Vanguard Appraisals, Inc.

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Excellence achieved through people, products, and service. ™   Spring 2015

PRC-the Cornerstone Report of CAMAvision ®

By Nick Klein

For years, the Property Record Card (or PRC) report has been the cornerstone report of CAMAvision. With all of its options enabled, this report can detail virtually everything you ever wanted to know about a parcel and it's still the go-to report for many things. But in this fast-paced technology age people have come to expect the information quickly, summarized and as cheaply as possible. Generally printing fewer pages means less detail, and printing fewer pages also means saving money – so having a shorter report is big win all around, right?
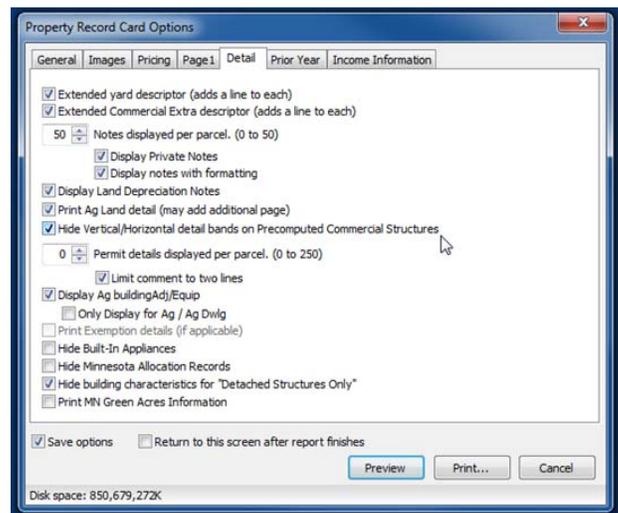
Well, sort-of. The Quick Summary and Review Summary reports were created to help shrink the number of pages created by the PRC. These variations of the PRC let the assessor par down the amount of information printed, while at the same time retaining the ability to "show everything" if desired. However, this flexibility has come at a different price: each of these reports has evolved into having seven tabs worth of options making them harder to use for new and old users alike.

The trusty Parcel Summary report has been around for a while, but it went to the extreme on the other end. For many, these reports simply do not show enough information. For this reason, users have requested many modifications making it the most heavily customized derived report.

Later, the 2-page Summary report came along to strike a balance between the big PRC reports and the one-page parcel summaries. Interestingly, as more use the 2-page summary, we get requests to add or change details. Slowly the options on the 2-page summary could creep up to that of the PRC or spawn many customized derivatives.

How to best summarize the complex data that the Assessor's office collects will continue to be a challenge for each successive version of the program. As the needs of our users continue to evolve, so will CAMAvision's Quick Summary, and really all of its data entry screens. Of course, reports won't be forgotten; there will always be more report options to code.

Caffeinated Dreams of a Simpler Tomorrow

By: Patrick Alexander

It all started with a cup of coffee. Black. Maybe they would ask if you wanted sugar or cream in it, but it was the same base substance either way. Next came the idea of decaffeinated coffee. It was a healthier alternative to the full octane stuff and the people rejoiced at being given a choice. People love choices. But over the past twenty years coffee shops have started springing up on street corners, in stores and malls and with them they brought an endless variety of blends and styles. And some people love the expanded set of choices, but there are others who long for the simplicity of days when it was just coffee.

Coffee isn't the only industry which has grown into a bloated monstrosity of what it once was. Software is another industry where new functionality seems to always be built on top of the existing infrastructure, and to some extent, CAMAvision is no different. Now all of this additional functionality has a reason, just as with the fifty types of coffee, there is a demand for it. But just because someone else needs their java fix in the morning, doesn't mean you want to deal with seeing it. And now you don't have to.

Implemented in version 18, initially as an alternative way to list using remote, the listing tab and forms can be utilized on the desktop as well. Why is this relevant? It is relevant because of how the listing forms work. They are at their core PDF, form-fill documents. And this means that they may be customized.

With this customization come a couple of major benefits. First, let's say that county A wants to show built-ins, but county B doesn't. We can accommodate them both by making two separate PDF templates. Furthermore, if county B wants to rearrange the form so all of the outside items appear last (since they always start indoors) we can make that happen. Second, with the way the access rights are set up in CAMAvision, a client could turn off the tabs for residential, ag buildings, and yard extras, while enabling the listing tab in their place. This will ensure your staff is populating and/or seeing only what you want them to. Reduce the choices forced on them by the existing tabs, and simplify their task to only things which matter to them. Finally, even after the listing forms have been completed, they are not yet applied to the parcel. This allows a review step (if desired). Additionally, the applied forms are retained, which provides a level of change history not currently available through the legacy tabs.

