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Deliver Customer Invoices Utilizing Balance Forward Billing

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Abstract

Many companies require flexible billing cycles to provide consolidated billing on a regular/ cyclical basis.

Balance Forward Billing (BFB) was a feature introduced in R12 to replace and enhance the functionality in Consolidated Billing. BFB provides the flexibility to define multiple billing cycles based on business and customer requirements. It delivers the option to view/display Receivables Billing information at the customer site or account level, including in a detail or summary level view via Bill Presentment Architecture (BPA).

Additionally, BFB can be set-up to: consolidate into one bill all customer transactions and payments per/ or across multiple sites, carry over a beginning balance from a previous period, reflect any outstanding balance for a current billing period (also show aging of outstanding balance) and present an itemized list of all billing activities (invoices, debit memos, credit memos, adjustments and/ or receipts).

Introduction

BALANCE FORWARD BILLING (BFB) – ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

This paper will provide an overview of the Balance Forward Billing (BFB) functionality in Accounts Receivable and how it supports customer billing combinations across different transaction types. It will also cover detail and summary formats, setup for billing cycles, payment terms, and customer profile classes. Additional topics covered will include:

- The full BFB cycle from the Generation process through the Confirm process
- How cycles are used to generate BFB data
- How to set up BFB for off-cycle billing
- How a BFB bill can act as both an invoice and a statement.

BALANCE FORWARD BILLING OVERVIEW

In E-Business Suite (EBS) Release 12, Balance Forward Billing (BFB) replaced the Consolidated Billing functionality available in EBS Release 11.5.10. It is intended to allow for combining multiple transaction types together into a single billing document for customer convenience.

BFB also provides a billing format that is unique to the Utility and other industries that combine open item balances into a single “Balance Forward” total. Each transaction included on a BFB can have its own accounting setups in Accounts Receivable to allow for disparate accounting treatments across multiple transaction types. BFBs can be produced in either summary or detailed formats. In detailed format the BFB acts as both a bill and a statement as all transactions, such as payments and adjustments as well as invoices in the current billing cycle are displayed on the bill, including the dates the transactions were applied to the customer’s account.

BFB is cycle-dependent and will automatically calculate beginning balances for the current billing cycle by combining all transactions from the previous cycle(s) into the opening cycle balance, hence the concept of a “Balance Forward” total. BFBs can be produced at any time during a cycle by running the Generate Balance Forward Bills concurrent process in “Draft” mode which will allow for off-cycle billing when necessary.

BFB uses Oracle Bill Presentment to render the billing document. Bill Presentment uses a standard template layout for both detailed and summary formats that can be modified to suit an organization's formatting requirements. Bill Presentment will produce hard copy bills for mailing and optionally, electronic bills for online distribution using Oracle iReceivables.

BALANCE FORWARD BILLING DATA POINTS AVAILABLE IN BILL PRESENTMENT ARCHITECTURE (BPA)

Balance Forward Billing (BFB) data points are available in Bill Presentment Architecture (BPA) to provide a more elegant customer-facing view of receivables billing information.

The process using a seeded BFB template provided in BPA to construct a personalized BFB template will be reviewed. The example reviewed will include specific data elements that support a business process and billing information required in the utility sector. Additionally, this paper will show how to format a template, include and exclude specific billing data elements and how to produce bills that can be presented using iReceivables or printed for mail distribution.

Balance Forward Billing Setup Steps

DEFINE BFB BILLING CYCLES

BFB uses Billing Cycles as the time “window” for grouping transactions together to calculate beginning and ending balances. If an organization requires multiple billing cycles (e.g., monthly, quarterly) then this step must be performed for each cycle.

In the setup example shown in Figure 1, note that BFB supports multiple cycles of the same duration but allows for different billing days to be identified. This supports the ability to bill multiple monthly cycles in the same period by billing on different days within the month.

Navigation: Receivables Manager> Setup> Print> Balance Forward Billing Cycles

Figure 1

Balance Forward Billing Cycles (Public Sector Receivables Manager)

Name: MONTHLY

Description: MONTHLY BFB CYCLE

Start Date: 01-JAN-2014

Frequency: Monthly

Repeat every: 1 Month(s)

Day(s) of Month:

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 13	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
<input type="checkbox"/> 15	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	<input type="checkbox"/> 17	<input type="checkbox"/> 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 21
<input type="checkbox"/> 22	<input type="checkbox"/> 23	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 25	<input type="checkbox"/> 26	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 27	<input type="checkbox"/> 28
<input type="checkbox"/> 29	<input type="checkbox"/> 30	<input type="checkbox"/> 31				

Last Day of Month

Type of Day: All Days Exclude Saturdays and Sundays

This example shows 4 billing days in each month.

DEFINE BFB PAYMENT TERMS

A balance forward payment term needs to be defined with the Billing Cycle field populated. Once the Billing Cycle field is populated (optional) this term is considered a Balance Forward billing term.

In order to enable the BFB data gathering functionality, both the term and the cycle must be defined and combined together to establish a BFB billing term. Note in the example shown below in Figure 2, the payment using this term is due 10 days after the billing date as defined on the BFB cycle. Generating BFB data is cycle-dependent. Data for a BFB can only be generated and confirmed once per cycle. Generating data for a future cycle cannot occur until the current cycle has been completed.

Navigation: Receivables Manager> Setup> Transactions> Payment Terms

Figure 2

Payment Terms (Public Sector Receivables Manager)

Name: MONTHLY
Description: MONTHLY BFB TERM
 Allow Discount on Partial Payments
 Prepayment
 Credit Check
Billing Cycle: MONTHLY
Base Amount: 100
Discount Basis: Lines Only
Effective Dates: 01-JAN-2014 -
Print Lead Days:
Installment Options: Include tax and freight in first installment []

Payment Schedule

Seq	Relative Amount	Due Days	Date	Day of Month	Months Ahead
1	100	10			

Discounts

DEFINE BFB CUSTOMER PROFILE CLASSES

In the setup example shown in Figure 3, the optional but recommended BFB setup step Customer Profile Class will be covered. Having a customer profile class simplifies the set-up of Balance Forward Billing enabled customers, as the values for fields pertaining to Balance Forward Billing are used to default the necessary values into the customer record. You can override values defaulted in from the profile class.

