

Newsletter #40 (April 21, 2013)

Contents

A few quick reminders:

MAKE BACKUPS! It's so sad when we hear from someone who's computer has crashed and they have no backup of their data to restore from. It's so easy to make a backup to a thumb drive, there's really no excuse not to do it at least once per week, if not daily.

NETWORK USERS - Don't use the same Workstation ID on more than one computer, even if you only plan to use one at a time. This can lead to missed data with no way to recover it.

INSTALLING ON A NEW COMPUTER -- This is the number one support question we get, even though we've put the information everywhere we can possibly put it; in the documentation, on our web site, and now in version 6.1 it's directly on the Help menu in the program. You'll need this information eventually, so make a note of how to find it now so you don't have to ask later. See our web site under Support / [Installing on a new computer](#).

What's New

Upcoming new version?

Windows 8 support

IC Verify issues -- read this if you use IC Verify for credit card processing!

PC Charge - an alternative to IC Verify

Merchant Warehouse credit card processing

Q & A

Making the text larger on the screen

Reporting reservations made during a period this year vs last year

Why are checked-out reservations disappearing?

Where is the Bulk Check-out function?

Splitting deposits among group reservations

Reporting revenue for each site

Reporting all advanced deposits for future reservations

Tips & Techniques

Full network re-synchronization

Reporting balances as of a certain date

Entering a new credit card for a customer

Changing vehicle field labels

Receipts by Category report changing values for previous dates

Showing Yes/No on a Query instead of .T./F.

What's New

Upcoming new version?

Yes, it has been awhile since we've released a new version (and even longer since the last newsletter). I could use the excuse that there haven't been any urgent problems needing to be corrected, and that's true to a certain extent, but the wish list of things we want to add and improve (and what our customers would like to see) is always getting longer. The main reason for the delay is that general support and new business have just kept us too busy to finish up any new development.

Nevertheless, we plan to have a new version released this summer. While there is a long list of possible enhancements that may or may not make it in this version, one definite change will be an option to round amounts to the nearest 5 cents because Canada is getting rid of the penny.

Another definite change will be the option to not store credit cards (assuming you're processing cards through Campground Master, e.g. using X-Charge or PC Charge). Don't worry, it will just be an option, not a mandatory change. While opting for that is less convenient for the user, it will make it easier to meet certain PCI compliance levels if the card information is not stored on the computer.

Along with the typical assortment of minor tweaks and enhancements, we also hope to have a few nice surprises in the next version. As always, you will be notified by E-mail when the new version is released. So make sure we're kept up to date on your E-mail addresses, and make sure our E-mails are not going to your spam folder.

Windows 8 support

Campground Master versions 4.2.2 and later appear to work fine in Windows 8, as long as it's the full Windows 8 with the "Desktop" mode. Windows 8 "RT", which is used on low-end tablets, will not work because they don't have the Desktop mode required for Campground Master to function.

While Campground Master works on Windows 8, be sure to check with other software that you may be relying on as well. I know that PC Charge is not ready for Windows 8. I don't know for sure whether other ancillary software such as X-Charge, QuickBooks, etc. are ready for the new version.

Touch Screen support -- While we haven't added any specific functionality for touch-screens, Windows 8 has helped by adding a built-in touch-keyboard that you can use when needed to enter data. So by using that tool, you can use Campground Master on a convertible touch-screen laptop or "Surface" tablet, again with the caveat that it be full Windows 8 and not the "RT" version.

IC Verify issues

There have been some major issues with the recent versions of IC Verify (4.1 and 4.2) which are unrelated to Campground Master. Due to these issues, detailed below, we officially consider IC Verify 4.1 and later to not be supported by Campground Master. While it is possible to get it to work, we are not responsible for getting it to work and consider it not compatible. If you call about getting it to work, we will refer you to this information which might help you, but cannot provide any other support for it.

