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What's New

Custom reports status

We didn't get the beta test version ready in December as we had hoped, but it is getting close. We're hoping to have something usable within a couple weeks.

We've only received a few specific report & form examples, so if you have some ideas be sure to let us know. I would hate to think that just a few customers will use this major new feature!

New Diner's Club / Mastercard rules

This information came from a merchant service provider, and indicates that a new rule resulting from a Diner's Club alliance with Master card may require some changes in merchant service or equipment. If you're using the X-Charge software and CAM Commerce merchant provider, you're already compliant. Otherwise, you might want to check into this:

"After November 30, 2005, if acceptance of a Diners club card with the MasterCard logo on the back is denied, potential fines of \$1,000 or more per month per location could be imposed. Even if you don't accept Diners Club now you will be required to accept the new MasterCard. Since this will require most merchants to purchase new credit card terminals now is a great time to look at a software based system that cost much less and doesn't require you to ever upgrade your hardware.

MasterCard International entered into an alliance with Diners Club International in 2004 that affects card acceptance across North America. Together, they are making it easier for Diners Club card members to use their cards at MasterCard merchant locations. This means that MasterCard merchants can now accept Diners Club cards.

North American Diners Club cards (cards issued in Canada and the United States) are now being re-issued with both the MasterCard and Diners Club brands on the front of the card. The card re-issuance started in November 2004 and is planned to complete in the third quarter of 2005.

These new cards now function as a MasterCard so they authorize and settle as MasterCard and MasterCard rates apply. The transactions report as MasterCard on the terminal and on the merchant statement. As a result, you will notice a shift in transaction volume to MasterCard as these new Diners Club cards now process as MasterCard transactions."

X-Charge is already fully equipped to handle this change, so X-Charge users will experience no interruptions to daily business, no fines, no new hardware requirements, etc.... If you're not using X-Charge and your current merchant service requires you to purchase new terminals, you should look into using X-Charge instead. For more information, refer to this web page:

<http://Campground-Master.com/creditcards.html>

Q & A

Deleting Expense and Misc Income Transactions

Q: Is there any way to delete an expense entry once it has been made? (Also applies to Misc. Income transactions.)

A: Yes, you need to locate the expense on the Transactions tab view (make sure the "Summarize" box is not checked so you see individual transactions), then right-click on the Expense item and select "Transactions". This will open it in an Unbound Transactions dialog, where you can select the transaction and click "Delete selected items" to delete it.

Viewing manually entered credit card info

Q: Even though we still use a separate credit card terminal, we enter the credit card information into Campground Master when entering payments and deposits. How can I find this information later?

A: The credit card number is in the "Check #/Ref" field on the transactions. If you go into the customer or reservation's Transactions entry and check the "Details" check box in the upper right, you'll be able to see that field by scrolling the grid over to the left. Or you can also go to "Transaction History" from Reservation Details or Customer Details.

By the way, you might consider getting a credit card swipe for the computer so you don't have to enter the information manually. Campground Master will work with a card swipe even if you don't process the cards through the computer. Stand-alone terminals won't interface to the computer, so you'll need one that interfaces through the keyboard port or a USB port. We sell these for \$125 + \$10 s&h (shipping outside the US will be a little more). See the web page below for more information:

http://campgroundmaster.com/hw_idtech.html

Changing rates for the new year

Q: How do I change the upcoming year's rates, without affecting this past years rates?

The best (safest) way is to duplicate each rate that's changing, and set the Season Dates of each one appropriately. This way you have one set of rates for 2005 and another set for 2006. This is better than just changing the old rate definitions because it will keep an auto-calculation from affecting old reservations, particularly long-term stays.

In Rates Setup, select each rate definition that will change (you can use Ctrl-click to select many at once), and click "Copy Selected Rates". Now edit each rate definition -- in each of the old rates, put the old range like "1/1/05 to 12/31/05" in the Season Dates Applicable field. In each of the new rates, put "1/1/06 to 12/31/06" (and change the charge amount and descriptions, of course).

Charges don't stay in when doing a confirmation

Q: When I click quote how can I save the prices? I loose everything and when I go back I have to put the prices in all over again.

A: The "Quote/Confirmation" transactions are temporary by design so they don't affect your accounting (e.g. show it as income immediately). If you don't care about that, then use "New/Edit Transactions" to put in the charges permanently and then print a confirmation from there, instead of using Quote/Confirmation.

Ideally you want to set up Rates so that auto-rates work (so you don't have to enter charges manually at all), and have it automatically add the charges when they check in. Refer to the Rates Setup documentation for more information about auto-rates.

Tips & Techniques

Report the number of reservations last year

One of our customers needed to know how many reservations they had in 2005. The Occupancy report can show the number of site-nights (if you uturn off "Show as percentages"), but they didn't want that -- just how many actual reservations regardless of length. The steps below show how this can be done with a different report.

1. Go to Reports / Arrival Statistics.
2. Click "Site/Reservation Filtering" and "Reset All" (to make sure the filtering is cleared). Select "Checked In" and "Checked Out" in the Reservation Status list (to exclude any cancelled, etc.). Click OK to save the filter.
3. Click "Year-to-Date", and group by "Site Class" (for a short list), or whatever grouping works best for you.
4. Generate the report, and this will show the # of arrivals (e.g. unique reservations) for each site class.

The only drawback is that it won't show arrivals in the previous year (2004) that stayed over into 2005. If you're a winter-season park, then using the Departures report the same way might be more useful (since most winter visitors stay through the end of the year).

Networking - How to set up a static IP address

If you're using the Campground Master networking option, you'll find that it works best if you configure the master workstation (server) to use a "static IP " address. Otherwise, you may have to occasionally reconfigure all of the client workstations to a new IP address. Without a static IP, the master might change its IP address any time it's rebooted, or when the network router loses power, which in some cases might be pretty often.

This is mentioned briefly in the documentation, but it doesn't cover any details. We still haven't had a chance to put together a complete tutorial on this because there are so many different situations that require different steps. So for now, we've used Google to search for tutorials on the web. Here are some references that may help, but of course we can't guarantee the accuracy or whether they apply to your particular setup. If you're not willing to experiment, please have a professional configure your network, as we can't help you with network problems outside of Campground Master.

Microsoft's info for Windows XP using Internet Connection Sharing (ICS):

<http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=309642>

Microsoft's info on How to Configure a Static Client for Windows XP:

http://www.microsoft.com/resources/documentation/windows/xp/all/proddocs/en-us/sag_tcpip_pro_manualconfig.msp

Information for Belkin routers, but appears to be generic Windows instructions. Covers all versions of Windows:

<http://www.belkin.com/support/kb/kb.asp?a=2824>

A more visual guide, generic for various Windows versions:

<http://www.edimax.com.tw/html/Faq/BR-6104x.htm#1>

This has an example if a router's configuration page, as well as general information:

<http://www.homenethelp.com/web/howto/static-ip-address.asp>