USENIX Association
Board of Directors Meeting
June 18, 2007
Santa Clara, CA

Attendance:
Board:
Mike Jones, Chairman
Ted Ts'o
Niels Provos
Margo Seltzer
Alva Couch (by phone)

Staff:
Ellie Young
Anne Dickison
Jane-Ellen Long
Toni Veglia

Guests:
Nick Stoughton

The meeting was convened at 4:15 p.m. and all the above were present.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Cole noted that Seltzer's departure from the previous meeting during Executive Session was not noted in the minutes. **Seltzer moved and was seconded by Provos to approve the minutes of the December 2006 meeting with one change noted.**
Passed: 5 in favor, 3 absent (Cole, Blaze, Evard)

Changes to the Agenda

Jones asked to have a verbal overview of the membership and student reports from the consent agenda after the Executive Office report. It was decided to finish the action item reports for those members not in attendance during Tuesday's meeting.

Action Item List

People reported on the status of their action items and most were covered in the agenda, except the following:

Couch reported that he had attended the VEE conference and it went well. CHMIT had 40+ attendees and was well-received. He had nothing to report on LOPSA.

Jones reported that CRA is making progress with the Image of Computing Task Force.

Report on Standards Activities

Stoughton reported that per the Board's request, he attended the April C++ Standards meeting. The C++ Standard is now undergoing revision by a working group that seems to be willing to consider implementation of a wide range of concepts in a short period of time, including "experimental" changes. He said that this deviates from the practice of other working groups, such as those working on C and POSIX revisions, which are very selective about what proposals they will consider. Stoughton was concerned about the C++ Standard being destabilized by the approach, and by the lack of liaison with POSIX. He would like to be a voice in that working group to promote stability, and to advance their ideas on concurrency in conjunction with the POSIX WG.

The IEEE has started a study group on POSIX bindings to C++, and Stoughton feels that USENIX has a vital role to play in liaising between the three groups. Stoughton said it would cost an additional $17,610 for him to participate in the C++ meetings in 2007.

Couch said he didn't have high hopes because of the politics, and was concerned that people in the C++ group were working with difficult semantic issues that they didn't fully understand. He hoped that Stoughton could build a coalition of OS experts to participate with this work.

Ts'o moved and was seconded by Provos to add to this year's budget the $17,610 requested by Nick Stoughton for Standards activities.
Passed: 5 in favor, 3 absent (Cole, Blaze, Evard)

SANS Training Venture

Klein reported that the plan to work with SANS to hold tutorials at each other's events had included sharing the promotion of each other's events equitably. The SANS marketing effort of our tutorials has been abysmal so far. Klein said that the director of SANS wants to fix the problems and suggests that USENIX make another attempt.

It was noted that our classes are not GIAC certified, and that many government employees take these classes per DOD job requirements and to get on a higher pay scale. It was suggested that Mason might be able to get information from the DOD about their requirements so we could teach courses with that in mind.

Couch said that SANS is aggressive in their marketing, sending targeted letters about the event from instructors, and perhaps we should consider doing the same.

Marketing Director's Report

LISA'06 - Dickison reported on the attendee feedback survey results. Some findings were that fewer attendees are calling themselves "system administrators", there were

more attendees from government and slightly fewer from larger companies, and 47% of the attendees were new to LISA.

FAST'07 - Attendance was up 20%, and one half of the attendees were from the greater SF Bay Area. There was good press coverage of the papers, the training was a success, and the attendees were very satisfied.

NSDI'07- Attendance was up by 9%, and about 22% were local to the Boston/Cambridge NSDI and the HotBots workshop received press coverage as well.

ATC'07- The budget for marketing was increased, and hence more effort, mailing pieces and outreach to local groups ensued. The response to all of these efforts was unexpectedly low, except for interest from the press. Dickison noted that exchanging lists with Dr. Dobbs was getting more difficult. Seltzer proposed that we talk to them about getting some of our best papers published in their journal, as this could help with promotion of USENIX.

"USENIX on the Road" - Dickison reported that the new partnership with Cambridge Computers, where Jacob Farmer teaches one-day free classes of USENIX-type course material, was working well.

