

Jail Break is a university run competition where by students must travel as far from their university town as possible .There are two rules; no money is to be spent on transport and the furthest away in 36 hours wins. Myself and another student undertook such a race from Bristol in 2006 and 36 hours later found ourselves in Poznan, Poland, over 1000 km away. The entire trip was based on the generosity of strangers and their help in the form of transport and accommodation allowed us to raise hundreds of pounds from our sponsors back in England.

After the success of this trip myself – Tim Kevil – Peter Stephens began to develop the idea. Our vision was of another jail break , with the same rules, but on a bigger scale. On the 26th of August 2008 myself and Pete accompanied by two other competitors and a precious few well wishers set foot in Ezeiza Ministro Pistarini International Airport. On the 1st of August, we set off. Our destination was New York city, USA. There was our finish line, and our flight home!

This time our limitations where not just time but language as well. Our collective Spanish was poor at best and the first task was commutation. Speaking to everybody at the truck stops and service stations we put huge efforts into even the most basic of requests. The second challenge was communication to our sponsors and each other. That is where the Jailbreak–Pan–America website came in. Websys had a few months before set up this forum for us to keep in touch with whoever would listen and each other with very little cost to us.

Although the actual writing of blogs was very time consuming whenever we stopped we made efforts to update the online diary as much as possible. This however became increasingly hard as time constraints in our race to New York became ever more pressing. Because of this Websys set up a twitter facility. This enabled us to give quick and up to date reports on the status of the race. This reassurance all of our well wishers (and parents) that all was well. Everything was still to play for.

Passing through Mexico we of course met Martin, Websys C.E.O. and friend, again. There as much as anywhere the people we welcoming and I believe the most supportive of any on our travels. The rest of the race was surprisingly quick. We managed to find a long distance lorry driver who took us most of the way across the US. We entered New York on 6th September 2008. This act secured £2000 in sponsorship.

The whole journey inspired me that people really will help if they are asked. But more than that it is not just finding the will but also the way. At time our progress was slowed but those desperate to help but perhaps without the capacity to. With Websys however I believe that the ability to quickly, efficiently and effectively build a website was a major factor in our ability to secure sponsorship. It gave our challenge an authority it previously had lacked. In addition it is incredibly easy t use and our early updates where conducted quickly and with little fuss. The only constriction was the time to write the updates. Using the Jailbreak–Pan–America website became as simple as using a phone and the whole adventure was made easier because of it.