

**USENIX Association
Board of Directors Meeting
April 24, 2009
Boston Park Plaza Hotel
Boston, MA
Minutes**

Attendance:

Board:

Clem Cole, Chairman
Margo Seltzer
Brian Noble
Matt Blaze
Alva Couch (by phone)
Niels Provos (by phone)
Remy Evard (joined meeting 12:09 p.m.)
Jerry Carter (absent)

Staff:

Ellie Young
Anne Dickison
Jane-Ellen Long
Devon Shaw (joined 1:35 p.m.)
Tony Del Porto (joined 1:35 p.m.)
Dan Klein (briefly by phone)
Toni Veglia (by phone)

Guests:

Glenn Samson, USENIX Financial Advisor (by phone)

The meeting begins at 9:15 a.m.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting. It was moved by Seltzer and seconded by Noble that the Board approve the minutes of the November '08 meeting. Passed: 7 in favor; 2 absent (Carter, Evard).

Action Items. Everyone went over his or her items. Most were ongoing, completed, or will be covered in the agenda.

Awards Committee Report. The Flame and STUG award recipients have been chosen. It was suggested that procedures be updated so that people who were nominated over three years ago be put back into the list for consideration.

Executive Office Report. Young discussed future meeting planning and strategies for getting good contracts with hotels in the current environment, with an eye to booking

mostly to the East and West Coasts. She reported that having events in Boston generated a lot of positive feedback, and that OSDI 2010 would be held in Vancouver.

Samson joins the meeting via phone, 9:58 a.m.

40th Anniversary of UNIX. Young reported that Ken Thompson would prefer to participate in an award for something modern that captures the spirit and quality of UNIX, e.g., elegance, simplicity, modularity and availability. The awards committee should consider this.

Report on USENIX Endowment Portfolio. Samson reported that the USENIX portfolio was down 12% in 2008, while most other endowments were down an average of 34%. He noted that in 2009 the portfolio is up 0.5% following six weeks of positive returns, and that our money managers were moving about 5% of funds into corporate bonds with 4-5 year maturities. With 45% of the USENIX investments in 2% yield bonds; the long-term goal of a 6% yield is difficult. Samson noted that this was not a good time to consider rebalancing portfolio because there is not a lot of clarity in the market. Samson said that the three money managers have been very proactive and attentive. Cole thanked Samson for his efforts.

Samson leaves the meeting at 10:14 a.m.

Executive Office Report (continued). Currently, USENIX has been offering conference attendees a choice between paper and a CD-ROM of the proceedings. Young reported that the staff was looking at eliminating the printed proceedings choice. This has been met with varying responses from the different conference communities. Young said that the Annual Tech proceedings would be on a USB drive.

Seltzer noted that the proceedings must be made available in such a way that Google Scholar and CiteSeer can access the individual papers. Young and Long will look into making arrangements with libraries for backups.

Young noted that she had been working on creating a policy concerning the retention of electronic communications. Also, there would no longer be a “best student paper” award, as most conferences choose to present two “best paper awards” instead.

Young reported that staff has approached Linux Pro Media about possibly doing a partnership about marketing and distributing; *login.*, in hopes of reaching more people. She noted that *Linux Pro Magazine* like *login.*, does not depend on advertising revenue. Cole expressed interest in seeing a written proposal in order to see how both parties would benefit from collaboration.

Klein joins and exits meeting (via phone) 10:49 and 10:50 a.m.

Marketing Report. Dickison described how she promotes USENIX events by using exchange partners’ mailing lists, sending electronic announcements, making “help

promote” buttons available, offering many types of conference discounts, and establishing a USENIX presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. She noted that SAGE booklets are now available on Safari Books Online. Membership numbers are going down a lot for SAGE-only but are only slight down for the rest of the membership.

Dickison said she hoped that getting our web site more interactive may draw people, but the question is what is a members-only benefit and how to draw the <30 crowd. Some felt the >30 crowd might contribute if we had a funding drive that stresses the positive things that USENIX’s openness does for the systems community. It was also suggested that we might create a members-group for students, across departments.

Seltzer also proposed that USENIX offer a reward for writing a new application to help Facebook groups switch to the upcoming new Facebook group format.

Klein joins the meeting by phone at 11:29 a.m.

Education Director’s Report. Klein reported that he is discussing the possibilities for doing something with CompTIA with regard to training and certification.

Seltzer suggested that USENIX market the tutorials directly to the academic community.

Klein leaves the meeting at 11:49 a.m.

Audit Committee Report. Noble and Young reported on the audit committee meeting of March 12, and said that the results of the 2008 audit would be available in the end of May.

Revised 2009 Budget. Young went over her report, and the reasons for the projected \$500K deficit, and funds will need to be withdrawn from the Reserve Fund to cover this. She said that the current economic situation is providing an opportunity to improve our operations. The 2009 budget revisions to the original draft budget reflected decreased conference attendance and much lower gains on our investments. Seltzer expressed thanks to the staff for working “smart & hard”.