Because it is recommended to define a customer profile class for Balance Forward Billing, check the “enabled” box on the Profile Class setup form. Once enabled, the fields for Bill Level (account or site) and Type (detail or summary) are enabled and only Balance Forward Payment terms will be available for selection in the Payment Terms field list of values.

Navigation: Receivables Manager> Customers> Profile Classes

Figure 3

Customer Profile Classes

Name: BFB MONTHLY | BFB MONTHLY BILLING PROFILE CLASS | Active

Profile Class | Late Charge Profile | Profile Class Amounts

Balance Forward Billing

Enabled | Bill Level: Site | Type: Detail

Terms

Payment Terms: MONTHLY | Allow Discount | Override Terms | Discount Grace Days: 0

Collectors

Name: Cindy Perry | Classification: | Periodic Review Cycle: | Analyst: | Tolerance: 0 % | Credit Check

Invoicing

Tax Printing: | Grouping Rule: |

Statements and Dunning

Send Statement | Send Credit Balance | Send Dunning Letters | Cycle: | Letter Set: Standard

Match Receipts By: | Auto Cash Rule Set: | Remainder Rule Set: | Automatic Matching Rule Set: | AutoReceipts Include Disputed Items

This is the Monthly term previously defined

These setups are optional. Use Dunning Letters if defined.

IDENTIFY BFB CUSTOMERS

When creating a BFB Customer, you have the option to use a BFB Profile class, as created earlier, or you can use any profile class and just address the fields highlighted under Balance Forward Billing and Terms. It will be necessary to either assign the correct profile class to the existing customers that will receive BFBs or modify the existing DEFAULT profile class with the required BFB parameters. It is recommended to change the profile to the BFB profiles rather than to change the DEFAULT profile and run the update process after doing so. This will ensure that only customers that are to receive BFB bills will have them generated.

To identify a customer to receive Balance Forward Bills perform the following setup changes:

Navigation: Receivables Manager> Customers> Customers (as depicted in Figure 4)

Figure 4

The screenshot shows the 'Customers' search interface. At the top, there is a 'Customer Type' dropdown menu set to 'Organization'. Below this is a 'Search' section with a 'Simple Search' form. The form includes fields for Customer Name (JACKIE O'S), Registry ID, Account Number, Account Description, Tax Registration Number, Taxpayer ID, D-U-N-S Number, SIC Code, Account Type, Customer Class, Customer Category, and Reference. There are also fields for Contact First Name, Contact Last Name, Address Line 2, City, State, Postal Code, County, Province, and Country. A 'Status' dropdown is set to 'Active'. Below the search form is a 'Create' button and a table of search results. The table has columns for Select Name, Registry ID, D-U-N-S Number, Address, Country, Primary URL, and Status. The first row is selected and shows 'JACKIE O'S' with Registry ID 154882 and Address 24 WEST UNION ST, ATHENS, OH 45701. Below the table is an 'Accounts' section with a 'Status' dropdown set to 'Active' and a 'Go' button. There is a 'Create Account' button and a table of account details. The table has columns for Account Number, Account Description, Profile Class, Primary Bill-To Address, and Status Details. The first row shows Account Number 32114, Account Description W0UB, Primary Bill-To Address 24 WEST UNION ST, ATHENS, OH 45701, and Status Active. A red callout box points to the 'Open the Account Details form' button.

Select Name	Registry ID	D-U-N-S Number	Address	Country	Primary URL	Status
JACKIE O'S	154882		24 WEST UNION ST, ATHENS, OH 45701	United States		Active

Account Number	Account Description	Profile Class	Primary Bill-To Address	Status Details
32114	W0UB		24 WEST UNION ST, ATHENS, OH 45701	Active

On the Account Details form, open the Account Profile tab. Change the Account Profile Class to the new BFB Profile Class on the Account Profile tab as indicated below in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Customers >
Update Account: 32114

Customer Information
Name: JACKIE O'S
Customer Type: ORGANIZATION
Registry ID: 154882

Account
Account Number: 32114
Sales Channel: [Dropdown]
Account Description: [Text]
Reference: 36027
Classification: [Dropdown]
Status: Active
Account Type: External
Context Value: [Dropdown]

Profile Class: BFB MONTHLY

Credit and Collection
* Collector: Cindy Perry
Credit Rating: [Dropdown]
Credit Classification: [Dropdown]
Review Cycle: [Dropdown]
Account Status: [Dropdown]
Risk Code: [Dropdown]
Tolerance (%): 0
Collectible (%): [Text]
 Credit Check
 Credit Hold
Credit Analyst: [Dropdown]
Last Credit Review: [Text]
Next Credit Review: [Text] (example: 21-Jan-2014)

Balance Forward Billing
* Bill Level: Site
* Type: Detail
 Enable

Navigate from the Account level to the Account Site level to also add the new BFB Profile Class to the Account Site level Profile tab. An example of this is shown below in Figure 6.

In most cases there will not be a Profile Class assigned at the site level so add the newly created BFB Profile Class rather than replace the existing one.

Figure 6

Customers >
Site: 37389

Organization Name: JACKIE O'S
Account Number: 32114
Registry ID: 154882
Account Description: [Text]

Location
Address: 24 WEST UNION ST ATHENS, OH 45701
Tax Profile: [Text]

Account Site Information
Site Name: [Text]

Profile Class: BFB MONTHLY

Credit and Collection
* Collector: Cindy Perry
Credit Rating: [Dropdown]
Credit Classification: [Dropdown]
Collectible (%): [Text]
 Credit Check
 Credit Hold

Note: The next (very important) step is to verify after changing the Profile Class value that it is set properly. For Billing at the Site level BFB will NOT generate a bill if there is not a relationship between the Customer, the Account Number and the Site Number.

