SERVAL GROUP

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THE NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION/IN-Q-TEL/SERVAL DEPARTMENT

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Archives

The Team

The Serval Project – The Team

A project is only as good as its team – and we here at The Serval Project have a good team – some paid, some students, some volunteers. All are treated with respect, friendliness, and a sense of all being in this together. This creates a working atmosphere where creativity and hard work combine with friendliness, humour, and a sense of fun that makes coming in to the lab a real joy.

Senior Development Team

The Senior Development Team is responsible for the core oversight of the software direction & development, as well as providing a leadership role for Serval's many project students, helping them to develop their skills and become integral and productive members of the team.

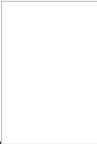**Paul Gardner-Stephen : Technical Architect, Co-founder & Inspiration for The Serval Project.**

PGS

Dr. Paul Gardner-Stephen is Rural, Remote & Humanitarian Telecommunications at Flinders University where, from the Resilient Networks Laboratory, (aka The Batcave), he leads the Serval Project, which was created in response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake. He has more than 15 years experience as a systems and network administrator and has been writing and selling software from age 17, which helped support his mobile telecommunications habit (an NEC P3 with half-duplex speaker-phone about 6 hours battery life) as an undergraduate student in the mid 1990s when cell phones were still uncommon in Australia. He is author of 64NET, which was sold in three continents before being released as free software. He created the world's first real and wearable shoe phone a la Maxwell Smart, and then legally wore it on a commercial flight into post-9/11 USA, (much to the amusement of airport security personnel along the way).

Since March 2010 he has been working tirelessly to realise the vision of enabling all people to communicate. He sees the way to achieve this to enable the latent capabilities of low-cost consumer electronics devices to automatically form useful communications networks, enabling communications for free or at low cost and in locations where it has not previously been feasible for whatever reason. He wears khaki, and is the star of many media appearances. He is just as nice as he seems, despite being smarter than just about everyone.

Romana Challans : IEEE Liaison, UX/UI Lead, Web Developer, and co-founder of The Serval Project.

Romana's experience as Technical Training Coordinator at Motorola Australia Software Centre, and her work as a freelance web designer, have added both corporate experience and understanding of user interfaces. She is passionate about Open Source advocacy and accessibility to technology, and all the advantages that it can bring for all people regardless of location or economic situation. This passion led to her helping found another not for profit group over 12 years ago, ITShareSA, involved in recycling computer hardware towards low income individuals, groups, communities, and at times, other countries, using Open Source software. There has been a field trial where we converted her wheelchair into a portable Mobile Phone Tower as a proof of concept. She is now involved with Serval's involvement with the standards process of 802.11 within the IEEE. This means a lot of travelling, and her wheelchair probably has more frequent flyer points than most people. She has a bad habit of quoting from poetry and geek lexicons like Monty Python equally, and always wishes for just one more cup of tea for the day.

Jennifer Hampton : Project Manager.

Jenny has 12 years of experience in software engineering and product development. Her roles have gained her experience in all phases of the software development lifecycle across testing, development and project management. Her project management experience in particular spans over 7 years. Jenny's objective as a project manager is to deliver projects which achieve a high level of customer satisfaction in both the end product and the project execution. She, Paul, Jeremy, and Romana attended Flinders University together. She and Romana went on to work at Motorola Australia Software Centre. She is tasked with making sure we all meet our milestones, and manages to keep us all to it with intelligence, firmness, grace, humour, and more than occasional chocolate bribery. Despite Romana quoting from most geek lexicons fluently, she is the undisputed Red Dwarf champion.

Jeremy Lakeman : Senior Software Engineer and Quality Manager.

Jeremy

Jeremy brings with him 12 years of commercial experience developing software, primarily for the financial services industry. Jeremy's interests lie in architecting and implementing novel software solutions to solve real problems, and thus was readily drawn to Serval Project when approached by the founder, Dr. Paul Gardner-Stephen, whom he has known from University days. He has been applying his skills at the Serval Project, identifying and implementing solutions to progress development and integration of the Serval BatPhone software, as well as providing a leadership role for Serval's many project students, helping them to develop their skills and become integral and productive members of the team. Jeremy is prone to casually solving hugely insurmountable problems by frowning, typing, and mentioning briefly the issue is resolved, before moving on to conquer the next impossible task. He is easily bribed with chocolate, and is regarded as enormous fun to work with.

daniel

Daniel O'Connor : Senior Software Engineer : Network and software engineer with extensive experience in C, Python and Tcl, FreeBSD deployment and embedded development. He has a sharp wit, and an even sharper intellect. He brings us cakes, so only nice things shall be said of him.

