N A L I T

National Association of Legislative Information Technology

Fall 2010

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

CHAIR'S CORNER
by Dave Larson

As I write this, it is Halloween. I am reminded of a story that I am sure has happened somewhere, sometime. It seems there was a young boy working feverishly on his Halloween costume when his mother asked him what he was going to be for the Halloween party.

"I'm going to be God for Halloween," said the boy.

The mother was quite surprised by this and said to her son, "Honey, God is a spirit and no one knows what he looks like."

"Well they will when I get there." replied the boy.

I often think that is how we look at electronic democracy. We all have some notion or concept of what it is, but we've never actually seen it. We are all working feverishly on some form of e-democracy, but we haven't completed it. We may even be surrounded by amused skeptics who discount our efforts to build it. Regardless of the difficulty, I don't think we can sit back and take a Justice Potter Stewart "I know it when I see it" attitude. NALIT is on the forefront in developing e-democracy. The eventual look and feel may differ from state to state, but I believe the core will be there. It will be free and easy to use; accessible at any time, maybe from anywhere; interactive and participatory. I see early incarnations of this in every legislature I visit. Keep working, NALITers. They'll know it when we get there.

NALIT is going to look a bit different this year. Due to the recession, the PDS was canceled this fall. Near-term prospects for travel may not be much better. We are looking hard at joint PDS meetings with other staff sections in the future. These joint PDS' potentially can minimize the financial risk of hosting the events and affords NALIT the opportunity to mix with people from the other disciplines. The chance to share ideas and programs where appropriate is another benefit. We will continue to focus on e-learning and collaboration opportunities as well. These can help fill the gaps that our lack of face-to-face time has created. I am blessed to have a quality executive team and committee chairs. With your participation, NALIT will continue to serve its membership well.

Dave Larson, Kansas
Chair

News from the NCSL Staff Chair

By Tim Rice, NCSL Staff Chair, Legislative Information Services, Illinois

Greetings, colleagues and friends! The 2010-2011 NCSL conference year is off to a great start. Many staff sections, including NALIT, have focused on offering professional development opportunities this fall, from webinars to seminars. For me, it marks the shift from the past year (documented in previous newsletters) where I was gathering information, knowledge and experience to actually putting all of that to use.

One of my primary responsibilities this year is to chair the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee (LSCC). For those unfamiliar with LSCC, it consists of the NCSL chair, vice chair, and immediate past chair, the 16 at-large legislative staff members of the NCSL Executive Committee, the two top officers of each staff section, the overall standing committee officers, and four discretionary appointees of the staff chair. The purposes of LSCC are "to oversee the legislative staff division of NCSL, to coordinate the work of the ten staff sections of NCSL, to promote professional development of legislative staff, and to review and evaluate NCSL services to legislative staff. LSCC serves in an advisory capacity to the NCSL Executive Committee."

LSCC held its first meeting of the year Oct. 15-16 in Denver. We normally meet in conjunction with the NCSL Executive Committee, but they eliminated their fall meeting this year. LSCC needed to start on our work for the year, so this became an opportunity to have a little more time and focus on legislative staff concerns. NCSL hosted us at their office on Friday, including a lunch cookout with their staff. This provided a first opportunity for some to visit the office and connect with the work there; it also allowed more NCSL staff than usual to participate in our

discussions. The meeting then concluded Saturday noon at our hotel.

NALIT is represented on LSCC this year by:

- Michael Adams – NCSL Staff Vice Chair;

- Gary Wieman – second-year member of the NCSL Executive Committee and vice chair of the Legislative Institution Work Group;

- Dave Larson – Chair of NALIT;

- Rich Beckwith – Vice Chair of NALIT;

- Linda Pittsford – discretionary appointment to LSCC and vice chair of the Strengthening Legislative Staff Work Group;

- And then there's me.

The focus of this year's LSCC is meeting the challenges that face the legislative institution and its staff with concrete, practical tools and solutions. We have four work groups to address specific areas:

Professional Development – overseeing all the various tools being used in this area, from professional development seminars to webinars and other distance-learning technologies to the Legislative Staff Management Institute; developing the Legislative Staff University concept introduced last year; and considering ways to address the professional development needs of senior legislative staff managers.