So you could go from a multi-tabbed residential screen like this:

Caffeinated Dreams of a Simpler Tomorrow-Cont'd

To one PDF form-fill document like this:

The listing form solution does have a couple of drawbacks. The first of which is their limited scope. As stated previously, the listing forms can only affect residential, ag buildings and yard extras (at least at the moment). The other drawback is the enablement of the listing tab does require a remote license (due to the initial idea behind how the listing form would be used).

Some people can't go without their Carmel Ribbon Crunch Frappuccino Blended coffee in the morning. But for those of you who can and long for the simplicity of yore, this listing tab solution may be for you. As always feel free to contact us and we would be happy to discuss its possibilities with you.

Missouri e-File Update - All Aboard

By: Sherry Surrett

In 2014, the counties of Cass, Vernon and Warren boarded the locomotive called e-File for personal property reporting forms as it pulled away from the terminal here at Vanguard Appraisals. In 2015, six additional jurisdictions jumped on board our speeding bullet of a process. With our second pass of the rails, we welcomed: Lincoln, Livingston, Marion, Pettis, Phelps, and Randolph counties. Their addition brought our passenger list up to nine clients. In anticipation of demand, we've added a whole new car and already look to extend our service to four additional clients!

Please allow us to toot our own horn:

- In the first 2 1/2 months, e-file submissions exploded, growing twentyfold from last year. This was before second mailings even hit the streets!!
- After second mailings and about 4 months in, we grew twenty-five fold in online submissions compared to last year.
- Clients and property owners alike are full of compliments and positive feedback.
- Personal Property was enhanced to import the email address, phone number and the reporting form, as well as update the account status. This import was designed to allow the jurisdictions to import as often as they see fit.
- The website continues to get updated nightly with the changes.
- We have a "feature" request list started due to the excellent suggestions and feedback from our clients.

Don't forget to register for the Missouri User Group Meeting to be held September 2-3rd, where you will enjoy a fresh look of all the features, as well as a sneak peek of what the future may hold.

My Extra Database:

By: Terri Scheuermann

On my day-to-day travels to your office, meetings and conferences, I hear many suggestions, concerns or complaints about our software, but rarely do I hear GREAT Pat-on-the-Back kudos. I recently was in Jerry's office, and he went on and on about how awesome the Extra Database module is. So, he put into words how and why he uses it, and with his permission, here is his testimonial:

Jerry Witt, Tama County Assessor

A revaluation is a very important part of the assessor job. My first revaluation was for the 2009 assessment year. It was terrifying changing the test tables, copying them over the main tables, and running the revaluation on my changes. It didn't feel much better two years later either. When I discovered there was an Extra Database, I knew I had to have it. We purchased the Extra Database Module in 2012 to use for the 2013 revaluation.

The previous revaluation years consisted of changing map factors and the manual level. These were very basic changes. For 2013 I decided to change our depreciation table and update our rural residential land values. I ran several different scenarios through the Extra Database Module, to see how the revaluation would affect individual parcels that were currently listed for sale, and some other ones that I was concerned about. Most of my rural residential listings were above my new values, so I backed down on the land values.

I personally do not like to run multiple revaluations in my Working Database, out of fear of messing something up, and not wanting to get the rest of my staff out of the program while the revaluation is running. If I don't like how the revaluation is going in my Extra Database, I will just save the Working Database over it, and start again. Doing this process several times has really taken the fear out running a revaluation.

I would definitely recommend the Extra Database to every newer assessor and to the more seasoned assessors that do not feel comfortable making changes for a revaluation.

"like" us on facebook   facebook.com/camavision

Join us on LinkedIn   search: "Vanguard Appraisals"

2015 PHOTO CONTEST

Photo Contest Rules

1. A photo, series of photos, or video can be submitted
2. The Vanguard bumper stickers must be visible, readable
3. Content of the photo/video must be Facebook appropriate

When the Vanguard staff chooses a photo, you will have 30 days to get as many likes as you can.

Submit digital images by email to brad@camavision.com or mail on a CD to Vanguard Appraisals, Inc. 1065 Sierra Ct NE Suite D Cedar Rapids, IA 52402.
Put Attn: Contest 2015
Digital photographs only-no printed photographs will be accepted

