



BUSINESS AREA: MOBILE APPS & IT

Case Study

WhaleReport

Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre wanted to provide the public with a tool that would enable them to easily report sightings of cetaceans and sea turtles.

WhaleReport is a smart phone app developed for the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre featuring the ability to submit details of sightings of cetaceans and turtles in the British Columbia area, a map to view personal sighting reports and a detailed species identification guide.

Reports are enhanced with accurate GPS location details and photographic images of the sightings. Once submitted the report locations are verified via a server based GIS process to ensure that reports are within the target area.

“The response from Sightings Network observers about WhaleReport has been overwhelmingly positive. Compared to other methods of reporting, observers are saying WhaleReport is by far the quickest and easiest way to report, and they love seeing the sightings they’ve submitted on the personalized map. The ease of reporting has re-engaged many observer groups, such as Parks Canada and some ecotourism operators that found recording sightings via other methods too tedious”

Tessa Danalesko
Project Coordinator, Vancouver Aquarium

Customer Profile

www.vanaqua.org

Company

Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre

Location

Vancouver, Canada

Industry

Education and Conservation

Product

WhaleReport App

Solution

WhaleReport is an app that provides a simple and powerful tool for public submission of sighting reports, taking advantage of mobile device functionality such as camera and GPS.

Benefits

- WhaleReport features a list of species with detailed descriptions and images that help identification
- Reports are immediately available to Vancouver Aquarium once submitted
- Reports include a location coordinate and photo of the sighting
- When a report is submitted a spatial validation occurs ensuring that only reports that relate to the area of interest are submitted



The Issue

With over 25,000 km of coastline to monitor Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre wanted to provide a tool that would enable the public to easily report sightings of cetaceans and sea turtles.

The aim was to extend their database so that they could increase their understanding of whale behaviour. In the past sightings have been reported on a toll-free phone line, a web form, in email or using a paper logbook but given that many sightings are unexpected, the ability to use a mobile phone to capture details of a sighting is very attractive.

The Solution

Spatial Vision was engaged by the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre to develop a solution that provided a simple and powerful tool for submitting sighting reports, while taking advantage of mobile device functionality such as camera and GPS.

The resulting app, WhaleReport, is used across British Columbia by whale watching operators, lighthouse keepers, charter boat operators, tugboat captains, BC Ferries personnel, researchers, government employees, recreational boaters and coastal residents.

Reports can be captured in the field whether connected or not. The app was engineered to store any unsent reports and allow the reporter to submit them once they have connectivity, an important feature given the vast areas of their coastlines and the remote locations where sightings may occur.

The Benefits

- ✓ The app features a list of species with detailed descriptions and images that help identification
- ✓ When a report is submitted a spatial validation occurs ensuring that only reports that relate to the organisation's area of interest are submitted
- ✓ Reports can be captured in the field whether connected or not

- ✓ Submitted reports are received immediately by Vancouver Aquarium
- ✓ Cetacean and Sea Turtle educational material is included in the app

The Results

Over **8,900** reports have been made since the launch of the app

200% increase in reports received in the same period

The app now accounts for **70%** of all sightings received

WhaleReport allowed users to easily report a sighting and identify different species.

If you'd like to know more, [please get in touch.](#)

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