



# AIMS

## Area Information Management System

### SOUTH PORT

South Port NZ is New Zealand's southern most commercial port, providing a range of services and facilities for the region. Located in the city of Invercargill, South Port is situated on a man made island harbour and foreshore approximately 56 hectares in size. The Port Company owns an additional 15 hectares of land that can be used for further storage and development. South Port provides cold storage, warehousing, transit sheds, marine services, and the shipping of both containerised and break-bulk cargo.

The southern region has seen significant investment and development capital in recent years to include the processing of forestry resources for export to Asia, North America and Australia. As the closest port to the region's resource of exotic Pine, Douglas Fir and Eucalyptus forests, plus wood processing plants, South Port is ideally positioned to provide an excellent mix of services that enable the effective and efficient distribution of products to these global markets. The region's forestry industry makes up a considerable part of the Port's cargo. In the 2001/2002 year, South Port handled 2.1 million tonnes of cargo of which 17% was forestry related. This 17% was made up of 50% processed timber, 25% logs, and 25% woodchips.

Another key attribute of South Port is the close proximity of the Port's dry warehousing facilities to the shipside, which enables efficient pre-transit storage and safe and effective transfer of dry cargo to ships. For more information about South Port visit:

[www.southport.co.nz](http://www.southport.co.nz)

### SUMMARY

#### The Challenge

South Port wanted to improve the flow of information between their customers and the Port. They were looking for an electronic cargo tracking system that would improve their customers' experiences with the Port while also enabling their staff to work more effectively with the ever-increasing cargo levels.

#### The Solution

Production Software Limited (PSL) worked alongside South Port to develop a system to meet their needs, called Area Information Management System (AIMS). AIMS is an Internet based inventory tracking application, which provides real time information for customers about their stock levels in storage, as well as tracking cargo movements from the customer's site to the storage facility and on to ships.

#### The Benefits

AIMS enables South Port to enhance their relationships with their customers by improving the flow of information and streamlining their communications with timely, accurate information. AIMS supports the best practice methods employed in warehouse operations today and takes advantage of the Internet and leading edge software.

## SOUTH PORT'S BUSINESS NEEDS

The 1990s saw a significant increase in customers and cargo throughput at South Port, which led the Company to look for an electronic cargo tracking system. They were looking for a system that would enhance their customers' experiences with the Port as well as one that would enable their staff to work more effectively with the increasing cargo levels. At the time, South Port's Marketing Manager, David Prendergast said, "E-commerce will enhance customer relations through increased customer interaction, improving communication with customers through improved timely and accurate information."

South Port also acknowledged that e-commerce would help them remain competitive in the fast-paced shipping industry. E-commerce was becoming an important tool within the industry for supplying customers with real time information relating to all aspects of port operations from cargo tracking to invoicing. "Most ports and shipping companies are interacting electronically now and implementing such systems is a competitive issue. You either get with it or you get left behind," David Prendergast.

After inquiring into the cargo tracking systems available in the marketplace at the time and finding no real solution, South Port approached Production Software Limited (PSL) to discuss their requirements. PSL had produced a very successful system for



the local smelter in Invercargill and the good word had led South Port to investigate the possibility of PSL producing a tailor made solution to meet their needs. Towards the middle of 2000, PSL sat down with South Port and began discussing their requirements for an Internet-based warehousing and tracking system.

*"You either get with it  
or you get left behind..."*



## THE SOLUTION

PSL started developing the Area Information Management System (AIMS) soon after their initial discussions with South Port. PSL's experience with project planning and scoping meant that they were able to accurately estimate the projects milestones and keep the development on time and on budget. AIMS acceptance testing began in December 2000, and a local support team installed the system for South Port early in 2001. The system was fully implemented by the second quarter of 2001.

AIMS is an Internet based inventory tracking application, which provides real time information for customers about their stock levels in storage, as well as tracking cargo movements from the customer's site to the storage facility and on to ships. AIMS enables South Port's customers to monitor and control their inventory and its movements. David Prendergast says, "AIMS brings better efficiency in stock control and better communication between the Port and its customers."

AIMS was designed and developed by PSL with the input of experienced staff onsite at South Port. The system was designed to support the best practice methods employed in warehouse operations and to leverage the advantages of Internet technology and leading edge software.

