



IT Committee report to the Libertarian National Committee

Submitted August 17, 2017 by Sean O'Toole

The IT Committee continues to meet by telephone every two weeks in order to review and discuss our ongoing initiatives on which I will elaborate here.

Email Server

Since our April meeting, the email server has gone live. States that have been configured are Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, New York, and Wyoming. Initially, we found our IP addresses were showing up on various blacklists. We believe that all blacklist issues have been resolved.

Ken Moellman has been the lead developer on this project and is currently configuring our list management software (GNU Mailman) and once this hurdle is complete, we are prepared to move lp.org email to the server. This will allow us to terminate our Softlayer server (\$514/month). The new server, hosted by johncompanies.com, costs \$418/month for an annual savings of \$1,152.

As part of the move to the new server, we have terminated the server at rackspace.com and have a physical backup stored at LPHQ. Annual saving will be \$8,544.

With the cutover to the new server, we recommend that we switch from using forwarders to using email boxes. The Internet is moving away from the use of forwarders in an effort to fight spam. Email boxes ensure that the data is housed with the LP and that email is delivered.

We should also examine an Acceptable Use policy for email (LP.org and other hosted email). Using LP-branded email for "inappropriate" things can harm the image of the party and/or create legal liability for the party.

Any state interested in switching over to our service should contact Andy Burns to begin the process.

Candidate Database

It has long been a goal of LNC staff and those involved in our web presence to have a page on lp.org where voters can easily find LP candidates in local and state-wide races particular to them. Andy Burns has investigated various Wordpress plugins and found nothing that suited our needs. As a long-term solution to this issue, the IT Committee has written a specification for a Ruby on Rails application that satisfies our needs.

The core of the application is an administrative layer that can accommodate multiple administrative users at the national level as well at the state level. Administrative users will have the ability to upload and update candidate data for their particular state (or any state for national administrators).

The application will accommodate voters throughout the U.S. by offering the following features in its initial version:

- Landing page available at lp.org
- Support for local lookup by address with zip code
- Lookup returns candidates at local, state and federal levels

Later enhancements will include the ability to insert landing pages in our affiliates' websites that will be geographically relevant to the affiliate.

This project has been started with the majority of work done by Committee members John Athayde, Steven Haddox. Committee member J.D. Drake, a database consultant, has played a strong role in database design.

This will be an open source project and we are actively seeking other Libertarians to step in, take on an issue and submit a pull request. The repository can be accessed at https://gitlab.com/libertarians/oss/candidate_db/

Voter Database

Our voter database initiative has been put on hold in favor of the Candidate Database as we see greater need for the latter at this time. Once completed, we will turn our attention back to the design and building of a voter database.

Multi-state CRM

Andy Burns has been putting quite a bit of work into designing the specification for a contact resource management system for our affiliates. Andy's work has led him to believe that (open source) civiCRM is a viable solution to our affiliates' needs.

A handful of states have had experience with the application with varying results. civiCRM is a powerful application but can be difficult to set up and maintain. For this reason, Andy has solicited proposals from consultants well-versed in civiCRM to host and maintain an instance of the software that would be provisioned to accommodate any and all of our affiliates.