



NALIT

SUMMER 2013

National Association of Legislative Information Technology

National Conference of State Legislatures ♦ 7700 E. First Place ♦ Denver, CO 80230 ♦ 303.364.7700

Where has the NALIT year gone? It seems we were just in Chicago for the summit and Madison for our Super PDS. With that, a few acknowledgments are in order to those who helped me with the responsibilities of being the chair.

Thanks to our directors, Mendora Servin, Kurt McDowell, Terri Clark, Eric Dugger, Jonathan Palmore and Gary Schaefer who carved time from their busy schedules to help organize our programs at the upcoming summit in Atlanta.

And thanks to the PDS planning committee, Troy Adkins, Terri Clark, Kelly Stallings and Rich Beckwith for also making time to work on the upcoming PDS seminar sessions. To Vice Chair Troy Adkins, who will become our fearless leader for the upcoming year—thanks. To Secretary Joel Redding—for keeping the newsletters interesting and informative—thanks. In addition, thanks to Past Chair Rich Beckwith—who always manages to keep us on track and manages to tell jokes...that make us laugh?

Of course, none of this would be possible without Pam. We all know NALIT would not be as successful as it is without her incredible knowledge and dedication to ensure that we provide high-quality summit and PDS sessions—big thanks. Finally, thanks to all IT staff. Without you, NALIT would not be the success it is today. The success of legislative IT staff can be attributed to the dedicated people in state legislatures who commit extraordinary amounts of hours figuring out the best technology to ensure the business of the state is accomplished. As our members work hard for their constituents, IT staff work hard for their constituents, members and legislative staff.

Please remember the Summit in Atlanta, August 12-15. Also please remember the PDS, October 15-18, in Raleigh, N.C.! The planning committees have used suggestions from our membership to develop sessions that will be educational and informative. The summit topics range from security issues and challenges, Cloud computing, emerging technologies and the technology that states are using in committees. For our PDS, the pre-seminar session will provide programming and networking tips and tricks, which can spur discussions on the “behind the scenes” development and support we do in our IT shops. Equally, the “five minutes of fame” session allow states to discuss their past and present achievements. Come to learn and come to share all your legislative IT experiences with your colleagues. Of course, at both events, the out-of-session interaction we have with each other provides a great opportunity to gain a more in-depth understanding of what we do. Check the NCSL website often for updates on the details of each event.

It is my greatest hope you will be able to attend the Summit and PDS. On a selfish note, if you can attend only one, please consider Raleigh. We invite you to come early to Raleigh. Visit our mountains (about four hours from Raleigh), and stay late to visit our beaches (you can get there in about two hours and 15 minutes). Our weather is great that time of year. The colors in the mountains are spectacular, and the water in the ocean is warm.

For those who are out of session—congratulations; for those who are not, hang in there. Thank you for the opportunity I have had to serve as chair this year. It has been a great experience.

I hope to see all soon.

Regards,

Peter

Chair's Corner

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Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

I invited all the states to contribute information for a composite Microsoft Office article. I wanted to see how many states are using Microsoft Office, what version they are on, and if they are considering switching to something else. Hopefully this will give you an idea of what other states are using and possible contacts if you are considering upgrading or changing.

Joel Redding: NALIT Secretary

Alaska

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

Yes, Alaska uses Word for Bill Drafting and every other form of word processing.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

Alaska uses Office 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

Alaska upgraded from Office 2007 to Office 2010 in 2011.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

We did not experience very many issues during the 2007 to 2010 upgrade. We did experience quite a few complaints in the migration from Office 2003 to Office 2007 due to the large changes in the User Interface (ribbons). We invested in several different training tools such as videos and plasticized 'cheat sheets'.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

We try to stay fairly current with Microsoft's versions. That is to say we like to upgrade at least one to two years after the new version is released in order to:

- 1) avoid Release 1 bugs,
- 2) give IT staff and power users train themselves at home on the new product, and
- 3) find solutions to any 'unique' ways we use Office (word macros, templates, and programming interfaces, etc.).

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

The new user interface and the new 'cloud' features will take more studying, but we are also looking forward to Office 2013 for a few features that could benefit us, specifically Skype integration with Lync, improved PDF support, and good reviews for PowerPoint 2013. We are more concerned with the upgrade from Windows 7 to Windows 8 with regard to the UI.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

While there are potential cost benefits with going to Microsoft Office 365, we are satisfied with our current situation. We have no plans to consider Open Office due to the large customizations we have done (scripts, templates and macros). The State of Alaska has an Enterprise Agreement (EA) with Microsoft that does afford us pricing discounts as well as other benefits with regard to training and support. We will continue to consider Office 365 for the future, but we have no plans to switch anytime soon.