DEFINE SYSTEM OPTIONS

To display both the invoice number and the BFB number on the transaction form, perform the following setup in the System Options form as shown below in Figure 7. This is optional but recommended.

Navigation: Receivables Manager> Setup> System> System Options

Figure 7

The screenshot shows the 'System Options (Ohio University Operations)' window with the 'Trans and Customers' tab selected. The 'Transactions' section includes the following options:

- Allow Change to Printed Transactions
- Allow Payment of Unrelated Transactions
- Allow Transaction Deletion
- Show Billing Number

The 'Tax Invoice Printing Options' section includes:

- Summarize By Tax Name (dropdown menu)
- Document Number Generation Level: When saved (dropdown menu)

The 'Late Charges' section includes:

- Assess Late Charges
- Average Daily Balance: Balance Calculation (text box), Calculation Period (text box)
- Interest Invoice Transaction Type (text box)
- Debit Memo Charge Transaction Type (text box)
- Interest Charge Activity: Finance Charge (text box)
- Penalty Charge Activity (text box)
- Late Charge Batch Source (text box)
- Default Receipt Method for Interest Invoice

The 'AutolInvoice' section includes:

- Purge Interface Tables
- Max Memory (in bytes): 65535 (text box)
- Log File Message Level: 3 (text box)
- Tuning Segments: Accounting Flex (text box), System Items (text box), Territory (text box)

The 'Customers' section includes:

- Automatic Customer Numbering
- Automatic Site Numbering
- Create Reciprocal Customer (C)
- Grouping Rule Name: DEFAULT (text box)

A red callout box points to the 'Show Billing Number' checkbox with the text: "Check this box to reveal the BFB number on the transaction form."

This completes the setup steps to enable Balance Forward Billing.

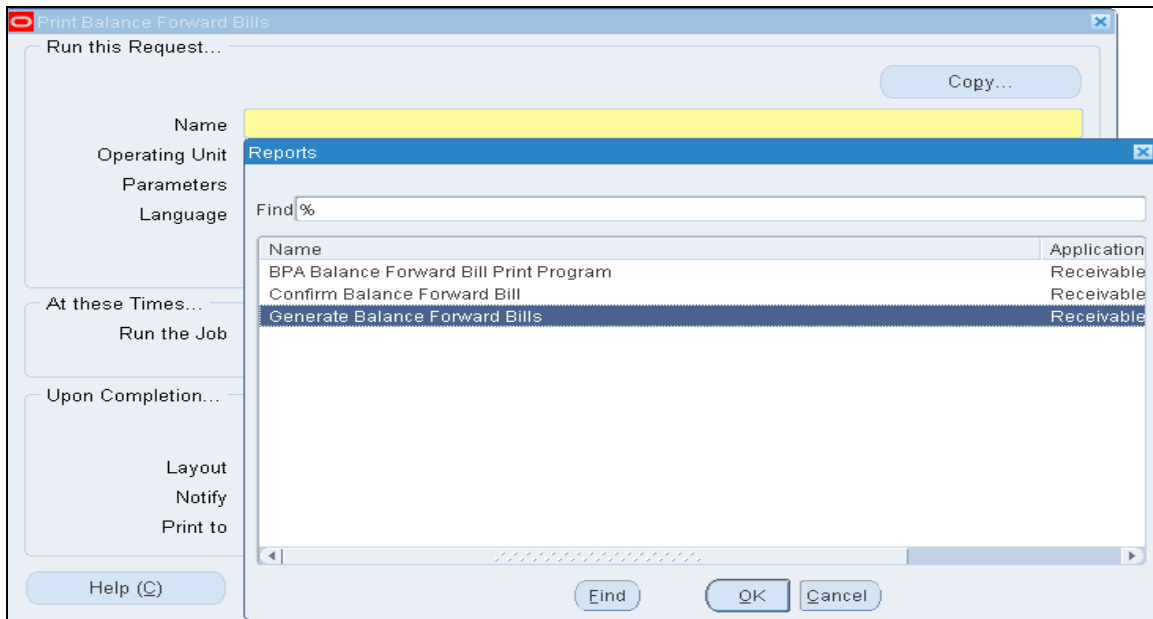
Balance Forward Billing Processing

GENERATE BALANCE FORWARD BILLS

To generate (create) Balance Forward Bills the Generate BFB process must be run from the navigation menu.

Navigation: Receivables Manager> Print Documents> Generate Balance Forward Bills as shown below in Figure 8.

Figure 8



In Figure 9 below, the parameters for the Generate BFB concurrent process are displayed. Note that the Billing Date parameter is optional. If the billing date is left blank, the generate process will use the latest date derived from the selected billing cycle that is on or before the system date. If a date is defined it must be prior to the system date. However, since the billing date is derived, it is only necessary to enter a billing date if there is a need to generate off-cycle BFBs.

Figure 9

The screenshot shows a window titled "Parameters" with the following fields and values:

Print Option	Print draft balance forward bills
Operating Unit	
Print Output	Yes
Billing Cycle	MONTHLY
Future Dates Billing Flag	No
Billing Date	

CONFIRM BALANCE FORWARD BILLS

To confirm Balance Forward Bills, the Confirm BFB process must be run from the navigation menu.

Navigation: Receivables Manager> Print Documents> Confirm Balance Forward Bills

As shown below in Figure 10, running the Confirm BFB process displays the following parameters:

Figure 10

The screenshot shows the "Print Balance Forward Bills" process window with the "Parameters" sub-window open. The "Parameters" window has the following fields:

Confirm Option	
Operating Unit	
Customer Number Low	
Customer Number High	
Bill To Site Low	
Bill To Site High	
Billing Date Low	
Billing Date High	
Billing Number Low	
Billing Number High	
Concurrent Request ID	

A "Confirm Option" dialog box is also visible, showing a list of options:

- Confirm Option
- Accept draft balance forward bills
- Reject draft balance forward bills

If the Reject option is chosen, the BFBs will be “erased” and can be generated and printed again. Note that the concurrent request ID used to originally generate the bills must be entered as a parameter. If the request ID is not entered the bills will not be “erased”.

