

Nightclubs & Live Events ID Scanning

Cowboys Nightclub & Music Festival Screens Tens of Thousands of Guests a Year with Patronscan

Industry: Hospitality · Nightclubs · Music Festivals and Live Events

Client: Cowboys Dancehall & Cowboys Music Festival · Penny Lane Entertainment Group, Vince May

Overview:

Cowboys Dancehall is one of the largest nightclubs in Alberta, with two to three thousand guests coming through the doors on a busy night. Its sister event, the Cowboys Music Festival, packs up to eight thousand people a day into ten days of “fun mayhem.” Between the two venues, Penny Lane Entertainment sees roughly seventy to eighty thousand guests a year and needs a door process that can keep up.

Vince, who works for Penny Lane Entertainment Group, replaced an older ID scanning system that scanned IDs and took photos but couldn't stop repeat troublemakers from cycling through multiple valid IDs, couldn't read passports or foreign IDs, and stored guest data on a PC with no real security. Patronscan's Guard+ changed that: **clearer images and information, fast enough scanning to move festival-sized lines, and secure records that have helped identify suspects for police.**

Penny Lane Entertainment owns Cowboys Dancehall, one of the largest nightclubs in Alberta, and produces the Cowboys Music Festival. Together, the venues bring tens of thousands of guests through the door every year and keeping that many people moving safely was the driving need behind the switch to Patronscan.



The Problem:

At the scale Cowboys operates, which is thousands of guests a night, and up to eight thousand a day during the festival, a door process has to be fast, accurate, and hard to fool. The previous system fell short on three fronts:

- **Repeat troublemakers using multiple IDs:** the venues could identify and ban a troublemaker's ID, but the same person would simply come back the next week on a different one. The old system had no way to stop it.
- **Insecure guest data:** records lived on a PC with no real protection; anyone who got hold of the machine had access to everyone's information.
- **Limited scanning and slow support:** the old system couldn't detect fake IDs, couldn't scan passports, and couldn't read foreign IDs, and replacement parts and service were slow to arrive when units broke down.

The Solution:

Cowboys Dancehall and the Cowboys Music Festival put PatronsCan's Guard+ scanners at the door. Every ID is forensically scanned, including passports and foreign IDs the old system couldn't read, and the clearer images and information make it far easier for staff to catch someone cycling through multiple identities or already flagged in the system.

The system has also become a tool for investigations. In one case, surveillance provided a description following a sexual assault; staff used PatronsCan to identify the individual on the system and handed the information to police, who made an arrest. Vince notes the broader effect: knowing the system is there gets people thinking harder about who they hang out with and how they behave on a night out.

The PatronsCan Toolset at Cowboys:



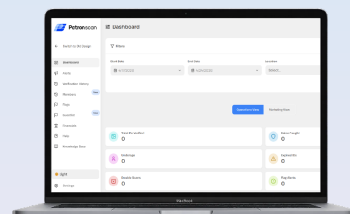
Guard+ ID Scanner

Forensically scans and age-verifies every ID at the door in six to eight seconds, reading passports and foreign IDs the venues' previous system couldn't handle, and catching guests trying to cycle through multiple identities.



Flag Network

Let's staff red-flag troublemakers and repeat offenders, so the flag follows them. Because flags are shared across venues and borders, someone turned away in Calgary can find the same welcome at a venue elsewhere.



Investigations & Records

Clear ID images and secure records let staff match a surveillance description to a real identity and hand accurate information straight to police, as happened in a sexual assault investigation at one venue.

How PatronsCan Supports Daily Operations:

- Stops repeat troublemakers from re-entering on a second or third ID after being flagged on the first.
- Reads passports and foreign IDs, closing a gap the previous scanner couldn't cover.
- Moves festival-sized lines quickly: roughly six to eight seconds per scan, enough to get close to two thousand guests through in about forty-five minutes across three lanes.
- Secures guest data far beyond the old PC-based system, in line with Canadian privacy law and with tightly controlled access.
- Supports investigations by helping staff match a surveillance description to a real identity and hand accurate information to police.
- Changes behavior at the door: guests know a flag can mean a ban of a year or more, and it shows in how they act.

"When PatronsCan came in, it was a breath of fresh air. What it can do, it was far superior than what we were currently using."

— Vince, Penny Lane Entertainment

The Results:

Since deploying PatronsCan, Cowboys has kept festival-sized lines moving without slowing down the door. Three scanning lanes got nearly two thousand people through in about forty-five minutes, while making it far harder for repeat troublemakers to talk their way back in.



70k–80k

guests scanned across both venues annually



3–4 Seconds

Average scan time per guest at the door



Reduction

in multi-ID users and repeat troublemakers



Beyond the numbers, the impact shows up in three areas that matter most to venues operating at this scale:

Repeat Troublemakers Locked Out

The old system's biggest blind spot was people cycling through multiple IDs to get back in after a flag. This is now gone. Clearer records and shared flags mean a person banned once stays out, whether they try again next week or try a different venue.

Fast Lines, Even at Festival Scale

With three scanning lanes running at six to eight seconds a guest, Cowboys moved close to two thousand people through the door in about forty-five minutes during the Music Festival, keeping a four-thousand-person lineup moving instead of costing the venue sales while guests wait outside.

A Deterrent That Changes Behavior

Guests increasingly know that getting flagged can mean a ban of a year or more, and it shows: people are more careful about who they go out with and how they behave. Vince recalls overhearing a guest turned away at a venue in the United States, flagged from an incident back in Canada, a reminder that a bad night at one venue can follow someone across venues, cities, and borders.

Get flagged at one venue on the network, and the word follows across town, or across the border.

“The troublesome people were using multiple IDs, and we couldn't stop people from coming into the venues. If you flagged that ID, they just came back next week.”
— Vince, Penny Lane Entertainment



Privacy, Done Right:

Guests are sometimes concerned about their ID information being shared. It's a natural question at a door process handling this much personal data. PatronsScan educated the venues' staff on how the system's privacy protections work, and that understanding now gets passed on to guests. Once guests understand that, showing an ID at the door becomes routine as showing one to buy a drink.

"Everyone's concerned about privacy, but once people understand the privacy laws and how PatronsScan has educated us on how privacy works. You cannot just access a bunch of information on the system. Nobody can. It's so secure that you need some serious, high credentials to actually get access to any information at all. They fully comply with Canadian privacy laws."
— Vince, Penny Lane Entertainment

Collaboration Across Venues and Borders:

- **Works alongside surveillance:** a description from camera footage was matched to a real identity on PatronsScan and handed directly to police in a sexual assault investigation.
- **Connected across venues and borders:** the shared Flag Network meant a guest flagged in Canada was turned away at a venue in the United States.
- **Privacy-compliant by design:** access to guest information requires high-level credentials and full compliance with Canadian privacy law, which is why the process feels routine to guests rather than invasive.
- **Built for scale:** designed to keep moving through festival-sized lineups (close to two thousand guests in forty-five minutes across three lanes) without slowing the door down.

Conclusion:

For nightclubs and festivals operating at real scale, Cowboys shows what ID scanning can do beyond checking a birthdate. PatronsScan's Guard+ stops repeat troublemakers who used to cycle through multiple IDs, keeps lines moving even when thousands of guests are waiting to get in, and gives staff the clear, secure records they need to support real investigations. As Vince puts it: "It works, and you can't beat it."

**Schedule a free demo with our team. Call
1-877-778-9798 or email sales@patronscan.com.
Learn more at patronscan.com.**