causes the note to disappear, but a later click on the Notes icon causes the window to re-open in the same size and in the same place you parked it. Separate Master and Project note tabs in the Notes window allow you to attach a note to any paragraph without altering the master note. You can also insert graphic files in a Project note.

Another new feature is *Compare Projects* (available from the Tools menu), which allows you to compare any two versions of a section, division, or project. The differences are shown in the form of underlining for new text and strikethrough for deleted text. This feature should be especially helpful for addenda. You can also mark multiple sections for copying to a different project.

Before you try out the beta version of the new software, you should be aware that a few features are still missing. Also, although you can use the software to create specifications for a project, *any work you do in this beta product may not be compatible with the final, production software*. The beta software does not yet include the requirements reports or an automatic table of contents report, although it does include Section 00100 – Table of Contents, which is linked from all other sections in the database. You will not be able to insert choices or add links, although these features will be included in the final product. And you will not be able to add new sections although this feature will also be included in the final product.

We urge you to try out the future of BSD SpecLink and send us your feedback. Our current plan is to introduce the initial version of the final product on the Spring 2000 CD-ROM. For at least the next year, we will deliver both versions each quarter, and the 16-bit product will be phased out in 2001.



Notes to the specifier provide valuable information to help you make your selections.

Q&A

CostLink/CM (M32)

Q What is the easiest way to add overtime to my whole project?

A Overtime can be added to any part of your project by clicking on the appropriate folder and opening the Markups dialog. If you want overtime applied to the whole job, then switch to Single Tab Mode (from the Tree Menu), click on the topmost project folder, open the Markups dialog and switch to the Overtime tab.

Q I would like to see my estimate sorted by the work to be done by each subcontractor.

A With CostLink/CM you can display your estimate in a number of different views. Besides the primary Work Breakdown Structure View, you can also select Contractor View, Bid Schedule View, or Activities View. This gives you the ability to review and analyze estimate costs in a multitude of ways. Simply select a View or Query from the pulldown directly under the estimate name.

Y2K continued from page 1

BSD SpecLink will not be impacted by the year 2000.

BSD CostLink/CM:

- Date fields in Summary Information – are for information only and do not affect calculations.
- Material Update date – is for information only and does not affect calculations.
- Escalation Date fields – are references for the escalation indices and do not affect calculations.

BSD CostLink version 1.6:

- Date fields in reports – are for information only and do not affect calculations.
- Escalation Date fields – are

CostLink (MFW)

Q I have added a new contractor to do metal fabrication work, and then added overhead items for the running of the fabrication shop, but they are not being added to my estimate.

A There are 4 different types of markups for Overhead: P – which is a percentage markup, D – which is a percentage calculated from direct costs only, A – which is an entered amount, and C – which is calculated from the overhead items entered under that contractor's Overhead title. Edit this contractor's record and change the calculation type to C for those items to be included in the estimate.

Q I'm getting a weird header on my report.

A There is a standard report header and also a run-time report title (especially helpful if you are printing an intermediate report and want to make sure everyone knows that the estimate is not complete!) Select the Print option from the File menu and remove the header from the run-time report title field.

Q I would like to discount all the material on my job by 8%. Do I have to change the material unit on each cost item?

A No, you can use adjust pricing to add or discount any cost in the estimate. Change the Notes Panel view to the Adjust Pricing screen using the pull-down. You can adjust any portion of your estimate but if you want all the prices adjusted, first make sure the adjustment is applied at the Project Level, then simply enter the discount amount in the material cost column. By entering a CSI code such as 05 in the ID column, you can limit the discount amount to only cost items which fall in Division 05.

Q Which is the most efficient way to copy items from the Unit Price database into my estimate?

A The drag and drop technique is generally the fastest. Simply tile the database and the project side by side, highlight the item in the database, hold down the mouse button and drag the item to the project. This can be improved by finding all the items in the database which you will want under a particular project title and putting the line item quantity in that field in the database. When you have marked all the items you want with their respective quantities, click on the Copy button and then Paste into the estimate. All of the marked items will come along for the ride.

Q I have created a new cost item in the Unit Price database and used it in an estimate. Every time I recalculate

my estimate, the equipment cost changes from what I entered. It's driving me crazy!

A What you might not have noticed is that when you created that item, it inherited the crew and crew productivity of its predecessor. If your estimate is an A type estimate (for Auto-recalculation) then it is repricing all line items using the indicated labor and equipment rates databases and the specified crew composition. In your case it is finding the crew ID on this line item and changing the equipment unit cost to match. If you want a simple unit cost for equipment, wipe out the crew information on the item form.

