



**AGENCY:**

Mississippi Department of Wildlife,  
Fisheries, and Parks

# Citizen Platform



**CATEGORY:**

Information Communication  
Technology Innovations

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP) embarked on a comprehensive technology enhancement plan to drive innovation to its licensing system. Part of this enhancement resulted in a nationwide first for hunting and fishing licenses; the ability to auto-renew annual licenses as part of an all-new personal customer portal.

Mississippi's Hunting and Fishing Auto-Renewal System and Customer Portal gives outdoor enthusiasts numerous convenient features, including the ability to opt-in to auto-renew their annual hunting and fishing licenses. The new system is the first instance of a state offering automatic renewal for all license holders, regardless of purchase method. While providing constituents with a convenient avenue to purchase licenses annually, the cornerstone services were developed to transform the way citizens interact with the Department. These transformative features include the introduction of hassle-free license purchases and bulk license package purchases.

The auto-renewal system gives the customer the ability to enroll in an auto-renew program within the mobile application or online in their customer portal. Once enrolled, the user can select which licenses

they would like to auto-renew on an annual basis. The dynamic auto-renewal system provides the online and mobile application the

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ability to securely store the user's payment method, renew and purchase the user's license, and deliver the new license directly to the user via a digital license or hard copy. License holders will no longer have to manually renew every year, instead the user will get to keep and manage their current licenses inside of the mobile app. It's designed to be a seamless experience.

## PROJECT CONCEPT

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks goal: find a way to increase annual license purchases and effectively engage licensees. To help achieve this, MDWFP launched the Hunting and Fishing Auto-Renewal System and Customer Portal and featuring the ability to purchase licenses easier than ever before in Mississippi.

### **Mobile Application Integration**

In Mississippi, 66% of customers purchase their license through a mobile device. The Hunting and Fishing Auto-Renewal System and Customer Portal was designed from day one to be a mobile first solution, delivering the same experience across mobile and desktop, inside or outdoors. Customers have the ability to update their profile, store their preferred payment method, select auto-renewal options, purchase a license, and update their customer information. It is essential for the experience channels to replicate each other and provide the same level of service and support that users have come to expect.

### **User-led Reporting**

The introduction of user-led reporting has helped MDWFP track not only customers that have opted-in for auto-renewal purchases, but also customers that may have chosen to not opt-in on the initial purchase. MDWFP has the ability to target these customers through the reporting admin and send email reminders encouraging the users to sign-up for auto-renewal, increasing the likelihood of acquiring recurring statutory revenue. This reporting has led to 60-day reminder emails that target customers who may have forgotten to sign-up for auto-renewal and gives them the opportunity in advance to opt-in their license.

### **Design**

In researching the design and interface of top user experience-centric online retail and purchasing systems across government and the private sector, the project team identified three pillars to enhance the customer relationship and create a personalized experience between the customer and the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks:

- First, the team took a “less is more” approach and followed a trend of minimalism: fewer elements that distract the attention of users, instead emphasizing focused interactions with less clicks and fewer buttons.

- Second, the new Auto-Renewal System and Customer Portal had to create a seamless experience anywhere using any Internet connected device—PC, Mac, tablet, or a smartphone—regardless of browser or operating system.
- Third, the project team adopted “don’t make me think” as the usability slogan for the new service. It refers to the degree to which the online solution is effective, easy to use, easy to learn, and satisfying to users.

## PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

The audience size of online Hunting and Fishing Licenses expands to the 250,000+ licensed hunters and fishers in Mississippi. Since the launch of the project, average transactions have totaled approximately 11,670 users per month. While there is one service completed through this channel, it encompasses the ability to purchase 23 different MDWFP Hunting and Fishing License privileges, five non-resident license packages, and seven resident license packages.



**Automatically Renewing Licenses:** The standout feature of the enhanced system is the auto-renew option for all annual hunting and fishing licenses. Outdoor enthusiasts can now opt-in for this convenient process upon purchasing a new license, and their eligible licenses will automatically and securely renew before their set annual expiration date. Any resident or non-resident interested in hunting or fishing Mississippi wildlife can take advantage of automatically renewing their license. Logging into the system only requires a driver’s license number and issuance state, and date of birth and state of residence. Then, opting in to automatically renew a license can be done with a click of a button. Mississippi took the automatic renewals a step further and is now the first state to offer automatic license renewals no matter the purchase channel. If a license is purchased from the offline/brick and mortar sales channels offered by MDWFP, license holders can log in to the new Customer Dashboard, post purchase, and enroll in the auto-renew program. Not to mention, users of the Department’s award-winning mobile application take advantage of real-time updates to their digital licenses. Once a license is automatically renewed, app users will see their applicable licenses within their application automatically update.



