

# Philome.la Replacement Request For Proposals

## 8 March 2020 (updated 28 March 2020)

### Introduction and Background

The Interactive Fiction Technology Foundation (IFTF) seeks a contractual **Developer/Administrator** to create, maintain, and develop improvements to a successor to the popular Philomela Twine-hosting site on a fixed-cost-per-month basis. IFTF plans to use the selected vendor's cost estimate as the basis of a fundraising campaign. Please keep in mind that engagement with a vendor is contingent on IFTF's ability to raise sufficient funds before the engagement begins.

Philomela (<https://philome.la/>) is a simple Ruby/Sinatra-based hosting site for Twine stories. In its original form, Philomela had these capabilities:

- An upload workflow where:
  - Users authenticate via Twitter OAuth.
  - Users upload a single published Twine file via a web form.
  - The site performs basic checks to ensure that a valid, published Twine story was uploaded.
  - Optionally, the user can choose to have the Philomela Twitter account ([https://twitter.com/philomela\\_twine](https://twitter.com/philomela_twine)) tweet the uploaded story name, user name, and a link to the published story.
- Once published, anyone can view a Twine story at a single, permanent URL. No login or other authentication is required to view it.
- Users have a dedicated profile page where all stories they have published could be viewed. If an authenticated user is browsing their own profile, they are able to delete a previously-published story of theirs.

Philomela did not support:

- Any other login method besides Twitter.
- Hosting additional files that a published Twine story used; for example, image or sound files.
- Browsing through stories in any capacity beside browsing by user.
- A user directory.
- Any Twine story editing capabilities.

As of September 30, 2019, the Philomela web site no longer supports uploading new Twine stories, but continues to host existing stories.

Philomela's source code can be found at <https://github.com/colinmarc/philome.la>. An incomplete rewrite of the code in the Go programming language by the original maintainer is at <https://github.com/colinmarc/philomela> (note the lack of period in the second link). This

second link is provided as informational, and does not necessarily indicate a desired future direction for the project. Also, IFTF is agnostic as to which programming tools are used to fulfill the needs articulated here.

The current maintainer of Philomela has limited time to devote to the site and, as noted above, has placed it into read-only mode. IFTF would like to sponsor a successor to Philomela that restores its full functionality and expands on it.

## About the Interactive Fiction Technology Foundation

The Interactive Fiction Technology Foundation (IFTF) helps ensure the ongoing maintenance, improvement, and preservation of the tools and services crucial to the creation and distribution of interactive fiction, as well as the development of new projects to foster the continued growth of this art form.

Interactive fiction was one of the first genres to emerge in computer gaming. It remains a driving force and a leading edge for the broad, ever-developing spectrum of digital games. Today, interactive fiction presents a medium uniquely suited to experimenters and artists. IF can be written without a budget, without a publisher, without a team of artists or programmers. Since the 1990s it has been supported entirely by hobbyists, open-source projects, and informal associations of enthusiasts.

It is the purpose of IFTF to offer organized support to these many passion-driven projects, helping to ensure the survival and growth of interactive fiction while maintaining the unique advantages of this medium.

## Scope of Work

IFTF has divided work into three main milestones. Your proposal should include an estimated length of time that each milestone would take to complete.

### Milestone 1: Initial Setup

- Provision a new web site using the existing open-source Philomela code (<https://github.com/colinmarc/philome.la>) and IFTF resources. Relevant IFTF resources:
  - Hover for domain registration
  - Linode for dedicated virtual servers
  - Amazon Web Services
- Set up downtime monitoring on the site following industry best practices.
- Respond to downtime incidents in a timely fashion. Your proposal should include a service-level agreement to a response time.

### Milestone 2: Code Review

- Review the Philomela code for possible improvements. Considerations include in rough order of priority:

- Security
- Stability
- Expanded functionality
- Code quality
- Develop a list of potential development goals and tasks.
- Come to agreement with IFTF on development priorities on the list developed.
- Continue to monitor and respond to incidents on the site created in milestone 1, at the SLA previously agreement

#### Milestone 3: Implement Improvements

- Implement the development tasks agreed upon in milestone 2.
- Continue to monitor and respond to incidents on the site created in milestone 1, at the SLA previously agreement.

IFTF's intent is that after milestone 3 is completed, it would continue to retain the services of the vendor selected. The initial contract would be for a 12-month term, with an option to extend to an additional year or more at the end of that term.

## Budget

IFTF plans to fundraise to support this contractual position, and as a result, the intent of this RFP is to both select a developer/administrator and determine fundraising needs.

IFTF will pay all necessary overhead costs for this project, including domain registration and web site hosting, to the relevant companies directly. Vendors should exclude these costs from their proposal.

## Submission Requirements

Proposals should include:

- A description of the vendor's previous experience with Ruby on Rails, Go, AWS, and other technologies used by Philome.la. Experience with all of these technologies is not a minimum requirement.
- Description and URLs of related previous projects that the vendor has worked on.
- A budget outlining total cost per month. This cost may vary per milestone (e.g. initial setup as opposed to ongoing review and maintenance).
- A proposed timeline for delivery of the three milestones outlined above.
- At least two client references.

Proposals should formatted as a single PDF document.

## Evaluation and Selection Process

All submissions must be made by midnight, July 15, 2020, US Eastern Time by email at [info@iftechfoundation.org](mailto:info@iftechfoundation.org). Proposals will not be accepted through any other means. The IFTF Twine committee, in coordination with the board of directors, will determine whether proposals submitted meet the criteria articulated above and which vendor is best-positioned to deliver on the milestones listed above. Vendors will be notified of IFTF's decision by August 3, 2020.

Execution of a contract and is contingent on IFTF's ability to raise sufficient funds for this project.

## Contact Information

Inquiries can be made at [info@iftechfoundation.org](mailto:info@iftechfoundation.org).