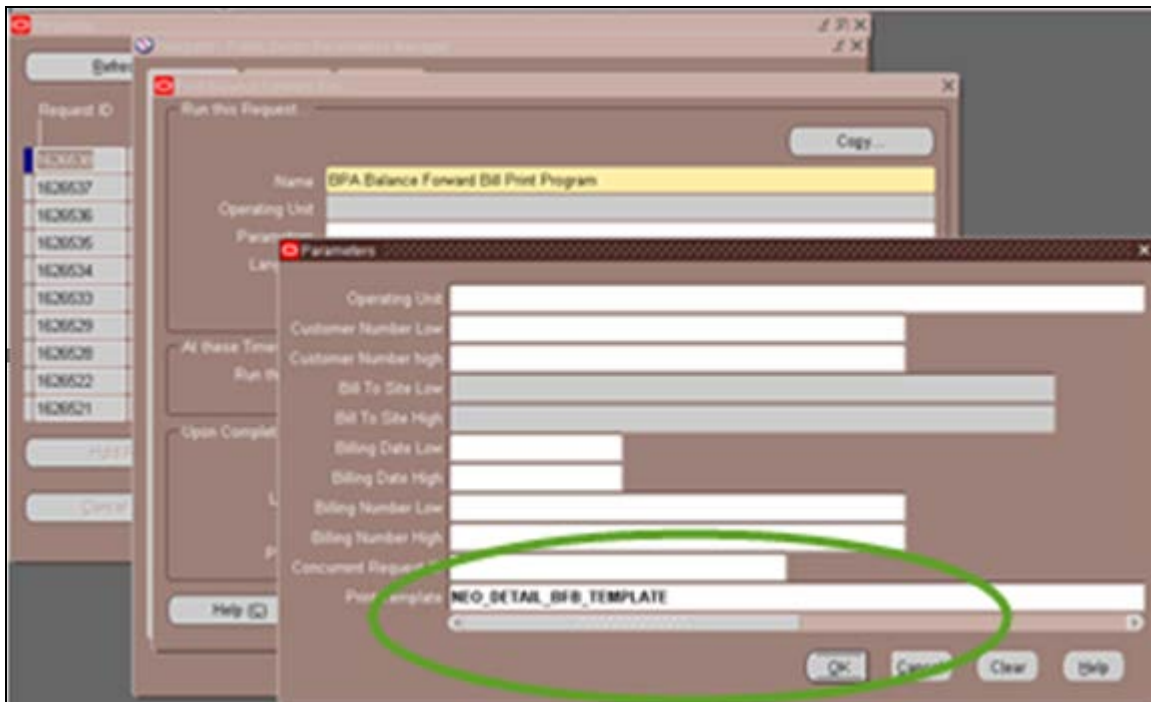
When printing draft bills it is best to use this option for editing and verifying amounts. If the “Accept” option is selected, the

BFBs will be sent to Bill Presentment and stored there for future printing and review if needed. Remember, BFBs can still be printed again from Bill Presentment if this option is chosen.

When you generate BFBs, Oracle by default will select a seeded template. To print the bills using a personalized template (see Bill Presentment Architecture section below for how to define a personalized template) you must run the BPA Balance Forward Bill Print Program selecting your template as a parameter as shown below in Figure 11.

Navigation: Receivables Manager> Print Documents> BPA Balance Forward Bill Print Program

Figure 11



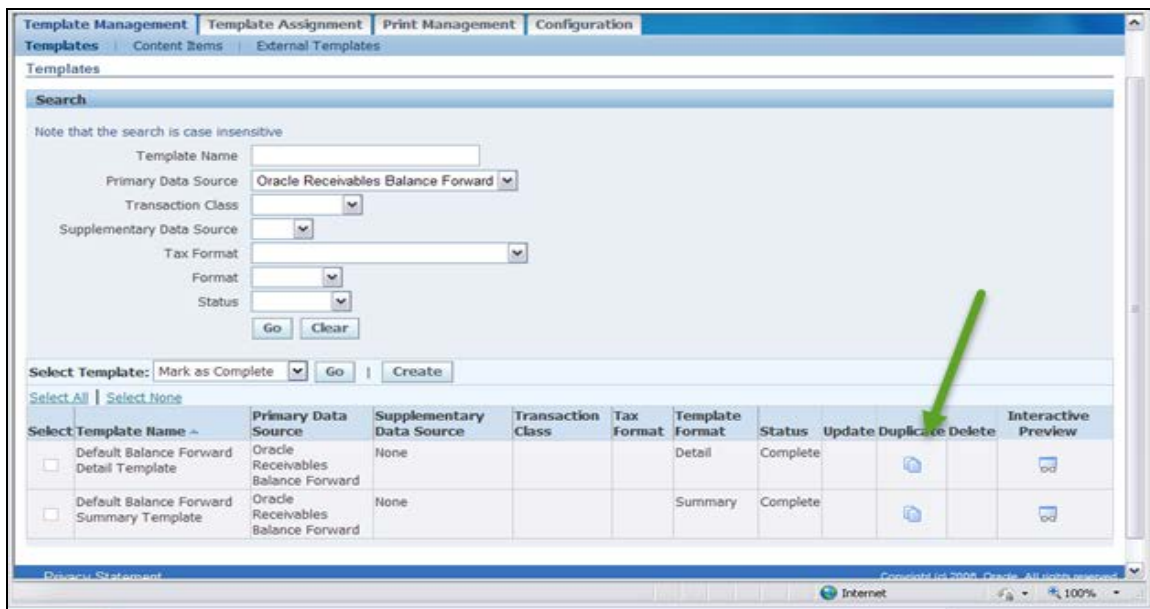
Bill Presentment Architecture (BPA) for Balance Forward Billing (BFB)

BILL PRESENTMENT ARCHITECTURE SETUP STEPS FOR BFB

Navigation: Bill Presentment Super User> Bill Management> Template Management

Click the “Duplicate” icon as shown below in Figure 12 for the Balance Forward Detail Template.