Outreach – continuing the effort to reach out to personal and district office staff around the country; working with the Trust for Representative Democracy on the "Project Citizen: The Legislative Staff Connection" pilot project; and working to support and maximize the Statehouse Ambassadors.

Strengthening Legislative Staff – reviewing the Self-Assessment Guide for Legislative Agencies introduced in 2001 with the intent of updating it and redistributing it; and developing guides for using the collaboration tools being provided by NCSL, then encouraging the use of those tools.

Legislative Institution – developing practical tools to promote the legislative institution; completing the work on the Legislative Service as a Career video project, getting it into the appropriate distribution channels and exploring other ways to use it; and working with NCSL President Senator Richard Moore on his civility initiative for this year.

Two other ongoing work groups have specific purposes. All staff section officers belong to the Staff Section Officers Work Group, providing them an opportunity to discuss common challenges and solutions and address concerns specific to staff sections. The Strategic Planning Work Group is formed and led by the NCSL staff vice chair (Michael Adams) and is focused on planning for both the next conference year and longer-term for LSCC.

This is the broader organization within which NALIT operates. While NALIT members are obviously focused on information technology and its use by the legislature, we share the concerns being addressed by LSCC with the other staff sections, whether they are clerks or bill drafters or librarians. To not do so risks being both narrow- and short-sighted.

As I compose this note, we are only a few days away from the November 2 elections. Whatever the various results around the country, they will bring changes and challenges to the legislatures. As legislative staff, we will rise to meet them, because that is what we do. In the midst of those efforts, remember the resources that are available to you.

Certainly, NCSL is one of those resources. Their staff offer information and support and are always ready to help however possible. NCSL also provides the framework for the networks we have as legislative staff, most notably in our staff sections. These connections allow us to communicate across the boundaries that might easily confine us, sharing our hard-earned wisdom and experience in this unique environment with each other for the common good.

It is my privilege to serve as your NCSL staff chair this year. If you have thoughts, comments, questions or contributions, about any of this or anything else pertaining to legislative staff and NCSL, please let me know. The year is off and running, and I look forward to seeing how it develops.

Greetings from Your New NALIT Secretary

By Peter Capriglione, North Carolina

I certainly have some big footsteps to follow given all the great folks who have previously held this position.

You will find a couple of new items in the newsletter. For those long days and lonely nights, there is a word search…have some fun. Also, in the spirit of our PDS "Five Minutes of Fame," we have a section entitled "1,2,3,4 or Five LINES of Fame."

As you are aware, we were unable to hold the annual PDS due to the unfortunate economic times many states are facing. However, as you also are aware, there was the annual meeting in Louisville at which we got new blood in our executive positions.

Our fearless leaders are David Larson, chair, and Rich Beckwith, vice chair. And, of course, there is me—Peter Capriglione—as your 2011

secretary. Linda Pittsford's new role as past chair will allow her to help guide us for the next year.

A number of congratulations are in order. Tim Rice of Illinois was named NCSL Staff Chair, and Michael Adams of Colorado is the newly elected Staff Vice Chair. The staff section will be well represented with these two gentlemen at the helm of the NCSL Executive Committee.

Additional congrats go to the following two recipients of the NALIT Legislative Staff Achievement Award. The team of Mark Allred, Richard Amon and Stan Eckersley of the Utah Legislature was recognized for their work on a software redesign that significantly improved the process by which the Utah Legislature develops fiscal notes on proposed legislation.

Terri Clark of Kansas was recognized for her role in the development of an integrated, enterprise-wide legislative information and services system.

Also, Michael Adams received the Standing Committee Staff Chair's award for his service to the Colorado General Assembly and his longstanding participation in NCSL.

And last but not least, Maryann Trauger of North Dakota (NALIT Chair, 2003-04), after 36 years and 18 sessions, retired on Sept. 30, 2010. Although we all are jealous of this feat, I know we wish her the very best.

Enjoy the newsletter. Thanks to all the contributors and, of course, to Pam for her guidance. I hope everyone can get some holiday time and some rest in before the 2011 legislative session becomes a way of life for all of us. ◉

Senate of Virginia: iPad Pilot Project

By Jonathan D. Palmore, Director of Information Systems, Senate of Virginia Virginia

Some projects get started in the strangest places...