If you already attempted to upgrade your IC Verify, you may already know about this. For those who have not yet upgraded, or who are considering using IC Verify for credit card integration, this simple answer is -- **don't!**

Here are some things you need to know:

1. If you can still use a previous version (e.g. 4.0.3 or 4.0.4), then we suggest you do so. They claim that it won't work with Windows 7 and will try to get you to buy version 4.2, but we've seen the old version work successfully on Windows 7 in at least one case. The problem is that they won't want to support you with that combination so you may be on your own with installation, and we can't guarantee that it will work.
2. If you upgrade from a previous version of IC Verify (from 4.0.3 to version 4.2, for instance), expect problems. Their installation doesn't properly re-register new components needed for the integration with programs like Campground Master. Most of their support staff does not know about this. They will require you to buy level 2 support for \$750 in order to fix it, since it only affects the integration with other software like ours. Expect 3 to 4 hours on the phone with them before they figure it out, if you're lucky.
3. If you're using Windows 7 with IPv6 enabled (as almost all installations of Windows 7 will), the IC Verify

integration with won't work. As with #2 above, most of their support is unaware of this and level 2 support is required to fix it.

4. Assuming the above issues are solved or are not a problem, you need to run Campground Master as an administrator the first time you try to connect with IC Verify so it can properly register the ICVerify DLL (Campground Master will offer to register the DLL if it sees that it isn't registered, because their setup doesn't do it for you). This means you should right-click on the Campground Master icon on the desktop and choose "Run as Administrator", assuming that's an option. If it's not an option, then either you're not logged into Windows as an administrator or you're using an older version of Windows (e.g. XP) where this isn't an issue.

4a. It's also possible that the IC Verify Multi-user component needs to Run as Administrator at least once, but we have not confirmed this.

5. If IC Verify is ever uninstalled and re-installed in the process of trying to get it working, you need to unregister and re-register the IC Verify DLL that Campground Master uses. Preferably, unregister it before doing the re-install of IC Verify. There is a convenient Unregister button on the Credit Card Processing Setup screen of Campground Master, since IC Verify doesn't do it for you. Once IC Verify is re-installed, Campground Master will again need to be run as an administrator so it can register the DLL (see #4 above).

6. Even if you get the integration working, their response codes and the documentation for them leave a lot to be desired, and sometimes an authorization comes through as "no error" when it really isn't processed, or it indicates an error when it really did process. We made some corrections for this in version 6.1.4, but there are probably still some cases that don't work correctly, especially for non-U.S. credit cards, so watch the response messages carefully -- there is usually text in the response indicating the real result.

IC Verify's support will try to insist that the integration problems are a Campground Master issue, which they are not. For the installations that we've gotten to work (after hours of back and forth with their level 2 techs), it has always been proven to be an IC Verify problem. This can be shown by looking at the IC Verify log files for the Transaction Client/Server components that do the encryption (see details below), which they require 3rd party software like Campground Master to use.

Due to these problems, we cannot provide support for IC Verify integration of 4.1 or 4.2 versions. When it works, it works well (except for #6 above). But since almost all installations run into these problems and the issues are with IC Verify, not Campground Master, you will be responsible for purchasing their level 2 support and working with them to get it to work.

So what do we recommend? Get rid of IC Verify and use [one of our other options](#) instead.

Solving the problems if you really want to try:

If you really want to try to get it to work, here is some further information that may help.

There are generally 4 possible errors seen:

-- A time-out waiting for a response from IC Verify -- This is good news, since it means that the encryption went smoothly and it's a simple matter of the path in the IC Verify Multi-User not matching the path in Campground Master, or the Multi-User not running. (See our [IC Verify basic setup](#) documentation).

-- An error saying that the IC Verify DLL isn't registered (with an option to have Campground Master register it)
-- This is expected the first time you try to run a card. If it happens again, then see #4 and #5 above

-- An error saying that encryption failed, a blank response was received from IC Verify -- This is the big one causing all of the issues, and requires level 2 support from IC Verify..

Here is some further information about the issue, which might be able to help their techs fix the problems:

To find out where it's really failing, you need to have ICVerify look at their log files (ICVTnsClient logs under

the Campground Master folder in Program Files, and the ICVTnsServer logs under the ICVerify folder)

What Campground Master does: Before putting the file in the folder, Campground Master must call ICVerify to encrypt it. It passes the information to the ICVTnsClient.dll, which in turn sends this to the ICVTnsServer service (which in turn calls the IC Verify EncryptionManager.dll). Once ICVTnsClient gets a response from the ICVTnsServer, it gives that response to CM so it can put the encrypted information in a file. From there, the IC Verify Multi-user picks it up, processes it, puts a response file back, and CM must go through the same process to decrypt it.

