

proto labs®

# Journal

2011 ISSUE 1

ANNOUNCING THE PROTO LABS

proto labs®

# Cool Idea!™

A W A R D

page 4

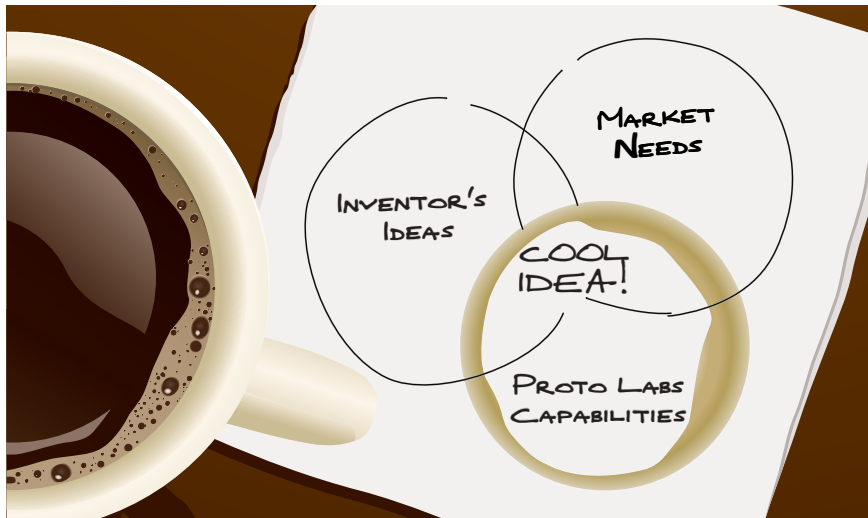


COOL STUFF  
page 3

PROTOCOLTURE  
page 6

HOT SHOP  
page 7

# → WHAT'S UP?



Hi everyone. I've taken over Brad's column for this issue because I want to put in a word for a new program we're launching here at Proto Labs that has us all excited—especially me because it goes to the heart of what Proto Labs has always been about.

The deal is, we're starting an awards program called the Proto Labs Cool Idea!™ Award. It's different from the usual product design contest, in that while we want to recognize and reward innovative thinking, we don't want to wait until after the product is already on store shelves. We want to provide our support at the time when it really makes a difference—when it's still an idea.

In our business we get to see a lot of cool ideas become successful products. It's exciting to play a role in that process by helping designers move their ideas from concept to market as quickly and efficiently as possible. But as inexpensive as our services are in the scheme of things, making that investment can still be tough for somebody with a big idea and little cash.

Thus our cool idea—to give designers a financial boost in the form of parts from our Firstcut and Protomold services, so they can make their ideas a reality, and make all our lives easier, or healthier, or smarter, more fun—whatever the case may be.

Helping people bring ideas to market fast (starting with my own—you can read the story at [www.protomold.com/Company.aspx](http://www.protomold.com/Company.aspx)) is what Proto Labs has been all about right from the start. Now, helping get their cool ideas off the ground is the perfect way to step it up. Real parts, really fast, for really great ideas. Now that's cool.

Larry Lukis  
Proto Labs Founder and CTO



## HOW ARE WE DOING?

“Out of the 16 parts that I had Firstcut make, there were no dimensions out of tolerance. This was our first time using Firstcut, but we will be utilizing your service more in the near future.”

— Lee Carlson, Honeybee Robotics

“I am very pleased with the finished part. It looks great!”

— Eric Grant, EG Turnings

“Both the Firstcut prototypes and the Protomold parts were first class quality. You folks do an amazing job!”

— Mike Johnson, JCReminders, Inc

“Don't know how you do what you do in the time you do it, but keep it up! Very good working with you. It is encouraging to see an American company provide such an innovative service.”

— Kevin Kezar, KMC Controls

“Firstcut and Protomold have always provided me with great service and parts. They are a great asset to my company, and a privilege to work with. I would highly recommend!”