Curtis Clothier



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

California

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

Yes. We currently use Word for bill drafting and analyses and are considering going web-based in the future.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

In 2010.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

We went from Office 2003 to 2010. Macros were difficult to convert. The user interface changes were significant and we needed to prepare for training on these changes. Some of the setting changes were surprising to our users. Otherwise, users acclimated pretty well. Some customers are still using 2003 features and have not converted, even though they were upgraded.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

Sometimes it is hardware replacement; sometimes feature enhancements, business process change, and retirement of support.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

We have no plans at this time.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

We are considering web-based solutions.

Cheri Meadows

Colorado

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

Word is used for non-bill drafting uses. We still use WordPerfect for everything related to bill drafting.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

We upgraded in mid-2012 as part of our hardware refresh.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

There were none to our knowledge.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

Upgrades are based on new hardware refresh.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

We have not planned for this yet.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

We have no plans as of now.

Manish Jani



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

Florida House

Overview:

The Florida House Bill Drafting unit uses an in-house electronic drafting system called “Leagis” (.net, sql server, Word-based). Requests (bill or amendment) may be submitted directly with instructions and attachments. Drafts are created, edited, reviewed and released electronically. Documents approved are filed, displayed, referred and tracked electronically. Official copies are printed with and kept by the Clerk of the House for delivery to the Senate Secretary when passed by the House, to the Governor when passed by the Legislature, and to the Secretary of State when approved by the Governor, allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, or in the case of other purely legislative act such as a Joint Resolution that bypasses the Governor’s desk.

Copies of drafts in progress may be printed or emailed by those working on them. Filed documents may be printed or emailed by anyone accessing them through the House webpage (whether directly or linked through another webpage).

Front-end application: ASP.net, MS-Word, using content controls for custom tagging.

Document Storage: Open XML Format (.docx)

Document Repository: SharePoint

Statute Information: A separate division of the Legislature (Division of Law Revision and Information) maintains an application to manage statutes; that database is integrated into the bill drafting process.

Document Output: PDF generated from the Word document is the primary output for general consumption.

System Development: System is primarily developed and maintained in-house by staff and contractors as necessary.

Scott McPherson

Hawaii

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

Yes.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We currently use 2007, but will be upgrading to 2013 this summer.

When was your last upgrade?

It might have been 2008. Not real sure.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

Lack of customizability of the ribbon was the biggest issue. Some people had a difficult time finding things in the new interface.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

Microsoft’s retirement schedule and users’ desire to use modern software.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

What changes? We plan on rolling with the punches.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Not at this time.

Jon Shimabuku



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

Idaho

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?
In the bill drafting system, we use MS Word only for labels, memos, faxes and several reports; MS Excel is used for a few reports. Secretaries also use Outlook and Word for correspondence.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

MS/Office 2007 SBE. We may be approved to update, but I am uncertain whether we will at this time.

When was your last upgrade?

In 2007.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

Users still wanted to use Word Perfect.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

When we went to Office 2007, the rest of the state was on MS/Office and we were using WP. Not sure there are new features that warrant a future upgrade, but may want to be somewhat current.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

We have no plans to go to a subscription service.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Since it is not a key part of the bill drafting system, we are very open to other options. Secretaries use Word for correspondence, and MS/Outlook is used for email. Outlook would be the hardest to replace.

Glenn Harris

Illinois

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

We use it for appropriations drafting, the journal and administrative rules.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use 2003. We are 95 percent certain that we will upgrade to Office 2013 and skip 2010. Testing is continuing but going well enough that plans are being put in place.

When was your last upgrade?

See above.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

We conducted extensive testing to make sure any applications tied to Word continue to function correctly

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

The need to be current, and pressure from users to move to 2010 for their own use. We've waited as long as we could.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

Our hope is that we can be completely or mostly free of dependence on Word before having to upgrade again.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Work is already underway to integrate appropriations drafting into our XMetaL drafting system. That's the most important piece, and after that we'll deal with the other applications that use Word. Likely that would be XMetaL or our own editing tool as needed.

Tim Rice



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

Indiana

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

No.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use 2013.

When was your last upgrade?

Spring 2013.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

We needed major changes to the UI.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

MS Office is not really core to our systems, so we tend to stay on the latest and greatest.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

Again, MS Office is not important to our core systems.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Yes. We are implementing Open Office as our core word processing application.

