

Webinar Questions and Answers

When, How, and How Much

- ❖ **When will SpecLink-E (SLE) become available?**
 - BSD is planning two Beta releases prior to final delivery of the software. The first Beta release should occur within the next 45 days. The second Beta release will be production-ready software and is expected in late summer. The second Beta is expected to last about 45 days and will culminate in the final release of the initial version of SpecLink-E.
- ❖ **How will SpecLink-E be released?**
 - SLE will be delivered to you as part of your SpecLink subscription. You can choose to move to SpecLink-E, stay with SpecLink+ for some period of time, or use both systems side by side until support for SpecLink+ is discontinued.
- ❖ **Will [SpecLink-E] be available in the middle of the subscription period?**
 - Yes, once it is released you can upgrade to it at any time.
- ❖ **When will Short Form be available?**
 - Short Form and Outline Specs are planned for implementation as part of the initial release of SpecLink-E.
- ❖ **How long will you continue to support SpecLink+?**
 - We expect to continue supporting SpecLink+ for at least one year. We will evaluate the needs of our customers on an ongoing basis and give ample notice of our intent to discontinue support.
- ❖ **Will there be a price increase?**
 - There have been relatively few price increases in your SpecLink subscription over the past 10 years. As stated in the Winter LinkLine newsletter, a moderate price increase for both initial and renewal subscriptions is expected in the near future, but this will be independent of the SLE release.
- ❖ **One of the reasons for switching to SpecLink was the ability to go between formats while maintaining one database. Would we be able to maintain one database in SpecLink+ and then open a copy of our master in SpecLink E for clients that request MF2004? Can I run both systems on one computer?**
 - Both systems can run on the same computer. However, you will have to make separate updates to each database. It will be possible to copy SpecLink+ Projects into SpecLink-E and then import Sections from the copied Projects into other Projects in SpecLink-E. BSD will continue to maintain both databases for some period of time, but we're certain you can appreciate that the new features and improvements in SLE preclude using a single database for both systems.
- ❖ **If we have a MF95 project and we switch to SpecLink-E, how will we [finish] the MF95 projects?**
 - When the Project is copied into SpecLink-E it is converted to MasterFormat 2004 just as if you had toggled to MasterFormat 2004 format just before you copied it. If you want to finish a project in MasterFormat 1995 format, then you will need to finish it in SpecLink+.
- ❖ **How does the new licensing system work?**
 - As before, you purchase a specified number of user licenses for a given subscription. This count is stored in one of the databases on the server (or standalone computer). Each user that has one

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or more documents checked out is using one license, and this information is tracked in the database. For example, if a user has three documents from two different Projects checked out to her laptop that she is taking on the road, the user is using one license until she checks all the documents into their respective Projects.

- ❖ **If we have 1 or 2 seats, can we install in many other stations but only have as many concurrent sessions as we have licenses?**
 - Yes, the number of installations of Client software on the user's work stations is unlimited. If you have two "seats" only two people can have documents checked out to work on at one time. One of these must check-in all documents before somebody else can check something out.
- ❖ **What is BSD doing to provide current subscribers an opportunity to actually work with SpecLink-E?**
 - Current subscribers can apply to participate in two Beta tests by sending an email to support@bsdsoftlink.com with the subject "SpecLink-E Beta Test" requesting to participate in one or more Beta Tests. Participants will be required to complete a pretest questionnaire, download and install Client and server software, spend approximately 10 hours using and testing the software, and complete a post test survey that helps BSD evaluate the performance and acceptability of the software. The initial Beta release will not be upwardly compatible with the second Beta or the final release, which means that you should not plan on using it for actual production.