facebook.com/camavision

First Photo Contest Entry

Click here www.facebook.com/camavision

Tim Peters from Monona County Iowa is our first photo contest entry. Go to facebook.com/camavision to like Tim's photos.
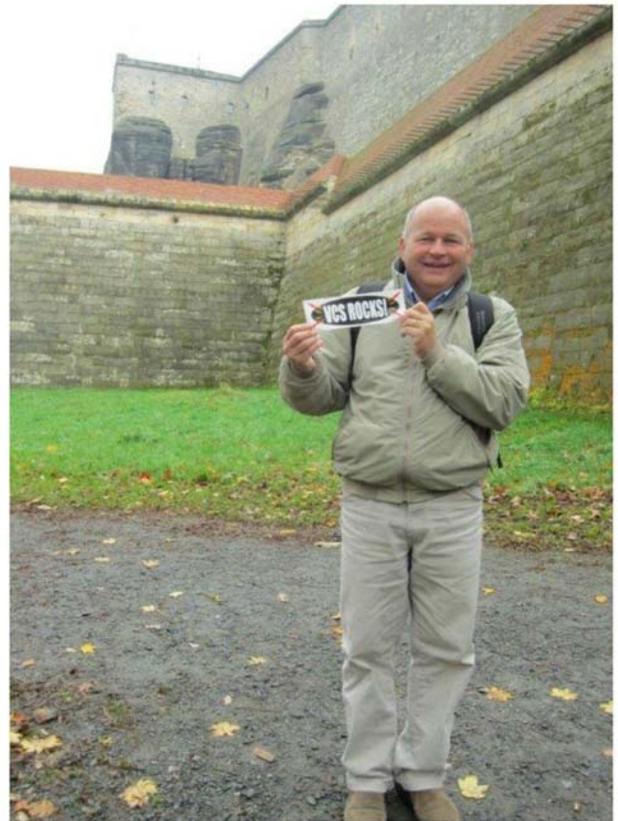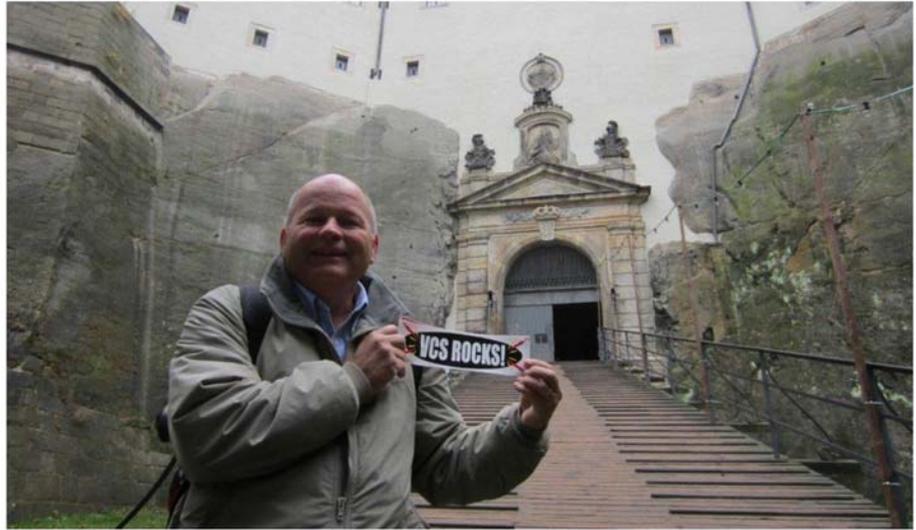
Meet Matt Shaffer our new IT Manager for Vanguard Appraisals

Matt grew up in Cedar Rapids and started his technical career in telecommunications. After transitioning to IT, he worked several years in medical, between St. Luke's, Allen Memorial and Mercy hospitals, starting in desktop support and working up to Server Administration. Most recently, he worked in managed services supporting several hundred businesses covering a territory from Waterloo to Oskaloosa. In his off time, Matt is an active musician and spends a lot of time writing, recording, and also audio and video production. But most of his spare time is spent with his 3 children: James, Kennedy and Rachael.

CAMAVISION.com /BLOG

Tablet Tips: Why the Surface Pro 3 is the device that can do it all

What you had to say about User Group Meetings in 2014

New weekly entries

Tips for CAMAvision

User Group Meeting news

Protecting a Constituent's Online Presence

By: Sherry Surrett

In lieu of recent news events, such as Ferguson and Baltimore, many law enforcement personnel and judges have requested their information be removed from the websites, citing fear for personal safety. Another recent trend in states such as Minnesota, Missouri, and Illinois is legislation dubbed "Safe At Home," which provides address confidentiality for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. The state of Iowa is currently in the process of trying to pass a very similar act into law. A popular question is how to prevent a property owner's information from making its way out to the website. A simple answer can be obtained by utilizing a Vanguard website and a taking a few simple steps. By doing the following, you can eliminate the display of qualifying parcels or personal property data online.

Within CAMAvision, there are two different methods to exclude parcels from the website.

Option 1:

1. Create a new PDF called Private Parcels, Safe at Home or something similar.
2. Any parcels matching the qualifications for Safe At Home or a similar law should then be moved to this PDF.
3. Send a full update to the website, excluding this PDF.

Items to Note:

- This option will require you to do the changes in both your working and certified database.
- If a parcel needs removed from the website after the full update is complete, you will need to set the privacy flag (as shown in Option 2), send the sales update and then move the parcel to the Private Parcel PDF.