 USENIX is partnering with Penton Media to cross promote our events. The possibility of co-locating one of their Fall Roadshows with LISA is being considered. They provide training on topics such as managing cross platform environments and other LINUX/Windows issues. Ts'o said that this sounded like a good idea for LISA.

Member Survey – Dickison noted that it had been six years since the last one, and she will be submitting a proposal to do another one in the Fall.

Campus Rep Program - Dickison wants to do a push to get more reps, especially getting more faculty to participate. She will present a report on the program at the next Board meeting.

Proposals for Funding/Sponsorship

EuroBSDCon.   Provos said that there would be about 150 attendees at this event. In exchange for sponsorship, USENIX would be acknowledged as a sponsor and our materials could be distributed at the event.

Provos moved and was seconded by Ts'o that USENIX support EuroBSDCon with a $5,000 sponsorship. Passed: 5 in favor, 3 absent (Cole, Blaze, Evard)

Grace Hopper Conference. Young stated that last year USENIX sponsored this event at the $10,000 level. There seems to be a lot of corporate sponsorship for this event, and this year our support was not actively sought. Dickison and Young felt that we didn't get

much benefit in return for our sponsorship. The Board did not express interest in sponsoring in 2007.

Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing Conference 2007 - Seltzer spoke highly of Tapia's work to recruit and retain minority students in Computer Science at Rice University.

Seltzer moved and was seconded by Provos to spend $10,000 to sponsor the Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing Conference 2007. Passed: 5 in favor, 3 absent (Cole, Blaze, Evard)

Appointment of Nominating Committee Chair

Jones stated that per the Bylaws, the Board appoints a chair for the nominating committee for the Election of the USENIX Board of Directors. The chair may then form a committee, composed of participants who chose not to run for office in the coming term. A slate of candidates must be delivered in the end of November, and the election will take place February-March, with results announced in April. It was agreed that this topic would be further discussed at Tuesday's meeting.

Seltzer moved and was seconded by Provos to adjourn the meeting.
Passed: 5 in favor, 3 absent (Cole, Blaze, Evard)

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

June 19, 2007

The meeting resumed at 9:07 a.m.

Attendance:
Board:
Mike Jones, Chairman
Clem Cole
Ted Ts'o
Niels Provos
Matt Blaze
Margo Seltzer
Alva Couch (by phone)

Staff:
Young
Dickison
Long
Veglia
Klein (arrived at 9:22 a.m.)

Henderson (arrived 10:12 a.m.)

Guests:
Glenn Samson
Rik Farrow
Dan Appelman (arrived at 9:14 a.m.)

Report on USENIX Portfolio

Samson said that the portfolio performed well in 2006 with a 14.7% return. The investments are in approximately 45% fixed income and 55% equities. Samson noted that the three managers have remained the same over the years. He stated that USENIX's equity holdings tend to out-perform in down periods.

At close to mid-year, the USENIX portfolio is off to a good start, performing at a 5.2% increase, with equities up 7% and fixed interest up 2%. The dollar is weak, but there is a positive return on overseas investments.

Appelman joins 9:14 a.m.

Samson reported that at the Board's request, he investigated the issue of socially responsible investments. His findings were that contrary to current popular belief, over the past 10 years, socially irresponsible investments are underperforming, while socially responsible investments have had an equal or better performance.

Samson stated that the USENIX portfolio showed about an 8% investment in socially irresponsible companies. Samson noted that these investments were currently up 14%, so this would be an opportune time to liquidate them if the Board so chose.

Klein joins at 9:22 a.m.

Blaze asked Samson to define "socially irresponsible". Samson said that socially irresponsible investments are generally defined as companies that are   oil producing companies; involved with nuclear technology; sell weapons; promote gambling; sell liquor products. It was suggested that instead of the board specifying the timing for liquidation, that the money managers handle this at their own discretion.

After much discussion about the definition, the problems with trying to micro-manage in this area, and whether nuclear technology is irresponsible it was then **moved by Cole, seconded by Blaze that we instruct the portfolio manager to diversify USENIX away from any socially irresponsible companies in the USENIX portfolio using their normal strategy.**
Passed: 5 in favor, 2 against (Couch, Jones), 1 absent (Evard)

Action Items (continued)

Cole reported that the Middleware conference papers are currently in review, with more submissions on a wide range of topics

Nominating Committee (continued)

Jones reviewed what had been said on the previous day.   He agreed to find a candidate to recommend as Chair of the committee.

