



NALIT

National Association of Legislative Information Technology

Winter/Spring 2007

National Conference of State Legislatures ♦ 7700 E. First Place ♦ Denver, CO 80230 ♦ 303-364-7700

I hope this issue of the NALIT newsletter finds you well! There are a number of NALIT activities underway as well as NALIT members working on the NCSL Executive Committee and on the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee (LSCC). Let me take this opportunity to update you on these activities.

The NALIT Executive Committee has had several conference calls to plan the NALIT program at the annual meeting. The planning process has been concerned with targeting an audience such as legislators or a staff section so we can create relationships with them and also have our sessions well attended. In that vein, we are working with the NALFO and Leadership staff sections to co-sponsor sessions that are of interest to both. Additional information for the annual meeting is available within this newsletter.

CHAIR'S CORNER by Gary Wieman

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The PDS Planning Committee has also started discussions for the fall meeting in Springfield. The discussion so far has been concentrated on the reasons for attending a PDS and what individuals want or expect to gain from attendance. Part of that discussion is trying to determine what activities have been most successful, and looking at other means to present information that will be of benefit to our members. Tim Rice, PDS Planning Committee Chair, has included an article in the newsletter that details some of the new technologies that have been implemented in Illinois plus some of the sites we plan to visit.

Gary Schaefer and I have been busy as well with our LSCC activities. As you may know, the LSCC is comprised of the Staff Chair and Vice Chair of each of the ten staff sections. Gary is on the LSCC Marketing and Outreach Subcommittee which has been working on updating legislative staff lists, looking into distributing current marketing documents, and developing new outreach ideas. I am a member of the E-Learning and Technology Review Subcommittee. Our major efforts are to evaluate e-learning technologies for use by NCSL and to review NCSL technology projects.

Sharon Crouch Steidel and Tim Rice have also been very active with their duties on the NCSL Executive Committee, the governing body of NCSL. Sharon, currently Staff Vice Chair, is chairing the Program Planning and Oversight Subcommittee as well as the Strategic Planning Subcommittee. She will become NCSL Executive Committee Staff Chair at the Annual Meeting in Boston, an achievement of which we can all take pride. Tim, who last year was appointed to the Executive Committee, has been busy with his assignments to the Professional Development and the Program Planning and Oversight Subcommittees.

These are some of the activities in which your officers are involved. In the next newsletter I will review other NALIT committees and the tasks on which the members are working. If you are interested in participating in NALIT activities, please do not hesitate to contact one of us so we can answer your questions and help you get involved.

Gary Wieman
NALIT Chair

ILLINOIS VOTING SYSTEMS UPDATE



By Tim Rice, Illinois

In the summer 2005 edition of this newsletter, I described the process Illinois used to develop a new electronic voting system for the Senate. At that time the Senate had used the new software with the then-existing hardware, and we were nearing completion of the next phase, which was to replace the hardware everywhere (except at the members' desks), including touch-screen interfaces for the President and Secretary and LED displays from Barco.

Work was completed successfully that September, and the system was used for both the fall veto session and the 2006 spring session. This left us with only replacement of the voting buttons at the members' desks along with the associated control unit to have a completely new voting system in the Senate. Renovation and restoration work in the Capitol beginning at the adjournment of the spring session provided an opportunity to accomplish those tasks as well as to replace the voting system in the House.

The fall 2006 veto session provided a unique diversion in the development of the voting systems. Neither chamber was ready for use, so both bodies had to find alternate sites to meet. The House met in the historic Old State Capitol and the Senate in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (see following article). Due to the architecture of the voting systems, we were able to utilize them in both locations. This was actually the first use of the new House system and provided an opportunity to use it under fire.

Meanwhile, work continued at the Capitol. Because the members' desks were being replaced, we were able to change the voting buttons at the desks. Everyone liked the old buttons, so we used the same thing, replacing

the incandescent bulbs with LEDs to reduce voltage requirements, extend bulb life, and brighten the illumination of the buttons. Voting buttons (Yes, No, and Present) along with Speak and Page buttons were configured into a box that sits atop the desk's work surface. The wiring to the box has a single quick-release connection, facilitating timely replacement of a box during session should there be any problems with any components.

The buttons in each chamber are wired into a single programmable automation controller, or PAC. The PACs process all physical button presses and communicate via a readable string with the voting system service, which then displays/records votes, controls microphones, etc. The biggest challenge in developing the voting system was the interface between physical buttons and the service, and the PACs have provided that interface quite well. They also handle all the traffic we can throw at them with no problem.

The Senate was already using touch-screen interfaces along with a select few physical buttons for the President's and the Secretary's console. Similar interfaces were installed in the House, albeit with some distinctive differences in functions. Debate timers for the President and the Speaker are provided by small touch-screen monitors. The audio controls in both chambers are touch-screen (with physical controls for the cameras) and interface with new hardware in the background. All of these screens are mounted in the woodwork of the respective podium or well.

