



RON CICCARONE

Trimble Business Center

Heavy Construction Edition Part 1

Trimble has released a new software product line that covers more than one of its business areas. Business Center (BC) supports the Survey and Heavy Construction Division each of which has their own vertical markets. I consider this to be a smart move by Trimble, because there is some cross over between these markets.

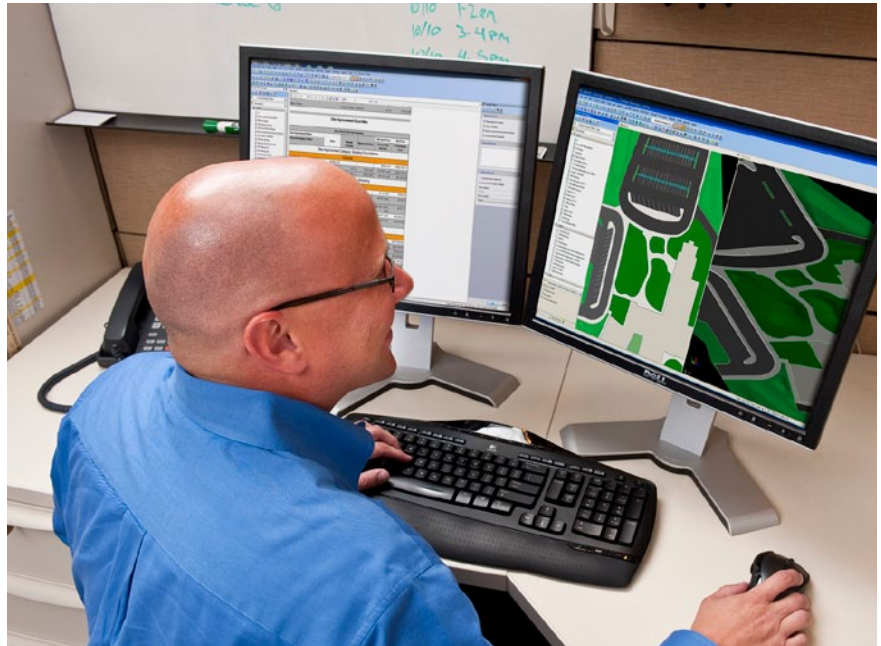
I attended a week long training session in Denver during the month of January and was lucky; I got out just before it snowed.

The intent of this first article is to give the reader my impression of Trimble's new product, but before I do let me give a little of my background. I have used a Trimble product for many years, Terramodel (TM) one of the best kept secrets in the industry. I began using this product about 1991. I was hired by the initial company that wrote TM to manage support and training. I still use TM, it is one of those things you get comfortable with a product and you can do anything with it. For me it is one of the best products that I have used for model building. I would use it for my taxes if it were possible.

Well the next generation for TM is BC-HCE, and this better be impressive if you are going to get my attention.

The classes very pretty intensive, there were about 20 to 25 people. This makes it challenging because we all had different levels of interest and expertise. I was not sure what to expect.

I was very favorably impressed with the product. The product is being structured as a common platform that will support next generation Trimble Geomatics



Office, PayDirt and Terramodel. I believe each will be referred to by a different name. PayDirt's new name is Takeoff and Terramodel is covered by several modules.

The concept that caught my attention is the data created by these two programs is now shareable, where in the past they were two separate programs with separate databases that did not communicate. This is getting interesting.

When you start BC, there is a wizard screen that allows you to decide what type of activity you will be doing (see Fig. 1). This will automatically configure the menus for the chosen activity. The nice thing is if you decide to do something else during this session, the menus allow you to alter the current options without leaving and restarting.

BC-HCE is built with a free platform that can be downloaded from the Trimble website (yes I said free), however there are 'modules' that can be purchased that will do the specific activities. The current modules in the BC-HCE platform are Data Prep, Image Manager, Surface Tools, Takeoff, Total Station and GNSS Processing. The entire product is installed similar to TM; however the available modules beyond the free platform are controlled by a dongle (hardware lock). You will be amazed at how much can be done by the free version. Download and try it.

One day was dedicated Takeoff (a module that must be purchased), which had my interest because it had been a long time since I had used a takeoff

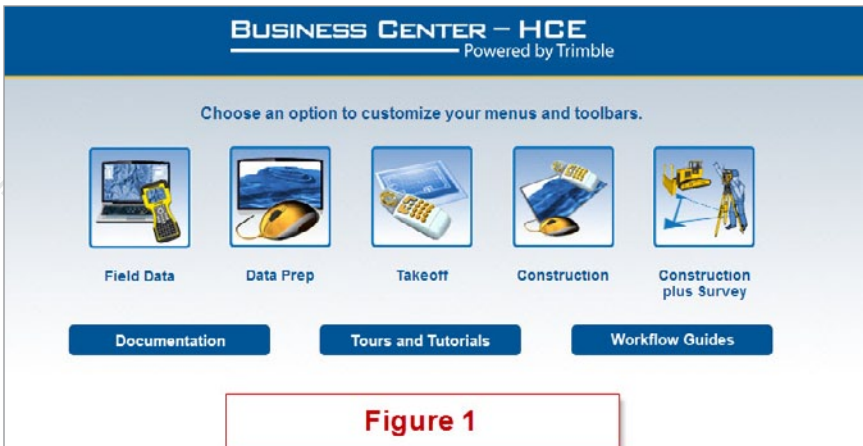


Figure 1

A wizard screen will automatically configure the menus for the chosen activity.

able to share the data between programs without conversion is the correct way to build an environment.