— Mike Willis, Archers Xtreme Products

“Your Firstcut service has worked well for both the prototype and small number of production parts we need.”

— John Humpherys, DuPont

We would love to hear from you! Send your comments to us at [news@protolabs.com](mailto:news@protolabs.com).



### Cool Stuff: Piranha X Paddle

There you are in your kayak, paddling stealthily through shallow backwaters thick with mangroves, when you spot your prey—a handsome specimen of the rare Dusky Gopher Frog! You plunk down your paddle, then grab for your camera...and before you can snap your shot the kayak drifts away from the frog and toward a fallen tree. Down goes the camera, splat goes your paddle in the water as you attempt to clear the tangle of branches, and away jumps the frog. Who knows when you'll see one again? Drat! For kayakers who fish, hunt, take pictures, or otherwise ply skinny (a.k.a. shallow) waterways, the Piranha X hand paddle is a real day-saver. Designed by retired Navy officer, survival instructor and eco tour guide Ed Hahn (and prototyped at Firstcut!) the Piranha lets you guide your craft with one hand while you hold your fishing rod, camera or gun with the other. Its patented hook-and-tooth design allows deft navigation around obstacles and lets you keep your kayak on course while you stalk your prey. Who says multitasking isn't productive?

[www.backwaterpaddles.com](http://www.backwaterpaddles.com)

### Broadway Live TV Streamer

Don't you just hate it when you've slogged through a long day's work, and all you want to do is kick back with a 4-cheese pizza and this week's episode of Ice Road Truckers—but you can't because you happen to be on the other side of the world? Well the enterprising folks at Hauppauge have come to our rescue, with their new Broadway live TV streamer. The Broadway lets you watch live TV on your Apple device anywhere there's internet. The standalone box connects to your home network router and transmits the TV signal over the internet to your iPhone, iPod touch, or iPad. It works with pretty much any standard router. Plus it's low power so it is always ready to deliver a quality TV experience to your couch—wherever on earth that may be.

[www.hauppauge.com](http://www.hauppauge.com)



### NoteSlate

Just when you thought you had seen it all with capabilities-loaded, app'd up tablet devices, along comes one that jumps out from the crowd because it's so...simple. As its makers are quick to point out, you CAN'T browse the web, read newspapers, play games, watch movies, or update your Facebook profile on the NoteSlate. What you CAN do is write, draw, doodle, make notes, write novels longhand and so forth, with a pen and eraser, on its appealingly paper-like surface. Just like an old-school tablet, only you never run out of paper. On the plus side, it's fun to use, saves trees, and the batteries go 180 hours on a charge. On the downside, you can't turn your doodles into paper airplanes or put them up on the fridge. But at \$99, who's complaining?

[www.noteslate.com](http://www.noteslate.com)



# Announcing... the Proto Labs Cool Idea!™ Award

Speed is our thing here at Proto Labs, as you've probably heard us say now and then. We like fast. We know how critical speed is for your success, and we will always make it our business to be the fastest in the world at what we do.

But we do occasionally take a moment for introspection, and recently we got to thinking about what really drives our enterprise.

What quickly became clear is that the reason we're in business is **ideas**. We're here to help make ideas come to life, in the form of smart, enjoyable, problem-solving, life-improving and of course, brilliantly successful products. If speed is the engine of our industry, ideas are the fuel. But too often great ideas stay just that, ideas, because people don't have the resources to develop them.

So we decided to do something about that.

## \$100K in 2011 to Get Cool Ideas Off the Ground

The Proto Labs **Cool Idea!** Award is all about nurturing promising ideas while they're still ideas.

In 2011 we will award up to \$100,000 in Firstcut CNC machining services and/or Protomold injection molding services to people who have a cool idea for a product and submit 3D CAD models of their parts. One or more awards may be granted each quarter with the aggregate of all awards not to exceed \$100,000.