Option 2:

1. Load the parcel in CAMAvision.
2. Go to the Status and Legal Screen and set the Privacy Flag to the appropriate options. See below for option descriptions.

All Names: Prevents parcel display via a name search but can be found by address, pin, etc. The name does not display on the results or parcel pages.

Entire Parcel: Hides entire parcel from the website, it cannot be found in any search.

3. Save the parcel.
4. Send either a sales or a full update to the website and this parcel will no longer display based on the privacy option selected.

# Protecting a Constituent's Online Presence-Cont'd

Items to Note:

- The ability to set the privacy flag is a User Access Right that can be changed in User Manager.

- Setting the Privacy Flag will also alter the appearance of the parcel within CAMAvision to alert office staff that they should proceed with caution before giving out information regarding this parcel.

- Red Exclamation Point on Search Screen next to Deed
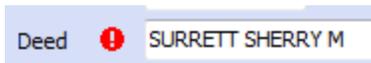
- Red Exclamation Point on Search Screen on the quick summary Note Tab with a note: MARKED PRIVATE:

- Parcel Number will display a Red background when the parcel is in Edit Mode.
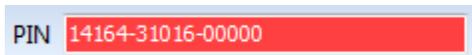
- Red Exclamation Point on General Tab next to Deed when the parcel is in Edit Mode.
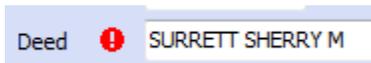
- Aside from removing this parcel from the website, the Privacy Flag also prevents this parcel from being included in any Data Export to a 3rd Party Company.

Within Missouri's VCS Personal Property, there is also a way to exclude an account from displaying online.

1. Load the account in Personal Property
2. Go to the Status tab and set the Private\Hide on Website option to Yes

3. Save the account.
4. Send either a full upload or an account change upload to the website and this account will no longer display on the website.

Protecting a Constituent's Online Presence-Cont'd

Item to Note:

- Setting the Private\Hide on Website option will also alter the appearance of the account within VCS Personal Property to alert office staff that they should proceed with caution before giving out information regarding this account.
  - The account search screen will display with a fuchsia background and ***Private Account Summary*** blinking text.
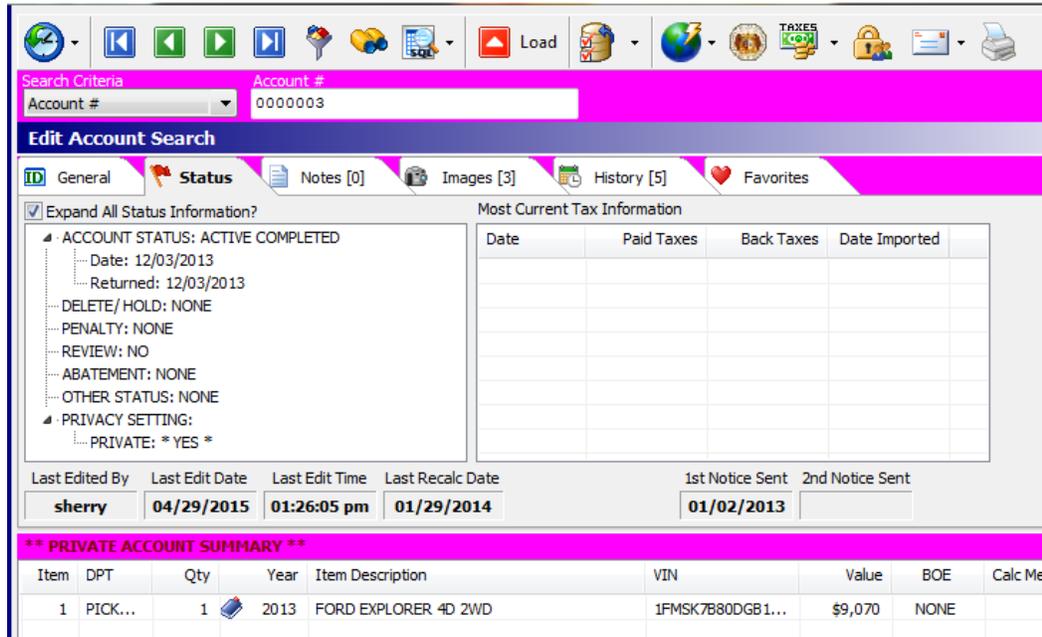
Summarize that Parcel For Me

By: Nick Klein

In this day and age, the Assessor's office is constantly bombarded with requests for parcel information. Be it a property owner, county office, or outside company, since they know the data is "in the computer," the recipient wants it quickly and as cheaply as possible. Few want to pour over multi-page documents anymore, even though it could clearly spell out how each value on a parcel is arrived. Produce the total, get them the bottom line, summarize the data.