Figure 12



As shown below in Figure 13, create the personalized template as shown below then click the “Apply” button.

Figure 13

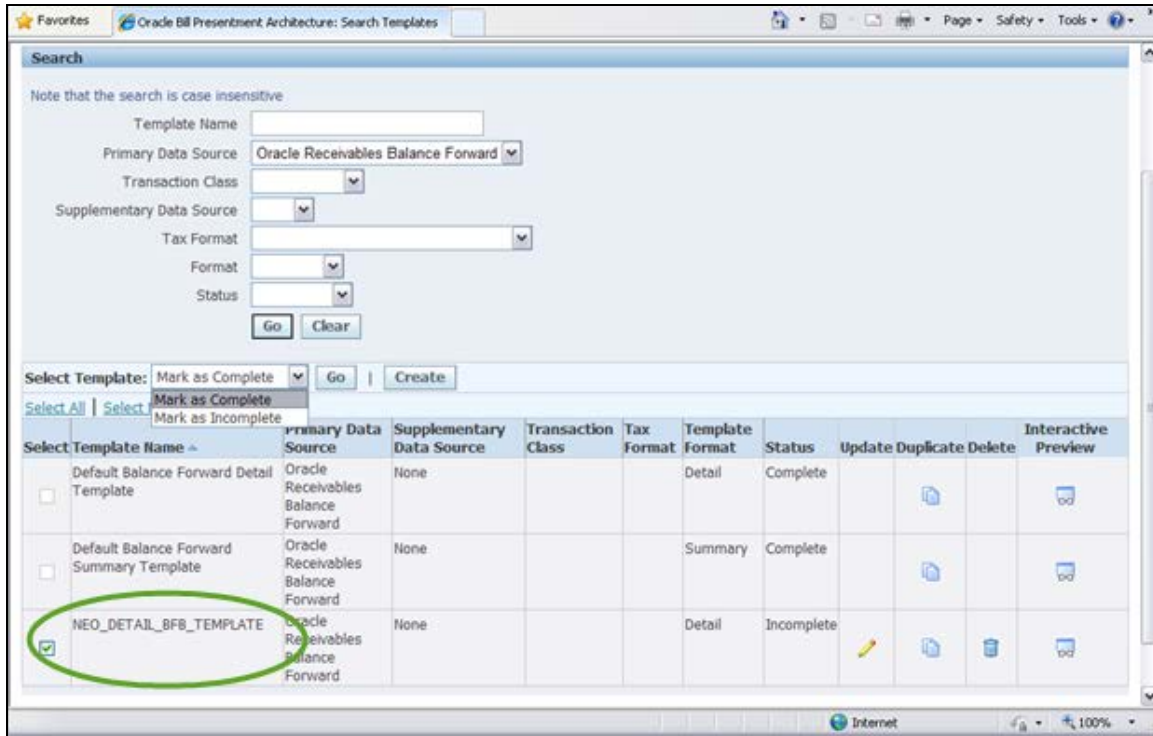
The screenshot displays the Oracle Template Management interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Template Management', 'Template Assignment', 'Print Management', and 'Configuration'. Below these, there are sub-tabs for 'Templates', 'Content Items', and 'External Templates'. The main area is titled 'Duplicate Template' and shows the 'Original Template' as 'Default Balance Forward Detail Template'. The 'Duplicate Template' section contains the following fields:

- Template Name: NEO_DETAIL_BFB_TEMPLATE
- Template Description: NEORSO Detail BFB Template
- Primary Data Source: Oracle Receivables Balance Forward
- Supplementary Data Source: None
- Format: Detail (dropdown menu)

There are two 'Cancel' and 'Apply' buttons. The 'Apply' button is highlighted. At the bottom of the window, there is a 'Privacy Statement' link and a copyright notice: 'Copyright (c) 2006, Oracle. All rights reserved.' The status bar at the very bottom shows 'Done' and 'Internet'.

As shown below in Figure 14, re-query the customer template that was just created, verify the template Status is “Incomplete”. The template must be in “Incomplete” status to be modified. Click the “Update” (pencil) icon to update the template.