Jeff Ford

Kansas

We are using Open Office in our bill drafting solution. We have to use an older version of Open Office with our current bill drafting software and don't have all the functionality available. We tried moving the users to Open Office for all their word processing and spreadsheet work, but it just doesn't work as well as MS Office. The users were very frustrated. We currently use MS Office for everything except bill drafting.

We are on MS Office Professional Plus 2010. Our staff PC lease renews this summer, and we may move to Office 2013 at that time, but the decision hasn't been made yet. We try to stay on current versions to avoid the problems with migrating across multiple versions, but we aren't out on the bleeding edge either. We are testing Office 2013 but haven't set a date to upgrade. Our executive branch agencies are considering moving those agencies' email to the cloud with Microsoft and Google the finalists on that bid. We'll observe that process and consider moving over to Office 365 or Google once the management of that system is stable. We have no plans to participate in that right now.

When we are considering an upgrade to any software we test it within our environment and create new training materials. We train the technical staff first—they need to know the new software and the best methods for the users to complete their work. We schedule the implementation so users receive training within a reasonable amount of time before the upgrade. When possible, we stage the implementation so we can handle user help calls without overwhelming our staff. When we migrated from GroupWise to Exchange Server and Outlook, we migrated groups of as low as 10 users. This allowed us to set up everyone's phones to the new email system very quickly the morning after the migration. This process took more calendar days, but the migration went smoothly, and the users were happy with the change. We'll likely take the same approach with the upcoming changes in Office—migrating small groups so we can provide intensive support for several days following the upgrade.

Terry Clark



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

Kentucky

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

Yes, Kentucky uses MS Word as the editor for our bill drafting system. The bill drafting shell program that stores, retrieves bills; interfaces with the bill request and bill status databases; and controls the word editor is written in MS VB.NET. The program that converts bills stored on the MS SQL server from XML to Word/RTF and back is written in MS C#.NET. Fiscal analysis needed for legislation is handled by a Word macro-based template.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

Our agency in general uses MS Office 2007.

When was your last upgrade?

MS Office 2007 during June – July 2008. Windows 7 OS for non-bill drafters: November – December 2011; for bill drafters: Summer – Fall 2012.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

The main pitfall was having the Word editor in the bill drafting system abend, following our upgrade to MS Windows 7 OS. The fix to the problem was to run Word in compatibility mode for Windows XP (Service Pack 3).

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

We participate in an enterprise (Executive and Legislative branches) licensing program that covers Microsoft Office licensing and upgrades. We upgrade when we are sure that upgrades won't disrupt the stability of the agency systems.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

We have discussed the newer cloud-based MS office products, and are not inclined to move our systems in that direction. However, we currently are testing all systems against MS Office 2010. The bill drafting system editor still works with MS Word 2010, when run in Windows XP (Service Pack 3) mode.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

No, at this time, we plan to stay with the MS Office Professional suite.

Jim Swain

Louisiana

Louisiana uses WordPerfect. Because on both the Senate and House sides, many people create bills (e.g., attorneys, researchers) and only a couple of people ensure the proper format of every bill and resolution (i.e., on Senate side two people), it is essential to have reveal codes to see why a document is formatting a specific way. We also have found that WordPerfect offers more formatting capability than Word (e.g., two different page numbering counts within the same document, multiple header changes within the same document).

Gary Schaefer



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

Michigan House

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?
We use International Roll-Call's program, LMS (Legislative Management System) for bill introduction, amending and engrossing. LMS uses Word 2010 behind-the-scenes to edit the Word documents.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use 2010 Standard.

When was your last upgrade?

In 2010.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

The major issue with upgrading from 2007 to 2010 was getting oriented to the ribbon.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

We are just trying to stay current.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

Not sure what you're referring to.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

We would love to try Open Office; however, the LMS program is written in VB and requires Microsoft Word.

Cathy Hunter

Missouri House

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?
No, but for word processing in Member and staff offices. WordPerfect is used for bill drafting and other legislative processes.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use Microsoft Office 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

In Summer 2011.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

I'm not sure that I would classify as it as a pitfall, but training and adjusting to the new ribbon menu structure and changes in mail merge was a task.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

An upgrade to Exchange 2010 and new features available with Outlook 2010. Support lifecycle of the product.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

No.

Scott Skinner



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

New Mexico

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

Not Word, but we have Access databases.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use 2007.

When was your last upgrade?

In 2011.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

The look and feel of 2007 to users/training.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

Security.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

Planning on skipping over the next version of Office.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Haven't thought of switching from Office at this point.

Mark Guillen

North Carolina

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

We use Office/Word for bill drafting and the committee notice system and our House calendar system (started May 2013). We will be using Word for the Senate calendar and journals next year via in-house development.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use Office 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

Three years ago.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

Converting/modifying the drafting system code (VBA/.net).