Users of CAMAvision® know the Parcel Search Screen summary contains a wealth of information about a parcel. Broken up into tabs similar to the edit screens, each section distills key information about multiple land and structures onto one screen. Users are able to see, at-a-glance, large amounts of parcel data.
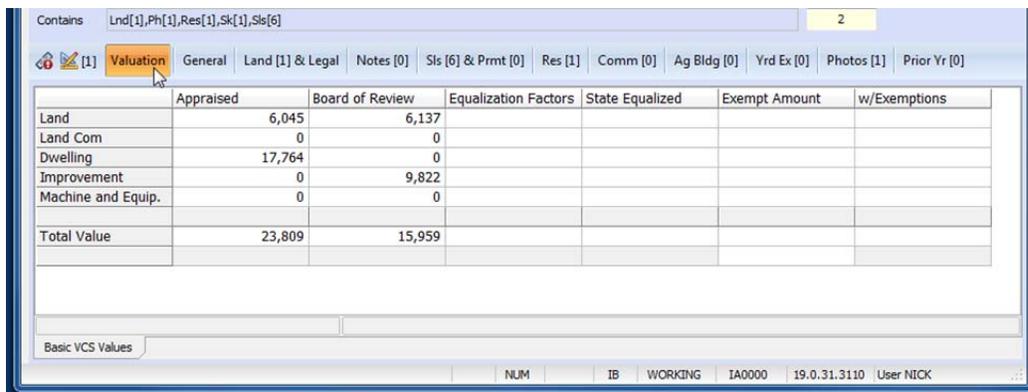
Summarize that Parcel For Me-Cont'd

From within CAMAvision we've been able to reuse this parcel summary in a variety of places. Whatever the parcel operation or batch process, each successive version of the program has seen the "Quick Summary" added to more and more places.

For example, most batch process log grids have a right-mouse click menu item giving users' access to summary information about a selected parcel. Simply right-click on the log, and you will have access to the Quick Summary.
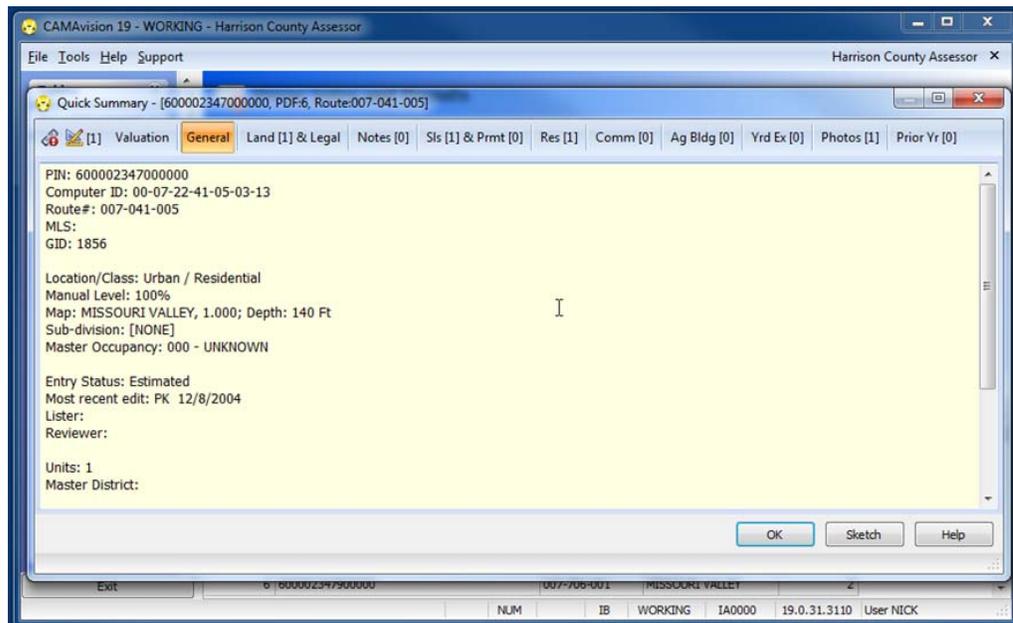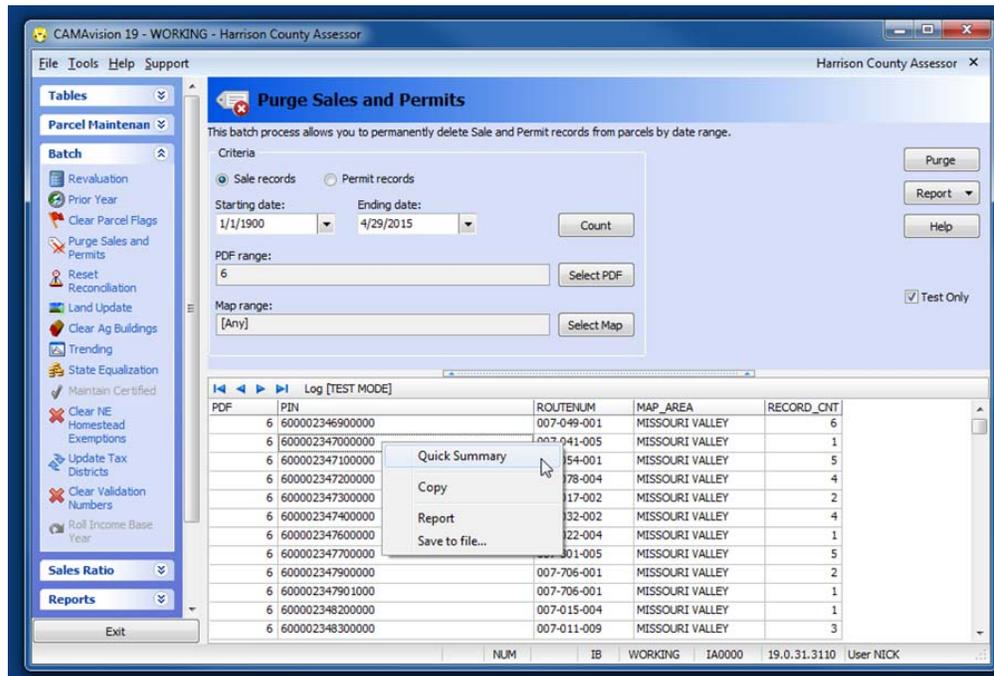
If you find a place in the program that needs the Quick Summary, we'd like to hear about it. As CAMAvision® continues to evolve I'm sure we'll continue to find new uses for the Quick Summary.

