

Parks-Tracker

Parks-Tracker is an advanced web-based platform which combines your:

- ‘Geographic/Spatial’ information sets – reserve boundaries, land information, threatened species, indigenous heritage sites, tracks, pests, etc; with your
- ‘Relational’ databases – permits, leases and licences, interpretation, capital works and maintenance works management, funding and budget management, visitor statistics, other research, etc.

Benefits

- Manage a proliferation of complex data and information
- Improve your decision making capabilities
- Leverage the expertise of your employees
- Use the system wherever and whenever a web connection is available
- Provide visibility of linked relational, spatial and temporal datasets at all levels of the organisation
- Single point of access for all park management tasks and information
- Integration with other enterprise systems

Next Generation, Web-Based Systems

Parks-Tracker’s web interface makes it very user friendly. This ensures high levels of user acceptance as it has the same look, feel and features as a normal web browser – with which nearly everyone has had exposure. Parks-Tracker is a next generation component based business system, using web technologies.

Key benefits of this technology and approach are:

- Minimises risk through the use of structured methods
- Focuses on business processes and needs rather than technology
- Easily tailored to individual requirements
- Ability to re-use components, which will lower the cost and shorten delivery time if additional functionality is required

- Portability – reflecting the fact that government departments restructure over time.

Being a “thin client” lowers the cost of IT support, as no software needs to be loaded onto PCs. As long as the user has access to a web browser, they can access the system.

Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service – Case Study

The Client:

Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for the management of Tasmania’s parks, reserves and historic sites. This world-renowned portfolio of natural assets covers 38% of the state and includes 444 reserves and 19 national parks.

The area under management (2.5 million hectares) includes the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area – the state’s most internationally recognised natural asset and one of the largest conservation reserves in Australia. At 1.38 million hectares, this World Heritage Area covers 20% of Tasmania and is one of only three temperate wilderness areas remaining in the Southern Hemisphere.

Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service is required to maintain the State’s reserve system and conserve Tasmania’s natural and cultural heritage, including Aboriginal, botanical and artistic heritage, while providing for sustainable use and economic opportunities for the local community.

The Challenge:

To support the achievement of its key business objectives, Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service formed a collaborative working partnership with Australian-based ICS to develop the concept of sustainable management and responsible tourism systems to:

- Manage a proliferation of data and information in complex business environments while allowing employees to rapidly access useful and relevant knowledge resources and best-practice guidelines



The next-generation in protected area management

- Make available increased knowledge content in the development and provision of products and services
- Leverage the expertise of people across the organisation and in the same sectors worldwide
- Maximise the benefits of the 'network effect' by increasing the number of productive connections between employees in the organisation, as well as increasing the quality of information shared
- Manage intellectual capital and intellectual assets in the workforce (such as the expertise and know-how possessed by key individuals) as individuals retire and new workers are hired
- Facilitate, manage and support organisational innovation
- Facilitate organisational learning

The Solution:

Parks-Tracker, developed by ICS, is an integrated knowledge base of the core information sets which define natural and cultural heritage management. It provides a core foundation database of underlying natural and cultural assets (such as land parcels, zoning, visitor assets, heritage sites and objects) and allows the joining and synchronising of geographic and temporal information across all aspects of the database. The foundation database is supplemented with modular information sets and workflow based business process systems, which support processes governments and other stakeholders are required to carry out.

This system was developed in direct response to calls from front-line managers who revealed the two greatest impediments to successfully accomplishing their mission were:

- A lack of visibility of relevant information as and when required
- Poor and inefficient flow of information between stakeholders around the organisation and beyond

The Tracker suite is an innovative and efficient solution which allows decision makers to view all information sets - from any device, anytime, anywhere.



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The system is acknowledged as providing a far richer coverage than ever before, allowing deeper analysis and more informed decision-making by senior managers.