Q I want to get a report of the labor used in my project, and I can see it on my Report Setup screen, but it is grayed out and I can't select it.

A In order for CostLink to calculate the labor (and equipment) needed for those reports, your project must be an A type estimate meaning that it automatically recalculates the labor and equipment costs each time reports are run.

Q How do I put a lump sum cost on a title level?

See Q & A, page 6

references for the escalation indices and do not affect calculations.

- Database Listings (the Unit Price Book, Crews, Labor or Equipment listings) - currently allow the user to filter the listing by update date. This particular filter will not work with dates greater than 2000, but you will still be able to produce a database listing report. Cost estimate calculations are not impacted.

Composer Gold version 6.0:

- Date fields in reports – are for information only and do not affect calculations.
- Escalation Date fields – are references for the escalation indices and do not affect calculations.

- Database Listings (the Unit Price Book, Crews, Labor or Equipment listings) - currently allow the user to filter the listing by update date. This particular filter will not work with dates greater than 2000, but you will still be able to produce a database listing report. Cost estimate calculations are not impacted.

These responses are predicated on your PC being able to recognize dates after the year 2000. Older PC's may not recognize these dates, which may cause sporadic problems in various programs.

Please contact BSD Technical Support at 404-876-0052 if you have any other questions.



LinkLine

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Get the latest on BSD by visiting our Web Page at www.bsdssoftlink.com.

About your SpecLink Winter Update

BSD SpecLink Statistics:

121 existing sections updated (17 percent)
1 new non-proprietary section
16 new proprietary sections
425 non-proprietary sections total
286 proprietary sections total
710 sections total

New Section - Non-Proprietary:

14560 - Chutes (Gravity chutes for waste (trash), linen, and recyclables)

New Sections - Proprietary:

02470 - Screw Piles and Anchors (A.B. Chance)
05532 - Trench Gratings (Balco)
05533 - Trench and Access Covers (Balco)
05551 - Stair Nosings (Balco)
05705 - Ornamental Metal Mesh Panels (Cambridge)
05810 - Expansion Joint Assemblies (Balco)
06139 - Timber Construction (Western Red Cedar Lumber Assn.)
06151 - Cedar Decking (Western Red Cedar Lumber Assn.)
06221 - Wood Trim (Western Red Cedar Lumber Assn.)
06251 - Slatwall Paneling (Perma Groove)
07462 - Cedar Siding (Western Red Cedar Lumber Assn.)
10260 - Wall and Corner Guards (Balco)
11630 - Laboratory Glassware Washers/Decontaminators (Lancer)
12484 - Floor Grid and Floor Mat Systems (Balco)
13966 - Total Flooding Extinguishing System (Fike)
15102 - Copper and Copper Alloy Building Services Piping (Copper Development Assn.)

Renumbered Sections:

Although we try very hard not to renumber existing sections, occasionally we have no choice. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause:

11611 - Self-Contained Filtered Laboratory Enclosures - Now is numbered 11625
11612 - Biological Safety Cabinets - Now is numbered 11620
11613 - Laboratory Glassware Washers/Dryers - Now is numbered 11630

Referenced Documents of 30 Organizations were Verified in the Last Quarter:

AI	The Asphalt Institute
ARRA	Asphalt Recycling and Reclaiming Association
AWWA	American Water Works Association
CDA	Copper Development Association
CGSB	Canadian General Standards Board
CISCA	Ceilings & Interior Systems Construction Asso.
DASMA	Door & Access Systems Manufacturer's Asso.
DHI	Door and Hardware Institute
EIMA	EIFS Industry Members Association

FS	Federal Specifications and Standards
GA	Gypsum Association
GANA	Glass Association of North America
IAPMO	International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials
IIAR	International Institute of Ammonia Refrigeration
MBMA	Metal Building Manufacturers Association
NCRP	National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurement
NFRC	National Fenestration Rating Council
NLA	National Lime Association
NOFMA	national Oak Flooring Manufacturers Association
NSF	NSF International, Inc.
PDI	Plumbing and Drainage Institute
SAE	Society of Automotive Engineers
SIGMA	Sealed Insulating Glass Manufacturers Association
SPIB	Southern Pine Inspection Bureau, Inc.
SWI	Steel Window Institute
TPI	Truss Plate Institute
VSI	Vinyl Siding Institute
WCLB	West Coast Lumber Inspection Bureau
WIC	Woodwork Institute of California
WWPA	Western Wood Products Association

Some notable new and updated documents include:

NFPA 13 - Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems, 1999 (extensive additions)
NFPA 70 - National Electrical Code, 1999
NFPA 72 - National Fire Alarm Code, 1999 (completely revised)
NFPA 204 - Guide for Smoke and Heat Venting, 1999 (new calculation methods)

Some new codes that have been published recently:

BOCA National Building Code and Fire Prevention Code, 1999
SBCCI Standard Building Code and Fire Prevention Code, 1999
1999 Updates to the ICC International Plumbing, Private Sewage Disposal, Fuel Gas, & Mechanical Codes.
CABO Model Energy Code has been superceded by the ICC International Energy Code.