Figure 14

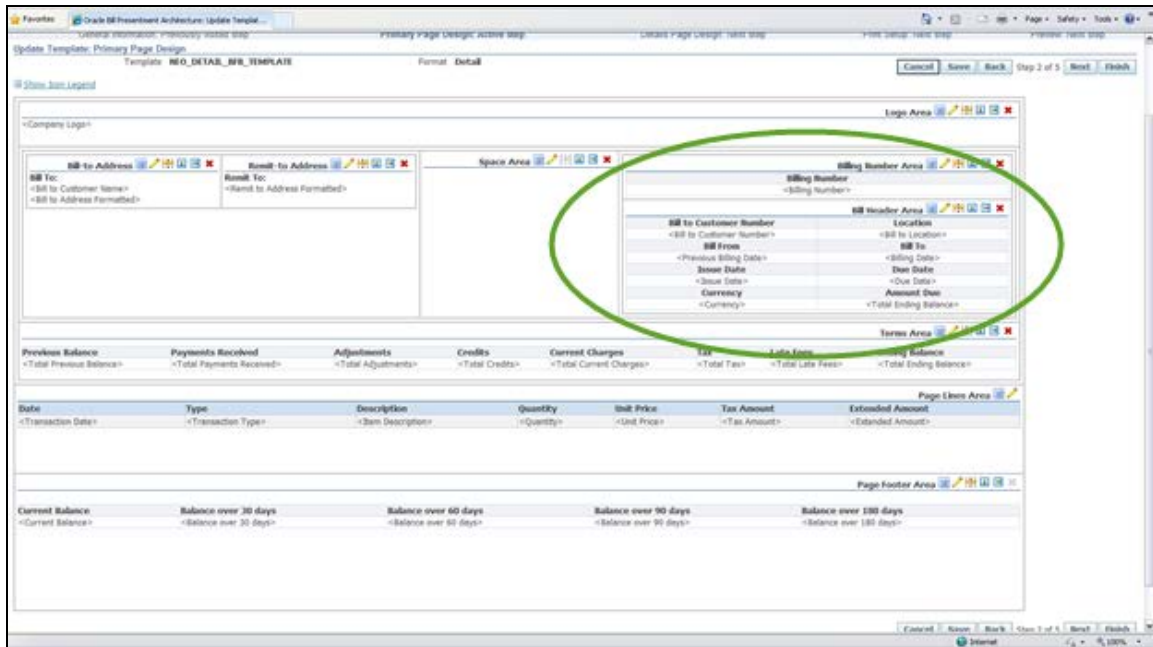


Click through the Wizard to the Primary Page Design screen below. This is the primary screen used to format the bill to meet specific requirements.

MODIFYING THE BPA BILL LAYOUT

To Modify the Bill Layout, click the “Select Content and Layout” icon for the Billing Header Area as shown in Figure 15 below.

Figure 15



To remove an item, highlight the item in the right hand pane and click “Remove”. This removes the item from the bill layout and moves it to the Available Content Items pane. In this example we remove the Currency and Issue Date fields. Note the vertical arrows to the right. These allow you to reorder the fields within the Bill Header Area. All of the above are shown below in Figure 16.

Figure 16

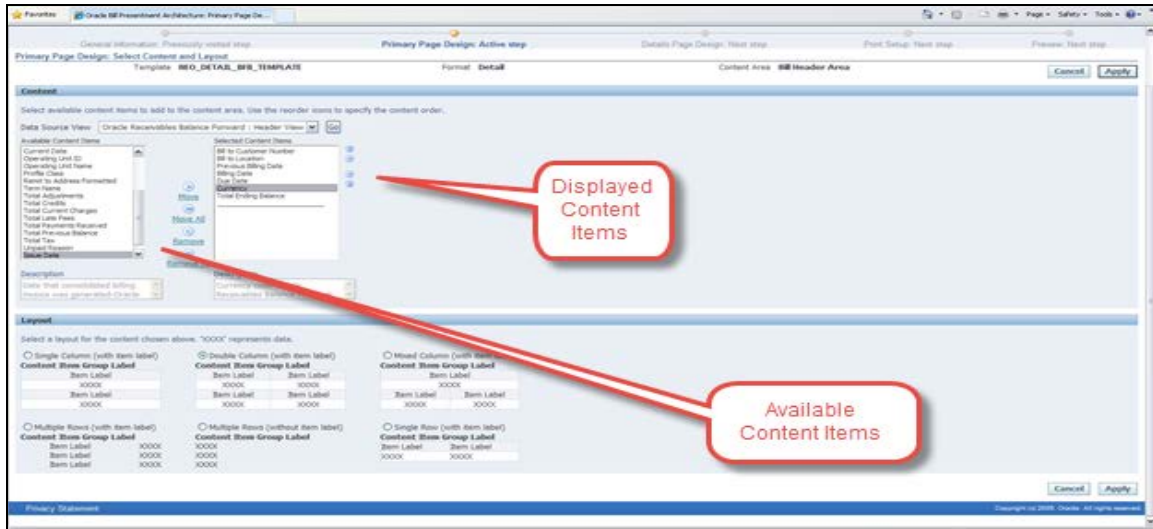


Figure 17 below covers how to change the column layout of the Bill Header Area, select from the options in the Layout area of the form. In this example, the “Mixed Column” (with item label) layout is selected.

Click the “Apply” button to save your changes and return to the Update Template Primary Page Design form.

Figure 17

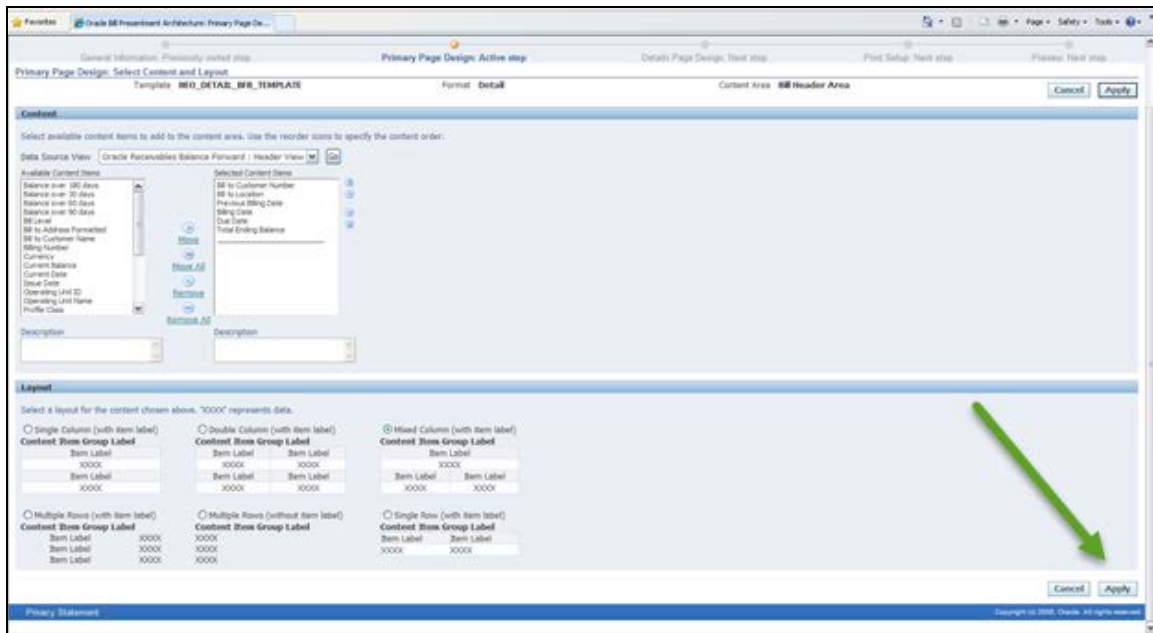


Figure 18 reflects continued work through the wizard. The Update Template Print Setup Page allows for changes to the print layout for non-standard sized bills. The default setups assume an 8.5x11 setup and are accepted in this example.

