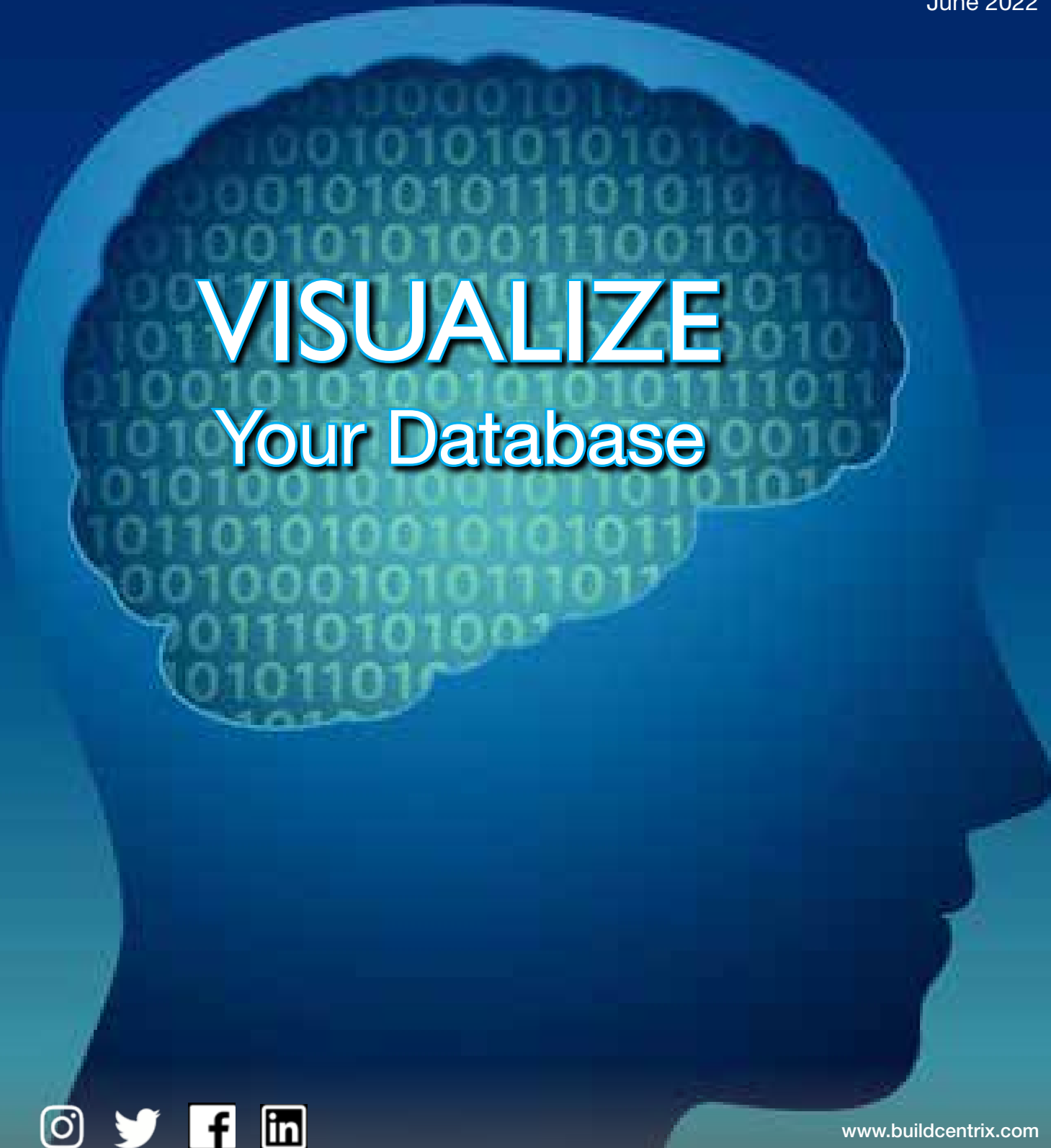BuildCentrix

CONSTRUCTION IN THE CLOUD

June 2022

VISUALIZE
Your Database

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VISUALIZE
Your Database

By / Jessica Kirby

The MEP construction industry is built from databases. These are primarily estimating databases, ERP databases of purchased content, and fabrication databases, and a great deal of time goes into building, maintaining, and disseminating them.