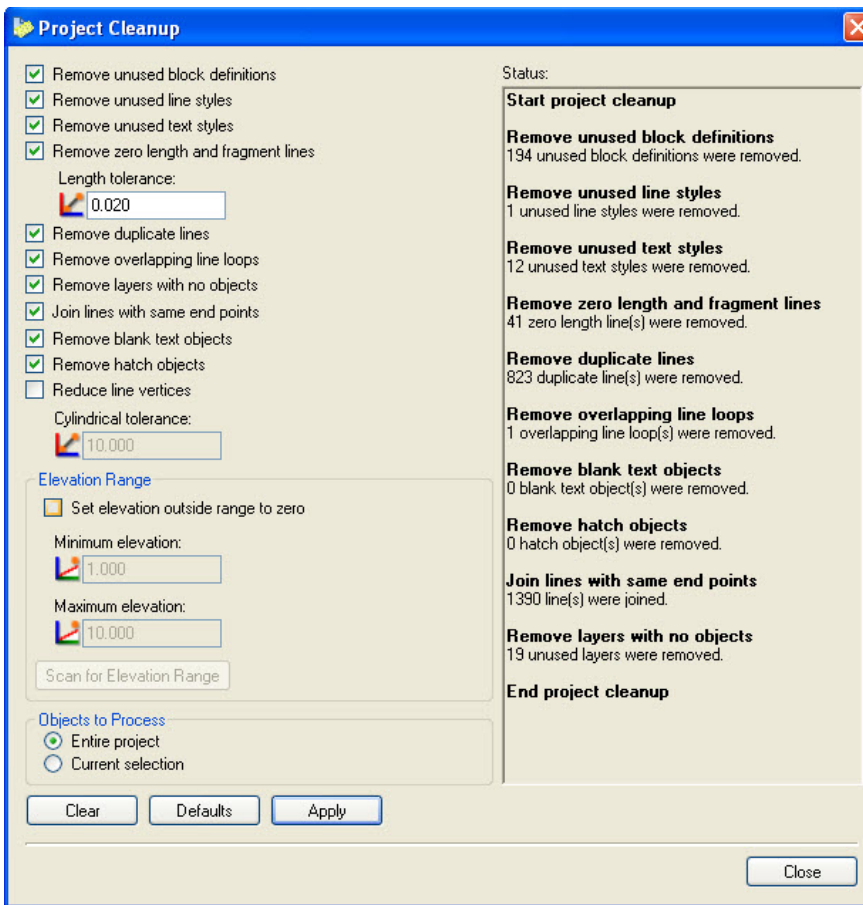
Now let's begin talking about modeling, this usually begins with PDFs and CAD files. BC-HCE has a clean-up feature that takes care of a lot of the issues that are manual and tedious to begin working with a CAD file for modeling. As shown in Figure 2, there are several options and what is really functional is you can run one at a time and see the results listed in the sidebar. Some of the options include remove unused items such as blocks, line styles, zero length lines, duplicate lines, layers with no objects, blank text objects, hatch objects, etc. The list is very impressive and it finds things that are not obvious until you begin working with the project.

Once this process has been completed you are ready to review the project a layer at a time. This is done very easily with the View filter that will isolate to a single layer and let you step through them one at a time.

I will continue this thread in my next article, but let me summarize.

Trimble Business Center is quickly becoming a complete product that will be an excellent tool for the construction, takeoff and modeling markets. The developers are building robust processes that will equip the model builder to perform task that were tedious and lengthy into one or two operations. This product is what I truly consider next generation.

I would recommend that you get on board with this product now and grow with it. 



Options can be chosen and the results will immediately be seen in a sidebar.

product. Some had digitizers and others used heads up digitizing on the screen. I did the heads up digitizing and found it to be very easy and straight forward. It was easy to digitize all the necessary parts of the project and the reporting was very detailed. You are able to easily lower sections of the project for various levels of Subgrade. It was able to handle borings

with multiple changes in materials.

Now the subtleties come to light, each of the digitize areas actually automatically become surfaces (DTM) that can be used by the other products. HCE can use the digitized surface for modeling and I believe the reverse is possible a surface imported from CAD that is developed in HCE can be used by Takeoff. Being

Ron Ciccarone, LS, has been involved in survey automation since the 60s, data preparation and 3D modeling since the late 90s, and owns his own business building data files.