Specification and Design Information Sources:

Did you know that SpecLink subscribers are entitled to a copy of BSD's publication "Specification and Design Information Sources"? This document is a printout of the latest information we have on where to find information on reference standards, codes, and design references. It includes the organization name, address, phone number, fax number, and [web URL](#) for over 200 trade associations, professional societies, government agencies, and other non-governmental standards developing organizations. If you want a current copy e-mailed to you, just e-mail us at support@bsdsoftlink.com.

Automating Specification Writing and Management Using BSD SpecLink®

Why Depend on an Outside Specification Service?

As most of our customers know, it is almost impossible for any firm to keep an office master up to date without resorting to an outside master specification service like MASTER-SPEC® or SpecLink®. In any given year, hundreds of changes occur in the construction industry, and these changes need to be reflected in construction specifications. Subscribing to a specification service reduces the amount of time needed for routine maintenance operations, significantly increasing the amount of time available for design professionals to do the kind of unique product research that seems to crop up on every project. With SpecLink, the automated updating process is itself a significant time-saver.

Other reasons for using an outside source are to achieve improved project coordination and overall document quality. Perhaps the most important reason, however, is that automation is a prerequisite for linking specifications to CAD, cost estimating, and other A/E/C software applications, an opportunity BSD has been pursuing for several years now.

Why Use a Relational Database for Specifications?

The traditional approach to automating specifications is to insert special codes into word processing files and to further process the files using special software routines. This approach is typified by ARCOM's Linx™ product and the SPECSINTACT program developed by NASA and later adopted by the DOD. The other automation technique is to organize the specifications into a relational database with word processing features. Both BSD SpecLink and PerSpective use the latter approach.

In both BSD SpecLink and PerSpective, all data for a project is stored in a single file, instead of in dozens or even hundreds of word processing files. This single file per project results in much better coordination between the various sections that make up the project specifications, because the file structure allows us to link easily from one section to another. It also allows us to establish preferences—for paragraph numbering

style and units of measure, for example—in one place per project, instead of repeating the information in many different word processing files.

The most important advantage of BSD's relational database approach to automation is the fact that all user modifications are stored as an overlay to the master data. What the user sees on the computer screen is actually a merged image of the master data as modified by the project overlay file. This approach means that the master data can never be corrupted inadvertently by the user. More importantly, it means that our quarterly updates for SpecLink and semi-annual updates for PerSpective can be installed automatically without disturbing project files. All user additions, edits, notes, and links are unaffected by the updating process.

Using BSD SpecLink and PerSpective

In both these specification programs, editing is accomplished by *selecting* project text from the master database, instead of *deleting* it—the approach used in word processing. Master text that is not selected remains visible (although grayed out) but is not included in the project and therefore does not print. This approach means that additional master text can always be selected at a later date for changing project conditions. It also means that a specification section originally developed for one project and copied to another can be further customized to the new conditions, because all the master data remains visible and available for selection.

Both SpecLink and PerSpective include a separate Notes window that keeps information relevant to the master text available but out of the way. The master database for each product contains many thousands of notes, but users can add their own project notes to master text or to text they have added. In PerSpective, the Notes window accepts graphic files as well as text files. All of this customization of text and notes is stored in the project overlay file and is automatically merged with the master database when a project is viewed on the computer screen.

What Are Links and How Are They Used?

In addition to text and notes, the BSD SpecLink master database includes well over 100,000 links. PerSpective includes almost 25,000 links. What are they? Essentially, a link is an instruction attached to a particular text segment (a paragraph, or an embedded choice within a paragraph) that results in a change to another text segment when the source paragraph is selected, either directly by the user or by another link. The links are the means by which we add “intelligence” to our database.

There are three kinds of links. We describe them as yes, no, and maybe, and they are color-coded as green, red, and yellow, respectively. Any paragraph may be the target of dozens of links and the source of dozens more.