"When you think about any tool used to create something digital, that creation is just a visual representation of a database," says James Beveridge, CEO of BuildCentrix (BXC). "The database is really where the intelligence and data reside. When using a tool like BCX, CAD, or Revit, users are accessing a database. They are accessing the database on a single part and making that part fit into a model."

Here's the main problem with the old, Windows-driven databases found in CAD and RevIt. They are usually in Windows file directories, which means different applications and programs are required to actually use them. Not only that, but users of these applications and software packages need to sync to get the updates.

When it comes to the fabrication process, many questions arise around how old databases operate and function. How are they shared? Who keeps them updated? What if the user is operating a different version or year of the software? What if something changes?

"Windows-based files structure databases mean if you want to share from that database, you have to .zip and send the files and then resync any changes to the database," Beveridge says.

"For example, when a specification is telling the user how rigid something is or how much pressure it can withhold, the database can't just modify a base specification. It must pattern different specifications for different materials. It is a standard in our industry, and everyone uses and complains about it, but no one fully grasps the true problem. They think it is a software issue, but really the problem is a layer below in the database."

It is possible to update the material pricing in the fabrication database using a .net api that makes calls to the company's ERP; however, that doesn't mean the information is going to be current for each fabrication database user. They will actually have to sync their systems or upgrade to the latest version.

"A .net API means it connects to installed applications," Beveridge says. "That means you have to reference an installed folder somewhere and specific software packages installed in Windows. In newer tech you usually have an open API, which means that you can query different end points and push and pull data, and it is really simple. It is optimized for quick responses and is fast and light to work with."

A challenge for users is installing ERPs or accounting packages and then wanting to push and pull information to the ERP, but since it is stuck in the old database, they can't.

BCX is different.

A company's ERP contains the vendor information and product list, and the estimate contains a project's budget. BCX provides the tool to link the two. It can capture and deliver your actuals for shop time, field time, and material, and it can get your material cost and price from your ERP, as well as products purchased from other vendors.

Most importantly, it lives in the Cloud, which means there is no need to sync and there are no worries about software versions.

"We offer a database that is technically relevant and new," Beveridge says. "Our stack is sound and future-proof going forward. Everyone else is building in an old system."

Going forward, BCX will be able to go directly to the equipment from the database. At the moment, it is leveraging a Watts-Mueller integration to go direct from the BCX database to that equipment.

"We can go from a run of duct to the fabrication equipment," Beveridge says. "BCX is the only system out there that offers a new database and a database you can fabricate from." ∎
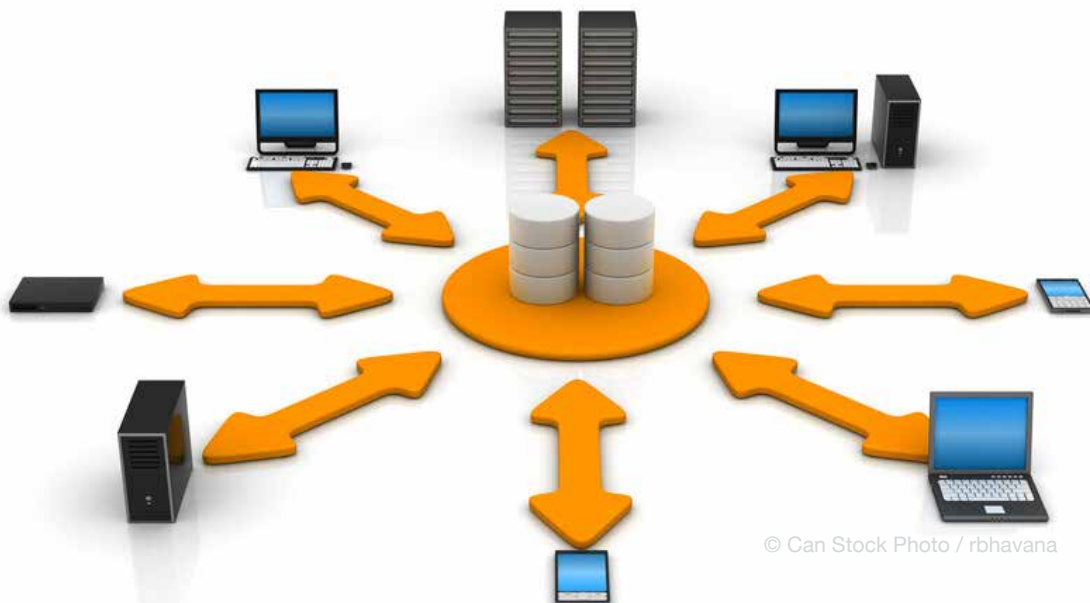