During the 2010 Virginia General Assembly Session, I was serving as a doorkeeper for a late-night session of the Senate when an idea surfaced. Hobie Lehman, Senate Sergeant at Arms, and I began to discuss what a time-consuming and labor-intensive process it is to create the bill books. This conversation continued throughout the session and into the interim—and our iPad Pilot Project was born.

Some will say that the iPad is a fairly expensive bill book; however, the iPad brings much more to the table than simply a bill book. We also are investigating whether these devices can be a laptop replacement and a committee voting system, how to use them in our Chamber, and how staff can use them to become more efficient.

Our initial pilot for the iPad will consist of the General Laws and Technology Committee, consisting of 15 members and two Clerk's Office staff. During this test, we plan primarily to leverage the iPad browser. We hope to be able to deliver applications to iPad, laptop and desktop with minimal customization. We may attempt to move toward an app at some point, but for now, we plan to stick to the browser. Of course, we also will configure e-mail and calendar for the devices, along with apps to help organize documents and read and edit Microsoft Office files.

If this pilot is successful, we plan to deploy the iPad to all 40 of our senators in the future. ◉

Virginia House of Delegates iPad Pilot Project

By Sharon Crouch Steidel, Director, House Information Systems Staff, Virginia House of Delegates

Shortly after the release of the iPad, I invited our Apple government salesperson to Richmond to clarify this often misunderstood little device and determine if it was a good fit for our members. As a result of that meeting, we purchased three iPads for staff to evaluate, and by mid-summer, decided this device may be a great fit for our members. House members are constantly moving around and maintaining calendars and mailboxes for their business, legislative and personal lives. Virtually all the information members use for legislative purposes is available online or via PDFs. A small, portable tablet device with a touch interface may be exactly the type of technology that would be beneficial for legislative purposes.

As a result, the House will be conducting an iPad pilot project during the next 15 months that will involve 16 House members and selected staff. This was a good time for us to begin this project, since all members were scheduled for laptop replacement this fall. Members of the pilot project will instead receive a 64GB 3g/WiFi iPad that will likely be replaced in 12 to 18 months. The goal of the pilot project is to evaluate whether iPad technology represents a more efficient and cost-effective business tool and a possible alternative to laptop computers.

We wanted members who were committed to participating in the pilot project and wanted to keep the pilot group at or around 15 members. Therefore, we polled all 100 House members about their interest in participating and provided a decision guide that outlined the pros and cons of using the iPad. I worked with leadership to select pilot project members, based on interest

level, computer proficiency and seniority. We wanted to include both freshman and senior members with varied levels of computer proficiency in the pilot. Interestingly, there is a waiting list of members who want to participate, should someone drop out.

Pilot members must use the iPad daily, both in committee and on the floor, and provide feedback to my office on their personal experiences using the technology to access legislative business applications, such as the Chamber Automation Program (CAP) and Legislative Information System (LIS); e-mail; calendaring; legislative documents; and other documents maintained by their legislative office. Because the feedback and experiences of the pilot project members are essential to the evaluation process, members also are expected to participate in a short training session with House Information Systems before they receive the iPad, and to attend periodic feedback meetings during the 2011 regular and special sessions.

We anticipate our next overall member replacement to occur in fall 2013. Based on the results of the pilot project, we will decide at that time what type of device will be issued to all 100 House members.

Below is a brief outline of our evaluation timeline:

Fall 2010 – Pilot group selected, training occurs, iPads issued.

Regular Session 2011 – Evaluate use during session, gain feedback from pilot group.

Spring 2011, after Reconvened Session – With feedback from pilot group, decide if we are to proceed with pilot project.

Interim / Special Sessions, 2011 – Assuming decision was made to proceed, evaluate what, if any, applications need to be developed; House Information Systems

staff to begin evaluation of other evolving tablet technology.

Election 2011 – Reconstitute group if necessary; make a decision on replacing iPads with new technology (different iPad model or other tablet device).

Regular Session, 2012 – Evaluate new applications, continue to evaluate use during session and evaluate potential new technology.

Reconvened Session 2012 –Pilot group to make recommendations on how to move forward.

