**[Let’s Get Technical!](http://lplabs.com/2010/04/07/lets-get-technical/" \o "Permanent Link to Let’s Get Technical!)**

**Justin Wark** (Lonely Planet author)

Software Development at Lonely Planet is generally all about building fast, reliable, scalable web applications for the masses which unfortunately means (limited) support for non-javascript browsers and supporting the dreaded IE6!

This has been put aside for a small cross-functional team to allow us to do some prototyping for applications intended for a limited set of users.  Without saying too much about the project, this has allowed us to experiment with some new (draft) HTML5 features such as LocalStorage and Offline Application Using Manifest.  The core use-case is to allow the user to take data offline (i.e. disconnect from the internet after browsing to the given web page or web application) and continue to use the system. The key benefit with the HML5 features is that it allowed us to build an application that will work (with some minor tweaks) on a PC, Mac, Nokia handset, iPhone, iPad, Android handset - in fact pretty much any device which supports an HTML5 browser!  Any Developer who has had to maintain a suite of native applications which work on Linux, Mac, Windows, iPhone, Android, etc will be as excited as we are.

It is early days, however we are learning a lot about the target user and having heaps of fun building prototypes with some help from the magic of Ruby on Rails and jQuery.

<http://lplabs.com/2010/04/07/lets-get-technical/> (8/04/10)

## [Lonely Planet’s Green Server Room](http://lplabs.com/2010/01/11/lonely-planets-green-server-room/)

**Nigeldalton (**Lonely Planet author)

**

by Julian Nikadie

It has always irked me that we have air conditioners running in the Lonely Planet server room 24 hours a day, every day of the year – even when we’re running heaters to warm the rest of the building. Such a waste of energy.

The need to redesign the server room to allow us to host some critical services gave us the opportunity to consider alternatives.

Wouldn’t it make sense to run the air conditioners only in Melbourne’s summer months? Could we vent the hot air from the server room to the rest of the building in Winter?

The reactions from the vendors we discussed our plans with ranged from a puzzled “Now, why would you want to do that?” to enthusiasm.

Inevitably there was the guy who nodded, said it seemed logical, and that he’d submit a proposal to us … that proposal was not only about six times what the budget would allow, it was a totally traditional, isolated server room that would require the air conditioners to run 24 hours a day – with no comment at all about the variation from what we’d discussed, and he seemed genuinely surprised that we didn’t respond immediately with a purchase order!

One of the enthusiastic vendors really latched on to the “waste of energy” comment we made while discussing why we didn’t want to simply increase the amount of cooling we had in the room.

“Ah! We’ve got just what you’re after … ”  [shuffle through brochures] “… here’s a new system that’s a twist on evaporative cooling – it uses less power to cool the room!”. Now, using less power to cool the server room was certainly better than our current system, but wasn’t it simply a more efficient way of wasting energy?

We wanted to use that energy to **heat the building**. He couldn’t help us there.

And then came  Anbro. Recommended by one of the vendors we were considering for the supply of a generator, Anbro was described as willing to listen and to consider offbeat ideas.

They came as a swarm. It seemed like there were a dozen fluoro-vested guys buzzing around discussing every aspect of the current systems (both within the server room and in the rest of the building). They had Bob running all over the place collecting plans and ladders. They were keen. They hadn’t done anything like this before, but it was logical, simple, and everyone should be doing it!

When their Warm Air Redirection System (WARS) proposal appeared in my email,  I skipped to the dollars part  (having been burned by the earlier pseudo-green proposal),… it couldn’t be right, it was not only less expensive than the pseudo-green proposal it was the best value of all of the proposals we’d received.

As I read the rest of the document (with that FGTH tune going through my head every time I saw the WARS abbreviation) it dawned on me … not only would this system save money through cheaper on-going running costs (since all of the other solutions had to install extra cooling to provide redundancy against the failure of a single air conditioner) – this proposal needed to provide sufficient cooling (for summertime), but the air conditioning and WARS could be used to back each other up. The fans, filters, ducts, vents, dampers and control circuits that would constitute the WARS were less expensive than providing a redundant air conditioner!

Why doesn’t everyone do this? Less expensive to install, less expensive to run, and Green! So, while war is good for “absolutely nothing”, WARS is proven greatness.