There are a variety of display options in use by both the House and the Senate. As noted previously, the Senate installed new display boards in the chamber in 2005; the House opted to retain the ones previously in use. Each chamber has a large flat-panel display on the outside facing the rotunda, and the Senate has mounted smaller ones in the side corridors. These monitors, as well as others in use in the

wells, use video extension technology to allow the driving PCs to be located in the equipment room of the respective chamber.

Further displays are provided for leadership on and off the floor. Laptops with 17" screens are used by floor leadership, and 19" monitors (and one pre-existing larger monitor) are used in leadership offices. In the Senate leadership offices the monitors have touch-screens allowing selection of various display options.

As mentioned above, each chamber has an equipment room where all the wiring is terminated and PACs, servers, PCs, and audio/video hardware reside. The voting system in each chamber is built to run even if connections to the main data center are lost.

The House has elected to use the opportunity provided by the new system to change some of its processes in the well. As an example, the Clerk is now using a digital calendar hosted on a tablet PC to track actions throughout the day, replacing a paper calendar that was extensively marked up as session progressed.

The Senate returned on January 7, 2007, and the House subsequently on February 6, to their beautifully renovated and restored chambers. The new chambers included fully implemented voting systems designed, developed, and supported by the Legislative Information System (LIS). To date both systems have been working well and the users are pleased.

Other than the typical hiccups experienced with new systems, we have had one particular problem with the new hardware at the members' desks. Each voting console has a key switch which is used to turn the console on and off. Some of the switches have been touchy, and if a member experiences trouble voting, they often manipulate the key. This has resulted in keys being forced beyond the internal detent and into a position where they do not work. Because we

have had several instances of this problem, all the key switches will be replaced over the Easter break with ones that have a hard stop. Hopefully this will provide a better tactile feedback for the members and prevent keys being forced beyond the correct position.

You have the opportunity to see the chambers, the voting systems, and other work done here when LIS hosts the 2007 NALIT PDS. The dates are September 26-29, so mark your calendars and make your plans now. 

**MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT:
2007 NALIT PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR**

Springfield, IL, September 26-29, 2007

The annual NALIT Professional Development Seminar (PDS) is the premier opportunity to meet with other legislative information technologists, learning from each other's successes and failures. It provides the unique combination of IT knowledge and skills as they apply to the specialized business of the legislature.

This year the NALIT PDS returns to Springfield, capital city of Illinois. Even if you came to Springfield in 2001, it will be worth your time to attend this year. Version 2.0 is based at a different hotel (the newly renovated Hilton in the revitalized downtown) and will feature a day at the newly restored Capitol, demonstrations of the new voting systems as well as all the legislative applications that were still in development back in 2001, and an evening at the wonderful Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Make your plans now to join your peers for insight, inspiration, recharging, and refreshment.

More information can be found on the NALIT website at:

www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/nalit/pds07-prelim.htm

*Tim Rice, Illinois
2007 PDS Planning Chair*

PROVIDING LEGISLATIVE IT SERVICES AT A TEMPORARY LOCATION



By Tim Rice, Illinois

Because of extensive renovation work in the Illinois Capitol, both the House and the Senate had to meet for the fall 2006 veto session in alternate facilities. The House chose to meet in the historic Old State Capitol (OSC) in downtown Springfield, about 5 blocks from the Capitol complex; the Senate chose the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (ALPL), another block and a half further. Our task at LIS was to provide as many of the regular IT services as possible.

The first challenge was connectivity to our Capitol LAN. There was a clear line-of-sight from the Capitol complex to the cupola of the OSC and from there to the roof of the ALPL, so we tested wireless dish antennas. We were able to make the connection, but there was concern about the amount of bandwidth available for peak loads. Our big break came when we learned that there was fiber running between all three locations that had some dark (unused) strands. We were able to use these to connect the OSC and the ALPL to the Capitol LAN without passing through any other networks along the way. This also provided more bandwidth than the wireless option.

The second challenge was connectivity within the buildings. This was fairly easy in the ALPL; it's a new facility with existing wiring that we were able to 'borrow' (moving those ports from the building switches to the ones we brought in for our network) and easy access to run additional wiring. The 'chamber' itself was a bit tougher, because it was a circular glass reception area with limited power and no network wiring. The members have used laptops for years in the chambers, so in this case we ran them on battery power (including an auxiliary

battery in the CD/DVD drive bay) and wireless network access. To facilitate recharging the laptops each night, we procured carts that held 30 laptops each and plugged them all into one outlet; a built-in timer cycled the power among the laptops to distribute the load and recharge them overnight. We also maintained a supply of spare batteries, which we did need on occasion.

Because the OSC is a restored historic building, there were different challenges. Power outlets were scarcer, and network cables had to be run along walls in some places. Still, we were able to provide the same services for the House as the Senate. The members used laptops on battery power and wireless access, and we had the same carts for storing and recharging them. Spare batteries were used on more than one occasion when session got lengthy.