Windows 10 is Almost Here

By: Nick Klein

At the end of April, Microsoft issued the next iteration of its Windows 10 preview. This latest version gives us a closer glimpse at what will be coming – possibly as early as July 2015. It was also announced that for existing users of Windows 7 and 8.x, Windows 10 will be a free upgrade for the first year.

Perhaps the biggest change our users will see will be the return of a full-featured Start Menu. Microsoft caught a lot of flak for this change when Windows 8 came out in 2012. Things got a little better with Windows 8.1, and a small software industry was born creating utilities to bring it back.

Some of the developers here at Vanguard have been able to install and have a look at the Windows 10 preview releases. As the months progress, we hope to do some serious testing with CAMAvision. Right now, we're still kicking the tires like everyone else.

Whatever the exact date, it's all but a certainty that Windows 10 will be coming out this year. If you've already budgeted to get new computers I'd say stick to your current plans – don't let this new version dissuade when you want to buy. Windows 7 and Windows 8.1 will be supported for many years to come and you'll have a whole year to decide whether to do the free upgrade.
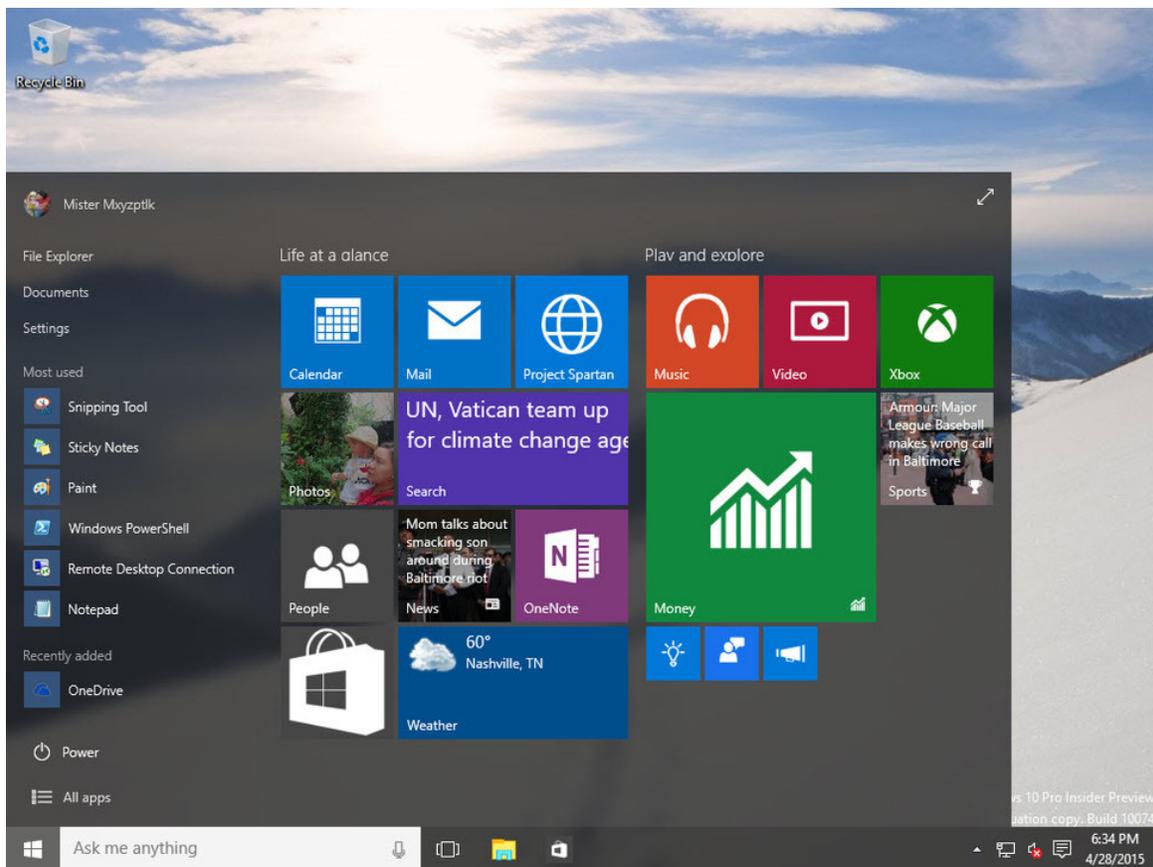

