WP engine®

Case Study

ELEMENT

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

Industry
State Agency

Site
https://tpwd.texas.gov/

Challenge
Legacy systems not coping with growth of statewide public education, licensing and certification programs.

Solution
Replace legacy system with WordPress-based cloud LMS solution.

Results
An agile platform that includes benefits for learners, instructors, third-party vendors, administrators, and program managers. easier production as well as cost benefits.

Replacing legacy learning with a new learning management system.

Texas Parks uses agile development to create enterprise-grade LMS.

How do you streamline the nation's largest hunter and boater education and certification program? Texas Department of Parks & Wildlife Department trains, licenses and certifies some 90,000 hunters and boat operators a year. To earn a hunting license or boat operator certificate, a learner passes both live courses and online courses. The live courses are taught by some 3,200 volunteer instructors across Texas who teach, give tests and collect fees for the State. The online courses are delivered by separate third-party vendors who also collect fees for the State. When learners meet requirements, Texas Parks issues them hunter licenses and boat operator certificates.

The challenge.

Texas Parks was operating with an outdated system, a 30-year-old database architecture, and some antiquated technology. Learners endured long waits to receive mailed licenses and certifications. Volunteer instructors, whose live courses are the lifeblood of effective safety training, had to live with a process Texas Parks wanted to make better, simpler, and faster. Texas Parks wanted a modern, enterprise-class Learning Management System (LMS) to replace its legacy operations.

Collection of fees from thousands of individual instructors and from separate third-party online course vendors was complex and cumbersome, and so was processing payment of fees collected to the State. Texas Parks wanted e-commerce to streamline those processes and to automatically process payments into the Texas.gov secure payment gateway. These operations involved multiple databases the agency wanted to unite and integrate. The new LMS would have to do all that.

The next challenge involved a statewide retail point-of-sale (POS) system Texas Parks uses to sell an array of permits, stamps, and tags to people with valid hunting licenses, fishing licenses, and boat operator certificates. The network includes some 1,700 retail stores across Texas that sell hunting, boating and fishing equipment and supplies. The LMS had to integrate with the agency's POS system, as well.

"**WP Engine takes care of hosting, security and WordPress Devops allowing us to put all our energy toward the needs of clients.**"

Martin Mascarenas, CEO, CTO & Cofounder at Element Learning Management Solutions

There was more. The agency deploys 500 Game Wardens who use a smartphone app. The LMS had to integrate all the other data and push it to those public servants scattered across Texas.

The solution.

Texas Parks chose Element Learning Management Solutions, based in Austin, to provide the new LMS and to implement and maintain the system. The agency named the new system the "Online Registration System" (ORS). Major ORS requirements included managing statewide classroom and online courses; delivering front-to-back education functions; e-commerce capabilities, and strong tracking and reporting.

For almost two decades, Element has implemented online learning management systems for clients in government, education, and private sector clients. The Element LMS platform is a cloud-hosted off-the-shelf (COTS) enterprise-class learning environment built on open source, modular, extensible architecture. To WordPress, the CMS foundation, Element added deep live and online learning management capabilities.

Using Agile SCRUM methods, Element implemented this solution:

- Setup, brand, and configure new ORS system

- Migrate database of some 1,500,000 license records

- Set up e-commerce integrated with the Texas.gov payment gateway

- Configure learner functions. Learners choose courses that meet their schedule and geographic needs, review course and instructor information, register for courses, receive notifications and reminders. Learners now print licenses and certificates online instead of waiting for mail. They can review their records online, including permits, stamps and tags.

- Configure instructor functions. Volunteer instructors now schedule and add courses online, maintain their instructor profile, download training materials, and print class rosters. Element added a portal for instructors to upload learner test results and pay fees they collect.

- Configure a portal for third-party online course vendors to upload test results and remit fees they collect.

- Integrate LMS with the POS system to exchange data with 1,700 retail locations.

- Integrate LMS with the smart phone app used by Game Wardens. Thanks to new 2D bar codes Element added on printed licenses, Wardens can quickly access license and permissions offline.

To maintain security and performance for the online registration system, Element uses WP Engine's Digital Experience platform. Because WP Engine takes care of hosting, security and WordPress Devops, Element can put all its energy toward the needs of clients.

The results.

Thanks to a modern, extensible LMS platform, Texas Parks is rolling out changes envisioned as more effective, more efficient, and better for learners and instructors.

WP engine®

The integrated database enables simpler, richer operating and management reports. Because learners can print licenses and certificates, the agency no longer has to print and mail those materials, with significant annual cost savings. Outdated, time-consuming test-grading equipment and methods can be phased out.

Because the ORS platform is modular and has capabilities not yet tapped, Texas Parks has an agile path to future business and technology innovation.

About WP Engine.

WP Engine is a leading SaaS content management platform for websites and applications built on WordPress. Founded in 2010, the company is headquartered in Austin, Texas and has offices in San Francisco, California, San Antonio, Texas, Limerick, Ireland, London, England, and Brisbane, Australia.