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

We want to keep up with the version change and features (include PDF conversion from word to PDF).

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

We will develop a test plan, and test well in advance of the upgrade.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Not at this time.

Peter Capriglione



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

North Dakota

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?
No.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use Office 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

With new laptops (2012).

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

None.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

We use the current version/features.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

N/A.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Our drafting solution uses Open Office.

Kyle Forster

Ohio

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

We do not use Office in the bill drafting solution, but do in the members' offices for word processing.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use Office 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

In 2012.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

The only issue was training users in the new look, coming from Office 2003.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

We try to stay current/compatible with the constituencies.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

Hope they work! We do not upgrade as soon as things come out. Hopefully, they work out the issues before we make the move.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

This is something that is mentioned every year when it comes time to renew the MS contract, but nothing serious has been done at this point.

Kurt McDowell



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

Oklahoma House

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

Yes.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

In Summer 2012.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

We upgraded from 2003, so the obvious interface change caused some training issues. Our process depends heavily on macros, so there were some small changes in the VBA code that presented some unforeseen challenges. In 2003 it was much easier to present toolbars to the user.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

The upcoming end of support for office 2003 was a big factor in moving forward, plus better compatibility with the new document types.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

We are looking at systems that use Open Office as editor.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Yes, we have been considering systems that use Open Office.

T.J. Robinson

Oregon

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

No.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use Office 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

In January 2011.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

Application compatibility/required macro re-writes.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

Keeping up with technology/additional features.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

Not sure; we're evaluating Office 365.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Not currently, due primarily to familiarity and training.

Shancy Saban



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

South Carolina

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?
Yes.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use Microsoft Office 2007.

When was your last upgrade?

We began testing Microsoft Word in 2007 and implemented it network-wide in Summer/Fall 2009.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

- Customizing the ribbon to enhance legislative process efficiency for bill drafting staffers who utilized macros for formatting legislative documents (i.e., bills, amendments, journals and calendars).
- Limited ribbon customizing tools.
- Upgrading and converting templates and macros to streamline processes for regular network users.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

To keep up with industry standards.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

- Testing current legislative process (macros and templates) in Office 2010 and soon other newer Office releases.
- Providing an extensive training program for staff utilizing classroom and video training platforms.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Yes, we're always looking for ways to improve. We're researching how we might use SharePoint for work flows.

Gigi Brickle

South Dakota

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

Not for bill drafting; we use WordPerfect for that, but we use Word exclusively during the interim.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use Professional Plus 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

In 2012.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

We really didn't have any.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

The state of South Dakota standard.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

We haven't had time to think about it yet.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

No.

Lou Adamson



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

Virginia - Division of Legislative Automated Systems

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

Yes, currently we're using Microsoft Word 2010 for our bill drafting system, our regulation information system and legislative information system.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use Microsoft Office 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

About seven to nine months ago.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

There were a variety of technical glitches particular to our software design. The main hurdle was acceptance by the user community of the new interface elements. Microsoft's reliance on the ribbon hid many menu features that the end user found confusing. One other wrinkle, since we rolled out the new version of Word with the Microsoft's new operating system, we found that the enhanced security features broke a few of our BDS-based utilities.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

Moving off older Dell computers to new ones required an OS upgrade along with the Microsoft Office upgrade.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

We're actually going to work to eliminate the use of Microsoft Word in our next few upgrades of the bill drafting system, the regulation information system and the legislative information system.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

We're looking at customized inline HTML editors to meet most of our text editing needs (TinyMice/CuteEditor, etc.). For presentation in PDF format, we're working with iText. The hurdle, of course, will be user acceptance.

Joe Johnson

Virginia Senate

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?

Yes.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use Office 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

In Fall 2012.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

It was difficult for users to adjust to the ribbons.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

Staying within two versions of current product.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

We're undecided and currently are evaluating other office automation products.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Yes.

Jonathan Palmore



Microsoft Office in State Legislatures

Vermont

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?
Our attorneys draft in Word, which is also used for most other document production. Word is also the main editing interface for our legislative automation application.

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

We use Office 2010.

When was your last upgrade?

We upgraded from Office 2003 last summer.

What were the pitfalls you faced during your last upgrade?

Converting the various macros, templates and toolbars to 2010 format was a major job, largely because the Office 2010 ribbon is far more difficult to manipulate than the 2003 toolbars. We also had major troubles with our legislative automation application due to the upgrade. Some of those problems were issues with adapting the application to use the new version, and some were issues arising from conflicts between the application and other applications that interface with Word.