A portable sound system was set up for use in each chamber, and we brought in the guts of the electronic voting systems. Because of the architecture of the new Senate voting system, it was relatively simple to utilize it in the temporary chamber. The touch-screen interfaces for the President and the Secretary were mounted on stands, and a large flat-screen monitor was used for the chamber display, with another in the public area outside (both running off laptops). The servers necessary to run the system were installed in the wiring closet, with connections over the fiber back to our data center.

The House setup at the OSC was similar. The Clerk's touch-screen interface was mounted on a stand, while other functions were transferred to laptops. Due to the size and layout of the room, two large and two small flat-screen monitors were used in the chamber and one large one outside (all running off laptops) in the public area to show the matter under consideration and the voting. Server setup was similar to the ALPL.

Both the House and the Senate normally use electronic voting buttons at the members' desks, and wireless devices were evaluated for use here. However, the decision was made to go with oral roll calls, which were electronically recorded into the system. A server to encode the audio for Internet streaming was relocated to each site. Members of the press were provided with wireless access in the 'gallery' areas.

Other services were also moved to the ALPL and OSC. Staff responsible for the bill status, daily calendar, and messaging functions were relocated onsite with their desktop PCs and printers. Areas were also set up for caucus staff with Internet and email access. While committee meetings were held at the Capitol complex, an electronic display system for committee postings was located at each site (again running off laptops).

By now you've noticed the proliferation of laptops in our scheme. Using laptops greatly reduced the need for desktop PCs and monitors at the temporary sites, with a proportionate reduction in the need for power (one outlet instead of two or even just a battery) and network cabling (wireless access instead of hard-wired).

Holding session in the temporary locations was a success, and it provided some collateral benefits as well. It further proved the flexibility of the systems architectures we have used in the last several years. The fall veto session was also offsite in 2000, but on that occasion no effort was made to provide any IT services onsite. Rather, processes were manual and proceedings recorded on paper, then transferred to the appropriate electronic systems back in the Capitol complex. Obviously, that was not the scenario this time around.

Hopefully we don't have another offsite session in our immediate future; however, another ancillary benefit of the offsite session was that

we obtained a proof-of-concept for disaster recovery and continuity of service planning. While there is much more to work out, it is a big step forward from relying on manual and paper processes to be loaded at a later date into electronic systems at another site. 

NALIT OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Did you know that NALIT has an Outreach Committee? Its purpose is to help newcomers to NALIT get acquainted with our staff section, make them feel comfortable at our meetings, and to reach out to other NCSL staff sections to encourage sharing ideas and insights where IT is involved. Because information technology is a vital component of everything today, we have a reason to 'reach out and touch' every staff section.

NALIT has become a great place where we can meet our peers in other states, compare notes, and learn how they do what you do. Many of us have known each other for many years, and want to make sure that newcomers don't feel left out. One of the things we offer newcomers is the availability of a mentor, someone who knows the ropes, and is willing to help the newcomer get sorted out. We also try to create and maintain contacts with states who do not regularly send IT staff to NCSL or NALIT events. We try to make sure that they know that there is something for them at NCSL. This is good for IT staffs who sometimes feel left out of things.

The Outreach Committee is small, but it helps NALIT to interact with both the other NCSL staff sections and the newcomers to NALIT.

Here is your 2006-2007 Outreach committee:

*Lorie Johnson, Arkansas, Chair,
Denise Kiehne, Minnesota,
Jim Swain, Kentucky,
Deborah Maguire, Pennsylvania,
Jason Montgomery, Illinois,
Ron Elliot, Alabama*

CHANGES TO THE AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE



By Stephen Lang, Nevada

At the Nevada Legislature the process of generating amendments and subsequent reprints of bills was – at the least – non-intuitive and cumbersome. Immediately prior to the 2007 session, I created a new method for generating amendments and reprinted bills that is more streamlined and efficient and matches the existing method of drafting bills.

The current amendment process in the Nevada Legislature follows this general path:

1. A request to generate an amendment is received.
2. A bill drafter is assigned to complete the amendment in accordance with the request. Bill language changes are specified in the amendment, identified by the page and line number of the bill that is being modified (e.g., “Amend page 4 line 5 by deleting the word “shall” and inserting the word “will.”)
3. After release, legislators, lobbyists and other interested parties would then match the amendment’s change directions to the existing bill to determine what changes the amendment is proposing.
4. If the amendment is adopted, a staff member then uses the amendment as a guide, and types the changes specified in the bill and creates the reprint.

This process has several actual and potential deficiencies:

1. Because the changes are interpretive in the amendment and not in context, confusion between legislative intent and actual document changes can happen at the drafting stage.

2. Again, because the amendment only identifies changes on a line-by-line basis, legislator interpretation may be inaccurate, resulting in a possible wrong vote.
3. Difficulty in providing “what if” type of amendments that allow the legislator to see the potential impact of one amendment vs. another.
4. After amendment adoption, its changes must then be retyped into the bill. This significantly slows the process down, because a staff member must read and insert/delete the language in the bill in accordance with the instructions of the amendment. And, because there is additional typing involved, another opportunity for error appears.
5. If several amendments are intended to alter a single bill, each must be interpreted not only singly against the original bill, but against the others which also need to be interpreted against the bill. This can significantly increase the possibility of errors in both generating the documents themselves and legislative intent being met.

