

SKI TRACKER APPLICATION

Preliminary documentation

What it is:

A screensaver that has a live internet feed. It is made with Flash 5 and delivered as a plug-in independent application. It can be downloaded from a website and/or burned to CD and handed out at the ticket counter, through marketing promos, and direct mail. It is updated and managed with a custom CMS system.

What it does:

With the live internet feed, the application pulls daily resort information from a database. Employees at the resort can easily update the application through a standard HTML webpage. This information is written to the database which is then called from the app. The application can call the server as frequently as every few minutes to grab images from webcams etc.

Features:

- Animated weather data (purchased)
- Snow base depths
- Current snow conditions
- Open lifts
- Open runs
- Upcoming events/calender
- Webcams
- *Templated marketing ads/pushes/promos
- Current local time
- Custom resort branding
- Interactive trail map
- Resort contact info
- Time based layout (day/night/new years)
- Streaming Flash MP3 player (database music, greetings)

Why this is better than a website:

This application is bandwidth independent as it pulls only raw data (except for webcams) which means it is visually unlimited. Any artwork or images are in the initial download, or, on the CD. Users do not have to sit and wait for it to load. Because it is a screensaver, users will not go out of their way to get at it. This format also creates a buzz as anyone passing by will see it. Screensavers are also a trendy download for internet users as they constantly seek new desktop images and screensavers to trade.

Why the ski industry will buy this:

Resort profits were at an all time high last year. Competition is fierce as resorts are in close proximity to eachother. With the upcoming 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, resorts will be spending more than usual to take advantage of the media exposure. This app will make resorts stand out, and, is an exceptional on-the-fly marketing tool.

US ski resorts had a record 57.3 million visitors in the 2000-2001 season.

NSAA attributes increased ticket sales to good snow conditions and new marketing efforts. The industry used incentives such as discounted lift passes to attract new visitors. It is also attributed to an influx of younger skiers.

Snowboarding continues to gain in popularity and has a healthy rate of growth. This season, snowboarding represented 28.3 percent of total skier/snowboarder visits, up from 25.9 percent last season, which is a 9.5 percent rate of growth.

Snowbaorder statistics (1999)

10+ days	49.3%
HH Income of \$50,000+	64.1%
Age 24 or Younger	75.4%

Skier statistics (1999)

5-19 days	44.5%
20+ days	10.7%
HH Income of \$50,000+	69.2%
HH with Children under 18	75.4%

This means that there is a growing, youger, more dedicated group of skiiers/snowboarders with a large amount of disposable income. Gathering market data on Gen-Y computer usage data.

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Templated marketing ads/pushes/promos:

This is the most powerful aspect of the app. Using Generator like templates, marketing administrators can push promos on a daily basis into a pre-defined area of the screen. By picking a predefined template, they simply type in what they want the ad/push/promo to say. It then appears on the users desktop in an animated format. Because this can be updated daily, it offers resorts unlimited opportunities. They can push materials for low cost to a target market. This could be used for the following:

- Discounted lift tickets
- Discounted lodging rates
- Upcoming events
- Pushes to resort lodging and deals
- Package deals
- Promotional items (links for online stores)
- Incentive programs
- Sponsorship
- Ad sales

Write Once/Reformat Many:

This application can be somewhat modular, with high-end and low-end versions. If a resort wants exclusive rights, a high-end version can be sold to that resort for a limited amount of time. Once one version has been programmed, multiple skins can be made in a few hours of time. This is because the front-end is what changes, and that is mostly the administrator interface with the database which is a HTML form interacting with PHP (preferable).

Also, it can be given, for free on CD-ROM at the ticket window. This allows customers to pass it around to friends and family when they return home from the resort.

Customer data:

Not only can downloads be tracked, but, users can fill out a form before they download allowing for targeted info to be collected and analysed. It is also an opportunity to send material in the mail. Possible collected data can include:

- Name
- Address
- Age
- Ski/Snowboard
- How many times they ski per year?
- Where they prefer to ski?
- Do they visit resorts as a result of a promo?
- Are they heavy computer users?
- Would they like to receive additional information by mail?

Research:

National Ski Resort Organization:
<http://www.nsaa.org>

Synopsis of last year's data:
<http://fyi.cnn.com/2001/fyi/news/08/29/ski.survey/index.html>

Preliminary example using data feeds:
<http://www.cnn.com/QUICKNEWS/ticker/ticker.html>

Whistler-Blackcomb interactive maps:
<http://www.whistler-blackcomb.com/mountain/maps/index.asp>