What is the driving force behind your upgrades?

The pending end of support for 2003 in 2014, and the increasing use of the .docx and .xlsx formats by other state departments and other correspondents. There were few, if any, new features of Word that offered any real benefit to our users. However, the fiscal staff are making use of the new Excel features.

How do you plan on dealing with the big changes that Microsoft has planned for Office?

We just managed to move away from Office 2003 in 2013. We won't be making any major changes for a while.

Are you considering switching from Office for these processes, to Open Office, for example, or something else?

Our legislative automation vendor recently began offering an alternative editor that is simpler and faster. We will probably move away from Word in that application (although not this year), but will continue to use it for other purposes.

Duncan Goss

West Virginia

Do you use Microsoft Office/Word in your bill drafting solution or in any other vital legislative process?
No, but we are currently looking into possibly moving to Word (Office 365).

What version of Microsoft Office are you using?

Microsoft Office 2010 and 2007 are being used by various areas of the Legislature, but are not currently being used for bill drafting or any other vital legislative process.

Sheila Harvey



The Case For a Next Generation Firewall

Jerry Gamblin

Due to state budget cuts you have been recruited by your state's highway patrol to help run a DUI check point on a major stretch of highway on a Saturday night. The patrol sergeant gives you a brief run down on what cars to stop:

- You must let all red cars through.
- You must stop all blue cars.
- You must stop all green cars.
- You must stop all silver cars.

During your shift, you let the red cars through and stop all blue, green and silver cars and, amazingly, all the people in those cars have been drinking. You help make a lot of arrests and go home happy that you were able to help take a bunch of dangerous cars off the road.

A year later, you are called back to help at the same DUI check-point. The rules are the same, except this time you notice a lot more red cars are on the road and a fair number of them look like they are really blue, green and silver cars that have been freshly and poorly painted. You call the patrol sergeant over and tell him that you are noticing a bunch of suspicious red cars tonight and ask if you should stop them. He tells you that, if the car is painted red, we have to trust it and let it through because color is the only way we are allowed to judge cars.

Police officers would never judge a car on its color to decide if they should allow it through a DUI checkpoint. They use all data available to them to make an informed determination whether to stop the car. If you are using a standard port-based firewall that is found in most IT departments today, you are still trying to figure out which cars are the bad ones, based only on their color.

In the past couple of years, companies like Palo-Alto Networks, Fortinet and SonicWall (and just recently Cisco) have offered a "Next Generation Firewall" that has stopped looking at what port the traffic is on and has started conducting application layer inspection. These firewalls offer, for the first time, a real view of the traffic that is entering and leaving the network and allows filtering based on application, user name, computer name, group membership, time of day and many other factors.

The data these units provide can be overwhelming and seem at the start to be big brother-ish; but the truth is, without the insight these firewalls provide, protecting your network is nearly impossible in this "everything over port 80" world.

If you haven't already updated your firewall to a next generation firewall, now is the time to add it to your project list. It is quickly becoming a "must have" for securing your legislative network.

If you have any questions or want to talk more about network security issues, please contact me via email at jerry.gamblin@house.mo.gov or on twitter at @jgamblin.



Idaho Legislature Cloud Storage

Glenn Harris

One of the new technologies added for the 2013 legislative session in Idaho was cloud storage provided by Box.com. All the legislative laptops were set up to have files saved in the My Documents folder automatically synchronized with copies stored on the Internet. This not only provided a backup copy to ensure against data loss, but also provided a means to share files between computers and mobile devices and to provide file sharing with members, staff, etc. The Box.com logins were synchronized with network accounts, and predefined shared folders were created for caucuses and committees.

Despite it being the first year of implementation, slightly more than half the members indicated they are using the cloud storage to share files either with multiple devices or with other users. Several legislators' desktop computers were set up to synchronize, and a few attachés were set up with a Box.com account to work on shared files. More than half the members indicated they plan to use the cloud storage more in the future.

More Transparency for Legislative Staff and Oregon Citizens

Shancy Saban

The Oregon Legislature implemented an electronic bill book application in January, 2013 for its 77th legislative session. Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS) is a custom-developed application that allows members, staff and the public access to session activities, bill information and committee information in a centralized and connected way. Modeled after the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS), OLIS is used to provide committee meeting material to committee members and to the public in a timely fashion. OLIS allows users to see all information about a bill—text, amendments, committee meeting materials and analysis—in a centralized location. Members can annotate bill text; store comments and share those comments with other members; and upload related material to their bill folders. It has been a resounding success. The project was a model of “it takes a village to raise a child” by involving staff from all legislative agencies, as well as taking suggestions from external stakeholders. It has become an “if you build it, they will come” application as the list of wishes to extend and build more functionality has grown.