Image from Infoworld.com

To Update or Not to Update?

By: Danielle Powell

Technology is taking over, and you may get frustrated with continuous interruptions asking for software updates. You will get these on your smart phones, tablets, laptops, desktop computers, game consoles, and yes, even your CAMAvision, Personal Property, and other VCS programs require updates from time to time. Almost any good, complex software will require regular updates, but you may be asking, "Why do I need these anyway?"

Our tech support department and field representatives deal with this question often. Updates are critical and necessary in order to keep your programs functioning effectively to your needs. They often include dozens of enhancements and new features that will help you accomplish your tasks faster and more efficiently. They also resolve any inconsistencies or errors that could potentially hinder your daily routine. Now, you're probably thinking, "Well, my program works fine, so do I still need the update?"

That is really up to you. However, you may want to ask yourself a few questions before making a decision. Have you sent in any requests for changes to the program? Have you encountered problems with your program? Have you ever wondered if there was a better way to do something? If you answered yes to any of these questions, an update may have just the solution you are looking for.

Would you like to know exactly what enhancements and changes have been implemented to the new version before making a decision? Those are available for review, and you can access them at any time from Net News, located within the CAMAvision Help menu:
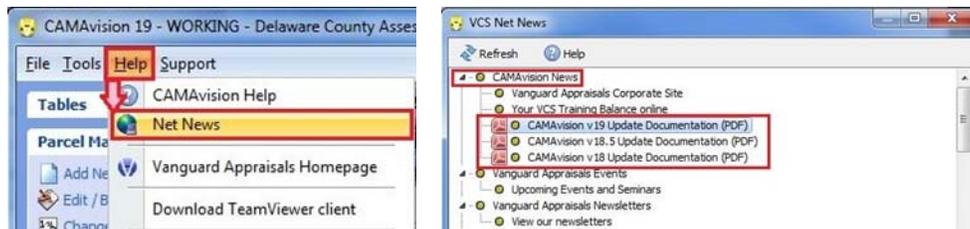
Not sure which version your office is currently running? That information can be found on the login screen, the loading screen, and the bottom-right corner within the program:
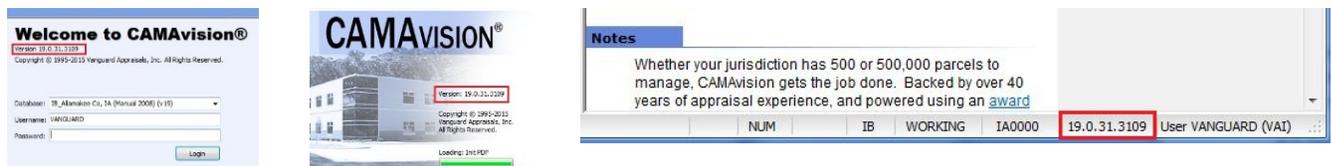
Call VCS Technical Support (1-800-736-8625) and ask about updating for more information.

Welcome our new clients

Illinois
Lawrence County

Iowa
Louisa County

Minnesota
Carver County
Clay County
Clayton/Dexter/Frankford, (multiple) Twps
Clearwater County
City of Moorhead
St Louis County

Missouri
Audrain County
Clark County
Platte County

North Dakota
Bismarck City
Emmons County
Hettinger County
LaMoure County
Mountrail County
Oliver County
Slope County
Wells County