Winners can use their functional Firstcut and Protomold parts for prototyping, testing, or even an initial production run. In short, helping move a project from pie-in-the-sky to product on the shelf.

And that's our goal. What we want to do is recognize innovative thinking at a point where we can help convert those ideas into real-life coolness.

### WHAT:

Proto Labs' new program to award innovative thinking and help great ideas off the ground.

### PRIZES:

\$100,000 worth of real, functioning parts from our Firstcut and/or Protomold services will be awarded in 2011, for use in prototyping, testing or production. One or more prizes may be awarded per quarter.

### ENTRY CRITERIA:

Cool idea in 3D CAD form, at a product stage where parts can be made within 90 days, from designers who have a cool idea for a project and would benefit from funding support.

### JUDGING:

Based on originality, feasibility, potential benefit to end users and innate coolness.

proto labs  
**Cool Idea!**  
AWARD

# Questions and Answers

**Q: How is this different from other design contests out there?**

**A:** First of all, we think of the Cool Idea! Award as a program to encourage innovation, rather than a contest. We're not here to give the thumbs-up or down, but to fuel creative thinking and prime the pump for designers in need. Second, there are already a lot of opportunities to win awards for products that are already in production and on the market. The Cool Idea! Award comes in much further upstream, at the design and development stage, when innovators are too often stymied by lack of resources to turn their ideas into real products.

**Q: What kinds of projects are eligible?**

**A:** Anything that would make life a little better, easier, safer, richer, healthier, less frustrating, more fun—if it's cool and it involves parts that Proto Labs can make, it's fair

game. Projects should be in the design/prototyping stage, at a point where they can be finalized within 90 days from the date of Cool Idea! approval. Projects from government contracts or Proto Labs employees and their families are not eligible.

**Q: How do I enter?**

**A:** Go to [www.protolabs.com/cool-idea](http://www.protolabs.com/cool-idea), download and complete the application form, and email it to [coolidea@protolabs.com](mailto:coolidea@protolabs.com). You'll be asked to describe your project or product, tell us why it's cool and how it will benefit the end user, and describe the type of assistance you need (type of parts, quantity, timeline etc.). After you send in your application, you upload your 3D CAD model to us by using the **Upload a Part** link. If your project is chosen for the award you'll need to use it within 90 days, so you should be at a stage where you can begin executing right away.

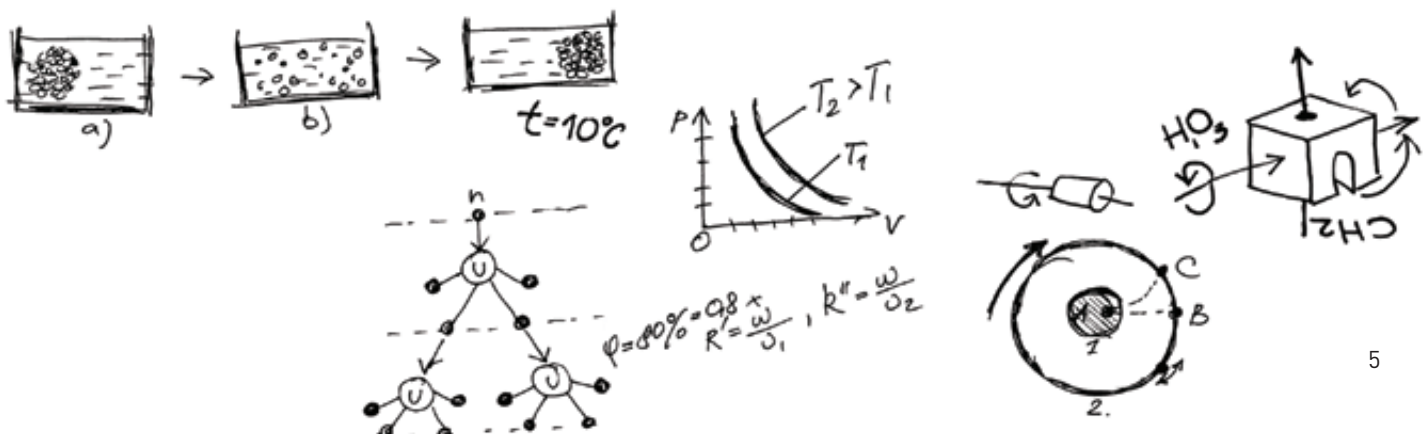
**Q: Can I enter more than one project?**