You should be able to see from the log files whether failing in ICVTnsClient (it gets the request from Campground Master but the Server never gets the connection from the client), or ICVTnsServer (it gets the connection from the client, but can't open the EncryptionManager DLL). The first problem is likely due to IPv6 being enabled in Windows. The 2nd problem is most likely due to an IC Verify upgrade not properly registering its components. Of course there may be other problems we're not yet aware of.

Good luck!

PC Charge

We added support for PC Charge in version 6.0 (for processing credit cards with your own merchant service), but initially recommended it only for certain customers in case there were issues. So far it has been much more reliable and easier to get working than IC Verify, so we now whole-heartedly recommend PC Charge instead of IC Verify.

The only issues we've seen are when one or more steps in our instructions is skipped, so it's extremely important that you follow our [PC-Charge integration documentation](#) to the letter, including the specific settings in PC Charge -- even if their support tells you it should be set a different way.

Any recent version of PC Charge Pro or PC Charge Payment Server will work (5.10, 5.09, etc), as long as it's not too old (we have not tested with versions released earlier than 2011).

One caveat is that they don't yet support Windows 8. Hopefully this will be remedied soon.

Merchant Warehouse credit card processing

Merchant Warehouse is an additional low-cost option for credit card processing available for Campground Master integration. In this case, the integration is directly with their web services, so you don't have to purchase software like PC Charge, and no software installation is required. This makes the setup integration very simple, and it doesn't matter what version of Windows you use.

The one obvious drawback is that it requires an internet connection, so a phone line can't be used for processing. Also, we don't support a PIN pad for debit cards through Merchant Warehouse, so it's only usable for U.S. customers.

While we don't recommend switching if you're happy with your current integration, e.g. through X-Charge or PC Charge, it's a good way to start integration with Campground Master if you're still processing cards separately (or need an alternative to using IC Verify). See our [web site](#) (under Features / Credit Card processing) for contact information and more details.

Q & A

Making the text larger on the screen

Q: How can I make the font larger? The small size is tough on my eyes.

A: There isn't a setting in Campground Master to change that, since it just uses the Windows default font size for text. You need to change the font size or screen resolution in Windows to make text larger (it will affect ALL programs, not just Campground Master). Experiment with the Display settings/properties through Windows -- try changing the "DPI" settings, or change it to "Large Fonts", or as a last resort, lower the Screen Resolution (note that this would also affect the area available for a Map).

The specific way to get to these settings varies depending on the Windows version you're using, but start by right-clicking on your desktop (a blank area) and select "Properties" or "Personalize".

Note also that if you've done any customizations to dialogs (through Advanced Customizations), then changing the font settings could affect the arrangement of any new controls added to the dialogs (since the pixel locations of the standard controls will change).

Reporting reservations by date made, this year vs last year

Q: Is there a way I can compare reservations taken in so far this year to reservations taken up to this point last year?

A: You can get a list of reservations by date made -- see Reservations / Reservations by Date Made. Then you can set the date range for this year or last year.

You can also use Reports / How-Heard report to get a summary of the number made by day, month, etc. In that report, check the box to Report by Date-made. You can also use Reservation Filtering within that report to limit it to reservations that arrive during a given time period.

Why are checked-out reservations disappearing?

Q: Why are checked-out reservations disappearing from the Rack?

A: There is an option under Maintenance / Program Options / Reservations that has been checked. You need to uncheck "Make checked-out sites immediately available from reservations". Now all checked-out reservations will re-appear on the Rack.

So why enable this option? It can be useful to clear reservations from the Rack immediately, e.g. if someone checks in and then leaves the same day, then the only way to make the site "available" that day for a later check-in is to enable that option. (If they were there overnight then you could always change the Last Night to the previous day, but that's not possible if they checked in and checked out on the same day.)