Importantly, the Tracker suite consolidates all information about natural and cultural assets belonging to the state, including:

- The number of assets and their location
- Availability
- Risk management practices in place
- Supported activities
- Values
- Digital gallery
- Owner and tenure information
- Stakeholder information
- Valuation
- Planning documents
- Visitor statistics
- Spatial data and workflow management of spatial editing, including integration with mobile devices

To enable easy-to-manage staged rollouts, it is a modular environment with customised modules available, such as:

- **Commerce** (for contracts, leases and licenses) – supports contract management of leases and licences operating throughout a reserve system as well as other types of contracts. It manages financial relationships and condition inspection protocols. This module includes: e-commerce billing, transactions, invoice style billing, bulk invoicing and all associations with contract inspection monitoring.
- **Permits** – enables geographical overlays of permit types applicable in various areas. This module allows for ease of navigation through complex permit related queries and enables online e-commerce permit facilities.

- **Works** – provides an integrated view of all works activities whether they are planned, funded, scheduled, completed or outstanding. The system consolidates the strategic information, identifying underlying reasons for the works tasks (ie. management of plans, statutory codes, etc). This provides decision makers with a strategic view of budget against actual financials needed to carry out works programs across all projects and programs. It also supports systemised budget needs assessments. At the coal face, works teams can see prioritised league tables of work tasks allowing lead logistics to be mixed with strategic prioritization to support the optimum use of available resources. The easy to use, context based, web interface ensures activities are undertaken in priority order, leading to high quality outputs and an increased ability to meet project management “Key Performance Indicators” (KPIs).
- **Bookings** – supports e-commerce based online booking of natural and cultural experiences, with in-built visitor quota management, and a web-based interface designed to help create values in the community and amongst consumers.

The Overland Track

In 2005, Australia’s most popular long-distance trek, the Overland Track in the heart of the Tasmanian wilderness, was in danger of being ‘loved to death.’ Between 8,000 and 9,000 visitors were using the track annually, walking 65 kilometres through the wilderness and leaving their mark in ways which were detrimental to the track and surrounding areas.

Our Involvement:

Anxious to prevent further damage to the track and desperate to protect one of Tasmania’s signature experiences, the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service worked with ICS Multimedia to develop a world-first management system to guarantee the long-term sustainability of the track.

The project began with a full infrastructure audit which identified a number of run-down shelters and overcrowded campsites, with as many as 130 people a night at one location. Based on this information, the project team decided to commission an online booking system, with ICS Multimedia selected as the preferred developer.

To complete the online booking system, a business case had to be developed to understand how walkers used the track, where they came from, how they preferred to book their trips and what their future buying plans were likely to be, and to cross-reference this information with the costs of asset depreciation and replacement over the next 10 years.

In parallel with the booking system, a marketing and communication action plan was launched to raise awareness of the changes and to encourage the support of local tourism operators, bushwalkers and the Tasmanian community. The marketing and communication strategy included the establishment of a new website, www.overlandtrack.com.au, with one important feature being a feedback mechanism which enabled people to voice their concerns, provide suggestions and join a stakeholder mailing list.

Positive Outcomes:

When the Department rolled out its new system as developed by ICS Multimedia, numbers on the track were restricted to 60 walkers per day. The first 'booked' walks on the track began on 1 November 2005 and there were a total of 2,224 bookings during the first full season. A total of 59 days were completely booked out and there were only two days, at the end of April 2006, with no bookings. Almost half-a-million dollars was raised from the booking fee – revenue which was automatically directed back into infrastructure to support the track.

While the total number of walkers using the track has not decreased, the flow is now constant, rather than a series of peaks and troughs. A number of performance measures were identified to measure the success of the project, including visitor satisfaction, compliance, and implementation of infrastructure upgrades. The Overland Track Walker Survey identified that 39% of walkers said the Overland Track was "one of the best things they have done in their lives."



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Contact Us

Please contact us for more information:

Address: ICS
11 Morrison St
Hobart, Tasmania, 7000
Australia

Australia: Phone: +61 3 6223 3559
Fax: +61 3 6223 8734

United States: Phone: (415) 240 4713

Email: info@icsmultimedia.com.au

Website: www.icsmultimedia.com.au