

Finding Software for Your Shelter

Please note: The information in the table below has been provided by the companies themselves. It is current as of March 2000.

Much has changed since *Animal Sheltering* published "Computerizing Your Shelter" in the May-June 1997 issue. More shelters than ever before are using computers and shelter-management software to track the animals and people they serve. Computers now are also much faster and cheaper, making them accessible to even small, money-strapped facilities. And the Internet has provided animal shelters with a powerful new medium through which to promote their services and animals—not just in their own communities, but worldwide.

These events have led to changes in the shelter software arena, too. Some programs now allow users to include photos of sheltered animals in the database. Most provide free software demonstrations on their Web sites. And all enable users to upload information and graphics from the software to the shelters' Web sites. To keep you informed about these new features—as well as about the old and new companies that offer them—we've updated the "Shelter Software Companies" chart originally published three years ago.

Six companies' shelter management software

programs are profiled here: ARK Shelter System, Animal Information Management System (AIMS), Animal Records Management System (ARMS), Chameleon/CMS software, PetWhere Shelter Management Software, and Shelter Pro. The shelter software

program Zootrak is not profiled here because the company that makes the software, Vertetrak Systems, did not respond to Animal Sheltering's survey in time for publication. You can learn about Zootrak by calling 941-342-8707 or visiting www.zootrak.com.

Would you like more information on getting the best computer hardware and software for your shelter? Do you need more information on taking advantage of all the Web has to offer? Log on to www.AnimalSheltering.org, or call 301-548-7732, and request free copies of *Animal Sheltering's* May-June 1997 issue, "Computerizing Your Shelter" and May-June 1999 issue, "17 Steps to a Great Shelter Web Site."

THE SHELTER MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE COMPANIES

	ARK Shelter System	Animal Information Management System (AIMS)	Animal Records Management System (ARMS)	Chameleon/CMS Software	PetWhere Shelter Management Software	Shelter Pro
How to contact the company	ARK Software 6556 Willowick Rd. Findlay, OH 45840 800-543-DOGS (phone/fax) arkinfo@arksoftware.com www.arksoftware.com	ALT-KIE Computer Consultants, Inc. 212 3rd Ave. North #560 Minneapolis, MN 55401 612-288-0166 (sales, tech support) 612-288-0161 (fax) AIMS@altkie.com	Business Computing 2418 Via Bonita Carrollton, TX 75006 972-417-1050 (sales, support) www.mindspring.com/~dluepke	HLP, Inc. 3271 Falkland Circle Huntington Beach, CA 92649 562-592-9899 (admin) 800-459-8376 (sales) 303-914-8630 (support) www.ChameleonBeach.com	PetNet/PetWhere Bosack-Kruger Foundation 8422 154th Ave. NE Redmond, WA 98052 800-738-9437 (support, orders, info) 425-556-9403 (fax) orders@petnet.net (orders) www.petnet.net	RoseRush Services P.O. Box 8726 The Woodlands, TX 77387 281-298-8466 (phone, fax, support) WBDUNCAN@WT.NET www.ShelterPro.com
COMPANY/SOFTWARE HISTORY						
How many years has the company or organization been in business?	15	11	15	16	10	6
How many years has the shelter management software been in existence?	10	8	10	11	5	6
Does the company have any other software on the market?	Yes (Accounting)	Yes (Management systems for other fields)	No	Yes (Public Access; Web Licensing; VirtualK; Face Facts)	No	No
CLIENT/SHELTER INFORMATION						
How many shelters currently use the software?	225	7	100	150	600	22
What is the average size of the shelters using the software?	Most are small-to-medium shelters with 1-5 computers	Most are medium-to-large shelters with 5-50 computers	Most are small-to-medium shelters with 1-12 computers	Most are larger shelters with 5-50 computers	Most are small-to-medium shelters with 5-15 computers	Most are small-to-medium shelters with 1-10+ computers