Figure 18

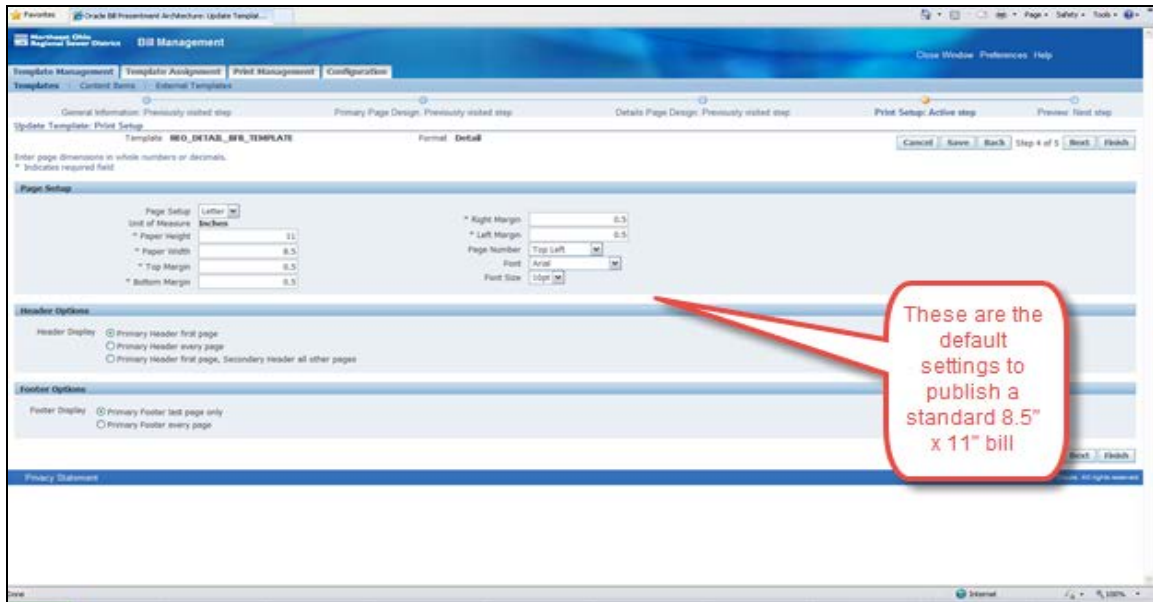


Figure 19 below addresses the fifth step in the wizard which is the Update Template: Preview. This page shows a generic rendering of the personalized print layout without any data. To see an Interactive Preview with data, the Generate BFB Bills process must have been run. See below for Interactive Preview. Click the “Finish” button to save all changes to the personalized template.

Figure 19

Update Template: Preview

Template: **NO_DETAIL_BFB_TEMPLATE** Format: **Detail** [Cancel](#) [Back](#) Step 5 of 5 [Finish](#)

XXXX indicates where actual data will appear on the transaction.

Primary Page

Bill To: XXXX XXXX	Bill To: XXXX	Billing Number XXXX
		Bill to Customer Number XXXX
	Location XXXX	Bill From XXXX
	Bill To XXXX	Amount Due XXXX
	Due Date XXXX	

Previous Balance	Payments Received	Adjustments	Credits	Current Charges	Tax	Late Fees	Ending Balance
XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX

Date	Type	Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Tax Amount	Extended Amount
XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX

Current Balance	Balance over 30 days	Balance over 60 days	Balance over 90 days	Balance over 180 days
XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX

[Cancel](#) [Back](#) Step 5 of 5 [Finish](#)

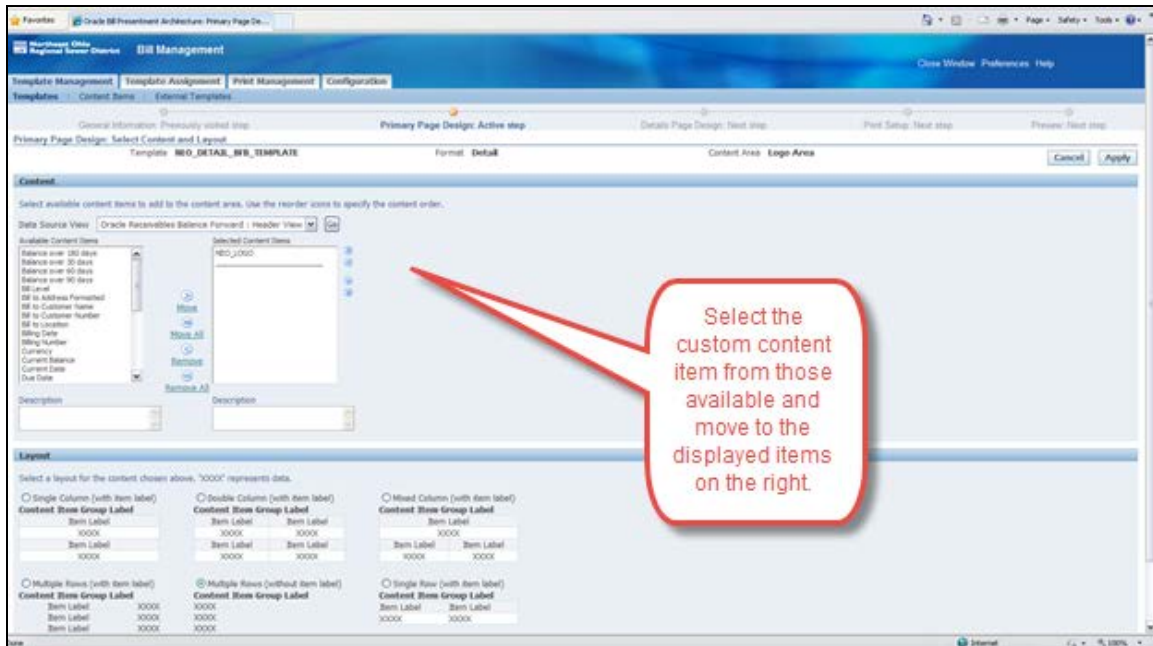
Primary Statement

Copyright © 2008, Oracle. All rights reserved.