The new method of creating a new version of a bill is by way of an intermediary “staging” document called a Proposed Reprint (PR). This document provides the means for the drafter to portray multiple actual amendments and/or possible amendments (mockups) to the same bill - *in situ* - and have not only the required amendment document as an output, but a “mockup” type of document that allows the legislator to see the effect of an amendment without having to complete a formal amendment request. The new process meets the following needed functions:

- ❖ Ability to display multiple, non-conflicting amendment/mockup edits in one PR document (“stacking”).

- ❖ Enable users to easily distinguish between added language and language marked for deletion in the existing bill, and “new” changes the PR document is making. The differences need to be evident on-screen and printed, both in color and black.
- ❖ “Pushbutton” ability to see the mix of old and multiple new edits as codified to verify readability and legislative intent. (A “pushbutton” interface is one which requires virtually no user interaction beyond pressing the button to start the process.)
- ❖ Limit editability to only parts of the document eligible for change.
- ❖ In eligible parts of the document, make marking deletes and additions as easy as typing.
- ❖ “Pushbutton” ability to associate/dissociate edits in the PR document with different mockup/amendment requests.
- ❖ “Pushbutton” ability to add more amendment/mockup requests after the PR document is live and editable.
- ❖ “Pushbutton” ability to create one or more amendments out of the PR document.
- ❖ “Pushbutton” ability to create one or more mockup documents out of the PR document.
- ❖ “Pushbutton” ability to create a reprinted bill, incorporating any combination of amendments existing in the PR document into the new bill.
- ❖ Ability to distribute PR document processing, so that several people can work the one PR document simultaneously.
- ❖ Maintain existing user experience and comfort level with using MS Word 2003 as the sole front-end application for all document processing. Existing processing of

bill drafts and other related documents may not be altered; limiting changes in operation to only the PR process.

After approximately six weeks, the new process was ready for testing. Unfortunately, due to the timing and proximity to the start of the legislative session, extensive testing wasn’t able to occur. Most testing and debugging is ongoing during live use during session. There have been only a few easily managed glitches – all of which were a result of coding within the Word object model, not with the process that was developed. Each time a bug was found, new process code was distributed swiftly, enabling continued processing during session. 🍷

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NALIT BY-LAWS

Summary: NCSL has recommended that each staff section adopt language identifying the staff section as part of the Staff Division of NCSL in order to establish a formal relationship that extends NCSL’s insurance coverage to staff section meetings.

(Underline indicates additions. Strikethrough indicates deletions.)

Article 1: Name

The name of the organization shall be the **National Association of Legislative Information Technology (NALIT)**, a recognized staff section in the legislative staff division of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), hereinafter referred to as the Association.

These proposed changes will be considered at the NALIT Business Meeting on Tuesday, August 7, 2007.

PLANNING FOR VISTA AND OFFICE 2007



By Paul Mayotte, Maine

When it comes to the amount of print space given to software releases, Vista and Office 2007 must have set the record even before released. We are the victims of more advice from the technology media on these two products than we can possibly absorb, which makes understanding the issues and planning for that inevitable (?) upgrade all the more challenging.

Having gone through every Microsoft operating system and Office suite upgrade since MS-DOS, this is shaping up to be the most complex and challenging upgrade yet. And, it's not just what Microsoft has done, but with how we have integrated Microsoft products into our business applications. For example, the Maine Bill Drafting application converts from an XML text editor to Word 2003 documents. The Fiscal Analysis System allows staff analysts to export data from the SQL database to Excel 2003 spreadsheets. Upgrading the drafting application to Word 2007 is a project all by itself.

What's a State Legislature's Technology Office to do?

Well, for those of us tightly integrated with software from Redmond, the Vista upgrade and the Office 2007 upgrade are looking like two separate, large, potentially risky and possibly costly projects. As such, each upgrade should be given the full project management treatment.

The good news appears to be that the rest of the world is moving very slowly with these upgrades. From a mission effectiveness perspective, many of us do not seem to have any pressing reason to proceed rapidly with these upgrades, giving us the time to plan. Allowing Microsoft to issue several service packs and

letting Vermont go first before proceeding isn't a bad strategy.

The Maine upgrade plan is shaping up to come in a number of stages spread out over several years with much evaluation and testing built in. At this point in time, Maine has more questions than answers.

Our current list of questions includes:

- ✓ What is the correct level of PC hardware to be specified in the 2007 replacement cycle?
- ✓ Did we under buy PC performance in 2006 based on the published requirements for Vista/Office 2007 at the time? (We're hearing performance at those levels is not good.)
- ✓ Will we need to/how will we upgrade our 2003, 2004, 2005 vintage PCs?
- ✓ If the Paperless Chamber Project is approved in 2007, how should the Legislator notebooks be configured for both software and hardware?
- ✓ How long will Microsoft support XP?
- ✓ How long will Microsoft support Office 2003?
- ✓ Where are our other vendors, such as IRC, with compatibility?
- ✓ What is Vermont doing?
- ✓ Will our existing applications work with Vista/Office 2007?
- ✓ Can we function with a mixed XP and Vista environment?
- ✓ Is there a business benefit in upgrading sooner?
- ✓ What level of training is needed for the technical staff?
- ✓ What level of training is needed for the user community?
- ✓ How much will upgrading done right cost?
- ✓ What is the impact to the available budget?

