

## Online Permit Shop Brings Fishing into the New Millennium

In the summer of 1999, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) embarked on a mission to reinvent its commercial fishing permit licensing process in favor of a faster and simpler method of issuing fishing permits. NMFS was confident that an online approach would provide the accessibility of the World Wide Web, and pave the way for a progressive interactive voice response (IVR) system.

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### The Need for Revitalization

Given the current advances in technology and automation, customers are no longer willing to tolerate inefficient paper processes and manual, time-consuming administrative systems. As a result, NMFS was motivated to replace its existing commercial permitting process with a technological solution to improve reliability and turn-around time. Though simply adopting a computerized system would improve the process considerably, NMFS wanted to surpass current industry standards, and opted for a more state-of-the-art solution.

PowerVision and AppNet teamed up to create NMFS Permit Shop, an online system which allows customers to obtain permits in a matter of minutes. NMFS Permit Shop was built by combining several start-of-the-art technologies—in addition to providing secure online permit ordering, the system also incorporates an array of other features.

### Internet Solution

PowerVision's solution integrates four Web sites running on top of the same engine. The sites were built to integrate common functionality. A public site allows customers to log in and purchase fishing permits, file landings reports, register for tournaments, etc. An inquiry site for use by the customer service representatives provides extra capabilities such as changing invoice information. The administrative site allows administrators to add news, modify the application questioner, manage user accounts and track usage statistics. There is also a fulfillment site which is used by third-party vendors to print and mail permits to customers who chose alternate shipping options.

The different sites draw from a common content pool that incorporates conditional logic for site-specific capability control. The public site allows users to purchase permits in a traditional e-commerce shopping cart: users can add to the cart, edit the current contents, or delete unwanted entries. As customers proceed to the "checkout", a questioner adapts the user entries to verify much of the customer information dynamically. The customer can choose from a variety of delivery options, including printing permits, faxing permits to alternate locations, or delivery from a selection of shipping companies and postage classes. Customers are required to provide credit card information to complete the transaction. The transaction process utilizes a COM component to interactively validate and process transactions

*NMFS Permit Shop has received two industry award nominations:*

- *Harvard/JFK School of Government's "Innovation in American Government" Award*
- *The National Performance Review Board's Silver Hammer Award*

#### **Business Area:**

- e-Commerce

#### **Key Technologies:**

- Active Server Pages
- Visual Basic
- VBScript/Java Script
- Oracle
- Site Server Commerce Edition
- Visual InterDev

#### **PowerVision's Role:**

- Algorithmic Design
- Implementation

against customers' available credit, and then charges purchases to the accounts dynamically via the VisaNet infrastructure.



During the site's first three months of operation, over 10,000 permits were issued, generating \$278,000 in sales. NMFS Permit Shop has received high-praise and positive feedback from the National Marine Fisheries Service and customers alike. NMFS Permit Shop has already been nominated for two industry awards: the Harvard/JFK School of Government's "Innovation in American Government" award, and the Silver Hammer Award from the National Performance Review Board.

NMFS Permit Shop provides an innovative design implementing capabilities such as smart questioning, a customizable content pool, data enabled shopping cart item structure, and multiple medium interfaces. The new online permitting process has delivered on the promise of a faster, simpler and more efficient solution.

The public site is accessible at <http://www.nmfspermits.com>.