ICS NEWS

INNOVATIVE COMPUTER SOLUTIONS, INC.

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SPRING 2005

Introduction

Another Spring has Sprung!!!

Another baseball season has begun (Cubs fans rejoice!) and everyone in the East is looking forward to warmer days after a dreary winter. At ICS, we have experienced a number of changes as well.

Moving into the 5th year since we introduced VISION, we have made great strides in the system from both a functional and technological perspective. We continue to generate new releases at a steady pace, incorporating items suggested by you, as well as modifications to processes that serve to improve your efficiency.

In many cases, this has resulted in a shift away from some of the routines that were initially developed to be 'Control+Plus-like'. While this makes the program a bit less familiar to those accustomed to working with our legacy system, we feel the increased benefits in navigation and information are well worth the trade off. We hope you agree and as always, invite your comments.

ICS Goes International

We are excited to welcome our first international customer, Blackbeard's Liquors in the Cayman Islands. Blackbeard's has 5 stores and is planning for more using VISION for store, warehouse and corporate processing.

Our installation was not without excitement as each of the stores had to be literally rebuilt from scratch after Hurricane Ivan devastated the island in September. We are pleased to report that the island is bouncing back nicely and the stores are up and operational.

If you choose a vacation to the Caymans, stop into one of the Blackbeard's and see VISION in action (with a tropical touch…) While you're there, try some of their locally produced flavored rum. A delicious experience to be sure!

Welcome Rick Reaver

Please join us in welcoming Rick!

It is our pleasure to welcome Rick Reaver to the ICS family. Rick comes to us from Cranberry Liquors, where he served as store manager for over 8 years. Rick will be serving ICS prospects and clients in the Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia and Virginia areas. As our representative, he will bring his experience and industry knowledge to the stores he visits, once again proof that we provide you with not only the best product but expertise that helps you get the most out of your expenditure.

Art Laurenti Marathon Man!!!!!

No, Art is still too occupied with his store to be training for Boston…. However he (rather his system) is the current VISION leader in the number of months that his LINUX server has been running continuously.

Art has just passed his 15th month without restarting his server. A spot check of several other customers finds Community Liquors of Princeton to be the current runner-up with 13 months and Avon Liquors of Colorado to be up and running for over 9 continuous months. Dozens of customers that we surveyed have been running for 3 to 6 months without interruption. We congratulate Art and all the folks we surveyed…. Another victory for LINUX!

Jim's VISION Shortcut of the day....

Do you know that you can <Right><Click> on any item number display (for example Purchase Orders, Customer Orders or Sales) and you will be able to 'quick jump' to the Inventory or Sales data screen for that item? Give it a try!!!

Dell Hardware service extension

All Dell computers come with a 1 year, next day, on site warranty. As many of our clients are looking to keep those machines covered, we have tracked the installation dates for each computer and will send you a notice when the expiration date is near.

Can I buy my own Computers for VISION?

This is a question we often receive as many of you do research on the Internet and find similar prices for similar models. ICS has no policy against purchasing your own computers, however we have a warning for anyone who may think they are getting a deal on their PC's.

Dell certifies the systems we purchase for business use. Similar models sold through personal (or Home) channels do not have the same certification despite the similarity in model numbers and types. If service is required on these 'non-certified' machines, Dell personnel have the option to decline to support you as you are using a 'personal-class' machine in a business environment. Make sure you purchase your machines from the 'business' channel if you choose to follow this path.

Dave's Tip of the Day

Make sure that the item number used in VISION for your non-taxable coupon has the tax flag set to "N".

Matt's Register tip

How do you do a price over-ride with multiple units in VISION?

Press the Price Over-ride key. Enter the number of items and the 'unit' key. At this point you can scan the item, enter item number or enter the item number by description using the "alpha keys". VISION also allows the cashier to select the item unit, pack, or case price for modification. At this point the cashier can enter the new price amount. The total price will reflect the multiple quantity adjusted price.

Thoughts from a Previous Manager

In my short amount of time with ICS, I have noticed several things that have me applauding retailers while at the same time wondering how people stay in business. As a person who believes that the more information you have on your business, the better your business will do, I have come across some points that I would like to pass along to all.

On computers in general, please remember that these units are dust sensitive. If air cannot circulate around the server, the continuous accumulation of heat may degrade your system component. This can be a fan motor or processor rendering your system useless.

Computers also have a shelf life. Have you ever wondered why Microsoft is so strong? This is simple, they force you to upgrade after a period of time to a new operating system. While ICS has developed two main versions in 22 years, we are constantly updating components to new technology. Updates to the VISION program are done quarterly and should be monitored by the end user to ensure that they understand what the update is designed to do. Please look at the help screen in VISION for the list of updates to your system.

Rick Reaver

For those of you running Windows...

In spite of the other article regarding LINUX, one of the best ways to maintain optimal performance at both the registers and the back office workstations is to Restart your Windows computer daily (at worst once a week). This serves to clear out (or release) memory and can result in a noticeable improvement in speed.

As LINUX handles memory more efficiently, the LINUX server and any LINUX workstations do not need to be reset unless instructed to by ICS.

If you need to restart your VISION server would you remember how to?

Rebooting instructions for your server are included in the OnLine documentation and were initially printed when the installation was done. These should be displayed in a prominent location, so you can refer to them, should the need arise.

To get another copy of these, click <Help><Contents><How do I><Reboot my Servers or Registers> then print the document that appears.

Did You Know?

You can see what changes have been made to your VISION system by reviewing the Release Notes for the month in the system documentation. These provide a brief description of the additional features and changes that have been included in the releases created during the specified month.

Additional detail about the operation and impact of these new changes can be found in the documentation for the new (or changed) function.

Beware the fly-by-nights

Please be aware that ICS is not associated with nor is represented by any company, sub-contractor or vendor with regards to hardware sales, unless expressly stated. While we will provide you with the names of service organizations for hardware, please understand that these companies have a long-established track record for support and are not looking to make a quick dollar before they disappear into the night. If you have any questions regarding someone or some company claiming to be a representative of ICS, please contact us so we can clear up any confusion.

Jump to from register

VISION Clients - While you know that the Register and Back Office can be running simultaneously, were you aware that there is a process to start this that allows your system to run more efficiently? Simply click on the 'Jump To' option while at the register, and select Menu. The Back Office menu will start immediately and you will be able to toggle between the two functions as necessary.

While minimizing the register form and clicking on the 'back office' icon on your desktop will achieve the same end result, the 'Jump' option is quicker and more efficient in terms of computer memory.

Inter NOT...

Many clients ask us why we don't develop Internet sites as part of our business offering. There are 2 reasons: first this would divert us from our core business, which is developing and supporting VISION. Secondly, Internet development is a highly customized process, requiring significant interaction before the program is implemented. This is best left up to companies possessing good graphic skills, as they are better equipped to design a site more in line with your visualization. If you need advice, please do not hesitate to contact us for guidance.

Ask Tony About…..

Gift Cards

….Questions & Answers

What is the new Gift Card function?

Gift Card Processing is an internal tracking module, which allows VISION clients to enter, update and maintain serialized gift cards or certificates.

Do I need custom cards?

No. Paper certificates work just as well, providing they have serial numbers for tracking.

Do I need an outside processor?

No. As all tracking is done in VISION, there are no fees to account processors.

Can the certificates be renewed?

Yes. Once a serial number is identified, additional dollars can be added to the gift card/certificate.

Is there any charge for this feature?

No. The Gift Card programs were included in the standard updates you received as part of the Annual Software Release Program.

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