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# New Technology for the Production and Delivery Calendars

Production Calendar + Delivery Calendar have been rebuilt in a new technology stack. The existing production and delivery calendars have been running since 2014. The move to a new stack allows BCX to continue to release new features, integrations, and enhancements for the calendars that will have long-term sustainability and speed enhancements. ∎
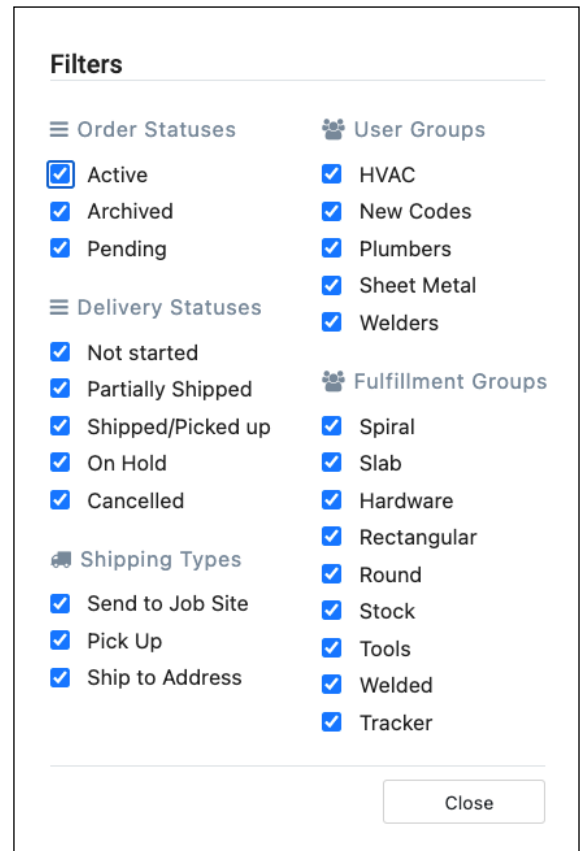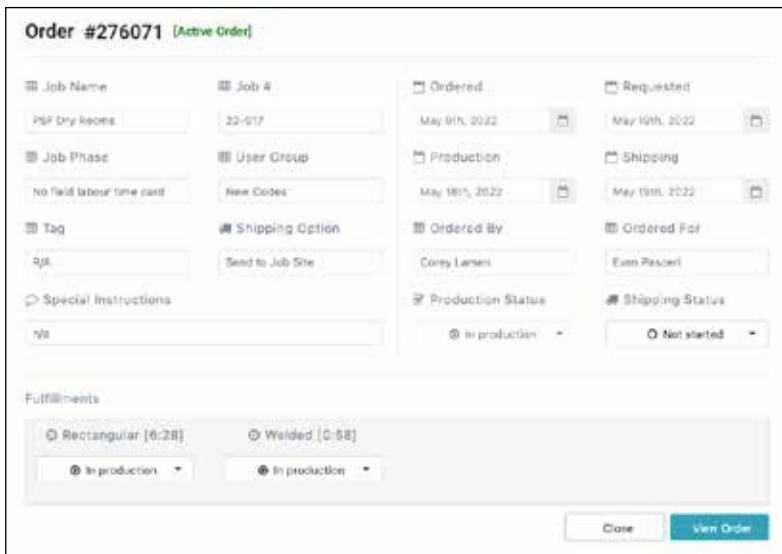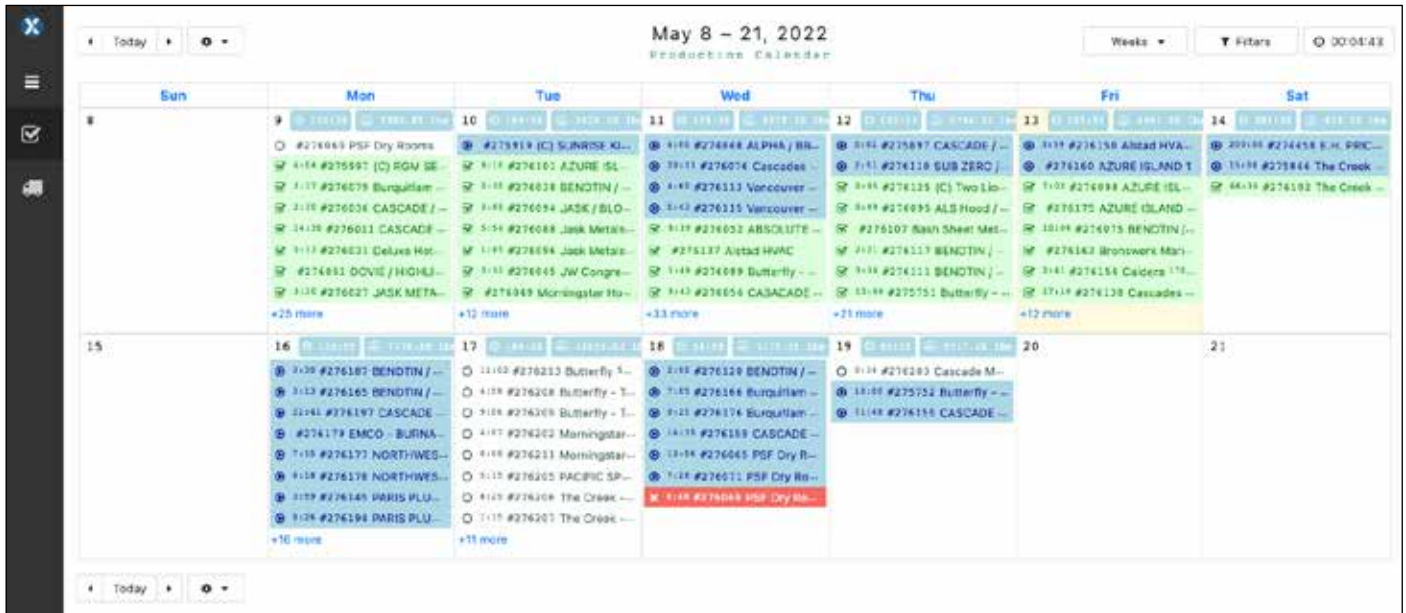
Arcol – Why Do You Accept Bad Tech?

Arcol is an interesting company with a great mission statement. Why let old software dictate your critical workflows? This company is looking to provide the tools architects and engineers need to model in new technology—Cloud native and truly collaborative. This is something the MEP industry could benefit from, as well. As BCX moves forward, it will continue to push to relieve the reliance on old installed software in the MEP space.