Samson exits at 9:57 a.m.

Break from 9:58 a.m. – 10:10 a.m.

Executive Session 10:10 a.m.(with full attendance)

Henderson joins at 10:12 a.m.

Executive Session ends 10:13 a.m.

Tutorial Coordinator's Report

Klein reported that attendance at the tutorials at USENIX Annual Tech was down by 30%.   Farrow said he thought that if people were funded for one event a year, they may not choose to go to a local. Seltzer wondered if there was a price sensitivity, and was there anything to learn from the success at FAST. Klein stated that FAST had a specific audience, and people attending tutorials were already coming to the conference. He felt that at events where the tutorial topics are aimed at a specific audience, we can expect to do better, and that it's hard to target the USENIX Annual Tech audience as they are generalists.

It was noted that at FAST, about half of all attendees found out about the event from colleagues. The board discussed ways to increase the word of mouth recommendations to engineers that our training can help them do their jobs. Provos suggested a Corporate Rep program. Ts'o proposed an Executive Sponsor program, where the sponsor could offer incentives within their organization for employees to submit papers, etc. An advisory board of company executives to tell us what training was needed was suggested. Dickison felt that getting business executives involved would be very expensive.

Young suggested that we re-evaluate online training, since perhaps our current conference model is becoming irrelevant. Appelman said that 45 minutes of concentrated updates could be an alternative to tutorials. Long said that the problem might be specific to just USENIX Annual Tech. Couch said that social networking at conferences was as important as the information in the classes. Seltzer suggested a frequent tutorial attendance program that encouraged people to come back. Klein relayed that when USENIX offered the online tutorials, people indicated interest for the offerings during testing, but once there was a charge for them, they didn't want to pay.

Ts'o left 10:45 a.m., returned 10:53 a.m.

Farrow suggested that instructors do short talks based on their courses that are presented online to generate interest in taking the full course, and maybe have a new type of "hit the ground running" track, like mini-tutorials on a focused issue. Jones suggested video clips, that might give people an idea of what instructors have to offer.

Jones said that USENIX should look at online training again, as things have changed since we last tried this. He delegated to Young, Dickison, and Klein the task of coming up with possibilities for online offerings.

Provos said that perhaps attendance at tutorials has fallen because our other small events siphon attendance away. Seltzer said that a theme for the conference was important. Provos suggested that we try to offer more tutorials at our smaller events, but it was pointed out that this has mostly not been successful because of the academic audience. Jones thanked Klein for his efforts. Klein said that there was no progress on certification, and that USENIX couldn't offer this on our own, and working with SANS is on hold.

Current Conference Program

FAST- Young reported that we have a proactive steering committee and that the conference saw a big jump in attendance. FAST is experimenting next year by moving to a 12 month timeframe, but there is concern that this could effect the number of submissions.

Linux Storage & Filesystems Workshop will co-locate with FAST again next year. It was felt that this workshop could grow another 10%.

NSDI - Seltzer reported that this year's event went well, and is well respected in the academic community.

Of the co-located workshops, HotBots received 32 submissions, with 11 accepted, and the event was a success. The NetDB workshop had few submissions and attendance. The SysML workshop was not highly attended but the chair felt the program was good. Young suggested that we carefully review and monitor the number of workshops attached to conferences as it has the potential for ramping up the staff's workload.

HotOS.– Young and Seltzer reported that it was successful, and the chair for the 2008 workshop hasn't been selected.

SRUTI - The program was late in coming, and attendance was about half of what it was the year before. However, those who are participating in the current one are extremely enthusiastic and want to repeat the event. Provos and Young would discuss the future with Bala and Bellovin.

Linux Kernel Developers Summit- Ts'o reported that the invitations are out, and the agenda will be finalized very late. He also said that many on the Kernel discussion list are not pleased with the OLS conference, and this may impact the decision on where to hold the summit next year.

USENIX Security - Provos reported that there were 187 submissions, and 23 papers were selected. Provos reported that the program committee meeting was challenging, and there were a number of multiple submission problem papers to deal with.