<http://lplabs.com/2010/01/11/lonely-planets-green-server-room/> (08/04/10)

## [LP Hack Day - Nov 7th & 8th](http://lplabs.com/2009/10/13/lonely-planet-hack-day-nov-7th-8th/)

**Matthew Cashmore (**Lonely Planet author)

**The very first Lonely Planet Hack Day in Australia.**

[](http://www.flickr.com/photos/mattcashmore/3812658449/)Join the teams responsible for the development of lonelyplanet.com, the Lonely Planet mobile apps and the new Lonely Planet Open Social Platform for the very first Lonely Planet Hack Day.

Fresh on the heels of a massively successful mobile hack day in London (<http://overtheair.org>), and our own internal hack day (see the [photos](http://www.flickr.com/photos/mattcashmore/sets/72157622015300428/) and the [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duEBztpTP20)) we invite you to come to the Lonely Planet headquarters based in Footscray in Melbourne to spend 48 hours playing with our new API, our new Open Social platform and our rather funky content, images and maps.

This is the first time Lonely Planet has run a Hack Day here in Australia, and we believe the developers of Australia can teach the rest of the world a trick or two.

The event starts at 10am Saturday morning with a series of talks from developers on Open Social (beginner and expert sessions) and our APIs, there’ll also be space for unconference style talks and once you’ve signed up we’ll send you details of the event wiki where you can book a slot and see what others are talking about.

Saturday at 1pm 24 hours of hacking starts - right through the night at our HQ with a few hours break for a mystery event at 7pm until 10pm before heading back and burning the midnight oil (note: you’re not allowed to burn oil at the LP HQ, I’ll get told off).

Sunday at 1pm the presentations start - you’ll get 90 seconds each to present to your peers and the winners have some pretty decent prizes - not to mention all the free beer, coke and pizza on hand through-out the event.

So sign up now - there’s limited spaces for this first event - so please only do take a place if you know you can come - if you sign up and then can’t come please do let us know - matthew.cashmore@lonleyplanet.com

<http://lplabs.com/2009/10/13/lonely-planet-hack-day-nov-7th-8th/> (08/04/10)

[**The inevitable, Hello world! post.**](http://lplabs.com/2008/11/05/hello-world/)

**Matthew Cashmore** (Lonely Planet author)

It’s the LP Labs blog.  Yeap, we’re giving it another go.  There’s so much stunning work going on here at the moment that it makes no sense for it to be hidden behind the secure doors of the Melbourne office.

This is a simple attempt to open up the back end of LP and let you know what we’re up to right now, what we want to do in the future, and how you can get involved. There’s really three major things happening right now.

* BlogSherpa
* Groups, and
* Developer API

BlogSherpa has already been [talked about in public over at Paid Content](http://www.paidcontent.org/entry/419-lonely-planet-to-share-ad-revenue-with-amateur-travel-bloggers/), as well as our sister blog, [Inside Lonely Planet.](http://inside-digital.blog.lonelyplanet.com/2008/11/14/working-with-bloggers/) But here on the LP Labs blog, I hope to go into much greater detail and expose our dirty back-end via the medium of WordPress.

Groups is newer, we’ve hardly mentioned it at all in public - not because it’s top secret - but because we’ve only just started sprint 0. You’ll be able to get the latest info on what Groups is, but more important get to grips with how it works and how you can build apps that work with it.

The Developer API is based over at [developer.lonelyplanet.com](http://developer.lonelyplanet.com) - it’s closed at the moment - but if you really want to have a mess around with our first API (it’s not terribly good yet) then [drop me a note](mailto:matthew.cashmore@lonelyplanet.com?subject=Developer%20API%20Request) with your registered username and I’ll assign you a key. There’s lots of work going on right now to make it a hell of a lot better - but that’s the subject of another post.

There are other ways you can keep up to date on what we’re working on, the most obvious of which (look top right) is our [twitter stream](http://twitter.com/lplabs). Feel free to follow us for a constant stream of frustration and swearing as we try to get new things working. Sorry, I mean - a constant stream of intelligent, witty, team banter.

That’s about enough for now. Subscribe to the [RSS feeds](http://feeds.feedburner.com/lplabs/Coqy), follow us on [twitter](http://twitter.com/lplabs) and keep and eye open for coming videos and podcasts. LP Labs is about opening up Lonely Planet to external devlopment - that means you.

<http://lplabs.com/2008/11/05/hello-world/> (08/04/10)