

ToorCamp Journal: Pushing the boundaries of technology

August 9, 2012 at 9:02 am by [Amal Graafstra](#) [1 Comment](#)

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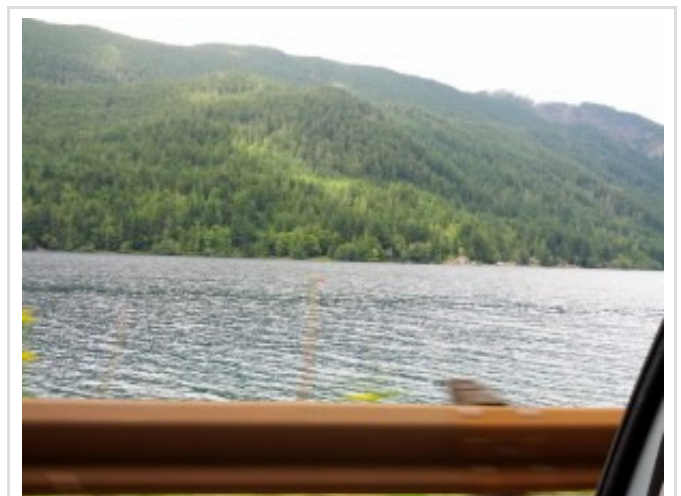


Ah, summer. A tent on the beach, and an ample supply of CAT5. (Photos by Amal Graafstra.)

[Editor's Note: Amal Graafstra is one of hundreds of people attending [ToorCamp](#), a summer camp for geeks now under way on the Washington coast. The author of the book [RFID Toys](#) and a "double RFID implantee," Graafstra won a ticket to the event through a GeekWire contest. He's sending dispatches from the camp to give the rest of us a sense for life there.]

Driving out to the tip of the Washington State peninsula is an adventure in and of itself. Harrowing turns, sudden speed changes from 60 mph to 25 and back again, and breathtaking views of sloping mountains prickling with evergreen trees that come right down to the water's edge all conspire to get my heart racing before I've even get to camp.

Upon arriving, I check in at the front gate, find a sweet campsite, and setup shop. My car is half loaded with camping gear while the other half contains tech gear... half



empty boxes of bulk CAT5 cable, a network switch, an amplified directional long distance wifi antenna, RJ45 modular ends, cable crimpers, and oh yes, everything I'll need to set up the controversial Implantation Station.

Most people here are interested in RFID tags, even if they aren't keen on getting one implanted in them while camping on the beach. What interests me however is that, even in a camp full of tech elite, there are doubts and mistrust when it comes to RFID implantation. Typically these fears are birthed from a lack of knowledge regarding what these small RFID tags are and are not capable of, but that is not the case here. I still haven't had a chance to really sit down and speak with anyone about it yet, I've only heard grumblings while walking past.

I meet my camp neighbors, one of whom happens to be a DBA by trade. I promptly pose a query and set him to work on a particularly difficult problem I've been having back in the office. There isn't enough battery life in his laptop to continue working on the problem, so I set about camp to find a long extension cord. Luckily, multi-outlet extensions are strewn throughout the camp, forming a sort of electron spider web. It doesn't take long to find a nearby power strip and plug in a borrowed extension cord, and we're back on the case. I hear long range wifi is being setup by the RF Palace camp tomorrow.

As I lay my head down to go to sleep in my cozy tent, music is blaring from the far end of the camp, movies start playing in the large geodesic dome toward the middle of the camp (WarGames, We Are Legion, Hackers, etc.), and more campers arrive. I'm so excited about the rest of the week I'm really having a hard time actually going to sleep.

Follow Amal Graafstra on Twitter [@amal](#) and [find out more on his site](#). For more on ToorCamp, listen to [our recent GeekWire podcast interview with David Hulton](#), one of the organizers of the event.



Movies in the ToorCamp 'Big Dome'.



Dawn breaks at ToorCamp on the Washington coast.