HotSec - Blaze said there were fewer submissions than last year, but they were strong.

EVoting - Couch reported that all was going smoothly. Ts'o suggested doing outreach to government professionals.

Metricon - Young reported that the program, chaired by Dan Geer, was up, and attendance was by-invitation only.

WORLDS - Seltzer said that the focus should shift towards actual technical problems in real, large distributed systems, as this hasn't really been addressed at the recent workshops. It was pointed out that people doing work in this area may not be able to talk about it publicly. Seltzer suggested that people could do invited talks. Seltzer said that WORLDS might be co-located with NSDI, as those attending that event had more connection to real world issues than the OSDI attendees did. Seltzer agreed to put together a Steering committee which would include big online service providers.

Future Workshop Ideas

It had been suggested that USENIX solicit requests for proposals for workshop topics from the community at large. Young stated that the most successful ideas come from USENIX's core community of Board members, program chairs, etc. Seltzer said that most proposals come from people who have participated in the past, possibly because the general membership doesn't know we want proposals. It was suggested that USENIX have a bullet on the home page describing how to submit a proposal, and that we try to promote this.

Multicore – Cole, Young, and Farrow have been talking to people about forming a steering committee. Cole asked for suggestions from the board. Couch is also talking to people attending the FCRC. He said that this topic was being aggressively pursued by other organizations. A collaborative approach between research and industry, the NSF, and CCC, was suggested. Jones and Cole would talk to Ed Lazowska. Two tracks were proposed, one on the research and software side, the other on designing better hardware. Cole said he would attempt to get the steering committee formed in the coming month.

GENI (Global Environment for Network Innovations) – Couch said that it would be good for USENIX to be involved with this. Seltzer said that when the award is announced, we should jump in and tell the winner that USENIX wants to help. (It was announced later

in the day that BBN was selected as the organization to manage the planning and design of the project. Seltzer and Young would get in touch with them.)

Provenance – Seltzer said that there are two Provenance communities. She will work on forming a steering committee to look into our possibly organizing an event that brings the two communities together.

HotBots/Worm – Provos is working on merging the two events and finding a new name for it.

Break for lunch 12:34 – 1:30 p.m.

All present except for Farrow (returns at 2:26)

Usable Security (USEC) – Young stated that the topic was timely, and that the organizers would like to hold it in early 2008.   USENIX would provide proceedings, web site, promotion, logistical support, and registration.   Blaze said he would be the board liaison with USEC.

Experimental CS – Couch said there were two different communities, the experimental community and the SIGMETRICS community, and the two didn't seem to combine well. It was suggested that the two communities needed their own venues. "Experimental Engineering" might be a direction, but some felt that this might not be something USENIX really wanted to do, especially since no one volunteered to run with this vision.

Open Fabrics Alliance – Cole has talked to their Board members to see if there was a way for the two groups to collaborate. Young stated that they were a 501(c)(6) organization. Appelman said it would be complicated to work with them due to restrictions. He said if USENIX came up with a plan, he could see if it could be accomplished. Everyone felt this was worth exploring, and Young and Cole will follow up on this.

IBM Research Award – Ts'o said that IBM was going to give away an Innovation Award, and there was as yet no place for the recipient to receive the award. He said that we might look into holding a "Real Time" event. Jones said it could be a small workshop open to all. Couch wanted to know if USENIX had an author base to support this. Young and Ts'o would discuss this further.

Break 2:47 – 2:59 p.m.

USENIX Annual Technical Conference

Young said that Annual Tech was a challenge to market because it lacked a focus/theme. She didn't have a definitive answer on why attendance was low, nor whether this conference is still viable.   If we do decide to change the format   for next year's event, we need to make changes with the hotel soon.

It was noted that the attendee surveys showed that 48% said that training was why they came to the conference, and that the Invited Talks were highly rated.   Ts'o wondered if the drop in attendance was due to the location, and urged that no big changes be made until the event was held next year in Boston. Blaze said that the USENIX constituency is served by the refereed papers presented.   Provos suggested that more information from attendees and members is needed to make an informed decision about changes.