**License Packages:** With many options to choose from while hunting in Mississippi, and many privileges to purchase, MDWFP integrated license packages into the new customer portal. Customers both resident and non-resident have the ability to purchase licenses in bulk and additionally receive a free



outdoor magazine subscription for a year. Each license package allows the customer to receive more than the other, giving hunters the ability to purchase licenses that they may need before they get out in the wild. This one-click license-package purchase process eliminates the need to search through a list of licenses, trying to find the best one to suit each individual hunt. Instead, the MS Sportsman package provides all the needed licensing privileges to hunt on Mississippi land for the next twelve months, saving valuable time in the license selection process. Since the launch of the license packages, transactions have totaled approximately 8,210 among a variety of 12 packages.



**Digital Licenses:** Users that download the MDWFP Hunting and Fishing Mobile App can store all of their licenses directly in the mobile app. With over 78,000 downloads, the mobile app connects real-time to the licensing system, updating licenses on the fly, and removing licenses when they expire. Citizens on the go and outdoors no longer have to remember their license or worry with replacing one if it is lost. The digital license is always available, and the offline mode stores the license if the user is out of cell coverage. See the digital license in action here: <https://vimeo.com/266704722>. Additionally, the application features in-app license purchasing allowing users to purchase applicable licenses on the go helping with annual privilege sales.



**Harvest Reporting:** With Turkey and Deer Harvest reporting becoming a requirement in Mississippi, Game Check was implemented into the mobile device. User have the ability to report their Deer and Turkey harvest immediately after they have finished their hunt. The offline mode stores the user's information until they have reached cell coverage and automatically submits the information. Hunters no longer have to wait until they get home to use their desktop computer but can do this directly from their iOS or Android device.





**Customer Portal:** The application contains specific user information that is associated based on customer login. The customer portal allows users to view their past license purchases, update their license auto-renewal information, update their mailing address and customer information, and navigate to purchase licenses specific to the customer needs.



**WMA Mobile Application:** Users have the ability to directly enhance their hunting and fishing experience directly from their mobile device, while integrating directly with the MDWFP Mobile App. No longer using paper cards at the wildlife management area (WMA) locations, this new mobile application allows citizens to check-in to WMAs across the state, select a time/date of their check-in, enroll the activities they will be experiencing on the hunt, check-out when they have finished, and report any species that were hunted during their visit from the comfort of their home. While this mobile app is standalone, the WMA system has been directly integrated into the MDWFP Mobile App. Allowing users, to check their licenses digitally, purchase licenses if needed and check-in to hunt all in one platform. Since the launch in 2019, there have been over 29,000 downloads and 129,160 checks-in through the mobile device successfully transitioning a fully paper-based process to an all-digital solution in less than a year.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The License Auto-Renewal System and Customer Portal has greatly increased the ease of use and process for citizens looking to purchase a hunting and fishing license. Customers now have the ability to update specific customer information on their customer profile, view past license purchases, and setup auto-renewal from their mobile or desktop device. In the past, customers were required to call MDWFP and wait while the staff searched for their information and update it while they were on the phone. This updated application gives customers complete control of their hunting and fishing experience.

Over 64,280 licenses have been purchased and opted-in for auto-renewal since the system launch. These users have chosen to not have to remember when their license expires or take the time to come back to the site to renew their license in 2020. Instead, their securely stored payment method will be used to purchase their license and save the citizen valuable time. To date, 50% of all licenses purchased are enrolled to be automatically renewed. Since the launch in 2018, there have been 80,648 privileges sold through the auto-renewal process.

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Portal was designed from day one to be a mobile first solution, delivering the same experience across mobile and desktop, inside or outdoors. Customers have the ability to update their profile, store their preferred payment method, select auto-renewal options, purchase a license, and update their customer information. It is essential for the experience channels to replicate each other and provide the same level of service and support that users have come to expect.

By delivering a new system that is cross-platform, innovative, and customer-centric, the MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks delivered on creating a truly modern experience that brings private sector technology to the government space for the first time. Automatic license renewals, license packages and digital licensing have already proven to be a winning formula for MDWFP as the agency continues to build on its award-winning digital platform for all people to enjoy what Mississippi wildlife has to offer.

