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**The two sides of Gavin Lowe:** Digital Systems Technician at Metro San Fernando Valley is also the author of science fiction novels. Photo by Jimmy Stroup



### San Fernando Valley Systems Tech Writes a Novel (or Two)

BY JIMMY STROUP

(March 17, 2006) Digital Systems Technician Gavin Lowe is responsible for keeping the computer systems in the San Fernando Valley humming. But once he gets home, he stops working on other peoples' projects and works on his own: writing novels.

And as if being a part-time writer weren't enough distinction, Lowe is publishing his novels in a manner befitting a systems technician. Two of his novels, *Tannis Island* and *The Seven Scrolls of Scallose*, are available in audio format – voiced by the author – online at [www.podiobooks.com](http://www.podiobooks.com).

"I started doing a lot of research about the technology – the iPods people wear on their belts – and I watched people get on the bus or the train. Everybody's plugged in. I started to realize that people aren't reading as much as they used to," Lowe says. "And when they want to listen to a book, they just plug in. In the next decade, that's probably what most books are going to be: audio format."

A new Web site that features work much along the lines of Lowe's chosen genre, science fiction, Podiobooks allows users to download entire novels in serial format – one chapter at a time. Authors record their novels chapter by chapter and upload them onto the site for weekly updates.

### Profits split with the author

"It's free to download the books," says Lowe. "They offer the option to make a donation if you like the novel, and that only happens once you complete the book. If you finish listening to a novel and you like it, they ask that you make a donation." He adds that Podiobooks splits the donation with the author.

But before his book can go online, Lowe has to first tailor it to a

format more conducive for Web broadcasting.

"I write the story based in a novel format. But for the podcast or the audio book, I rewrite the book based toward that type of an environment, which is almost like a radio show when you listen to it," he says. "It sounds more like you're listening to Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds* — it has sound effects and it has music."

Lowe has already penned a sequel to *Tannis Island* called *Legend of the Windmaker*, and will be converting it to audio format soon. He's also got four other outlines for new novels that he hasn't had a chance to write yet.

For Lowe, even success wouldn't be enough to change the way or the function of his writing: He writes for fun and as a hobby.



#### 'At my own pace'

"If you want to destroy a hobby, make a job out of it. For me, the writing is a hobby and a pastime. If I want to do it for a living, it wouldn't be a hobby anymore," he says. "I'm going to do it at my own pace and the way I want to do it."

His pace is quick, though, and he sees that as a function of writing in an area that interests him: science fiction.

Gavin Lowe

"Practically all of my books are science fiction," he says. "I'm not so much into UFOs and aliens, but there are other aspects of science fiction that are equally as interesting."

And because Lowe's done the writing and recording on his own, it only fits that the books' designs should be his own, too — he created the artwork that adorns the covers of both his novels.

*Tannis Island* features a dreamlike island on a glassy sea, and *The Seven Scrolls of Scallose* depicts a kind of platform suspended above a floating, lighted orb.

*Tannis Island* is available in its entirety on [www.podiodbooks.com](http://www.podiodbooks.com). *The Seven Scrolls of Scallose*, though fully written, is currently on chapter seven, with chapter eight soon to come.