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DIVER

AUGUST 2015
divernet.com

SHARK HIGHS & LOWS

4 Bahamas experiences but
they're not all feelgood

ARE YOU A KEEN NIGHT DIVER?

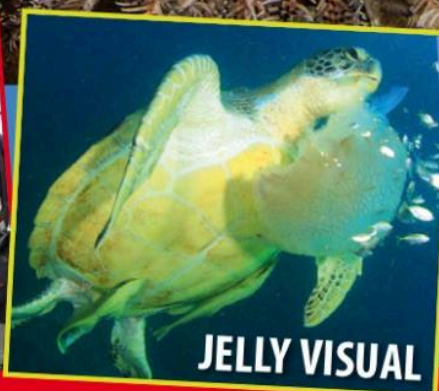
After-dark guide for the unconvinced

7 FREE DIVELOG APPS

So which to select
and which to avoid?

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

...and other uplifting
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NOW THAT ALMOST EVERYBODY has a smartphone, a tablet or at least a computer, is the old faithful paper logbook still necessary? What about moving to the virtual world and carrying your logbook with you all the time?

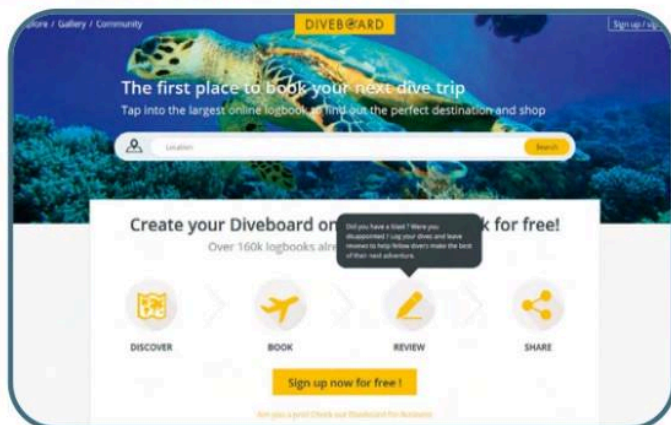
Electronic loggers are available in several flavours, from old desktop programs available for Window, Linux and Mac OSx systems to mobile app and online sites.

I've been looking at some of the online services available to scuba-divers, checking their features and how friendly and easy to use they are. In particular I have looked for ease of use, data import, logs export and print, and overall user experience.

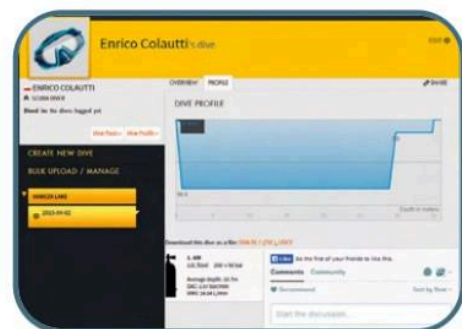
Website loggers are online loggers accessible from any device with an Internet connection. Usually they offer adaptive technology, changing the way data is displayed according to the device screen size.

This means that it offers easy use of the logger on a smartphone with a 4in screen as well as on a desktop computer with a 27in screen.

Diveboard.com



This claims to be the largest online logbook. Let's register a new account and see what it offers. The process is fast and easy, with only three fields to complete: nickname, email and password. Immediately I'm presented with my logbook and I can start and fill in my dives.



The screens are simple to navigate with all the necessary options, without being overwhelming or confusing.

An interesting option is the Wallet, where it's possible to upload scans of our documents, such as diving licences or

medical certificates.

Adding a new dive is an easy job. The data is logically divided among several tabs. Of course, there's no need to fill all the fields, and with a few clicks the essential data is inserted and saved.

After saving, the dive data is displayed in an overview page that also has a direct connection to Facebook. It looks a bit poor against other online loggers, but the essential data is there, together with the possibility of downloading the dive data in a couple of formats.

Unfortunately I couldn't find any way to print my logged dive directly from the site. On the other hand, data import is quite robust, with a good choice of data formats.