If you have any questions about this project, feel free to contact me or Tommy Hoffman at thoffman@house.virginia.gov or Troy Adkins at tadkins@house.virginia.gov.

Teleworking in the Utah Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel

By Mark Allred, Information Systems Manager, Utah Legislature

Yes, teleworking is the same thing as telecommuting. Early in our process, we decided calling it teleworking sent a not-so-subtle message about what our staff should be doing when they telecommute. In this first installment I will lay out our first teleworking experience.

The Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel have responsibility for drafting legislation and staffing standing and interim committees for the Utah Legislature. We also maintain the legislative website, support the phone systems, program and maintain the computer applications, and support

BlackBerries. We currently have about 50 staff, 16 attorneys, 14 policy analysts and a variety of support staff.

It all started with the Winter Olympics in February 2002. To minimize traffic into Salt Lake City and in response to security concerns at state facilities, the governor asked state workers to figure out ways to stay out of town. My boss asked my staff to develop a plan to implement teleworking.

We knew the Legislature would recess for a couple of weeks in the middle of our 45-day general session. Although legislators would not be on the hill, we would need to continue to prepare for their return. We had some assets and some problems. Most of our staff had notebook computers. Virtually all of our staff had home access to the Internet, most with high-speed access. On the negative side, we had only limited access to a Virtual Private Network (VPN) we had set up for IT staff, and general staff had no training on how to access it. We had no experience with or plan for collaborating on drafting or research from remote locations. So, with the same lack of judgment that leads people to base jump, we launched the effort.

Some people chose to always work in the office. We required the receptionist to be there. Some secretaries rotated into the office each day. We developed some applications, built on an intranet requiring authentication (Novell NDS, in case you care). The apps included a web-based sign-in and sign-out system and access to upload and download documents from our Novell file servers. We could forward our office phones to another number so calls rang through to cell or home phones. I asked staff to volunteer comments on their experience.

Work patterns had to change. For those used to dealing with paper documents, telework forced some changes.

"The main thing I've seen is that I have to enter all proofing changes—whether my own or those of the proofers—in electronic versions of bills. I don't think this is a big deal for some of us, but it probably slows others down quite a bit."

Getting used to the idea that just because someone is not physically in the office they are still working was an issue.

"Secretaries in the office—Cassandra very busy with everyone's work while I would guess that secretaries at home are bored. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush—I have found that because I am in the office Tracy refers more calls to me that would normally be channeled to another but because of the slight inconvenience of connecting with someone working from home [because] I am here and available and a manager."

Another manager said:

"As a manager, you go by trust. You assume people are doing their best and keeping happily busy… Anyway, from my perspective, I'm glad we're doing it. I think it is important from a safety issue at this point in time, and I think it holds some promise for the future."

We had a mix of high-speed and dial up Internet connections.

"My home connection is much slower than at work. I am spoiled by fast work at the office… I would rate my experience thus far successful with few minor irritations. In some ways less efficient (speed of computer connections, etc.), but more efficient in other ways (focus on task, undisturbed, etc.) Also, not having to drive and park has been nice."

Forwarding phone calls worked pretty well.

"A lady called and wanted to know what the status of a bill was. Easy enough. While on my cell phone, I checked the status on our website and was able to give her the answer she wanted within a few seconds."

We used AOL instant messenger for quick communication and presence detection.

"Communication through AOL, e-mail, or the telephone was great! I think I used AOL 90 percent of the time."

One staffer had a series of comments related to experience.

"I've found it difficult to waste time by visiting with my office pals. I believe I've been as productive (perhaps more) as when I'm in the office, my Internet connection only goes out a few times a day, and I'm right back on (thanks to your suggestion.) I am racking up about 30 minutes a day in cell phone use. I miss the face-to-face associations and the long walks to the restroom, etc."

I received this unusual comment.

"One disadvantage was I was home to see a poor deer jump into my yard and, within 30 minutes, die. I had to call state wildlife services, which came and informed me that the deer had starved to death. Even at home, I get to interact with various state agencies."