Other Implementation Concerns

- ❖ **Do you need to be running Windows Vista or Office 2007 to use SpecLink-E?**
 - No, SLE will run and is fully supported on Windows XP. The user does not need to have any version of Microsoft Office installed in order to run SLE.
- ❖ **Band width required seems to be a concern for our IT person.**
 - When compared to SpecLink+ running on the user's computer with the Master database and/or Project files located on a server, we actually expect SpecLink-E to use LESS bandwidth.
- ❖ **We are using an integrated Timberline accounting and estimating package in our design/build firm. Timberline uses a SQL Server backbone. Have you tested for conflicts w/ Timberline?**
 - We have not tested specifically with Timberline. However, many systems use SQL Server and almost without exception each uses its own "named instance" of SQL Server and avoids any conflict with other systems. SpecLink-E uses its own named instance that other systems have no knowledge of and therefore have no way to interfere.
- ❖ **I'm concerned about the "all specs in one file" thing. [The] size of spec files now [is] quite large. What is the impact of this? Will you have the capability to split out individual [Projects]?**
 - BSD Server and SQL Server together manage the Projects Database and the SpecLink-E Master Database. Users no longer manage or worry about individual files. Having said that, there is

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provision in SpecLink-E to “Save to Zip File” an individual Project for archival and/or backup purposes.

- ❖ **Will SLE allow me and my consultants to work on the SAME project file at the SAME TIME from DIFFERENT locations (i.e.: Me in the [architectural] divisions, civil engineer his Divisions, and MEP engineer in his Divisions) ? I'm not a multi-disciplined A/E firm, making it difficult to integrate SpecLink content between consultants.**
 - Yes. If you implement virtual private networking (VPN) functionality on your network, each consultant can run his own copy of the Client software free of charge on his individual computer and access Projects on your server over the Internet using the VPN. The consultants are treated like any other system user and use one of your licenses only when they checkout documents. If you haven't implemented a VPN and don't want to do so, please read the next question.
- ❖ **Our IT department does not support VPNs - what are the alternatives for [supporting] off-site access to the [databases]?**
 - We are planning to implement communication between the Client software on the user's computer and the BSD Server software that uses the Internet without a virtual private network (VPN) or other wide area network (WAN). However, this technology will not be in place for the initial release of SpecLink-E.
- ❖ **If the databases will be stored on an office server, how will people outside of the office be able to work on the project?**
 - When a user checks out a document, it is copied to their local computer while he works on it. When that computer (laptop) is disconnected and is carried out of the office, the user can continue to work on all the documents that he has checked out. When he returns and hooks up to the server again, he can check those documents in to the server, where they are once again part of the Project and available for printing or checkout by others.
- ❖ **I'm in the market for a new server for my small 10 person [architectural] office. Any specific SLE configuration requirements I should know about?**
 - Most modern servers with an up-to-date CPU, 1GB or more memory, and current disk drives should be sufficiently powerful for SLE use. SpecLink-E is not a particularly heavy user of the server. If you buy a server (e.g. from Dell, HP, etc.) that is capable of running SQL Server (and most servers should be capable) you will have an adequate server for SpecLink-E. In a standalone environment, the user's computer serves as the “server.” In most situations, a good work station would be satisfactory to use as a server platform for 5 to 10 people, provided it does not have other heavy loads. We do however, recommend a computer running Windows Server 2003 or newer server operating system as the best platform for this purpose.
- ❖ **Does [the Client software] install into the "all users" area on the box or does EACH USER have to install it (which would be BAD).**
 - On a computer that is used by multiple individuals, each with a different login, each user will need to install his or her own copy of the software. However, the initial setup is simple, does not require administrator rights, does not ask any questions of the user, and thereafter maintains

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itself up to date with whatever is placed at the server-based install location for the Client setup. This is the only way to keep each user's checkouts separated and allow individual settings in the software specific to each user. It's also the only way to avoid requiring a system administrator to install the software and every update thereafter. It is a simple process – we promise!.