**A:** Yes. You can enter multiple times, but each entry needs to be a different cool idea. You can't submit the same idea or project more than once.

**Q: Will Proto Labs assume an ownership interest in my project?**

**A:** No. Your project is your property. If you win an award we will ask you to agree to let us feature it in print, press releases, case studies and so forth.

The "Cool Idea! Award Program" is subject in all respects to the complete Official Terms and Conditions available at [www.protolabs.com/cool-idea](http://www.protolabs.com/cool-idea) at the Program section of the website or by sending a S.A.S.E. to "Cool Idea! Award Program—Terms Request," c/o Proto Labs, Inc., 5540 Pioneer Creek Drive, Maple Plain, Minnesota 55359. Open only to applicants who, if an individual are permanent legal residents of the 50 U.S.A. or D.C., and at least 21 years old, and, if an entity, must be a legal entity that is organized under the laws of the 50 U.S.A. or D.C., and the individual registering the entity as an applicant must be a permanent legal resident of the 50 U.S.A. or D.C., and at least 21 years old, and authorized to register the entity in the Program. The Program is void outside the 50 U.S.A. and D.C.; and where prohibited or restricted by law. Program application period begins at 12:01 a.m. CT on April 6, 2011 and ends at 11:59 p.m. CT on December 31, 2011. LIMIT: Up to four (4) idea submissions per applicant, provided each idea submission is significantly different. Application and submission method, limits, restrictions and instructions, and award information, requirements and restrictions are set forth in the Official Terms and Conditions. Administrator: Proto Labs, Inc., 5540 Pioneer Creek Drive, Maple Plain, Minnesota 55359.



# Globo-Proto-Mojo

**From the UK and Japan, our men Dave and Kris report on talking elevators, English English, and life in the office overseas.**

Proto Labs may be rooted in the American Midwest, but with facilities in Europe and Asia, and customers worldwide, we've got cultural feelers all over the place. Take IT Specialist Kris Marose and Senior Software Developer Dave Rand. Kris works on network and database admin, software development, and pretty much everything IT-related for our offices in Japan. Dave writes software for public and internal websites, database applications and other services in the UK. But beyond business efficiency, customer satisfaction, and supporting Real Parts Really Fast on a global basis, Kris and Dave also give those of us back in the States a look at what it's like to live and work in another culture.



Dave Rand, Senior Software Developer

**The biggest difference between working where you are and working in the US is...**

**KM:** The US gets very quiet after 4 or 5 o'clock. Japan, on the other hand, regularly works much later hours.

**DR:** People take turns making tea and coffee for the group all day. I'm usually the first to start the kettle, wash mugs and prepare drinks for people in the office. Someone else does the same around 9:30 a.m., and so on throughout the day. It's quite nice, really...

**Your most embarrassing cultural faux pas?**

**DR:** When I took my car in for service, I asked the young man at the dealership if I could get a ride to work. I should have asked for a lift, as a "ride" means something completely different in England!

**KM:** I struggle with the Japanese idea of restraint and politely declining offers. For instance, when eating with a group at a restaurant, you shouldn't hog too many of the snacks that come out, especially the last piece. Even if you are offered the last piece by others, you always decline, often resulting in the last piece being left behind. My faux pas was that when I was offered something I would quickly say "oh hey, thanks!"

**Dave, how's it going with the British English?**

**DR:** I really love the different accents. Daily, I interact with "Brummie" (Birmingham), Manchester, Welshpool, Liverpool, Scottish and Northern Irish accents. "I really loike it eya." (That's Brummie.)