While we are following the Vista/Office 2007 media reports, there is an obvious need to develop hard answers and options within the

Maine technical infrastructure. To do that, we are proceeding with establishing a Vista/Office 2007 test environment. Two well equipped PCs have been purchased for testing the Vista/Office 2007 software. At least one older model PC and a laptop will be added to the test pool. The initial goal is to determine the appropriate level of PC hardware needed to run Vista/Office 2007 with equal to or better than performance to today's standard. This standard will be used for the specifications for the 2007 PC replacement cycle.

The second goal is to determine how Vista/Office 2007 will perform on the existing inventory of PCs. The Maine Legislature keeps PCs in service for 5 years. There is a concern that the older PCs in the inventory will not be capable of supporting the demands of Vista/Office 2007 at an acceptable level. We also need to know if these older PCs can be upgraded to run Vista with steps such as adding RAM, or if there are no workable or affordable options.

The third and most important goal is to evaluate the compatibility of Vista/Office 2007 with the other software applications used by the Legislature and determine if we can run applications in a mixed XP/Vista environment. To do this, the test environment will include a small server as well as controlled access to the local area network. Whenever possible, we plan to invite our users and vendors to run their applications and provide their input. A list of compatible applications will be developed. Applications found not to work correctly will need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. I expect this important step to be a fairly lengthy process that needs to be coordinated with an already full project list.

From a technology staff resource perspective, the compatibility evaluation process will require the involvement of both the desktop and development groups. That pesky integration of

the Office Suite with our mainline business applications makes this an all hands effort.

In the fall of 2007, with the information gathered from the testing and evaluation process, we will develop the detailed implementation plans. Our current long-term plan calls for the installation, test and rollout of Vista during the 2008 interim period and installing Office 2007 during the 2009 interim period presuming Microsoft hasn't announced Office 2010 by then.

I would suggest to the members of NALIT that we keep Vista/Office 2007 upgrades as an agenda item at our various meetings over the next several years. Without a doubt, each of us going through this process will have lessons learned that will be of great value to all. ☺

TECH TIP

"My Computer Wants to Send a Message to Microsoft! What do I do???"

If your users are anything like ours, Windows Error Reporting scares their pants off. Not only has their program crashed (probably at the worst possible moment), but now their workstation wants to tattle to Microsoft! Error reporting may be a Good Thing as far as Microsoft is concerned, but the first thing our users do when they see the Error Reporting message is to reach for the phone.

It is easy to turn this feature off. Go to the Properties of My Computer, select the Advanced Tab, and click on Error Reporting. You can set the workstation to report all program errors, or to report only Windows errors, or to disable reporting altogether.

Using Active Directory Policies, we have set all of our workstations to disable reporting to Microsoft, but to notify the user that the program has crashed (they probably know this already). This has relieved a major source of user panic, and reduced the number of frantic calls to the Help Desk.

This may not make Microsoft happy, but our users don't really care.

Duncan Goss (aka "Vermont")

**HAWAII'S PUBLIC WIRELESS
ACCESS NETWORK:
"BRIDGING THE GAP"**



By Craig Nakahara

The State of Hawaii's Legislature has taken the next big jump in giving the public more access to legislative information, by providing free wireless access within the State Capitol. This wireless network would be totally separate from our internal Eclipse Legislative System.

Hawaii's State Capitol is unique in that it rises five stories from the basement. The inside of the Capitol is totally open, with no inner core, and it is almost completely surrounded by water. The Public Wireless Access project was to be implemented in two phases, due to the size of the Hawaii State Capitol and the amount of money involved.

Phase 1 of the Public Wireless Project was completed during a three month span of the 2006 Legislative Session and the cost was estimated to be at \$140,000. A total of 23 access points were installed around the State Capitol. We encountered many challenges during phase 1, as we had to deal with the following:

1. Implementation all took place during the 2006 Legislative Session.
2. Drilling into concrete walls and not disturbing the offices and ongoing hearings.
3. Gaining access to offices and conference rooms that had meetings or hearings.
4. Placement/installation of the access points to get a greater coverage and the testing of all wireless access points.
5. Unforeseen problems of existing conduits and concrete barriers in the ceilings.
6. Communications issues and expectations needing to be set prior to the project starting.

Over the past year, we have received good responses about the Public Wireless Access Network, and have not encountered too much downtime or maintenance issues. The public, lobbyists, government and business sectors have praised the legislature for making access to information on a timelier basis and especially for giving them wireless access to accommodate e-mail, Internet access to up-to-the-minute legislative information and Internet access to testimonies. We've even received requests by legislators to allow their offices to have access to the Public Wireless Network. Two good lessons that we learned during Phase 1 of the project is that it definitely should not be attempted during the legislative session and that communications amongst all parties involved in the project should be solid.