Idaho Smartphone Helpdesk Application

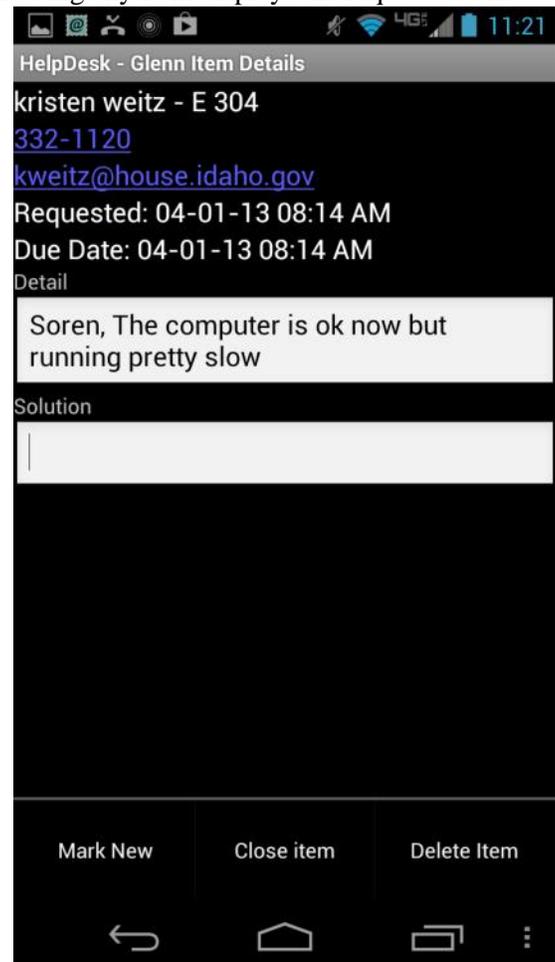
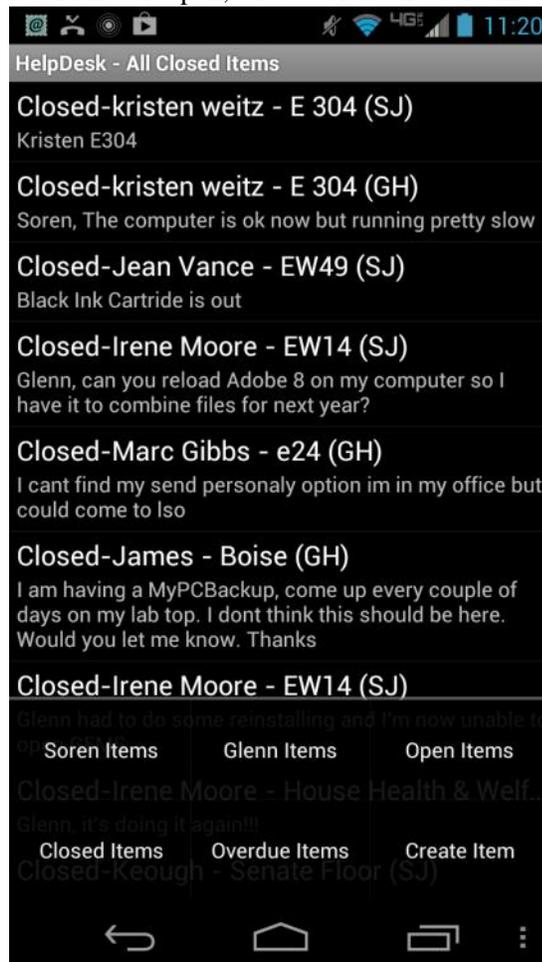
Glenn Harris

The time had finally come in Idaho to replace an old custom helpdesk program that was written years ago in Visual Basic 6. A query of IT staff revealed that a desired feature would be to allow management of assigned tasks to be performed on smartphones. Since all IT staff use Android phones, only a single mobile app was required. The old helpdesk program's MS/Access 97 database was replaced by one in MySQL. Database access was enabled through PHP. A desktop Java program was also written to submit requests to the database using some of the same PHP code. Servers were placed in the DMZ to allow offsite access.

Since the programmer of the original helpdesk application was still around, he was given the assignment, even though he had never written a Java program more complicated than "Hello World." After an initial working version was created, much of the code had to be rewritten when it was discovered that the newer Android operating systems require all database access to be performed in separate multitasking threads.