Overall, teleworking worked pretty well and kept about two-thirds of the staff out of the office for the two weeks of the Olympics. In the next installment, I'll fill you in on what happened next with teleworking in Utah. 🌐

Why Is that Sheep on Fire? Session Hijacking for Everyone

*By Jerry Gamblin, Security Specialist, Missouri House of Representatives*

I was sitting in my home office on a late October Sunday when my twitter stream started going crazy about what was happening at ToorCon in San Diego. Eric Butler from Codebutler.com gave a talk and released a tool that made what used to be a fairly complex hack into a Firefox sidebar.

The name of the tool is FireSheep (http://codebutler.com/firesheep), and it makes session hijacking nearly automatic on any unencrypted wireless network.

Session hijacking occurs when a hacker gets a copy of an active user's session cookie, effectively giving them access to that site as the user they stole the cookie from.

How does it work? The directions to use FireSheep are fairly easy. Eric Butler describes them as follows:

1: Download FireSheep extension.

2. After installing the extension, you'll see a new sidebar. Connect to any busy open Wi-Fi network and click the big "Start Capturing" button. Then wait.
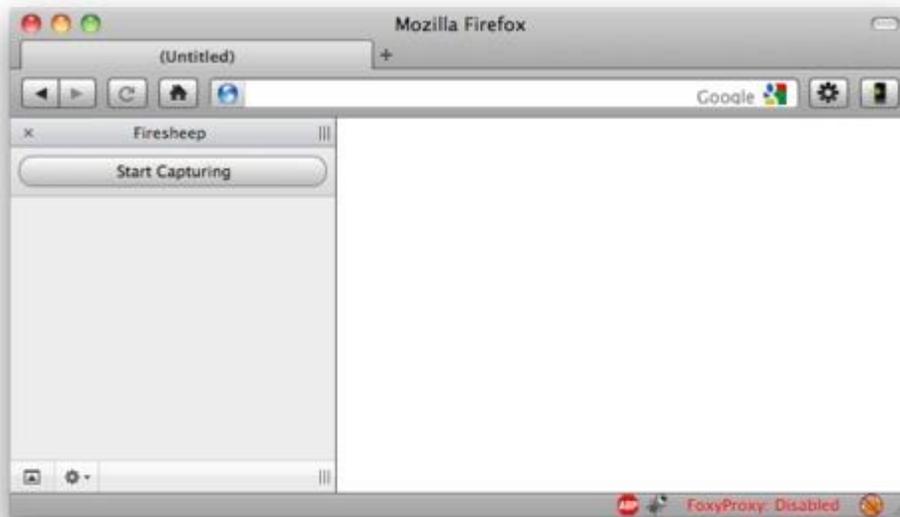
3. As soon as anyone on the network visits an insecure website known to FireSheep, their name and photo will be displayed:
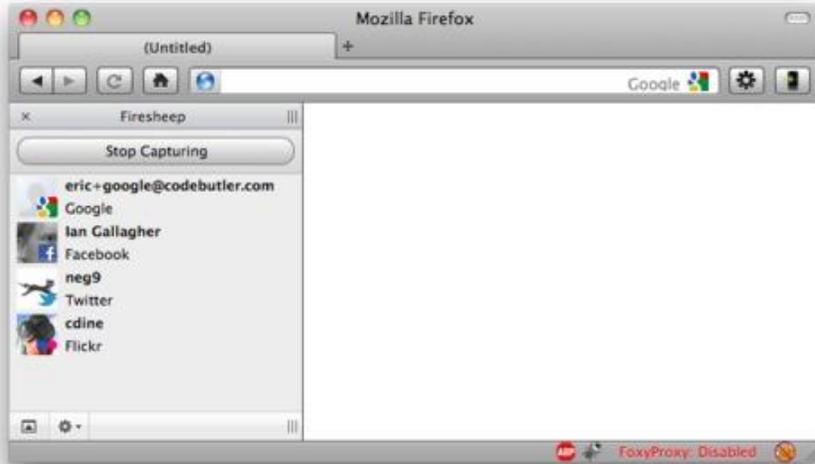
4. Double-click on

That's it. No fuss, no mess. Easy access to people's Amazon, Twitter, Facebook, Yahoo and about 30 other sites as soon as they log in on an unsecured wireless network.

Now that I have you worried, how do we fix it? The easiest way to fix it locally is to set a WPA2 password on your public network, then allow that password to be freely distributed. WPA2 encrypts the data sent on the network and will stop FireSheep and other sniffers

(wireshark, etc.) from working on your public wireless network.