Lyn Stephens : Senior Engineer, Community Network Manager

LS

Lyn is another who went to Flinders University, albeit a different field originally. He has spent the last 8 years working with Free and Open Source software, including being one of the founders, (and ongoing leading member), of ITShareSA, which is involved in recycling computer hardware towards low income individuals, groups, communities, and at times, other countries. He is our go to guy for hardware solutions – no job too odd or – we hope – too horrible (his USB charging server was an appreciated innovation). He is now working with the configuration and testing of Serval Software in Community Network Scenarios. He is also married to Romana, but seems calm and sane despite it.

Andrew Bettison : Senior Software Engineer

andrew

Andrew's Quixotic career in technology has its fair share of fun, farce, and excitement. He has hand crafted real-time software for computer musical instruments, hacked on the Unix kernels of monolithic American and Japanese supercomputers, synchronised digital audio with motion pictures, ridden a Swedish dot-com through the Spanish and Portuguese economies, fused tactical sonar, traced infra-red rays over tropical seas, and delivered mobile phones to Spain's socially-networked teenagers. He has also sung with some of Australia's leading chamber choirs, studied Aikido, become fluent in Spanish, studied the piano, learned to cook, undergone (but not performed) heart surgery, and raised a family. Now with the Serval Project, he hopes to help usher in the revolution that the mobile phone always promised but never quite delivered.

Other Team Members

There is more to supporting a project than the actual development work itself. Our supporting team provides us with the tools, resources, and ability to pursue our goals. They do this with wit and intelligence.

Susan Williams : CFO, Bookkeeper

Susan

Susan has an extensive background in finance, as well as degrees in Economics & Computer Science. She also attended Flinders University with Paul, Alasdair, Lyn, Romana, Jeremy & Jennifer (as well as at Motorola Australia Software Centre with Jennifer & Romana). She has worked with a wide range of companies, from large companies, government bodies, and not for profits. Her financial expertise as Financial Officer is a real asset, as is her technical skills, allowing her to walk both administrative and technical worlds, bringing them together as needed – a rare talent. She shows commendable patience & humour when faced with our geekery.

Students

Lab

The students we have working with us in the 'Batcave', as our laboratory is affectionately known, are all gifted, hardworking – and incredibly nice people to be around. We regard ourselves privileged to be around such people. Some of the students come from overseas, mostly from Flinders University. We welcome any students who are interested into the lab, so as well as post graduate students, we have been very lucky to have had talented people join in, this year gaining us two gifted first years. We have also had some wonderful students from INSA, l'Institut National des Sciences Appliquées in France, who, working with Flinders, send us superb and talented young engineering students. Each of these students has been outstanding, of the highest calibre, and incredibly nice and friendly as well – a true credit to themselves and their Institute. We look forward to continuing the relationship we have with INSA, and working with many more of these fine students!

Candice Jenkins – First Year, B. Comp Sci
Matthew Smith – First Year, B. Comp Sci
Adam Brenecki – Second Year, B Sci (Comp Sci Major)
Watcharachai Kongsiriwattana – PhD

Ninja Student – Honours

One of our most experienced and senior students, he works in silence, accomplishing huge things under cover of anonymity. The project would not be the same without the quiet but vital accomplishments of the Ninja Student.

List of previous students :

Dany Rakotopara – Masters, 2010

Dany was our first student from INSA, and as such, was a key part in helping Serval start from day one. His work on the project earned both him, and the project, a place as a finalist in The World Embedded Software Contest 2010. This project, run under the auspices of the South Korean Government, is an annual contest that selects excellent original works on embedded software and award prizes to them since 2003. He was regarded by his colleagues as a gifted engineer, and as a great person to be around, and by the teen element of the testing at Arkaroola as 'a really cool dude'.

Romain Bochet – Honours, 2011

Romain also is a student sent to us from INSA, and worked on the Video Capture section of the Serval software, and had to overcome many difficulties with the limitations and vagaries of Android. His humour and intelligence won him many friends in the project. He was even hired by the project to do some extended, paid work outside of his project, furthering the research into this area.

Thomas Giraud – Honours, 2011

Thomas, another student via INSA, was one of the hardest working students we have ever seen, and provided results of the highest quality. He worked on the SMS (short messaging service) part of Serval software, and rapidly proved himself to be talented and hard working, producing excellent results in better than expected timeframes. Warm and friendly, he was, like Dany & Romain, very deeply missed when he returned home to France at the end of his time with us.

Swapna Palaniswamy – Masters, 2011

Swapna was one of our most prized students, and sorely missed when she graduated, winning a prize for her presentation along the way. We are incredibly proud of her, and wish her well in her new career – she landed a job within a month of graduation. We have no doubt she will be a huge asset to any employer.

- Home
- Blog
- Developers
- Contribute

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-
-

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