Check out this Arcol article at: *medium.com/@PaulO_Carroll/the-arcol-manifesto-fa59d9ec2354* ▪
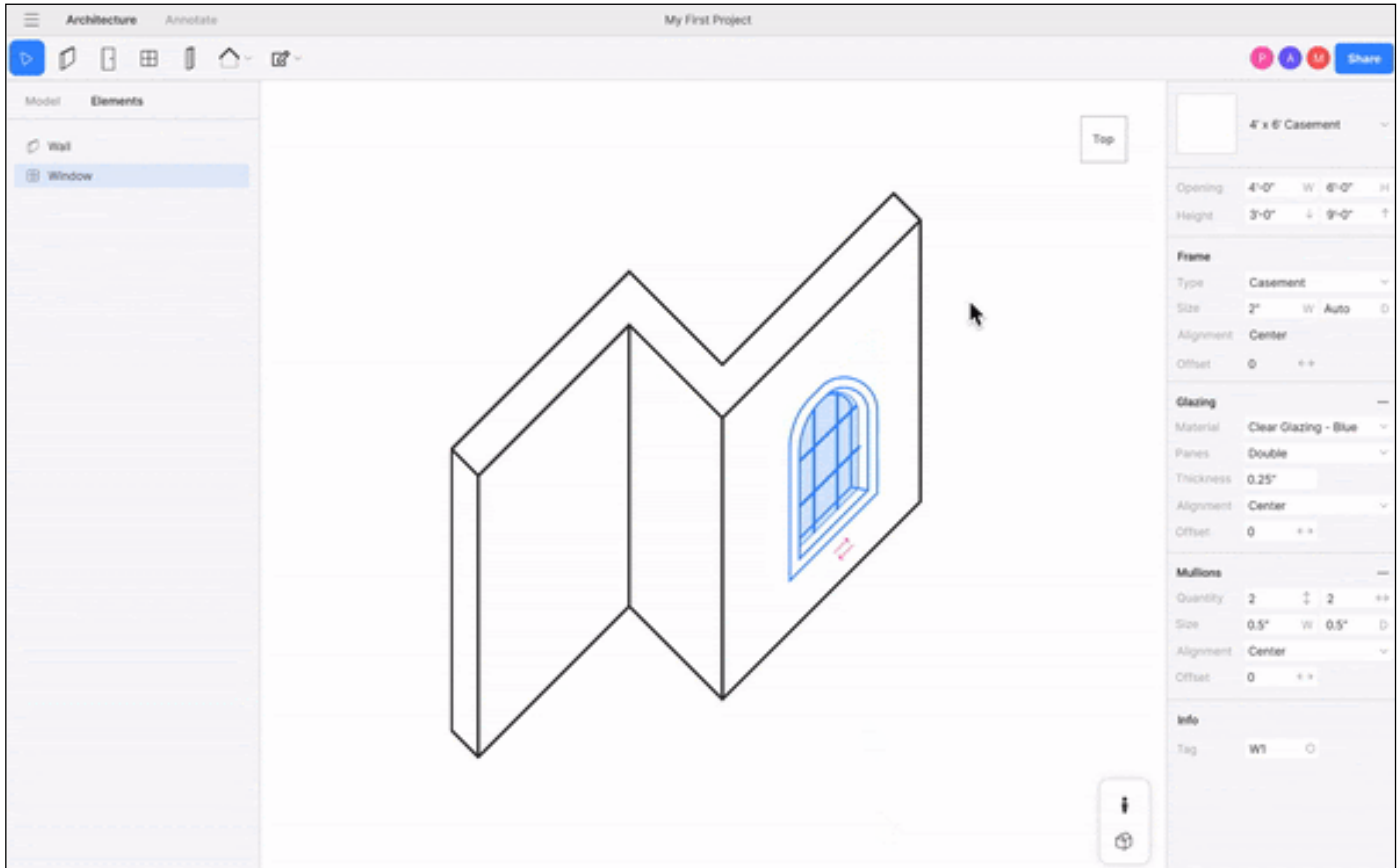
Old Database Issues are Knocked Out by BuildCentrix

BuildCentrix is proud to be the only MEP technology company that has a proprietary and new database of MEP products that is not linked to any old, installed software. Our content (piping, plumbing, sheet metal, and ancillaries) can be linked to existing old, installed databases, but the content is 100% Cloud native and in a new technology stack. The MEP industry currently uses a lot of old, installed software. There are a lot of gripes about the lack of updates to the old, installed software, but one of the issues is the database, as well. BCX is currently developing a database that is entirely Cloud-native and managed in-house for use across the company. ▪

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