**Kris, what cool gadgets do you see in Japan that we don't have in the US?**

**KM:** The escalators and elevators talk, telling you to hold the rail or apologizing if the elevator is crowded.



Kris Marose, IT Specialist

**If we stepped inside your home, what would tell us we're no longer in America?**

**KM:** The bathroom is split into three areas. The toilet is in its own small room. The sink and washing machine are in another room. And adjacent to that room is the bathtub/shower, with the tub itself rather deep, like a one-person Jacuzzi. I have a remote that will fill my bathtub up to a set level at a set temperature.

**DR:** The bed sizes are different. A king-sized mattress is roughly the same as a US queen, a queen here is like a US double and so on. This sort of reaffirms the stereotype that everything is bigger in America!

**Any interesting overseas habit that you have brought back to the US?**

**DR:** When I return to the US I need to remind myself ALOUD that I should drive on the right. I usually make a couple driving mistakes the first day back in either county.

**KM:** I'm finding that I have been obligatorily apologizing to American co-workers in my emails, especially when making requests. Also I have gained the habit of slurping my ramen noodles, which has led to a few embarrassing faux pas moments back in the US. They don't taste as good without slurping anymore!

# HOT SHOP



Interview with Wayne Morris,  
Business Development

**Firm-at-a-Glance:**

Product development company providing turnkey concept-through-manufacturing service for clients anywhere in the world.

**Projects Profile:**

Wildly diverse, from IVs to RVs.

**Zen:**

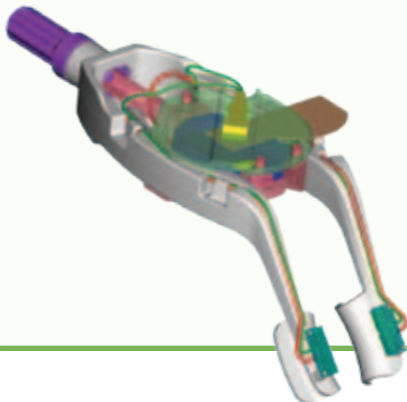
Old-school client service with cutting-edge capability.

**Why They're Hot:**

"Someone can just walk in the door saying 'I've got an idea' and we can run with it, start to finish—looking out for that client's interests all the way through."

**Dream Project:**

"We love challenges, and we're good with them. So we enjoy different and unusual things—for instance, marrying processes and materials that normally don't like each other very much, in order to achieve functional properties. That's fun. That's why we get out of bed in the morning."



**Rant:**

"When things are designed without understanding of tooling and manufacturing, you get potholes in the process and the product suffers. That's why we like to give clients the comfort of knowing someone is always looking out for them."

**Prototyping Philosophy:**

"In the world of prototyping there are all kinds of options and they all have their place. But somewhere along the line you need real plastic parts. This is a valuable service we can offer our clients—the touchy-feeliness, as we scientifically call it—of holding a part in your hand. That brings all kinds of insights to the surface that you can't get with computer renderings or other forms of prototypes."

**Why Proto Labs?**

"In our projects, speed and accuracy is huge. We can call Proto Labs and say we want parts by Thursday afternoon, and that's when we'll get them. Of course we have in-house machining capabilities, but we generally can't turn things around as fast as Proto Labs. And for short runs, we're not as cost-effective."

**Source One**  
41691 Corporate Center Ct.  
Murrieta, CA 92562  
Phone: 951.677.3002  
Fax: 951.677.3302  
Web: [www.source-one.net](http://www.source-one.net)



Vector CAD Services  
3D Modeling, Design,  
Drafting, & Prototyping

[VectorCadSvc.com](http://VectorCadSvc.com)

Ideas to  
3D Models  
to Parts

321-453-2971

Engineering Fast  
Collaborative Cost  
Time to Market  
User Interface  
Electromechanical Accurate  
Ideation  
Schedule  
DFMA  
Industrial Design  
Complex Mechanisms

Where is **your** pain point  
in product development?