APPLYING CONTENT ITEMS TO THE TEMPLATE

To apply a custom Content Item, re-query the template, click update, and navigate to the Update Template: Primary Page Design as shown previously. Associate the Content Item to the Template by clicking on the Content and Layout icon for each area where the Content Item belongs, in this instance the Logo Area. When the icon is clicked the following screen shown below in Figure 20 is displayed.

Figure 20



In the Content area, select the Data Source view Custom: None and click the “Go” button. Next, remove the default Company Logo then select the Content Item created earlier from the available items on the left and move to the right area and click “Apply”.

Note: The design tool provided in Bill Presentment does not use a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) method. Spacing and sizing requires frequent review of the format to ensure a correct layout for the bill template.

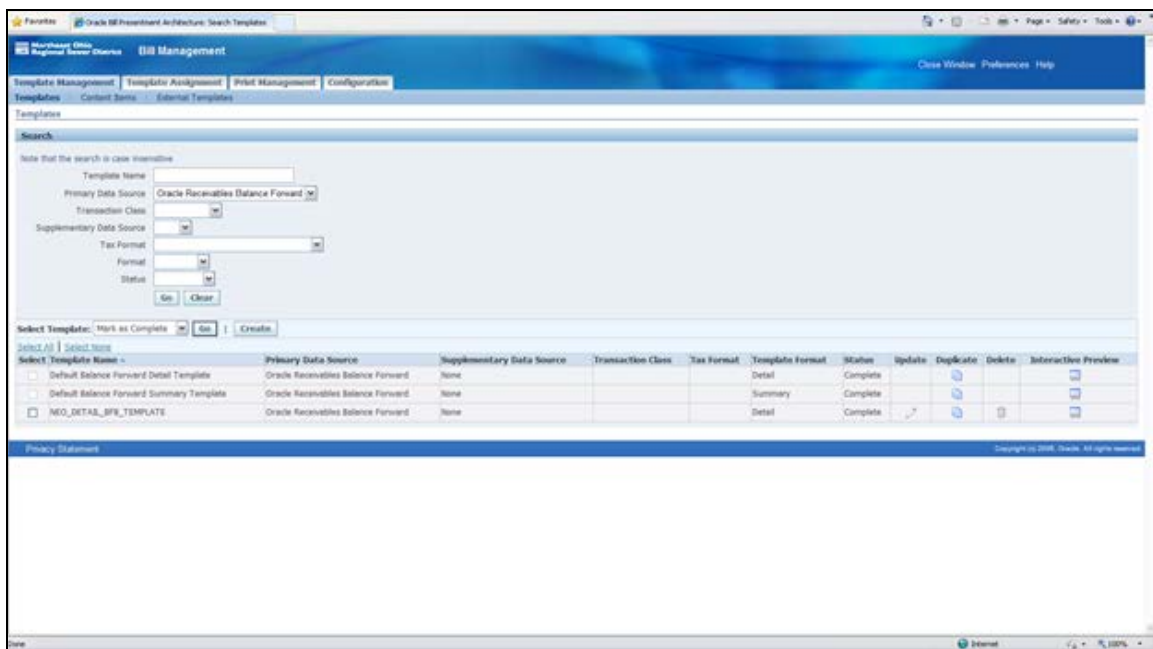
When making adjustments, use the Interactive Preview to view the bill layout with actual BFB data.

Query the Template as shown below and click the “Interactive Preview” icon to view the layout.

On the Interactive Preview Screen enter an Operating Unit and click “Go” to generate a list of BFB Bills. Click the “Online Preview” icon for a specific bill. Actual billing data should display on an invoice based on the design changes made to the personalized template.

Once satisfied with the preview, mark the template with a status of complete. A template must be complete to be used in a BFB output. After querying your template, check the box next to the template name. From the drop down select “Mark as Complete” and click the “Go” button as shown below in Figure 21.


Figure 21



The actual bill output is displayed as shown in Figure 22 below.

Figure 22

Page 1 of 1



Bill To:
CAPT'N WILLIE'S
PIRATE PARTIES
1345 MAIN ST
CLEVELAND, OH
44115

Remit To:
3900 EUCLID AVE
CLEVELAND, OH
44115

Billing Number	
5529	
Bill to Customer Number	
8275	
Location	Bill From
14447	
Bill To	
02/11/2014	
Due Date	Amount Due
03/13/2014	1,513.35

Previous Balance	Payments Received	Adjustments	Credits	Current Charges	Tax	Late Fees	Ending Balance
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,513.35	0.00	0.00	1,513.35

Date	Type	Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Tax Amount	Extended Amount
01/30/2014	INVOICE	FIXED COST RECOVERY FEE	1	6.60	0.00	6.60
01/30/2014	INVOICE	NEORS D CHARGES	24	62.15	0.00	1,491.60
01/30/2014	INVOICE	NEORS D STORMWATER CHARGE	1	15.15	0.00	15.15

Current Balance	Balance over 30 days	Balance over 60 days	Balance over 90 days	Balance over 180 days
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

This completes the setup steps required to format a BFB bill.

Conclusion/Summary

Many companies require flexible billing cycles to provide consolidated billing on a regular/ cyclical basis. This paper provided an overview of the Balance Forward Billing (BFB) functionality in Accounts Receivable and how it supports customer billing combinations across different transaction types. It also covered detail and summary formats, setup for billing cycles, payment terms, and customer profile classes.



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