Where is the Bulk Check-out function?

Q: How do I do a bulk check-out?

A: This function was added in version 6, but it's easy to miss. It's called "Auto-Checkout today's departures", and it's only available on the Departures tab right-click menu.

From the documentation:

Auto-Checkout today's departures

This function can be found on the right-click menu of the Departures tab view. Selecting this option will check out all reservations currently checked in with a last night equal to yesterday's date (i.e. departing today), provided that their Paid-thru Date is set to their Last Night and they have a \$0 reservation balance. If the reservation has any Guest reservations, they must also have a \$0 balance and be due out today or earlier, and the Guests will be automatically checked out also.

Splitting deposits among group members

Q: Is there an easy way to split deposits among group members automatically?

A: It's easy to miss, but there is a function to auto-split the deposit **at the time you enter the deposit**. This requires that the sites (reservations) be linked as Non-Synchronized at the time, so you need to make the group reservations as non-synced to start with. From the documentation (under Handling Transactions / Deposits):

Splitting the deposit among multiple reservations

If the reservation is linked to other non-synchronized reservations (for separate billing), then a special Split payment among group members option will be present when entering the deposit. (This option appears as a checkbox next to the "Amount of deposit" entry field.) For instance, if one person is making a deposit for a group of 4 parties, select this option to automatically split the deposit (transfer 1/4 of it to each of the other 3 reservations). This adds all of the appropriate "Deposit Transfer" transactions, saving you the trouble of doing the transfers manually.

Reporting revenue by Site

Q: How can I report the revenue for each site?

A: Assuming you want it cash-based, i.e. when payment was received:

Start with the Transaction report "Receipts by Payment Method" (Receipts by Category will NOT work). Then click on the Summary Options button, and change the "Group total for each" to Site. Change the Summarize period to Monthly if you like. Click OK and that should be it (change the From/To dates accordingly).

Note: If you enter advanced Deposits, they will be shown on the date the deposit was entered. If you want the report to reflect the actual date of the stay rather than when the money was received, click on "More Filters" and check the box to "Use reservation date instead of transaction date". This will report all revenue as of the First Night of each reservation.

Reporting all advanced deposits

Q: How do I get a report of all advanced Deposits for future reservations?

A: You can do this from the Arrivals tab view. Add the "Deposits" field if needed (through the Options on that tab), and put in a date range that would be far enough to include all future reservations made.

Warning: Don't add the "Auto-Charges" or "Auto-Balance" fields unless absolutely necessary, and assuming

you have auto-rates set up correctly. This can result in an apparent lock-up of the program if it takes a long time to calculate the rates for all reservations shown.

Tips & Techniques

Full network re-synchronization procedure

If you're having a lot of issues with workstations timing out, disconnecting, or unable to connect to the master, then it may be a problem of one or more workstations being so out of sync that the master is spending all of its time trying to update them. Here is a complete manual re-sync procedure you can use as a last resort to make them all "like new".

Note: This assumes that the Master computer has the most correct / up-to-date information. If not, that must be corrected first by copying the database from the most up-to-date client to the master.

1. Shut down ALL clients.

2. On the master:

Make sure all orphans are fixed -- Maintenance / Database Maintenance / Report and repair Transactions orphaned from Reservations, and click the "Fix" button. Repeat for the other 2 "Report and repair" functions.

Also go to View / Alerts, and if any are shown then highlight them all and select "Dismiss".

Go to Maintenance / Network Functions / Network Setup.

- Under Timing, make sure the "Max delay between saves" is at least 600.
- Under Diagnostic Options, Uncheck the box "Show an alert...". Also make sure the top 3 boxes ARE checked (Enabled/Auto/Force). The "Request full database" box should NOT be checked.
- Click "Delete ALL log files" (under Diagnostic Options), and confirm the prompt.

3. Under Maintenance / Program Options / Database, make sure "Automatically save the database..." is checked, and that "History Logging Enabled" is checked.

4. Make a backup from the master (Maintenance / Back up database), e.g to a thumb drive or somewhere you can access it easily. **IMPORTANT:** Be sure to use a unique name for the backup file so there's no mistaking the correct file when you restore from it below, and pay attention to the "Save In" location to be sure it's going where you want it to go (e.g. the thumb drive).