Young reported that FAST wasn’t much affected by the economy, and NSDI did very well. Seltzer noted that USENIX’s previous “investment” in the academic community has resulted in high participation from this community.

Seltzer moved and Noble seconded to approve the 2009 revised budget. Passed: 6 in favor, 2 absent (Carter, Evard).

Break 11:59-12:09 p.m.

Evard joins the meeting at 12:09 p.m.

Conference Report. Young went over her report. The Board asked if the question to ask when evaluating a workshop might be “what is a success” rather than “what is a failure”. The staff will come up with some guidelines so that the USENIX board liaison,

staff, and program chairs will have a crisper definition. It was also suggested that each workshop have a steering committee.

Seltzer leaves at 12:27 p.m.

*12:27 p.m. – 1:35 p.m. - break for lunch.
Shaw and Del Porto join the meeting*

Young reported that HotPar went extremely well, with most attendees giving it very high marks. Dave Patterson who will co-chair in 2010 wants to hold this event on the UC Berkeley campus. Young reported that NSDI had its highest ever attendance. There was discussion of how program committees should deal with conflict of interest issues.

Seltzer returns 1:58 p.m.

Seltzer reported that FAST'09 went well, and that the CFP for '10 should be out soon. TaPP'09 attendees were pleased with the first ever event. Young reported that HotOS'09 is on track. The USENIX Annual Tech and Security programs looked strong. Young had approached Zadok and Miller about organizing a “green IT” workshop. Couch asked to be put in touch with them. Blaze reported that there is some slow movement towards a Software Defined Radio event, as it appears there is growing interest in this topic from the CS community.

Break 2:41 p.m. – 2:55 p.m.

Proposal on Reworking USENIX Office Systems. Evard explained that the staff aimed to revamp current processes, so they do not require special expertise, and to update the website to offer interactivity and new services. Currently, the database has migrated to MySQL, but with no front-end tools, services are still provided from Sybase. There is a collection of web servers, serving many purposes. The staff would like a new, integrated system.

Long reported that the backend and frontend were now tightly coupled, with the frontend services interacting with the database. Seltzer questioned whether the systems could move towards less integration. Cole proposed that the project could be done in increments. It was suggested that the USENIX community might be able to provide useful input on this project.

Cole said the question was what are critical pieces that hold other things up, and how do those become stable and known to work. Long said that we may need to modify how we do things to match the tools available “out there”. Seltzer noted that even though we are starting with a legacy system, some current functions might be able to work with new solutions.

The Board suggested that the “chunks” of the project should be prioritized. There was a question about whether to develop incrementally, or work towards a total switchover.

The Board seemed to feel that a total switchover to a new system would be very risky and prone to failure.

Evard said that it would be important to add a section to the RFP describing the priorities clearly, to distinguish between existing functionality to fix now vs. completely new features/capabilities desired. It was agreed that the staff would circulate the revised plan to the Board for commentary. The staff should also refine the RFP with:

- Priorities as noted above
- Desired architecture if there is one, i.e., database as a separate thing
- Desired technology methodology i.e., use existing platforms rather than new code, buy/configure vs. build.
- Recommended conversion approach – one part at a time, or drop in the new system overnight?

It was also suggested that an overview/introduction be circulated to people in the USENIX community to get feedback on the approach. Evard said he would send his suggestions to Young on his take on the “capabilities” of the system, which might be a better way to organize the RFP and refine priorities.

It was moved by Blaze, seconded by Evard to say thanks for what has been done thus far and to direct the staff to continue along the lines indicated by the current discussion. Passed: 7 in favor; 1 absent (Carter).

Cole said that there was good thinking in the RFP, and that we should “make haste slowly”, as there will no doubt be false starts and some frustration with getting this type of project going.

Break at 4:00 p.m.

Executive Session. The Board moved into Executive Session from 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Next Meeting. It was decided that it would be on August 11, 2009, in Montreal.

It was moved by Noble, seconded by Cole to adjourn the meeting. Passed: 7 in favor, 1 absent (Carter)

The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Actions Taken by the Board from April 25 – July 21, 2009:

It was agreed to schedule the Annual Meeting during the week of the USENIX Security Symposium in August 2009.

It was agreed to accept the proposal to co-locate IPTPS with NSDI in 2010.

The recommended language for revising the confidentiality portion of the instructions that the program chairs send to PC members was approved.

The revised description of role of the USENIX Board liaison to USENIX conferences was accepted.

**On July 14, 2009, it was moved by Blaze, seconded by Evard to allow an additional \$40,000 expenditure in the budget for the Student Stipend Program this year.
Passed: 8 in favor.**

Secretary

Date