Phase 2 of the Public Wireless Project is still being planned and is expected to start sometime in June or July. This phase will cover all legislator offices and agencies within the State Capitol, making it 90 % wireless and will probably take four to five months to complete. Between the House and Senate, we will be installing another 50 + access points, and the cost is estimated to be \$300,000. If any of our fellow states are planning to make their State Capitols wireless, we'd be more than happy to share our experiences with you.

Upcoming projects of the Hawaii Legislature include: chamber upgrades with electrical and hard wiring, replacing all network switches and hubs within the State Capitol and disaster/emergency planning in the wake of our latest virus attack. 

**WHY HAVEN'T WE SEEN THE
PAPERLESS OFFICE?**



By Dawna Attig, Vermont

For years, futurists have been promising the "paperless office." However, as we look out from beneath ever-growing stacks of paper, we

are justified in wondering if we will ever see it come to pass.

The US Department of Commerce estimates that paper and printing purchases represent between 5% and 15% of all corporate expenditures. The average US office worker uses over 10,000 sheets of paper per year and generates two lbs. of paper waste per day. Paper consumption has increased six-fold over the past 50 years while, at the same time, digital technologies have been incorporated into every aspect of society.

Information no longer needs to be shared through mass production of paper documents. Providing employees and customers with a paperless working environment can provide safe, real-time access to information, facilitate efficient teamwork, eliminate geographical and organizational barriers, and reduce both monetary and environmental costs.

Electronic publication can also provide access to services for large numbers of people who heretofore were excluded because of disability, poverty, geographic location, or limited numbers. The development of online communities allows people with specialized needs to come together and act as a group.

However, the improved speed and efficiency of today's technology have so far produced decidedly mixed results; acceptance of electronic publication varies depending on the type of information provided.

Newspapers and magazines now routinely produce digital editions, either as a supplement to the printed issues, or as standalone products. Other successful electronic publications include multimedia encyclopedias, technical manuals, and subscription services. On-line books have not fared as well; the public still prefers books published on paper.

Human factors have to be taken into account. There seems to be a deep-seated need to print

emails, to take handwritten notes on hard copy, and to preserve paper copies for future reference. The prevalence of printers provides a temptation that is often too great to resist.

Finally, paper has a good track record for archival storage, especially in the legislative context, where archivists talk of centuries rather than decades. Opening even a ten-year old electronic document can be difficult due to changing storage formats. However, paper archives also have problems, including inability to search and vulnerability to damage.

In the next issue: New technologies coming onto the market may reduce user resistance to going paperless. 

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR NALIT OFFICERS

The NALIT Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for the NALIT Executive Committee for the upcoming year. Officers will be elected at the NALIT business meeting at the NCSL Annual Meeting in Boston on August 7.

If you are interested in running for office, please notify a member of the nominating committee by July 25. Officers will be elected for the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. Duties of each office are described in the NALIT By-Laws at:

[www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/nalit/NALIT By-Laws.htm](http://www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/nalit/NALIT%20By-Laws.htm)

In addition to other duties, the Chair and the Vice-Chair represent NALIT at the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee (LSCC) meetings, which are held four times a year, with one meeting held at the annual NCSL meeting.

NALIT directors and committee members are appointed by the Chair, but anyone interested in these positions is encouraged to notify the nominating committee who will forward your interest to the new Chair.

*Maryann Trauger, North Dakota,
Chair, Nominating Committee*
mtrauger@state.nd.us

NALIT AWARDS HONOR EXCELLENCE

NALIT awards underscore the association's high standards of professionalism and service to the legislative institution. Each year, NALIT awards two Legislative Staff Achievement Awards to individuals, teams or legislative offices. In addition, each year the LINC/S/NALIT Online Democracy Award recognizes one state legislative website that stands out for making democracy user friendly.

Recipients of the awards are presented with a plaque and are recognized by the NCSL Staff Chair during the legislative staff luncheon at the NCSL Annual Meeting.

The criteria for the NALIT Legislative Staff Achievement Award are:

- Helping to improve the effectiveness of the legislative institution
- Supporting the legislative process and the mission of the legislature
- Exhibiting a high degree of professionalism, competence, and integrity in serving the legislature and the public
- Contributing to the National Association of



Michael Adams

Legislative Information Technology

- Contributing to the work of the National Conference of State Legislatures
- Contributing to existing knowledge/ demonstrating expertise in a particular field

For more details, see

www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/nalit/criteria.htm

The Online Democracy Award criteria are based on content, design, and technology. For more details, see

www.ncsl.org/programs/press/webawardcriteria.htm

Winners of the 2006 Legislative Staff Achievement Awards were Michael Adams, Colorado, and the team of Lou Adamson and Scott Darnall, South Dakota. The winner of the 2006 Online Democracy Award was the Minnesota Legislature.

More details will be made available on the NALIT website and announced through the NALIT listserv in the coming weeks. Please consider nominating a deserving individual or office for these awards.