Each time a paragraph with links is selected and becomes active, all its links are immediately activated. Green links select other paragraphs that are needed as a result of the initial selection. Yellow links highlight possibilities the user may wish to consider, and red links exclude paragraphs that would be incompatible with the initial selection.

The links may be within the same section or between sections. For example, products in Part 2 of SpecLink sections frequently have links to installation instructions in Part 3 of the same section. Cross references to other sections almost always result in links to those other sections, so relevant information is automatically selected or highlighted. Sometimes selection of a single paragraph can result in selection of dozens, or even hundreds of paragraphs elsewhere in the database, due to a phenomenon we call *cascading*. This is particularly true at higher levels in the PerSpective database, where the chapters are organized hierarchically.

Of course, the user always has the final say in determining which text is included in a project. Text excluded by a link can be selected, and text included by a link can be deselected by simply clicking on its status box.

This article is excerpted from a seminar presented by Robert Paul Dean, AIA, CSI, CCS, at CSI's National Convention in Los Angeles on June 25, 1999.

A Go to that title and open the Item Form. You will notice the unit cost fields are unavailable to the cursor. The cost totals are based on all cost items below that title (the totals are zero if there are no cost items) and the units are calculated by dividing the totals by the title quantity. Go to the Options Tab and put a checkmark in the Cost Override box. Now go back to the Costs Tab and see that the fields are now available and you can enter a lump sum cost, effectively overriding the previous calculations.

SpecLink

Q What does the .SAV file do?

A The SAV file is a backup of the project file from the last time it was updated. This file is created before the update is started in the remote chance that something happens to your project during the update process. Other file extensions of interest are: the SLP file which is the project file, the LOG file which lists all the latest master updates that are relevant to your project, and the LDB file which is used by the software for multi-user locking.

Q How do I insert the degree symbol in my text?

A Windows includes a utility called Character Map, which is generally found under Accessories (if you can't find it in your Start menu, look for the file charmap.exe under the Windows directory). Open the Character Map and select Arial as the font. Locate the symbol you want and highlight it. The keystroke you need to add the symbol into your text is displayed in the lower right-hand corner.

Q Is there a way to control where SpecLink places a page break? It's breaking right in the middle of a sentence.

A SpecLink works just like most popular word processing packages. Select Widow and Orphan control on the Print dialog to keep single lines from appearing as the first or last line on a page.

Year 2000 Software Training Schedule

BSD SpecLink
1-1/2 day \$395
December 20 - 21, 1999
January 24 - 25, 2000
February 28 - 29
March 27 - 28
April 24 - 25
May 22 - 23
June 19 - 20

Class attendees earn 12 Continuing Education Hours.
AIA Members earn 36 Learning Units (*Dec. class).

BSD CostLink/CM (M32)
4-1/2 days \$1195
February 14 - 18, 2000
April 10 - 14
June 12 - 16

BSD CostLink (MFW)
3-1/2 days \$895
January 10 - 13, 2000
March 20 - 23
May 8 - 11

Government Contractors earn Mcaces Certification.

You can now look for BSD class schedules on our internet site. Just go to www.bsdssoftlink.com and go to the training page. You will find schedules, maps, hotel information, and information about Atlanta.

Q Is there a way to make the Notes box larger so that I don't have to keep dragging the dividing line over?

A After dragging the dividing lines to the places you prefer, and making any other layout selections, select the Save Section Layout as Default option from View menu.

Q For the first time I have to do a spec on a small branch office of a local bank. How do I set the Bank Branch Model project provided on the CD to be the source of my new project?

A If this is a one-time job, then you could simply copy the Bank Branch model project to a new name (use Copy Project from the File menu) and start making the required edits. If you want to set one of the model projects (or a master project of your own) to be the source of all new projects, then select Project Setup from the File menu and choose that project as the Project Source.

Q How do I change the paragraph numbering from 1.2 to 1.02?

A Select the Paragraph Format option from the Format menu. You can select one of the pre-defined formatting schemes or click on the button for User-Modified. If you want to change the formatting of level 2 paragraphs only, click on the Modify button, select Level 2 in the top pulldown, and then select the desired number format (1,2,3...; 01,02,03,...; i,ii,iii,...; etc.).

Q I would like to add a special section in what I call Division 17. Can I?

A No, SpecLink does not allow new sections in other than the standard 16 divisions. One workaround would be to add the section into Division 16 and change the title of the section to read SECTION 17xxx. If you want to have the section number in the header or footer you will have to "hard code" it rather than using the @NUMBER keyword. That means you will have to remember to treat this section separately and also to edit the Table of Contents to conform to your change.