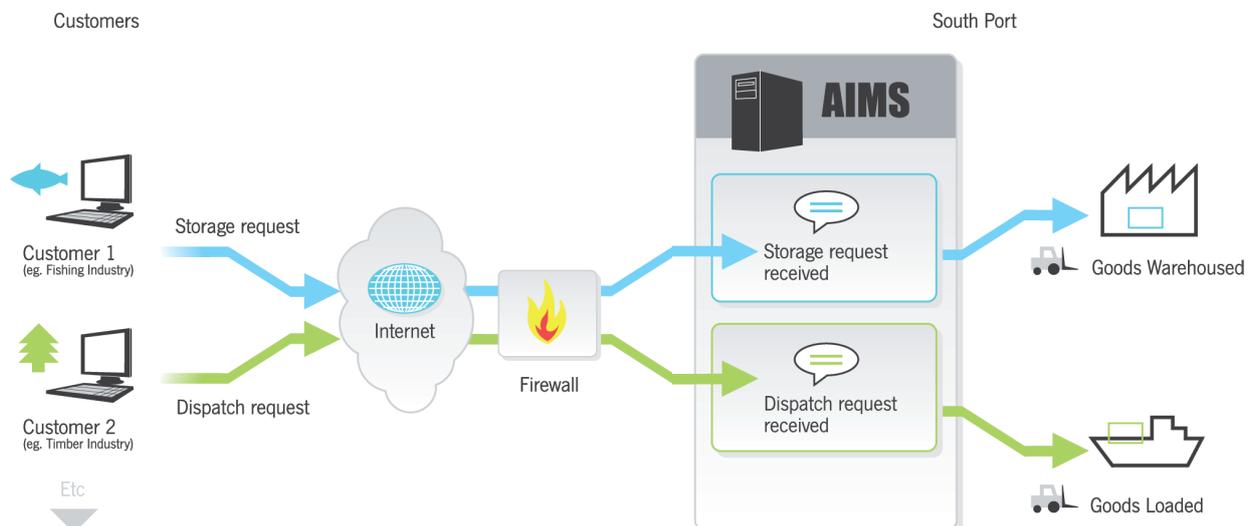
Customers are able to log into the inventory system via the Internet and submit orders for storage and dispatch. Customers can enter the details of their cargo into AIMS before the cargo arrives at the Port. Once it arrives at the Port for storage, the cargo is bar coded and its status can be tracked online. Customers can also monitor their stock levels in storage and check the cargo that is awaiting dispatch at any time.



AIMS also uses Radio Data Terminals, which enable staff on the ground to enter information into the system as they work. The information is captured in real-time, so the status of every piece of inventory is instantly available for staff and customers.

PSL aimed to develop an open system that offered the best functionality for South Port and their customers to control all materials handling and inventory control operations from before receipt to beyond delivery. AIMS enables South Port's customers to control and monitor not only their inventory but its movements as well. The system ensures confidential access to data 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and also provides a complete log of all transactions for auditing and billing purposes. A variety of standard reports as well as additional ad hoc reports can be produced through an XML data reporting function. AIMS has improved South Port's productivity through on-line, real-time control over all operations, and also ensures that accurate information is produced. In addition, AIMS is a paperless system, which reduces waste and prevents storage issues.

### Area Information Management System (AIMS)



## The Benefits of AIMS

AIMS enables South Port to enhance their relationships with their customers by improving the flow of information and streamlining their communications with timely, accurate information. AIMS supports the best practice methods employed in warehouse operations today and takes advantage of the Internet and leading edge software.

With the transfer of timely information, AIMS makes South Port's operations much more efficient. AIMS provides South Port's customers with 24x7 Internet access to their data using a standard browser to enter their log-in and password details. The system's security ensures that only authorised users are able to access their own cargo information.

The AIMS reporting function enables customers to produce a variety of standard reports online as well as additional ad hoc reports through an XML data exporting function. The additional reporting functionality enables customers with different reporting requirements to fully utilise the system to meet their needs. Although, the extended reporting functionality meant that the AIMS implementation took a little longer than expected, the final product ensured greater customer satisfaction.



## AIMS in the Future

AIMS was designed as a tailorable solution that can be modified to meet a variety of customers' needs. Current plans to develop AIMS further, include:

- Integrating AIMS with the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture's (MAF) eCert system, which will automate and streamline information sharing between South Port and MAF
- Integrating AIMS with the New Zealand Customs Service, in order to automate and streamline information sharing between South Port and the NZ Customs Service
- Adding an accounting interface, which will enable users to extract financial data from AIMS for use with other systems and make financial transactions over the Internet
- Upgrading the Radio Data Terminals used in the field
- Enabling AIMS to utilise an XML schema that will automate information sharing between South Port and their customers' systems.

For more information about AIMS and PSL, visit:

[www.prodsoft.co.nz](http://www.prodsoft.co.nz)



"By capturing crucial data about the Port and its customers, AIMS enables us to make better and more informed decisions about our business and how we can best help our customers."

Nigel Gear, Cargo & Warehouse Manager, South Port.

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