

applied
innovative
commercial



Natural History Tours - Tour Management System

Oyvind Seljeseth
Martin Andersen
Solveig Kaaberg

Project sponsor: Natural History Tours of New Zealand
Unitec
Auckland, NZ

Natural History Tours organise tours of NZ for overseas travellers. The tours are normally booked by agents via phone or Fax and comprise a complex itinerary of domestic air bookings, coach bookings, hotel stays, visits to places of interest etc. Each organisation has different rules for bookings and payments: dates when confirmation must be received, dates when deposits must be paid etc. Problems exist trying to manage all this information and meet the deadlines specified. Tours get more complex when agents or members of the party want to make changes to the itinerary: join the tour at a certain point, stay in a different hotel, visit a different place etc. This requires changing bookings and getting deposits refunded and meeting different deadlines for different members of the party.

A Tour Management system was proposed that keeps track of the information about tours, itineraries, bookings, deposits etc and produce a schedule of what is needed and when. In addition to managing the tours, Natural History wanted to accept online bookings. This did not present a problem in itself, except for the fact that the tour operators also want to have a copy of the database on their laptops to make changes while they are travelling when no Internet connections is available. This called for a complex synchronisation of multiple databases.

The solution uses an SQL server database and the .net framework with applications running on a web server and the laptops.