Scott Darnell & Lou Adamson

NALIT MEETINGS AT THE NCSL ANNUAL MEETING IN BOSTON

Don't miss the NCSL Annual Meeting in Boston—there's a full schedule of sessions for NALIT members this year to make it worth your while. NALIT sessions are scheduled throughout the week, including a tour hosted by IT staff from the Massachusetts State House on Monday morning. The NALIT Business Meeting and lunch where new officers are elected will be held on Tuesday. We'll also have a very special evening reception just for NALIT members on Wednesday evening.

The traditional all-staff luncheon, where

legislative staff awards are presented, will be held on Thursday and will feature Jimmy Orr, former White House Webmaster and current director of E-Communications and Chief Deputy Director of Communications for Governor Schwarzenegger. Whether you saw Mr. Orr at the NALIT Seminar last fall or not, you won't want to miss seeing this immensely talented and funny speaker in Boston.

Additional information is available at

www.ncsl.org/annualmeeting

Watch for more details about NALIT sessions at

www.ncsl.org/nalit

2007 NCSL Annual Meeting: Preliminary NALIT Schedule

Sunday August 5	Monday August 6	Tuesday August 7	Wednesday August 8	Thursday August 9
Registration	NALIT Tour and Briefing Massachusetts State House (8:30-Noon)	Plenary Session: <i>David McCullough</i> (8:30-10 am) NALIT Wireless Security (10:15 am-Noon)	Plenary Session (8:30 10:00 am) Exhibit Hall Open (9 am-4 pm)	Plenary Session and Breakfast (8:30-10 am) NALIT/LSS Ten Questions Legislative Leadership Should Ask the IT Director (10:15 am-12:15 pm)
	Exhibit Hall Open (Noon-5:00 pm)	NALIT Business Meeting and Lunch (Noon-1:30 pm)	New Orleans 2008 Preview: Mardi Gras Lunch (11 am-1 pm)	Legislative Staff Luncheon <i>Jimmy Orr</i> (12:30-2:30 pm)
NALIT Interactive Technologies (1-3 pm)	NALIT Open Document Format/Open Source (3-5 pm)	NALIT/All-Staff Sections Session: Managing Change and Transition (1:30- 3 pm) NALIT/All-Staff Sections Session: Managing Conflict (3:15-4:45 pm)	NALIT/All-Staff Sections Session: Separation of Powers (2:45-4:15 pm) NALIT/NALFO Joint Session: Fiscal & Budgeting Applications (4:30-6 pm)	Executive Sessions: Conversations with Thought Leaders (2:45-4:30 pm)
	Boston Social Event	States' Night	NALIT Dinner	Boston Social Event

**THE 10TH ANNUAL NALIT
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SEMINAR**



By Duncan Goss, Vermont

While it may be hard to believe, it has been ten years since Jim Greenwalt organized and hosted the first National Association of Legislative Information Technology Professional Development Seminar in St. Paul, Minnesota.

In September, Jim again took the lead and organized the 10th Annual NALIT PDS in Washington, D.C. The seminar was a great success, living up to NALIT's established reputation for high-value sessions, great tours and events, good food, and better fellowship.

In recognition of the increasing convergence of information and communications technologies, the 2006 PDS was held jointly with the Legislative Information and Communications Staff Section (LINCS). Many of the conference sessions focused on topics of mutual interest, including digital broadcasting, recording, and archiving technologies.

A high point of the conference was a tour of the United States Senate's broadcast studio and audio systems, which are now completely digital. The Ethernet-based chamber sound systems are quite remarkable, and the studio is state of the art.

Before the chamber tour, we had the opportunity to meet with Dan Doody, Director of House Information Resources, who described the often chaotic mixture of IT systems in use in the House of Representatives, where each representative hires his own IT staff and makes his own IT choices. The resulting variety of hardware, software, operating systems, cell phones, Blackberries, PDAs, and other devices make for a very interesting mixture.

Mr. Doody also discussed the events following the 9/11 attacks and the anthrax scare in the US Capitol on October 17. At that time, neither the Senate nor the House of Representatives had full business continuity plans in place. When the Capitol was evacuated, all of the support organizations, including IT services, had to come up with alternate operating sites and meeting facilities within 72 hours under a constitutional mandate.

The Capitol was declared safe and reopened before the alternate locations were required, but today the House and Senate operate under full business continuity plans, and have standby operating and meeting facilities designated and prepared. This is a lesson many state legislatures should take to heart.

We also saw the Senate's new XML-based drafting system. As in many states, the House and the Senate have separate IT operations, and each has its own drafting system. The two bodies have managed to standardize DTDs to a significant extent, and have created exchange DTDs to handle those areas where agreement was not possible. However, major differences in design philosophy separate the two systems.

XML was also the subject of several of the conference sessions. One of the most interesting presentations was by Michael Gaudiello, who discussed the Maryland XML drafting project. This project ran into major technical problems, delays, and massive user resistance.

