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CASESTUDY / CITY OF CALGARY

# The City Of Calgary Enhances Its Web Portal Effectiveness with Webtrends

*“We’re increasing our investment in our online applications, so it’s important that we demonstrate and increase return on investment. Webtrends lets us do that.”*

**- KAREN HOWELLS, MEASUREMENTS ANALYST, THE CITY OF CALGARY BUSINESS**

## OVERVIEW

One of the largest and fastest growing cities in Canada, Calgary, Alberta has grown to a population of almost one million. To better serve its rapidly growing population, Calgary’s municipal government launched an initiative to consolidate its several web sites that served the city under one main City of Calgary portal site, giving citizens, businesses and employees convenient access to many City resources and services.

Today, The City of Calgary web portal ([www.calgary.ca](http://www.calgary.ca)) hosts and links content, services and commerce activities, such as transit information and news from City Hall, online licensing and registration, and the Calgary Online Store.

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## BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The City embarked on a major upgrade of its site to a web portal, which would provide a citizen-centric view of The City with greater interactivity and customizability. In addition to insight into web visitor

behavior, The City needed a web analysis solution that could deliver meaningful information from the dynamic content and complex parameters of the new portal site. As Karen Howells, Measurements Analyst for The City of Calgary, explains, “Moving into the new portal presence meant we had to choose a different analysis strategy; we wouldn’t be able to do the standard log analysis that we were using on the static sites. We needed a solution that would work around the effect that portal design has on the types of URLs that are created.” Long, parameterized URLs of the portal, which reflect the personalized views of pages, are inconsistent and dynamic—making page titles and URLs meaningless in standard log file analysis.

## WEBTRENDS SOLUTION

After reviewing the analytics options, The City selected Webtrends, which offers an alternative to standard web server log file analysis with SmartSource Data Management. SmartSource Data Management uses client-side data collection, collecting information directly from visitors’ web browsers and providing meaningful and accurate analysis of dynamic content.

Howells shares that they chose Webtrends for three reasons: “First, there was no other solution that could give us the key elements of reporting that we required in the portal environment. SmartSource Data Management was key to our decision. Second, our IT staff is using other Webtrends solutions and has a positive relationship with Webtrends. Third, we wanted a tool that our employees would find easy to use. Our Webtrends implementation has been very successful, and business unit users are able to start using it very quickly.”

***“Several business units are taking advantage of the full functionality of Webtrends by looking at reports, making decisions and then taking action. For example, they can try a specific marketing campaign, see the impact and learn what works best for them.”***

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## **RESULTS**

While the selection of Webtrends and SmartSource was driven by the technical requirements of the new web portal, the benefits of the solution quickly reached business units as well. From guiding the design and implementation of the new site to driving continual improvements for marketing, content and commerce activities, Webtrends is having a real impact on enhancing the effectiveness of The City of Calgary’s new web portal.

Information about top pages and top entry pages was critical to the strategy and schedule of the migration to the new portal, as well as to key decisions about what features and services to place on the homepage. Howells explains, “Usage patterns of content are used to decide who gets real estate on the main page. Everybody is passionate about the importance of their content and services, but we have to make objective decisions, so one of the important criteria we look at is the volume of traffic to these features.”

Among the features business users rely upon for insight into web visitor behavior are Dashboards, which provide an at-a-glance view of several critical metrics. “Our business unit groups and I find the Dashboard feature very convenient. Through the Dashboards, users can quickly find out patterns, check for unusual trends in activity, identify peaks and then dig deeper for more information on what caused them,” shares Howells.

Howells and her business users also regularly use Comparative Reports to look at trends and see the effect of changes they make. Howells says, “Several business units are taking advantage of the full functionality of Webtrends by looking at reports, making decisions and then taking action—trying new things because of the numbers they see. For example, they can try a specific marketing campaign, see the impact and learn what works best for them.”

The City’s web portal also enhances the convenience of access to City services. Howells shares “We can’t staff our counters and phones 24/7, but we can make many resources and services available 24/7 through our web presence. By pointing out the heavy activity occurring outside normal business hours we can show decision-makers and funders the value of our web presence.”

Realization of the value of web analytics is growing in The City of Calgary. When one business unit tries something and sees results, Howells shares the experience with other business units. The more they use Webtrends, the more business units realize the potential power of the information— and want more. Howells says, “Our next step is to start taking

advantage of the advanced functionality of Scenario Analysis to track shopping cart or other online applications use. Webtrends Professional Services is coming to show us the best way to get the information we need based on the business objectives we have set.”

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In developing the portal, The City spent a lot of effort on customer-centric navigation—offering several ways to find and access content. Because SmartSource Data Management reports the same page title by the different URLs generated according to the path the customer actually takes, they are able to see the degree to which customers are indeed using these different navigation

features to find the same content. Howells shares, “We are able to demonstrate the value of our enhanced navigation features. Webtrends reports provide critical information that lets us better understand our web site visitors and provide the best online experience. By designing key elements of the new site based on actual visitor behavior, we have seen an astounding rate of growth in use.”

As Howells explains, Webtrends and SmartSource Data Management are critical to the City’s growing web presence: “We’re increasing our investment in our online applications, so it’s important that we understand better how our site is being used to demonstrate and increase return on investment. Webtrends lets us do that.”

### **About Webtrends Inc.**

Webtrends is a trusted analytics advisor in the business of collecting, analyzing, delivering and ultimately transforming data into understanding. Webtrends delivers the industry’s most recognized search engine marketing, visitor intelligence, and analytics solutions to enable companies to understand their customers, drive engagement, and enhance marketing and brand awareness. Thousands of global organizations, including Microsoft, Reuters, General Mills and Ticketmaster have chosen Webtrends business solutions and client services expertise to optimize their customers’ online experiences. Webtrends was the first web analytics company, founded over 15 years ago.

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