

Critterpedia

“Our original plans were set back 12 months and our original target market, tourism, evaporated. We have now pivoted to a Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Government (B2G) model. As well as developing exciting technology, our pivot has opened options to explore and identify additional target markets.”

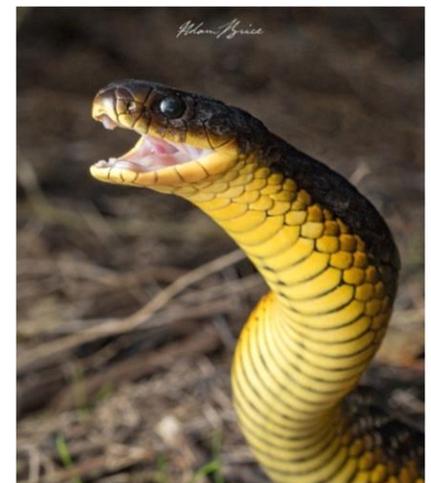
- Nic Scarce, Co-founder, Critterpedia

Critterpedia is an Australian Snake and Spider Awareness and Safety Tool Kit. Including a machine learning engine for automated species identification, the platform will change our connections with wildlife. Critterpedia is tapping into artificial intelligence, virtual reality and augmented reality capabilities and providing software that is addressing a significant gap in interactive solutions, combining education with fun technology. The idea was born when a visitor from the UK met a nest of red-back spiders. The experience was so unnerving for the UK visitor that the Co-founders were then bombarded with questions about every Australian creepy crawlly – “Wouldn’t a ‘Shazam’ for creature identification be amazing!”

Working around the world licensing and merchandising well known global brands, Nic Scarce, co-founder of Critterpedia, could never have predicted her career would now involve gathering pictures of Australian snakes and spiders to train an artificial intelligence, machine learning algorithm. A visit from a plague of red-back spiders, coinciding with a visit from overseas relatives, led Nic to change her career path and devote time to developing Critterpedia with her husband and Co-founder, Murray Scarce. A simple idea to find information on spiders and snakes has led to the development of a technology platform which is fun, educational and in some cases, potentially life changing.

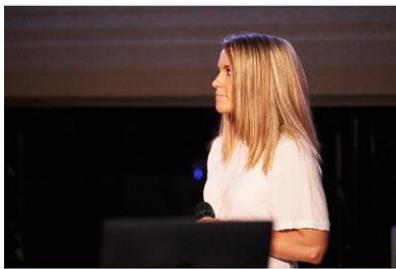
As with many start-ups, product development encountered some obstacles; the things you just do not see until you start product development. Legal issues, technology exploration and then the impact of pandemic conditions created many decision points along the project timeline. However, when it came to populating the program, the true enormity of the task became very real.

“To get Critterpedia ready for launch, 209,652 spider and snake photographs have been provided by a group of dedicated and kind contributors: herpetologists, arachnologists, snake handlers, wildlife photographers, and spider and snake enthusiasts. It’s taken about eight months but we took on the challenge, achieved what we set out to do and made some amazing connections and friends along the way,”
Nic Scarce, Co-founder, Critterpedia



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Originally, Critterpedia was planning to offer a technology platform to help overseas visitors with information relating to the myriad of Australian snakes and spiders. This was to include an snake/spider instant identification feature, education about the “critter”, vital first aid advice and other safety related information. With travel restricted, finding new markets and applications for Critterpedia became vital to its continuing success.



“Critterpedia has been successful in securing CSIRO Kick-Start funding for this project and CSIRO’s Data61 are collaborating on a machine learning engine for automated species identification.”

*Nic Scarce, Co-founder,
Critterpedia*

Through the Female Founders Impact Program, Nic has been part of the Mentor Match sessions. This has allowed Nic to receive mentoring support to work through their current challenges.

Access to contacts and networks has supported the team as they have pivoted the original idea for Critterpedia, away from a product for the tourism industry, to a multi-faceted B2B/B2G platform, incorporating VR/AR, and providing information not only on snakes and spiders but also bite first aid, awareness, and other safety and behaviour related education.

As work progresses on training the artificial intelligence that supports Critterpedia, it is anticipated it will become a trusted resource for businesses, Governments and, when the time is right, back to where the idea started, visitors to Australia.

While it is still early days, we look forward to seeing Critterpedia become a well trusted and “household” name in the identification, education and awareness of the wonderful spiders and snakes of Australia.

Visit the Critterpedia website <https://critterpedia.com/>

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