PLUS: Easy navigation, Facebook integration
MINUS: Limited data export. No logbook printing
WEBSITE: www.diveboard.com

PADI ScubaEarth

This site is managed by PADI. Registration is a three-step procedure – at least it was for me, as I don't have a PADI number. More data is required here than on other sites: an address, date of birth and an email confirmation procedure.

After logging in, I'm presented with an efficient and elegant desktop. All

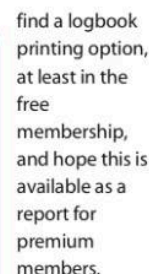
Which is the best online dive-logging software available for free?
ENRICO COLAUTTI
 compares the offerings from seven sites



ANTONIO GILLEN | DREAMSTIME.COM



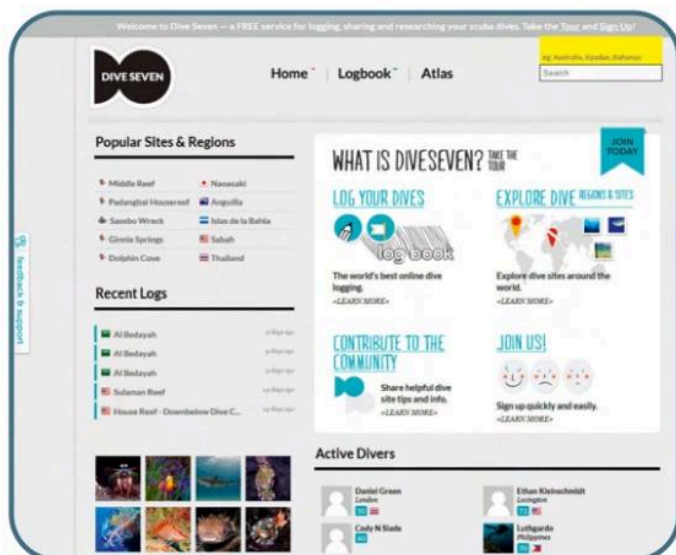
The last option should be available for free in my opinion, because an easy way to add data to a logbook would attract far more users and expand the site



PLUS: Huge diving spots and dive-centre databases.

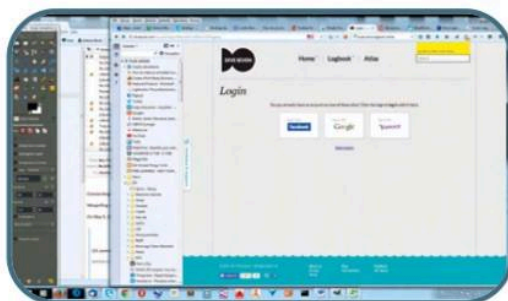


There are no gear-listing or import/ export options.
Adding a new dive is a similar process to Diviac's, with a lot of buttons from



which to choose, but presented in a less appealing way.

I found it very easy to do, and at the end I had the option to publish the dive-log to



Facebook – perfect if you like to show your buddies your last dive.

After saving, the logged dive overview has a much nicer visual presentation than the previous form. I liked the simple and clear infographics

containing all the dive parameters divided among a few panels.

Overall this is a very simple logbook, without dive-data import/export and logbook printing capabilities.