How do site owners fix this problem? Use SSL. Once a site is encrypted with SSL, this problem goes away. Big companies don't move to SSL because the computing overhead that SSL causes would require a significant investment in new equipment.

If you have questions about FireSheep, feel free to e-mail me at Jerry.Gamblin@house.mo.gov.

1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 LINES of Fame

Mark Allred, Utah
- After a review, the House and Senate decided to stay with International Roll Call for another session.
- We have been having a jolly time virtualizing servers and processing PCs (using VMWare). A lot of our web building processes are driven by applications looking for documents dumped into the hopper.
- We are attempting to pound our code into shape as we work on converting it to XML.
- While there are a bunch of executive branch RFPs in the works (Hosted Email, VOIP), most of our work has involved fiddling around the edges to improve what we have and attempt to keep rapidly aging equipment from self-destructing.

Tim Rice, Illinois
- Migrated to SQL Server 2008.
- Migrated to Exchange 2010.
- Major revisions of core legislative applications—minutes, bill status, committee, journal.
- Pilot project using Granicus services to broadcast chamber and committee proceedings.
- Dealing with the consequences of the state's budget deficit.

Ann McLaughlin, State of Delaware
- Replacing 200 desktops.
- Upgrading from XP to Windows 7.
- Upgrading from Office 2003 to Office 2010—a giant leap that, much to our delight, has been well received!
- Upgrading to Server 2008.
- Looking to the future and a change in the Legislative Information System—talking to some vendors.

Brenda Fleming, California
- Legislative Session Readiness 2011-2012.
  - This project prepares all the legislative IT systems for the 2011-2012 legislative session by updating member names, session dates, etc.
- PC Maintenance: Upgrade to Windows7/Office 2010/IE8.
  - This project refreshes the desktop configuration to Windows 7, Office 2010 and Internet Explorer 8.
- Infrastructure Maintenance.
  - This project will refresh the underlying hardware and software technologies to maintain a reliable infrastructure.
- Application Enhancement Projects.
  - This covers a variety of application projects designed to update application software, enrich application features and functions, or resolve application defects.

Peter Capriglione, North Carolina
- Office 2010 deployment.
- Reviewing virtual desktop technology.
- Possible new machines for permanent staff; budget could get in the way.
- New Fiscal Research Budgeting System; IBM Cognos/BI and TM1.
- Redistricting.

Mark Your Calendar

NALIT at the NCSL Legislative Summit
San Antonio, Texas
August 8-11, 2011
www.ncsl.org/summit

NALIT Professional Development Seminar
Portland, Oregon
October 2-5, 2011
www.ncsl.org/nalit

NALIT

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D G J I B R Y O R S M X F Q A F W S R O      TECHNOLOGY
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L E U L D A V L Z J E J N L Q C M A C K      RICE
R G B A X P Y P V J N N P O X M E L E W      CAPRIGLIONE
R P W T H R P G V D C D B R A P S U Q E      LARSON
T I V U X I U N O O B R Q E V R U R R P      BECKWITH
M R X R W G A K I L E R G G R O M U I D      PITTSFORD
G I H E S L T V D N O Q O O J G M V V S      TROY
E Y O Q I I A W D P Z N V N G F I N T T      BRENDA
T U P T S O R A B X I D H M F S T E R L      CURTIS
A N B T F N G C R E R T S C G W V T M A      JOEL
E Q I R C E G U U N C S T Z E E Q D X R      STEVE
K T U O E I Y J C R F K E S A T R T V S      JEFF
C H Z Y D J B Y N L T L W R F D I Y L O      PDS
L D Y B M V V F F R D I A I Q O J I E N      SUMMIT
I N F O R M A T I O N S S I T N R M O D      OREGON
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Call for Newsletter Articles

Publishing this newsletter would be impossible **without your participation**.   What kind of articles do we need? Here are some suggestions:

- New or improved chamber automation projects
- Desktop virtualization—doing it, looking at it, etc.
- Document/content management projects
- E-mail and e-mail archiving
- Data archiving strategies
- Data backup solutions
- Network makeovers
- Security

Last, but not least, send in your "Five LINES of Fame." Tell us, in five lines or fewer, some of your current projects.

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