The Maryland drafters found the system inflexible, and complained that it reduced their productivity. Michael and his team eventually moved to a hybrid solution, giving up some of the benefits of the XML structure to provide the ease of use that the drafters required.

I spoke with Michael during the preparation of this article, and he confirms that the new system

is working well and has been in use for almost an entire session at this point. Michael promises an article for the next issue of this newsletter describing the project and its aftermath in more detail. Thanks, Michael!

Finally, the closing plenary included an audience-participation event on “Negotiating Your Way to Success,” presented by Senator David Landis of Nebraska. Senator Landis posed a number of scenarios and challenged the group to find areas of common ground between the competing interests. The exercise was an eye-opener: finding common ground proved much more possible than any of us would have thought beforehand. A good lesson for all of us to learn.

(Vermont brought Senator Landis to Montpelier during the new member orientation to pose the same challenges to the incoming members of the 2007 legislature.)

EDITOR’S CORNER

As this first edition of the NALIT newsletter to be compiled under my watch grinds to completion, I would like to thank those NALIT members who contributed articles and notices: Tim Rice, Steve Lang, Paul Mayotte, Craig Nakahara, Dawna Attig, Lorie Johnson, and Maryann Trauger.

We are all busy in our respective state capitols, and finding the time to write a short paper that has no bearing on the work you are trying to complete can be difficult. My thanks again to all contributors.

I would urge future secretaries to start soliciting articles from the membership immediately upon their return from the annual meeting, as it takes a lot longer than you might think. Believe me!

Having learned this lesson, I will be looking for contributions to the Summer 2007 issue as soon

as this issue is put to bed. If you have ever thought of contributing, now is the time!

My thanks also to Gary Schaefer, my predecessor in this job, for his document templates, logos, and other graphics, and to Gary Wieman for the Chair’s Corner.

Finally, I would like to thank Pam Greenberg for her invaluable assistance, particularly in providing the details of the NCSL Staff Awards and the 2007 annual meeting notice.

Duncan Goss, Editor

CALL FOR NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Putting out this newsletter would be impossible without your participation. The summer 2007 edition will be published in June, and we need articles from you, the members of NALIT.

What kind of articles do we need?

- Descriptions of IT-related projects undertaken by your office. (I am particularly interested in projects that didn’t go anywhere near as well as planned.)
- Reviews or studies that your office has done on IT-related issues
- IT-related policies or systems implemented in your state (not just by your office) that affect the legislative IT operation.
- Anything at all that you think would be interesting to your peers in other states

Don’t be shy! We’re not looking for a master’s theses. Take the space you need to describe your subject adequately, but no more. A typical article is two single-spaced pages, but longer or shorter articles are fine.

If you are interested in contributing, please contact me at 802-828-2231 or by email at dgoss@leg.state.vt.us.

2006-2007 NALIT Committees

2007 NALIT Staff Achievement Awards Committee

Chair: Lou Adamson, South Dakota

The Legislative Staff Achievement Awards Committee solicits nominations and recommends award recipients for the 2007 NALIT Legislative Staff Achievement Award, based on criteria outlined on the NALIT website.

2007 Nominating Committee

Chair: Maryann Trauger, North Dakota

The NALIT Nominating Committee interviews and evaluates interested candidates and presents the slate of candidates for election at the Business Meeting at the NCSL Annual Meeting at Boston – August 5-9, 2007.

2007 Professional Development Seminar Planning Committee

Chair: Tim Rice, Illinois

The committee assists the host state staff as requested, plans session content and activities, locates speakers, and conducts other tasks that contribute to the success of the seminar.

IT Survey Committee

Chair: Ann McLaughlin, Delaware

Committee activities include evaluating and updating the information in the survey. The committee issues reminders to members to update their information within predetermined time frames (e.g., currently in the survey and updating the types of information quarterly, annually), and decides the best means for presentation on the NALIT website. The committee will also develop additional methods and activities to enhance the value of the survey information.

Outreach Committee

Chair: Lorie Johnson, Arkansas

Members of this committee have a two-year appointment. Committee activities primarily include the continuation of outreach efforts to members of other staff sections and inactive NALIT members. Efforts are made to encourage inactive NALIT members to become involved again, and to reach newcomers.

LINCS/NALIT Online Democracy Award Committee

Co-Chair: Mark Allred, Utah

The Online Democracy Award is sponsored by NCSL's Legislative Information and Communications Staff Section (LINCS) and NALIT. Each year the selection committee considers nominations from official legislative sites developed and maintained by or under the authority of (a) a state legislature, (b) a legislative house, or (c) an officially-recognized legislative partisan caucus.

IT Standards Committee

Members of the committee are the Executive Committee Officers and Directors. The committee monitors other states' technology activities. It utilizes experts in those states to form issue/technology-specific subcommittees, which provide information and personal experiences on technology implemented in its state. Committee and subcommittee activities include: evaluating new and existing technologies and processes, providing positive and negative aspects involved with implementing a new technology, providing estimates for implementation, and offering an unbiased opinion that NALIT and other NCSL staff sections can use as a source of information.

Executive Committee – Officers and Directors, 2006-07



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