PLUS: Facebook integration

MINUS: No import/export options, no logbook printing options

WEBSITE: www.diveseven.com

Scuba-Logbook

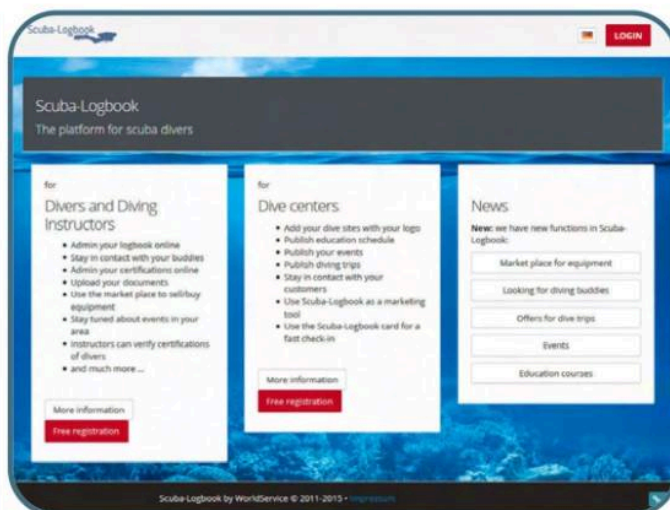
Similar to Diviac, this application provides different registration options for divers, instructors or dive-centres. Unlike Diviac, everything here is free.

Registering took me through the usual three or four fields, with basic data plus an activation email.

Once logged in, I added a dive to the logbook. I found the forms quite old-styled and definitely less appealing than Diviac or Diveboard – all those fields to fill in without any graphical data input as in the previous sites.

An equipment list is also available. The data insertion is very similar to the dive insertion and it didn't look very user-friendly.

This is the only site here that for the first few days sends emails containing tips. So I learned that I could add my certifications and ask an instructor or a buddy to confirm them. In the same way I could add a dive and ask for



confirmation.

There is also a marketplace and a buddy invite/ search section if you're looking for new diving partners or organising a dive trip – great options.

Finally, the user is offered a Scuba-Logbook card. This is a shortcut to the diver documents and history on the site.

By typing the ID number or using the card's QR code,

all verified information such as certificates and documents and the last 10 dives will be displayed.

What about data import/export or logbook printing? I didn't find any sign of either – pity.

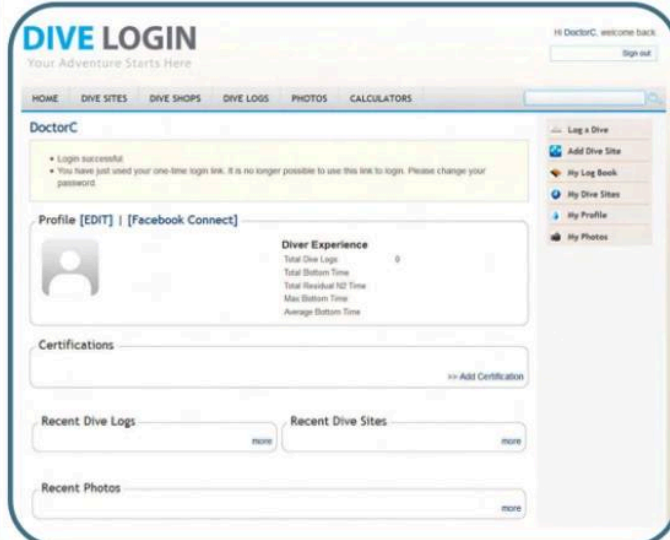
PLUS: Buddy/instructor certification, community interaction, Scuba-Logbook card

MINUS: Data input, lack of data import/export, no logbook printing

WEBSITE: www.scubalogbook.com

Dive Login

The landing page is a bit old-fashioned, and less appealing than Diviac or



DiveLogs.

Registering is very easy, with just a username and email fields to fill in. By clicking the link in the confirmation email the profile page opens, and this is required to change the user password.

Adding a dive to the logbook is again divided into steps. The first step shows a world map with a list of diving spots from which to choose. A little overwhelming – but there is an optional button to skip this step.

The second step contains all the dive data. Unfortunately the dive-site can be chosen only from the map on the previous step, or from a huge drop-down list that is noticeably incomplete.

A mixture of type-in fields and radio buttons with icons is used to insert the dive data.

There is also a section with a dive verification where it is possible to insert

buddy data, but there is no buddy verification, as in other loggers. Once saved, the data is presented in a simple, clear form.

I quickly found out how I could print my logbook. A side-panel even shows a list of printing options for logbook customisation – impressive!

But here again, I didn't find any possibility of dive-data import/export.