	ARK Shelter System	Animal Information Management System (AIMS)	Animal Records Management System (ARMS)	Chameleon/CMS Software	PetWhere Shelter Shelter Management Software	Shelter Pro
Will company provide client names for reference?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
What modules are included in the system? <i>(Note: Because of space limitations, we were unable to include complete system features. Please contact companies for further information.)</i>	Basic Shelter Management (animal intake, adoption, euthanasia, medical); Animal Licensing; Volunteer Information; Trap/Loan Retrieval; Cruelty and Complaint Cases with Dispatch; Cash Receipts and Payments; Lost and Found; Graphs and Reports	Animal intake; trap rental; return to owner; medical information; euthanasia; foster; wildlife release; sterilization/surgery; adoption; licensing; off-site adoptions; municipal contracts; reports/statistics; staff/security management. Lost & Found and Humane Investigation modules purchased separately	Field Activity (e.g., complaints, bites, cruelty, strays); Animal Sheltering (e.g., intake, adoption, claim, euthanasia); Animal Licenses (with customizable settings); Lost & Found; Trap Loans; Donations/Membership	Kennel (e.g., strays, foster care, lost/found); Animal (e.g., history, traits); People; Donor; Clinic (e.g., medical history, medications); License (e.g., renewal notices, batch processing, canvassing); Finance; Field (e.g., calls, complaints); Dispatch (e.g., shift tracking by officer, street mapping)	(Version 2.6) Animal Receiving; Lost and Found; Animal Care; Spaying/Neutering; Adoption; Redemption; Euthanasia; Licensing; Field Operations; Permits; Person info; Remote Operations; Reports. Upcoming version 3.0 will include enhancements and new modules	Animal database (e.g. animal descriptions, license, history); Person database; Animal Control module (e.g., complaint log, citation tracking, license tracking); Shelter module (e.g., intake adoption forms, lost-animal reports, match lists); and donation tracking
What is the cost of the software program (not including support)?	\$995 for complete package (includes 90 days of free support)	\$5,000 for base product	Ranges from \$600 to \$3,495, depending on modules purchased	\$9,800 for complete package	Free to all qualified public and private non-profit animal care organizations	\$795
Can modules be purchased separately, and if so, at what cost?	New Internet-based version of ARK coming July 2000, can be run in any browser from our Web server for approx. \$30/month, including free support, program updates, daily backup service	Yes: \$1,000 for Lost-and-Found module, \$1,500 for Humane Investigation module	Yes: Call for details	No: Purchase price includes all modules	Yes: Free optional modules: PetField (for field operations laptop) and PetAdopt for off-site adoption centers	Yes: Shelter Module \$495 Animal Control Module \$495
Is there free demonstration software?	Yes: Free demonstration software available by diskette and through Web site	Yes: Call for details	Yes: CD demos can be purchased for \$10. Free demos available on the Internet. Onsite demonstrations can be arranged	Yes: Free demonstration available through a dial-up arrangement; call for details	Yes: Free demonstration software available at www.petnet.net or by request	Yes: Free demonstration software available at www.ShelterPro.com or by diskette/CD upon request
What, if any, software features help users disseminate or collect information through their shelters' Web sites?	ARK Forum on Web site allows exchange of messages and images from any ARK software user	Data import and export	Data can be readily used in Web applications	Data dissemination and collection through Public Access	Features being developed for upcoming version	Data can be collected if the Internet software is able to import data from the ShelterPro database
Can users upload information and graphics (e.g., lost-and-found listings and images) from the software to their Web sites?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes: Knowledge Rocket uploads data and proprietary animal images to PetHarbor.com and shelter's Web site automatically	Yes: However, users must make the data "web-friendly" and add any pictures to the data before posting it. Upcoming version will make this easier	Yes: If the Internet software is able to import data from the ShelterPro database
Does your software support scanned information (e.g., barcodes)?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes: All fields in Chameleon are bar code enabled, images can be scanned and loaded	No	No
Does your software enable shelters to include animal photos in the database?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No: Upcoming version will include such imaging components	No: Future release will support
Typically, how frequent are new versions and maintenance releases?	New versions every two years; maintenance releases as necessary (typically every few months)	New versions annually; maintenance releases as necessary	Major versions about 1-2 years; maintenance releases as needed	New versions quarterly; maintenance releases as necessary (typically every few months)	New versions every few years; maintenance releases every few months	New versions every 12 months; maintenance releases as required
What is the cost of maintenance releases?	New versions cost \$145, and are included in the \$195 annual support agreement	Dependent upon existing environment	\$445 per year	No cost to registered users	Free to all qualified public and private nonprofit animal care organizations	No cost if downloaded from Internet; will be shipped if technical support is purchased