Despite the challenges, the helpdesk Android app was operational before the start of the legislative session. The app displays a selectable list of Open, Closed or Overdue items. Pressing any item displays the request details

screen. From this screen, a solution can be entered, and the request can be closed or transferred to alternate staff. Pressing on the requester's phone number or email address provides a quick way to correspond. To submit the requests, a new Java helpdesk program was installed on all legislator and attaché computers. Helpdesk program enhancements are planned for the upcoming session.





NALIT to Meet at NCSL Legislative Summit in Atlanta

Pam Greenberg

Members of the NALIT Executive Committee are planning a great [agenda](#) for the NCSL Legislative Summit in Atlanta, Ga. The NALIT sessions planned include:

- How to Keep Hackers Out of Your Capitol
- Cloud Computing
- Emerging Technologies
- Committee Technologies

NALIT members also will get together for a Dutch treat dinner in Atlanta on Tuesday evening, Aug. 13. In addition, NALIT will co-sponsor three additional sessions: *Cyber Warfare*, *Increase your Presence with Tech Tools*, and *Going Mobile: What It Means for Legislatures*. Visit the [Legislative Summit website](#) for the full agenda and general information.

Confirmed speakers to date include Jerry Gamblin, senior security specialist with the Missouri House of Representatives, who will speak at the “Hackers” session, which will provide information to help both NALIT members and other staff and members in legislatures. Jerry speaks frequently at security conferences around the world. Sean Johnson, senior manager, Systems Engineering with VCE, who previously served in a state legislature as a director of information technology, will provide information about cloud computing for legislatures.

More details on speakers and locations will be available in the coming weeks, so check the online agendas for updates.

NALIT Annual Business Meeting and Luncheon

NALIT's annual business meeting will be held at the NCSL Legislative Summit in Atlanta on Tuesday, Aug. 13 from 7:30 am-8:30 am. Breakfast will be served. At the meeting, NALIT members will elect new officers, recognize the winners of the NALIT Legislative Staff Achievement and Online Democracy Awards, and consider other business of the association. All NALIT members—legislative IT professionals who serve the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories—are invited to attend.



Call for Nominations for NALIT Officers

Pam Greenberg

NALIT's 2013 [Nominating Committee](#) is seeking nominations for [NALIT officers](#) for the 2013-14 conference year. NALIT officers and directors manage and guide the activities of the association, including the NALIT meetings at the Legislative Summit and the NALIT Professional Development Seminar.

NALIT officers will be elected at the NALIT Business Meeting at the [NCSL Legislative Summit](#) in Atlanta, Georgia, August 12-15. The three elected offices in NALIT are: secretary, vice chair, and chair. Typically, the current vice chair succeeds to the chair, the current secretary becomes vice chair, and a new secretary is elected. Each year, the membership votes for all three positions.

If you are interested in serving NALIT as an officer, please contact the members of the 2013 Nominating Committee by **July 10, 2013**. The members of the nominating committee are Rich Beckwith, Missouri; Gary Schaefer, Louisiana; and Mark Humphrey, Texas (rich.beckwith@house.mo.gov; schaeferg@legis.la.gov; mark.humphrey@tlc.state.tx.us).

Information about the responsibilities of NALIT officers can be found in the [NALIT by-laws](#). Those interested in becoming an officer may also want to consider how they would answer the following questions:

- What would you bring to the position?
- What ideas do you have for NALIT?
- Do you have support from your management for the position and for travel to NALIT meetings (two per year) and [Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee](#) meetings (three to four meetings per year).
- Are you committed to move from the secretary to vice chair to chair positions?
- Do you see any problems in fulfilling the requirements of the officer positions?
- How long and in what ways have you been involved with NALIT?

If you are interested in serving as a NALIT director or if you would like to become more involved in NALIT in the 2013-14 conference year, please contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee or [Pam Greenberg](#). We will forward your name to the new NALIT chair who will appoint directors and committee members after the NALIT business meeting.

Serving as an officer or director for NALIT is a great way to be involved in a great organization. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. We hope to hear from you soon!



2013 NALIT PDS: Raleigh, North Carolina

Pam Greenberg

Raleigh Marriott City Center, Raleigh, N.C. *Oct. 15-18, 2013*

Make your plans now to attend the 2013 NALIT [Professional Development Seminar](#) (PDS). The NALIT PDS is the only national seminar designed specifically for state legislative information technology professionals who are interested in advancing the effectiveness and efficiency of state legislatures through technology.