5. Shut down the master so clients can't connect.

6. On each client:

Start Campground Master.

- Quickly log in and go to View / Alerts, and if any are shown then highlight them all and select "Dismiss".

If any alerts do come up, use the "Close/ignore" option to close them.

Go to Maintenance / Network Functions / Network Setup.

- Under Timing, make sure the "Max delay between saves" is at least 300.
- Under Diagnostic Options, Uncheck the box "Show an alert...". Also make sure the top 3 boxes ARE checked (Enabled/Auto/Force). The "Request full database" box should NOT be checked.
- Click "Delete ALL log files" (under Diagnostic Options), and confirm the prompt.

Go to Maintenance / Restore from Backup, and restore from the backup you made above -- paying attention to the "Look In" location and the file name so you now that you're getting the correct file.

... Repeat for each client.

7. Once this is done on each client, restart the master.

That should guarantee they are in sync. Start the master, and they should all connect immediately without a problem.

You might want to open the Networking Diagnostics window for awhile to make sure things are going smoothly. Keep an eye out for any issues like re-sending things repeatedly, workstations disconnecting, sending a full database, etc...

Reporting balances as of a certain date

If you want to report all reservations with a balance as of a certain past date, and assuming they still currently have a balance, there is a tricky short-cut for this. (There is also a sample Query you can import, but that's a more complex option -- see below).

Go to the Payments Due tab, and under the Options, enable the "Current" field for Aged Balances Due. Now the "Current" column will show the balance as of whatever date you enter for the date ("Show any due as of"). Also check the box "Show all with balances".

Note that it will normally show the Reservation balance, but if you check the box "Use Customer balance" under Options, then it will show the Customer balance - but of course this can result in duplications if they have multiple reservations.

As mentioned, this will only show reservations that will normally show under Payments Due, according to the other Options set -- any with current balances, or pending with no deposit, etc... If you need to comprehensive report for As-Of balances regardless of their current status, you can import the sample query that does this.

1. Go to Maintenance / Advanced Customizations / Queries
2. Click the Import Query button, and you'll get a typical Windows file-open dialog labeled "Import Query".
3. You need to locate the sample Forms folder, which is typically C:\Program Files\Campground Master\Samples (most likely you just need to double-click the "Samples" folder to get there, but you may have to navigate to the C: drive first using the "Look In" drop down at the top).
4. Now select the appropriate file, for instance "Sample Query - Balances Due as-of a date", and click Open. You'll see one or more queries added to the list. When done importing, click Close.

Now that query will be added to the Query tab view (that tab will be newly added in front of the Transactions tab if you didn't have any Queries before this). Just go to the Queries tab and select it from the list.

Entering a new credit card for a customer

Sometimes we get a question about entering a new credit card for a customer, usually for long-term residents. The first attempt usually involves entering it under the Customer Details / Guarantee Info. However this doesn't necessarily work. Here's why:

When you make a new payment, it looks for a previous card in a specific order:

- First it looks at previous transactions for the Reservation and will use the last card from the most recent reservation payments made by credit card.
- If no cards are found in reservation transactions, then it will look at Customer transactions (e.g. from other reservations, or done on just the Customer).
- If still no card is found, then it will check the Reservation's Guarantee info, under Reservation Details. (This is assumed to only be useful when they first make the reservation and have no transactions yet.)
- Finally it will check the Customer's Guarantee info (this is assumed to be oldest, e.g. left over from prior reservations).

So if you're entering the new card under Customer Details, that's going to be the last place it looks.

While there isn't a specific field for holding credit card information "on file" for a customer, there is a workaround way of doing it if you don't mind losing all of the old information (and the ability to do a refund to the customer's previous card). You can put the new credit card information in the Customer's Guarantee Info (on the Customer record, not the Reservation record). This also involves changing the security settings to a minimal level. In my opinion this is not a good idea -- I would just make the customer produce the credit card the next time they need to make a payment. However if you want to do it, here are the steps.