How Does It Work

- ❖ **Does the system identify who has checked out a Section?**
 - Yes, the user and his or her computer are identified in the Project tree. Moreover, a System Manager has the ability to view a list of all checkouts and to undo a checkout. Undoing a checkout will cause the loss of any work the user may have done on the document.
- ❖ **Also, will it have an option (similar to Word) that lets a person know when the Section has been checked back in?**
 - The system does not presently inform a waiting user that the document has been checked in.
- ❖ **Will users still need to map a network drive to use the software in a client/server mode?**
 - The Client software on the user's computer needs to know the computer name of the server. It is not necessary to map a network drive.
- ❖ **Did I hear correctly that we would be able to insert Excel spreadsheets?**
 - A feature is planned that will let the user select Excel, Word and PDF documents for inclusion in the Project tree. The names of these documents can be entered in the table of contents Section and they will be printed in order when printing an entire Project or branch of a Project. This feature will be implemented in the first or second release of the SpecLink-E system.
- ❖ **Will I be able to import an XL spreadsheet into the text of the document?**
 - You can create an image of the spreadsheet and paste the image into the specification document and you will be able to insert the spreadsheet as a document into the project, but you cannot yet insert an Excel spreadsheet directly into a specification document.
- ❖ **Will the table formatting be similar to existing SpecLink+ or similar to how Word approaches formatting the tables?**
 - As demonstrated, table management is modeled after that found in Microsoft Word. Table functionality is part of third party software that is licensed by BSD that strives to imitate Microsoft Word.
- ❖ **Is there a way to label an image if added to the spec (such as Figure 1) in order to reference it in other specs or addendums?**
 - Yes, there will be one or more ways to label images.
- ❖ **Will format styles copy (translate) from SpecLink+ to SLE?**
 - We are attempting to copy formatting intact. Headers and Footers are among the most difficult aspects.
- ❖ **I liked the tabs for navigating between groups of Sections. Is the front end separated out?**

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- Division 00 Procurement and Contracting Requirements and Division 01 General Requirements each have their own tab separate from all other Sections.
- ❖ **Is there any way you can give more flexibility to the bid forms? Can this be a Word .doc or a spreadsheet?**
 - Bid forms (any section, in fact) can be set to a different Style from other sections, using the Templates function, and without having to change the style for the whole project (as is now the case in SL+). You could conceivably use the planned facility to insert a Word or Excel document in the Project Tree (described above) to implement these forms.
- ❖ **Can user-created folders be moved around and placed in a different order?**
 - The user can add, edit and delete folders. Moving user created folders is not currently implemented or planned for implementation.
- ❖ **The [Page View] allows images to be [inserted and] displayed. How is this image displayed in the work panel area (Normal View)?**
 - Inserting and displaying images in Normal View is not currently planned.
- ❖ **A Table of Contents can be built based on the invoked Sections. Is it possible to tag headers (within a Section) so they show up in the Table of Contents [Report] as well?**
 - This feature is not currently planned. It would be possible to insert this type of entry in the Table of Contents Section, but it would have to be done manually.
- ❖ **Will there be an ability to toggle an office master from Outline to Short Form to Full Version... and in reverse order too?**
 - You will have the capability to toggle between Outline, Short Form, and Full Specs in either direction.

How Will It Interoperate With Other Applications

- ❖ **Does the CostLink/AE program report in MF04 breakdowns? If not, are there any plans to do this and report with labor and material separations?**
 - CostLink/AE modeling builds and reports estimates using assemblies and therefore uses the assembly-oriented UniFormat breakdown as opposed to a product-oriented MasterFormat breakdown. However, users can use whatever WBS they want, especially if they are building a line item estimate. We do provide a project template for using MasterFormat 2004. The low cost of the AE product is based on a license agreement with RS Means that specifically precludes publishing the labor and material breakdown.
- ❖ **Have you looked into the meshing of SpecLink-E w/ Timberline estimating?**
 - We have not yet looked into this arrangement. As BSD's approach to interoperability matures and assuming that use of the IAI's Industry Foundation Classes becomes a part of the National BIM Standard, there is some likelihood you could see a relationship through that channel in the future.

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- ❖ **I would like to know more about the interconnection between Revit and SpecLink with Linkman-E. This is one of the main reasons we looked into SpecLink-E. Can I have more information about that?**
 - We understand your interest. We will be glad to provide more information on this as it becomes available. Right now all BSD engineers are working on getting the SpecLink-E application ready. They will work on the LinkMan-E application as soon as SLE is complete.
- ❖ **What other CAD software will work w/ LinkMan-E besides Revit? The webinar made it sound like a partnership brewing.**
 - Autodesk Revit is the first of several CAD systems we would like to support. We would also like to support Autodesk Architectural Desktop, Bentley Architecture, and Graphisoft ArchiCAD, among others.
- ❖ **Will the LinkMan interoperability software be available with the initial release?**
 - LinkMan-E is expected to be released within three to six months of the initial release of SpecLink-E
- ❖ **Can we beta test an integration product for Revit, Spec link-E and Timberline estimating?**
 - We are planning a Beta Test of LinkMan-E and interoperability between SpecLink-E and Autodesk Revit Architectural 2008 following the initial release of SLE. However, we do not foresee a link with Timberline in the immediate future.