This year, the PDS will be held in [Raleigh, N.C.](#), Oct. 15-18, 2013. Raleigh offers a variety of attractions, including world-class museums, live music venues and more, all in a park-like, scenic setting. Fall temperatures average in the 70s.

The NALIT [seminar agenda](#) offers a mix of technical, policy and management sessions and provides opportunities to share solutions and discuss innovative uses of technology.

This year, the pre-seminar conference, on Tuesday, Oct. 15, will be available at no additional cost, and will provide a mix of presentations and hands-on and interactive training and networking opportunities. The pre-seminar will showcase state legislative systems and allow attendees to share code, methodologies and ideas.

The seminar will include tours and briefings at the North Carolina General Assembly House or Senate chambers and the offices of the Information Systems Division in the Legislative Building. Social events will include an exhibitors' reception and another informal evening social event.

[Registration](#) is now open, and special rates are available at the seminar hotel, the Raleigh Marriott City Center. Make your [hotel reservations](#) early (reference code SLGSLGA), since rooms at the NCSL-NALIT special rate may sell out early.

The tentative sessions and schedule are listed on the next page, but check the online agenda for [updates](#).

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2013 NALIT PDS: Raleigh, North Carolina

(Continued from page 20)

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

As of June 2013

	Tuesday, Oct. 15	Wed., Oct. 16	Thursday, Oct. 17	Friday, Oct. 18
7:30 am		Registration	Registration NOTE: Sessions will be held at the Legislative Complex	Registration
Early morning	Registration	Opening Session: TBD	<i>Tours and Briefings at Legislative Complex:</i> Overview of North Carolina General Assembly Structure and Staffing	Homeland Security/ Cybersecurity
Mid-morning	<i>Pre-Seminar Training: Showcasing Systems, Sharing Code and Programming Method-</i>	Five Minutes of Fame	<i>Tours and Briefings at Legislative Complex:</i> Technology and the Legislative Process in North Carolina—from Idea to Law	Virtualization and Network/Server Migration and Upgrades
Late morning	<i>Pre-Seminar Training (cont.):</i> SharePoint and Content Management Systems		Member-Centric Applications	GoogleGlass
	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
Early Afternoon	<i>Pre-Seminar Training (cont.):</i> Mobile Technology Solutions	Mobile Technologies	Paperless Initiatives: Chambers and Committees	
Mid-afternoon	<i>Pre-Seminar Training (cont.):</i> Bill Drafting Systems Showcase	Project Management	Electronic Bill Publishing and Filing	
Late Afternoon	<i>Pre-Seminar Training (cont.):</i> Development Methodologies and Processes	Wifi Security	NALIT Exhibitors' Reception (5 pm - 7 pm)	
Evening				

NALIT Executive Committee 2012 - 2013

Officers

<p>Chair Peter Capriglione Applications Manager North Carolina General Assembly, Room 400 300 North Salisbury St. Raleigh, NC 27603-5925</p>	<p>Vice Chair Troy Adkins Network Administrator Virginia House of Delegates General Assembly Building 8th Floor 910 Capitol Street Richmond, VA 23219</p>	<p>Secretary Joel Redding Deputy Chief Information Officer Kentucky General Assembly Room 26 Annex 702 Capitol Avenue Frankfort, KY 40601</p>	<p>Past Chair Rich Beckwith Director of Information Services Missouri General Assembly House of Representatives 201 West Capitol Avenue Jefferson City, MO 65101</p>
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Directors

<p>Mendora Servin Information Technology Specialist Legislative Counsel Bureau 1100 J Street, Suite 200 Sacramento, CA 95814 <i>Term of Office: August 2012-August 2014</i></p>	<p>Kurt McDowell Director Legislative Information Systems Ohio General Assembly 77 South High Street, 22nd Floor Columbus, OH 43215 <i>Term of Office: August 2012-August 2014</i></p>	<p>Terri Clark Director of Infrastructure Services Legislative Computer Services Kansas Legislature Suite 063-W 300 SW 10th Avenue Topeka, KS 66612-1504 <i>Term of Office: August 2012-August 2014</i></p>
<p>Eric Dugger Network Services Manager Nevada Legislature Legislative Counsel Bureau 401 South Carson Street Carson City, NV 89701-4747 <i>Term of Office: August 2011-August 2013</i></p>	<p>Jonathan Palmore Senior Assistant Clerk of Technology Senate Virginia General Assembly P.O. Box 396 Richmond, VA 23218 <i>Term of Office: August 2011-August 2013</i></p>	<p>Gary Schaefer Information Systems Coordinator Louisiana Legislature Senate P.O. Box 94183 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9183 <i>Term of Office: August 2011-August 2013</i></p>