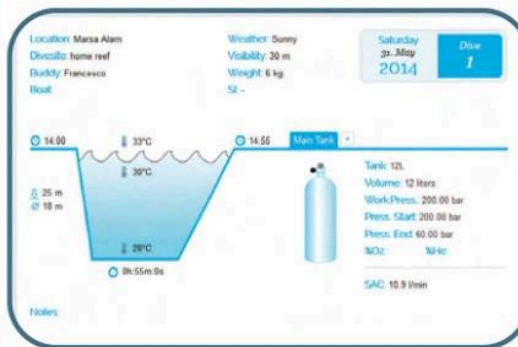
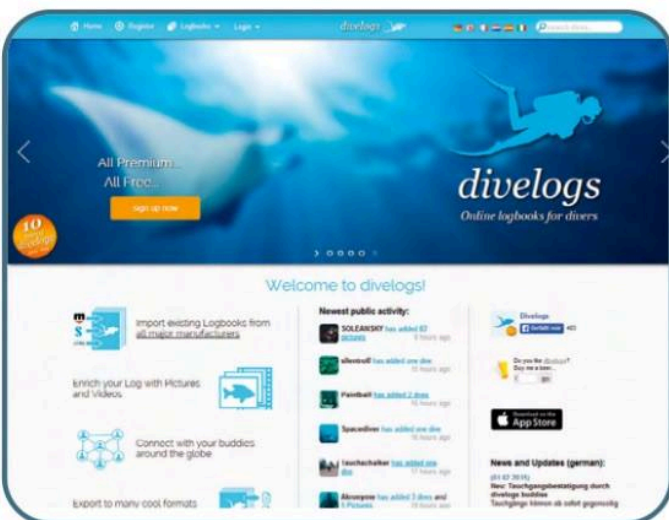
PLUS: Logbook printing

MINUS: Old-fashioned, no data import/export, somewhat unpleasant to use

WEBSITE: www.diveblogs.com

DiveLogs.de

DiveLogs.de introduces itself with a very attractive landing page that promises quite a lot.



Registration is very fast, and after confirmation through a verification email, I was able to login. First impressions are very good. The site is well-designed

and modern. Clicking on my username tab opens a long drop-down menu.

The number of options may seem a bit daunting but they are well thought-through, though I would be inclined to change the list order – putting "New Dive" at the top, for example.

I started by adding some information in My User Profile: a picture, a few words about me, my equipment, my certifications – easy.

Adding dives to the logbook is again fast and straightforward. A cool feature is the possibility to pin your dive-spot on Google Maps. Later you can search your dives by location, and you can even export dives to Google Earth.

After saving the dive data I was asked if I would like to add images or videos, which is just a drag-and-drop operation. Great! Finally, I was presented with a graphical representation of my dive.

Your buddy can verify every dive, if he/she is registered in DiveLogs.de.

Where DiveLogs.de excels is in its import/export and printing capabilities. It provides a full

range of export options: PDF; eBook with or without images from your dives in epub format; Google Earth; Excel; UDCF; or DLD (website proprietary format). So it's not just paper prints! Epub format is great if you want to carry your logbook in your smart device.

The data import feature is just wonderful. The list of available formats is really long and complete.

PLUS: Huge import/export data formats, logbook printing, appealing graphics, buddy dive verification

MINUS: Hmm – nothing!

WEBSITE: diveblogs.de

My Verdict

After playing around these sites for a while, I came up with the following podium classification:

Third place goes to **Diviac**, mainly because of the logbook printing paid options. This is a great site with appealing graphics, but other sites are offering the same for free.

On the second step of my podium goes **Diveboard.com**, with its easy navigation and Facebook integration.

It didn't make the top because of the limited data import and the lack

of logbook-printing possibilities.

And the winner is **DiveLogs.de**. It made a great overall impression, and the right combination of colours and graphics made it a very pleasant user experience.

What really made it stand out is the huge data import and the perfect logbook export/printing options.

A special mention goes to **Scuba-Logbook** – appealing layout, email tips, buddy confirmation and diver community give it great potential.

It needs only to improve the input forms and data import/export options.