 **DESIGN INTEGRITY**  
Innovations in Engineering and Design

[www.designintegrity.com](http://www.designintegrity.com)

**proto labs**<sup>®</sup>  
Real Parts. Really Fast.™

To recommend a  
design firm for our  
**HOT SHOP**  
feature, or to enter a  
lottery for a free ad,  
please contact us at  
[news@protolabs.com](mailto:news@protolabs.com)  
(attention: HotShop).



## USA

Proto Labs, Inc.  
5540 Pioneer Creek Dr.  
Maple Plain, MN 55359  
United States

877.479.3680 phone  
763.479.2679 fax  
info@protolabs.com  
www.protolabs.com



## EUROPE

Proto Labs, Ltd.  
Halesfield 8  
Telford  
Shropshire  
TF7 4QN United Kingdom

+44 (0) 1952 683047 phone  
+44 (0) 1952 683048 fax  
info@protolabs.co.uk  
www.protolabs.co.uk



## JAPAN

Proto Labs G.K.  
729 Nakano  
Ebina City, Kanagawa  
243-0425 Japan

+81 (0) 46-237-3951 phone  
+81 (0) 46-239-1932 fax  
info@protolabs.co.jp  
www.protolabs.co.jp

**firstcut®**  
CNC Machining Service

**protomold®**  
Injection Molding Service

## pl Join the discussion!

Email article ideas, cool projects or great design stories to the editor at [stacy.sullivan@protolabs.com](mailto:stacy.sullivan@protolabs.com).

# → THE SPEEDWAY

*A quick look at what's new from Proto Labs*

## RAPID GLOBAL GROWTH IS THE PROTO LABS WAY

Change continues to be the only constant at Proto Labs.

In response to a very strong increase in demand for our Firstcut and Protomold services, Proto Labs has made significant investments in each of our worldwide locations during the first quarter of 2011.

In Maple Plain, MN, the headquarters for our US operations, we've already added more than 50 employees across the organization, created another 40 openings and invested more than \$4 million in capital equipment, producing a combined estimated capacity increase of 20 percent for Firstcut and 40 percent for Protomold.

To support a similarly accelerated demand from our European customers, Proto Labs Limited of Telford, England, has recently completed the move into its new 136,000 square foot facility. It's also added six new employees, has 10 open positions and made an investment of more than \$1.2 million in capital equipment.

Not to be left behind, our Japan colleagues have recently taken delivery of \$400,000 worth of new equipment and increased their sales, customer service and manufacturing staff by seven colleagues.

All of this is on top of our sixth record quarter in a row. We're running as fast as we can, and appreciate the business and support of our customers during these busy times.

## NEW! TWO QUOTES IN ONE STEP

Not sure whether to use CNC machining or injection molding for a part? Now it's easy to compare costs with Proto Labs' new, improved two-in-one quotes. Just upload your 3D CAD model once, and you will get two separate quotes, including pricing, materials options, and if appropriate, suggested changes for improved manufacturability. Go to [www.firstcut.com](http://www.firstcut.com) or [www.protomold.com](http://www.protomold.com) today to give it a try.

## CATCH US AT THESE TRADESHOWS

### Mid-Atlantic Design-2-Part Show

April 13-14, 2011  
Greater Philadelphia Expo Center  
Phoenixille (Philadelphia), PA

### Nikkei Monozukuri Forum

May 16, 2011  
Meguro Gajoen  
Toyko, Japan

### RAPID 2011 Conference & Exposition

May 24-26, 2011  
Hyatt Regency Minneapolis  
Minneapolis, MN

### FIP

May 24-27, 2011  
Lyon Eurexpo  
Lyon, France

### M-Tech

June 22-24, 2011  
Tokyo Big Sight  
Tokyo, Japan

