DASHING through the Code – Introducing Austin Ward

'Twas the night before Christmas and busy not bored, not a creature was stirring"… except Austin Ward.

Austin Ward, Computer Programmer Specialist for TotaLand since 2009, doesn't see many "silent nights" since he enjoys the year-round "hustle and bustle" of creating software to make landmen jolly and their businesses bright. Graduating from ULL with a Computer Science Degree, Austin has a passion to stay on the leading edge of technology by continuously learning. Austin recently graduated from LSU with a Master of Library and Information Science with a focus on knowledge management and human-information interaction.

Years ago, Austin developed TotaLand's unique and popular Abstract Assembler, a service originally designed to combine PDFs of different sized and orientations into a standardized abstract document. The Abstract Assembler grew organically from there, where new libraries were utilized to extend the capabilities of the AA to include other file formats, such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and various images types. After a couple of years of feature additions and developments, many of which were spurred by user feedback, the Abstract Assembler was rewritten from the ground up to be a more efficient service. Abstract compiling times were cut down in half or greater. Austin is always adding new features to benefit landmen. Austin said, "There are still more features to be added to the Abstract Assembler and it always possible to leverage newly acquired knowledge to enhance our current services."

When asked about his programming vision and gifts, Austin replied, "Finding the correlation between pieces of information and determining the best way to represent the connection has always been an interesting puzzle to solve. Programming provided the most direct way to participate in that process. In high school, I liked it when people got enjoyment and use out of the games and applications I programmed. I decided that it would be the right career path for me, and I began a degree in Computer Science at ULL."

Austin noted that, "Aside from addressing all of our clients' custom output needs, continuing to find new ways to turn our clients' data into ever more useful information is my main goal. There's no telling where that road leads yet. Leveraging new technologies and libraries is essential to stay ahead of the curve. In the future, I hope to be able to provide even greater statistical data for our clients to use and to increase the efficiency in which they are able to produce documents and data from TotaLand."