THE SHELTER MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE COMPANIES (CONTINUED)

	ARK Shelter System	Animal Information Management System (AIMS)	Animal Records Management System (ARMS)	Chameleon/CMS Software	PetWhere Shelter Management Software	Shelter Pro
How can the product import data from an existing database?	Data conversion tools included with software	Data conversion tools included with software	Call for details	It can import and export in the five basic industry file formats: csv, dbf, sql, xls, dbs	PetNet/PetWhere supplies documentation and limited support to enable user to do this	Call to discuss data conversions
What is the current recommended hardware configuration for the software?	486PC, 32MB RAM, 1GB hard disk, Windows	File Server running Windows NT Server v4.0 or Novell Netware v.3.2/4.2/5.0, Workstation with Pentium 133 MHZ 32MB RAM, 500 MB hard drive & Windows 95/98/NT	Minimum recommended hardware for DOS version is 386 PC, for Windows version, Pentium 133, 64MB RAM, Windows 95 or higher	Call company for hardware suggestions	Call company or visit Web site to obtain hardware guidelines for current and upcoming versions	IBM compatible PC capable of running Windows 95, 98 2000 or NT
Does the product support client-server or network access to data?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are there other versions available for old PCs?	Yes: DOS and older versions for Windows	No: Windows-based systems only	Yes: DOS version available for older PCs (call regarding support)	No: Chameleon runs on 386 systems or better	No	No: PC must be capable of running Windows 95, 98, 2000, or NT
SERVICE INFORMATION						
Can the company customize the program for the shelter?	Yes: \$50/hour	Yes: \$75/hour	Yes: \$90/hour; \$500/day	Yes: \$600/day	No: Not at this time	Yes: \$35/hour
Do you offer Web-based products or services to help shelters develop, manage, and improve their Web presence?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
What is the web address where clients can find product information, software updates, technical advice, etc.?	www.arksoftware.com	www.altkie.com	www.mindspring.com/~dluepke	www.ChameleonBeach.com	www.petnet.com	www.ShelterPro.com
What kind of technical support does the company offer, and what is the cost?	Free support, first 90 days, then unlimited 800-number support with \$195 annual support agreement	Telephone, remote access, e-mail, on-site; unlimited telephone support with annual maintenance agreement; \$75/hr without agreement	Unlimited technical support via telephone is \$425 to \$625/year	Technical support provides total coverage with annual support and maintenance fee of \$960 per workstation (applies only to workstations using software for daily operations)	Unlimited free technical support is free to registered users via phone, fax, and e-mail. Web site provides solutions to many support issues.	Service is on a return phone call; contact via e-mail is preferred. \$35 per incident charge, or \$175 per year unlimited
Is on-site training available?	Yes: \$250/day plus expenses; Interactive Multi-Media Training CD, \$195	Yes: \$800/day	Yes: \$500/day plus travel expenses	Yes: \$800/day (all travel costs included)	No	No
Are there user group meetings at animal protection conferences?	No	Yes: As requested by clients	Yes	Yes	No: Not at this time	No
What does the company consider the program's most special feature?	What we hear most from our clients is the ease of use of our software. Rarely is any required. In addition, ARK Software is designed to be extremely open and flexible, with the tools made available to users to customize many aspects of the software	AIMS' easy-to-use interface allows managers to quickly and easily train new staff and volunteers. AIMS was designed by knowledgeable, experienced animal shelter personnel specifically for animal shelter operations.	We're told again and again that ARMS is the easiest to use program in the field, that it stores more complete records and has better searching capabilities.	Chameleon's architecture was built to take advantage of each new generation of software and hardware (multimedia, mapping...) ensuring that it will never be obsolete. Our support services keep every site up and running efficiently.	PetWhere is a free, comprehensive shelter management program developed for, and driven by the shelter community. Our software and unbeatable free support gives your money back to the animals.	Excellent design, functionality, and value. Very flexible, easy to learn and train. Free upgrades with Internet. Customizes to fit your needs. Data conversion services available.