Cole suggested that the training could be aimed more at system administrators, with a possible one day sysadmin invited talk track, followed by USENIX Annual Tech refereed papers conference. Couch said it could be two events sequentially located, and also suggested a "Hit the Ground Running" track, with 15 minute presentations. After more discussion, it was surmised that the sense of the board is to have a minimum of three days of tutorials and three days of technical sessions; that more work is needed to identify the audience for the tutorials, keeping in mind that more focus is better, but that sysadmin focused tutorials could take away from the LISA Conference.

Break at 4:24 p.m.
Fire alarm rang in hotel, meeting moved to outside
Meeting outside resumed at 4:49 p.m, with all present except for Couch on phone.

Revised 2007 Budget

Young reported that we approved a budget with a $300K deficit in operations, and that gains from the portfolio will most likely bring it to break even.   However, the lower attendance and attrition fees for USENIX Annual Tech will likely result in an additional $100-200K deficit, unless the stock market does extremely well this year.

Cole moved and was seconded by Ts'o to accept the revised budget plus the changes voted on at the meeting for Standards, and sponsorships for EuroBSDCon and the Tapia Conference.
Passed: 6 in favor, 2 absent (Couch, Evard)

Proposal to Raise Registration Fees

Young said that expenses would be higher for the upcoming LISA Conference, and that she favored regular, small increases in registration fees. She suggested that the tutorial fees for LISA be raised $10 per day, and they would then match those charge for USENIX Annual Tech.

Seltzer moved and was seconded by Blaze to increase the LISA tutorial fees $10 per day per Young's proposal.
Passed: 7 in favor, 1 absent (Evard)

Couch joins by telephone at 4:56 p.m.

Plagiarism Issue

It was noted that a paper submitted to the E-Voting Workshop contained text copied from another source. The author was a faculty member, and Couch felt that a letter should be written to the chair of that person's department. Jones said that it would then be up to the department to decide on what action would be taken. Provos advocated instituting a policy for dealing with this issue. Jones suggested that the policy should be to notify the next level of management of the facts of the plagiarism. Ts'o said that future Calls for Papers should state this policy, and we should publicize it in ;login:. Jones said Appelman should be consulted about the language of the policies.

Seltzer moved and was seconded by Blaze to authorize Couch to send a letter to the department chair of the person who submitted a paper with plagiarism to the E-Voting Workshop, telling the chair of the facts of the case.
Passed: 7 in favor, 1 absent (Evard)

Cole moved and was seconded by Seltzer that USENIX's official policy in cases of plagiarism would be to inform the next higher level at the person's workplace, at a minimum.
Passed: 7 in favor, 1 absent (Evard)

Awards Report

Cole reported that Guido van Rossum would receive the STUG award for his work on Python, and that Peter Honeyman would receive the Flame award for his work as a mentor.

Executive Office Report

Young reported that she and Long had been working on an agreement with ACM about online publication of proceedings from events done in-cooperation with ACM.

Young reported that it was getting harder to negotiate low prices for connectivity at conferences because hotels are now viewing this as a profit center.

Long reported that Farrow continued to bring in larger issues early and with more interesting content. The Board expressed its appreciation for Farrow's efforts.

Membership Report

Dickison reported that membership was holding steady since December, except for Corporate and Educational memberships, which were down. She thought that perhaps a Corporate Rep program could help.

Student Programs

Dickison reported that applications for student conference grants were down. Seltzer pointed out that some faculty members were happy to pay the student registration fee for their students, so this could affect applications. She waned to know what the student attendance was like.

Annual Meeting

Topics were discussed for the annual meeting to be held the next day. Topics might include our policy on plagiarism, future plans for Annual Tech, asking for new topics/ideas for conferences.

Next Meeting

It was decided to meet on either December 7th or 10th, and that the date would be finalized via email.

Blaze moved and was seconded by Cole to adjourn the meeting.
Passed: 7 in favor, 1 absent (Evard)

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Summary of Actions taken by the USENIX Board via email as follows:

It was decided via email to move the next meeting to November 5, 2007 in Boston area.

On September 26, 2007 it was moved by Seltzer, seconded by Couch that we support AsiaBSDCon to the tune of $5,000 for 2008.   Passed: All in favor.

It was agreed via email to change the time and venue for the Fall USENIX Board meeting to November 5, 2007 in Boston, MA.