First go to Maintenance / Credit Cards / Security Setup, and uncheck (disable) all of the options for removing guarantee info, and also uncheck the option to not retrieve card information from previous transactions or Guarantee info, and uncheck the option to limit retrieval to the current reservation's transactions. If you're using at least version 6.0, this should leave all boxes unchecked. Note: If you're using a version prior to version 6, there are other security options noted for PCI compliance. Do NOT disable those options.

Next, go to Maintenance / Credit Cards / Remove a customer's credit card info. Find the customer in question and have it remove all past card information.

Finally, go to Customer Details for that customer, click on the "..." button at the end of the Guarantee Info line, and enter the new card information.

Changing vehicle field labels

While it's not obvious, it is possible to change the labels for the vehicle fields on the dialogs and on the Ticket Form receipt, e.g. "Rig", "Car 1", "Model", "Color", etc. This can be useful if you're a marina instead of a campground, for instance.

Some of the field labels can be changed in Data Field Definitions, which you may have already tried. But because the dialogs and the Ticket Form receipt don't show the separate labels for each vehicle field, the rest require special handling. We have set it up so they can be changed through the Settings table.

Go to Maintenance / Raw Data Tables / Park Setup / Settings.

Sort the Section column (click on the header) to make it easy to find the entries in the "Vehicles" section.

Locate those settings and edit the "Value" as needed. (Don't forget to check the "Allow editing of fields" box).

The Key gives you some clue as to what each value is used for. The ones that start with "Ticket" are for the printed Ticket Form, and the ones that start with "Search" are for the Find Customer selection list. The "MoreButton" and "MoreTitle" entries are for the button in Customer Details and the title of the more-vehicles entry dialog.

Receipts by Category report changing previous values

The Receipts by Category report is a "calculated" report rather than just summarizing raw transactions, so it's particularly sensitive to the way data is entered, and especially to changes made to the data. This is one reason it's important to do everything you can to keep from altering "prior" transactions. For one thing, make sure most operators log in with an access level of Reservations, not Administrator, so they can't alter old transactions.

The report is mainly sensitive to the order of transactions, particularly the position of the Payments vs. the Charges. If you manually allocate categories for a payment then that can affect any following payments also, e.g. if a later payment does not have manual allocations then it will try to "fix" the allocations to make them add up correctly. This kind of thing has already been covered in the normal documentation under Dynamic Interactive Report Screens / Transactions / [Receipts by Category](#), so you should first read that if you have any questions about the "normal" operation of this report.

So what if you print the report once, and then later notice that values have changed for the same date periods you printed earlier?

The categories for a given Payment cannot be affected by a transaction that's below it in the history for that reservation or customer, so if amounts in the reports are changing on previous dates, that could be a result of one of these things:

- Transactions being deleted (or values changed)
- Transactions being moved up or down through a reservation's Transaction History
- Category allocations manually changed in previous payments
- Transaction Categories deleted from the Pick List

Outside of operator intervention, there are a couple other possibilities:

- Bad links or orphaned transactions -- go to Maintenance / Database Maintenance, and do each of the "Report and repair" functions to fix orphans and Repair bad links.
- Network synchronization issues -- see if the report differs on separate computers. This usually results from orphaned transactions. Make sure the Master computer is all fixed up using the steps above, then on each of the other computers do a Maintenance / Network Functions / Request a full database refresh (one at a time, giving it time to complete before doing the next one).

Finally, if you upgraded the program since you ran the prior reports, then the new reports may be different due to fixes in the report calculations.

Showing Yes/No on a Query instead of .T./F.

Here's a quick tip if you're experimenting with Queries (Advanced Customizations).

If you've added a "boolean" field, you've noticed that the default values show as ".T." and ".F." (which means True and False). Most likely you would prefer that it show something like "Yes" and "No". In order to do this, you need to make a change to the Expression.

Whatever it has for the expression, you just need to put that inside an IIF() expression that results in Yes or No.

For instance, instead of:

```
Campsites:Site_Inactive
```

...change it to:

```
iif(Campsites:Site_Inactive,"Yes","No")
```

(Note that it's **iif** with an extra "i", not the word **if**.)