Nebraska
Holt County
Johnson County
York County

South Dakota
Jackson County
Lake County
Sully County

Register for 2015 User Group Meetings

Missouri-September 2nd & 3rd at the Stoney Creek Inn Columbia

Minnesota-September 9th & 10th at the Ramada Inn Bloomington

North Dakota-October 7th & 8th at the Comfort Inn Bismarck

Iowa-October 14th & 15th at the Cedar Rapids Marriott Cedar Rapids

At this year's meetings we will be offering a residential grading, condition & data input day 2 with Scott Johnson/Mike Weeks

http://www.camavision.com/events.php

15 Year Clients

Adams County IA

Cedar Rapids IA

Cerro Gordo County IA

Lyon County IA

Mason City IA

Monona County IA

Page County IA

Scott County IA

Taylor County IA

Nicollet County MN

Polk County MN

Atchison County MO

Dickinson City ND

Williams County ND

Thank You for your Loyalty

Reappraisals Completed for 1/1/2015

2015 (Year of work 2014)

Brule County SD Commercial & Industrial (Chamberlain)

Carroll County IA Commercial & Industrial

Cass County ND All Classes (Reed Township)

City of Dickinson ND Commercial

Delaware County IA Commercial & Industrial

Dickinson County IA Commercial & Industrial

Dunn County ND All Classes

Dunn County ND All Classes (Dodge)

Dunn County ND All Classes (Dunn Center)

Dunn County ND All Classes (Halliday)

Dunn County ND All Classes (Killdeer)

Grundy County IA Residential

Henry County IA Residential

Iowa County IA Commercial & Industrial

Monona County IA Commercial & Industrial

Montgomery County IA Residential

Polk County MN Commercial & Industrial (Crookston)

Polk County MN Industrial

Renville County ND All Classes (Ensign Township)

Renville County ND All Classes (Glenburn)

Ward County ND Commercial

Wayne County IA Grain Elevators

Allison Barta
Office Support Staff Trainee

Miranda Caldwell
Office Support Staff Trainee

Caitlin Brown
Office Support Staff Trainee

Jamie Morrissey
Office Support Staff Trainee

Welcome Vanguard's Newest Employees

Matt Shaffer
Computer Hardware Specialist

Matthew Penrod
Mass Appraisal Associate

Jim Sinclair
Mass Appraisal Associate

Randall Thorton
Mass Appraisal Associate

Brendon Tharp
Mass Appraisal Associate

Trenten Tharp
Mass Appraisal Associate

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Since 1968, Vanguard Appraisals has been at the forefront of the mass appraisal industry. Our trained staff includes specialists in field data collection, appraisal review, pricing, mass appraisal project management, court preparation and testimony, data entry, software engineering, technical support and training.

Our Flagship CAMAvision product has been developed specifically to operate in the assessor's environment. Vanguard is a full service company. We provide a wide range of appraisal products and services for assessors, we also see all the projects through completion.

Customer satisfaction is our main goal.

Mark Your Calendars Upcoming Conferences

MAAO-Minnesota Association of Assessing Officers

Dates: May 20th – May 21st, 2015

Location: Holiday Inn St Cloud

MCCC-Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative

Dates: June 1st – June 4th, 2015

Location: Arrowwood Alexandria

ICA-Iowa Certified Assessors

Dates: July 15th – July 16th, 2015

Location: Grand Harbor Hotel Dubuque

Assessor's Fall Workshop

Dates: August 23rd – August 27th, 2015

Location: Sandhills Convention Center North Platte

ISAA-Iowa State Association of Assessors

Dates: September 27th – September 30th, 2015

Location: Airport Holiday Inn Des Moines

MAAO-Minnesota Association of Assessing Officers

Dates: October 4th – October 7th, 2015

Location: Craguns Brainerd

NDACo-North Dakota Association of Counties

Dates: October 25th – October 27th, 2015

Location: Bismarck Event Center Bismarck

IACO Illinois Association of Counties (Fall Conference)

Dates: November 22nd — November 24th, 2015

Location: Marriott Pere' Marquette Peoria

SDAAO-South Dakota Association of Assessing Officers

Dates: June 2nd – June 5th, 2015

Location: Kelly Inn Yankton

NCRAAO-North Central Regional Association of Assessing Officers

Dates: June 14th – June 17th, 2015

Location: Chula Vista Resort Wisconsin Dells

NDAAO-North Dakota Association of Assessing Officers

Dates: August 9th – August 13th, 2015

Location: Comfort Inn Bismarck

IAAO-International Association of Assessing Officers

Dates: September 13th – September 16th, 2015

Location: Marriott Indianapolis

MAA-Missouri Association of Assessing Officers

Dates: September 28th – October 1st, 2015

Location: Branson

MAC-Missouri Association of Counties

Dates: October 15th – October 16th, 2015

Location: Osage Beach

ISAC-Iowa State Association of Counties (Fall)

Dates: November 18th – November 20th, 2015

Location: Double Tree Cedar Rapids

NACO-Nebraska Association of County Officials

Dates: December 9th — December 11th, 2015

Location: Younes Conference Center Kearney