Linking, Updating, and Wish Lists

- ❖ **Will linkages between sections be improved?**
 - We are always working to improve linking, but particularly in revising the Master prior to release of SLE, and including the linkages between Sections.
- ❖ **Will [links] between Outline / Short Form / Full Spec be improved over SL+?**
 - Since Outline and Short Form Specs will be embedded in the Full Specs text, linking will be much more effective and easier to develop and maintain.
- ❖ **Will PDF writer have better widow/orphan control?**
 - Widow/orphan control is implemented using third party technology and is independent of PDF output. We are working to create improved logic for this release.
- ❖ **Will you have some basic online training for [SpecLink-E]?**
 - We are planning on developing tutorials and a one-hour online introduction to SLE similar to that currently provided for SpecLink+.
- ❖ **Did you FINALLY add word-wrap to the document panel?**
 - No, we continue to follow the example set by Microsoft Word believing that is what the majority of customers are familiar with. However, we have implemented Zoom functionality that lets you shrink or enlarge the text size allowing it to fit in different spaces and on different screens.
- ❖ **I'm unclear on exactly what all happens over the Internet w/ SLE besides auto software updating and auto content updating. Does BSD have access to my project files via the Internet?**

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- We have access to certain information in your project. For a number of years BSD has been monitoring usage of the Master database (primarily what sections are being used and what manufacturers are being included) to better understand how our specifications are being used. We provide information on what manufacturers are specified to manufacturers. Unless you permit it (via a checkbox on the Summary Info dialog), no project or company-specific data is released to anyone. This data collection technology uses a “web service” that will be expanded in SpecLink-E to include automatic updating of the BSD SpecLink Master specifications database as updates become available, without the necessity of installing a new CD to each and every computer.
- ❖ **In the demonstration Beth showed how the sequence number in a section could be clicked to toggle between a master spec and user edits. Is this functionality retained between sessions (ie. stored in d-base) or is it just for that particular session?**
 - The Master version and user version of a paragraph are both stored in the project database, just as they are in SpecLink+
- ❖ **Is there any plan to make software available on the Macintosh platform?**
 - There is no plan to build a native version of the software for the Macintosh platform, because the costs would be prohibitive. Recent Mac laptops and desktops utilize Intel CPU chips, so it should be possible to use Boot Camp, Parallels, VMWare or other virtualization techniques available in the Apple environment for SLE.
- ❖ **You mentioned saving to disk. One of the nice things about SL has been that changes are automatically saved, since they update the database. Can't this automatic saving be extended to saving to local and checked-out copies as well?**
 - We will implement a feature in the first or second release that allows you to set a schedule for auto-saving the active checked out document to disk every few minutes.
- ❖ **Will there be a way to indicate changes? (e.g., with strikethrough for deletions, and bold italics for additions?) Those sometimes help reviewers, or even our own Project Managers, and may even be required on projects we do with other software that has that capability (SpecsIntact, or an owner's own masters edited in Word with Track Changes).**
 - We are implementing the same type of document comparison functionality as presently exists in SpecLink+. At the same time we are looking at alternatives to advance this feature to be more useful in coming releases. We are hampered by the third party software that we license to provide much of our word processing functionality, which does not (yet) provide change comparison as part of its feature set.
- ❖ **Still on my wish list: A way to change paragraph formatting globally, as well as paragraph type by paragraph type, e.g., changing the whole section from Times New Roman 11 pt to Ariel 10, including headers and footers. At least give us a quick, simple way of changing the default font.**
 - This will be considered when planning future releases. Keep in mind that user created project templates will be available across all projects, so once you have created one, it is easy to select it for any other project and/or section.

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- ❖ **Please make it possible to "undo" editing, etc., to the greatest extent practicable...**
 - We have added significant Undo functionality that was not present in SpecLink+. We will continue to build on this foundation in this and future releases.