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The Technology Liberation Front is the tech policy blog dedicated to keeping politicians' hands off the 'net and everything else related to technology.

The Technology Liberation Front Turns 5 Today!

by [Adam Thierer](#) on August 14, 2009 · [Comments](#)

Five years ago today the Technology Liberation Front (the “TLF”) got underway with [this post](#). The idea for the TLF came about after I asked some tech policy wonks whether it was worth put together a blog dedicated to covering Internet-related issues from [a cyber-libertarian perspective](#). The model I had in mind was a “[Volokh Conspiracy](#) for Tech Issues,” if you will. I wanted to bring together a collection of sharp, liberty-loving wonks (most of whom worked in the think tank world) to talk about their research on this front and to give them a place to post their views on breaking tech policy developments. It was to be a sort of central clearinghouse for libertarian-oriented tech policy analysis and advocacy.



At first, Tim Lee and I debated whether it even made sense to have that sort of narrow focus, but I think the passage of time and the rise of plenty of competition on this front shows that it was worthwhile. And I’ve been very pleased with the tag-team effort of all our TLF contributors and the way—without anyone planning it, in true libertarian fashion—we’ve sort of developed a nice division of labor on various tech policy issues.

Perhaps a few stats are in order on this occasion to mark our progress 5 years in. The best indication of our success is the fact that our [Pagerank](#) (Google’s logarithmic scale of website importance based on links to that site) has reached **7/10**—the same score shared by the Volokh Conspiracy (our model), as well as Techmeme (the leading tech news aggregator), the Cato Institute, CDT, etc. (For comparison: ArsTechnica and EFF are **8s**.) Unfortunately, we’ve only been using Google Analytics for three of the past five years, so it’s impossible to get a authoritative accounting of traffic growth since Day 1. But here are few markers:

- 4,450+ posts
- 29,000+ comments
- 2,698 RSS subscribers
- 15,763 unique visitors per month
- 1,000,000 pageviews since Nov. 2006 when we started using Google Analytics
- Besides organic search and direct links, we get the bulk of our traffic from other tech-oriented sites (in order of hits) [TechDirt](#), [Freedom to Tinker](#), [Ars Technica](#), [GamePolitics.com](#), [TechMeme](#), [Slate](#), etc., and aggregators such as [reddit](#), [Fark](#), and [StumbleUpon](#)

So, what’s our #1 post of all-time? That would be Jim Harper’s “[Where to Get Your Fake ID](#),” proving that if you [play Google search terms wisely](#), you can build a link goldmine! 18,200+ pageviews and counting! (Harper... You finally have something to list on your resume that lots of people have read!) Sometimes silly posts like that can net a lot of traffic. For example, another top 5 TLF post was my piece on “[The Most](#)

[Powerful Computer Ever](#),” which has netted over 7,700 pageviews. It was just an old magazine ad that Wayne Crews had found years ago and sent me a copy of.

In case you're interested, some of our other most popular TLF posts include:

- My post “[Grouping Recent Net Books: Internet Optimists vs. Pessimists](#)” (6,631 views)
- Jim Harper’s “[Social Hack on Gmail Users](#)” (3,756 views)
- My rant on “[Video Games & Moral Panic](#)” (3,408 views)
- Berin Szoka’s look at “[The Right Way to Allow Cell Phone Jammers](#)” (3,322 views)
- Tim Lee’s piece on the tech community & civil liberties: “[Pissing on Their Graves](#)” (2,828 views)
- Harper’s “[ID Checks are About Control, Not Security](#)” (2,870) and his look at “[Border Biometrics](#)” (2,402 views)
- Cord Blomquist’s “[Sirius XM Bankruptcy: Thank Washington for the Delay](#)” (2,069 views)
- Alex Harris’s look at the “[Best and Worst Supreme Court Decisions](#)” (1,714 views)
- My book review of “[Zittrain’s Future of the Internet](#)” (1,689 views)

I want to thank all my TLF blogging colleagues for their contributions over the past 5 years. As I noted in that very first post here back in 2004, “this blog is not a one-man show.” Almost all of us here have our own personal or organizational blogs, but when we come together here on the TLF, it helps us show the world that there *is* another vision for ordering the affairs of cyberspace beside the command-and-control, [hands-all-over-the-Net mentality that dominates today](#): [real Internet freedom!](#)

There are a couple of people who deserve special thanks for what they have done for the TLF:

[PJ Doland](#) has not only generously hosted our site all these years and donated endless hours of his time to keeping it running through waves of spam attacks, but he also designed our unique TLF banner. His use of Soviet-style art for libertarian purposes is the perfect compliment to our “Liberation Front” theme. PJ also provided that awesome TLF tagline: “The real problem is not whether machines think but whether men do.” (It’s a [B.F. Skinner](#) quote, incidentally).



[Jerry Brito](#) has also been enormously helpful with the back office stuff, including getting [our podcast](#) off the ground. He is also responsible for the wonderful site redesign and improvements that were just rolled out recently. And Jerry has been extremely patient with all the TLF bloggers through the years as he taught us the basics about how to be more effective bloggers.

[Tim Lee](#) has been the TLF’s most prolific and popular blogger and, [as I noted recently](#) when he announced [his departure](#) from the TLF, it is not an overstatement to say that for many of the TLF’s five years the rest of us here have simply been riding on his coat tails. We were just lucky to be along for the ride as he made the TLF more visible to the tech policy world. He brought us a significant portion of the audience and respect that we have to today and I cannot thank him enough for that.

[Berin Szoka](#), my colleague at [PFF](#), came on board just over a year ago but since then has become a prolific force on the TLF and helped spawn several new “ongoing series” features such as the [Privacy Solutions Series](#), “[Googlephobia](#),” and [Cutting the Video Cord](#). Berin is also helping with the back-office stuff and trying to help me get the podcast going again regularly.

Our Readers! Seriously, we thank each and every one of you who has taken the time to visit our site, read our rants, and leave comments (even the shitty ones!) We really appreciate it. We know there are [countless other blogs out there](#) to occupy your time and we’re honored that you’d give ours even a few minutes of your day. If you’re in D.C. today, we hope you’ll join us for [our celebratory happy hour tonight!](#)

Here's to another 5 great years of technology freedom!

Cheers,

Adam Thierer

P.S. I'm feeling a bit sentimental as I think back and realize all the things that didn't exist even just 5 years ago: Twitter, the iPhone, FiOS, Facebook, Pandora, Chrome, the PS3 + Wii + 360, YouTube, Hulu, etc... Just imagine how exciting the next 5 years will be!

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