USENIX Board of Directors Meeting
March 2, 2004
Woodfin Suite Hotel, Emeryville, CA
Draft Minutes

Attendance:

Board:

Kirk McKusick, Chairman
Lois Bennett
Tina Darmohray
Mike Jones
Jon "maddog" Hall
John Gilmore (joined at 11:30 a.m.)

Guests:

Dan Appelman (USENIX Attorney) (joined at 1:15 p.m.)
Clem Cole (Board candidate)
Alva Couch (Board candidate)
Geoff Halprin (SAGE Exec Committee, Board candidate) (joined at 9:10 a.m.)
Andrew Hume (former Board member)
John Nicholson (Board candidate)
Brian Noble (Board candidate)
Glenn Samson (USENIX Financial Advisor)
Ted Ts'o (Board candidate)

Staff:

Ellie Young
Cat Allman
Anne Dickison
Rob Kolstad
Jane-Ellen Long
Tara Mulligan
Toni Veglia

All of the above were present at the beginning of the meeting, except where noted. The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Bennett moved and was seconded by Jones to accept the minutes of the October 2003 meeting as amended. Passed: in favor: 5; absent: 3 (Gilmore, Honeyman, Rubin).

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Young requested that the NordU conference be added.

ACTION ITEMS

Darmohray reported on her action items, saying that the *;login:* editors are looking at ways to cut costs, and improve editorial coverage at our conferences.

Hall reported on his items, and added that he is the FSG (Free Standards Group) liaison, and that they have had two meetings this year, on which he will report on at the next Board meeting.

Young reported on behalf of Honeyman regarding his SANE '04 liaison duties, and stated that it is going well with a great program. Young said the remainder of Honeyman's items would be reported on in the conference reports.

Most of the remaining items would be discussed later in the agenda.

FINANCES

Report on Investment Portfolio

Samson reported on the USENIX reserve fund, saying that 60% of the fund is in blue chip dividend paying equities, and 40% is in fixed markets. He expects the fund to yield 6-7% in 2004. He said that the weak dollar overseas is stimulating the market, along with government and consumer spending. However, corporate spending and employment recovery remain slow. He suggested keeping the current investment balance, saying that blue chip companies have the most return with the least risk, and he predicts a 6-8% growth over time.

Young addressed the USENIX policy that states 5% of the 2-year quarterly moving average of the value of the Reserve Fund will be appropriated to the annual budget to be spent on good works and special projects, and that it wasn't needed in operations at this time. Samson mentioned that the funds could be left as they are and be accessed within 2-3 days. The Board agreed that the money be left in the endowment at this time.

2003 Year-End Report

Young reported that USENIX began 2003 with a projected deficit of $148,000 in operations. The deficit would have been a lot higher since we did not meet most of our conference attendance projections, plus we incurred $140,000 in meeting room penalty fees to the hotels. However, we were able to reduce membership, office, and good works expenses, while at the same time increasing revenue with sponsorships. She summarized her report by saying that after two years with large deficits in 2001 and 2002, USENIX managed to have a net in 2003 of $463K when gains and interest on the Reserve Fund were factored in.

2004 Revised Budget

McKusick explained that USENIX produces a first draft in the fall. We then make revisions, and approve it as a "working budget." He said that USENIX continues to budget conservatively.

Young reported that the previous three years budgets haven't been conservative enough. In 2004, she cautioned that we may be too optimistic again since it is impossible to predict with much accuracy what the revenue will be for the newly revamped Annual Technical Conference. She said that membership income has been estimated as dropping by 10% each year for the past few years, but that in reality has been a greater percentage, attributable to lower conference registrations (where members join). She said we might want to consider raising registration fees

for our fall events, but we should wait until June to see how our spring and June event attendance is.

Jones moved and was seconded by Darmohray to accept the revised budget FY 04 as the operating budget for 2004. Passed: in favor: 5; absent: 3 (Gilmore, Honeyman, Rubin).

Break from 10:30 a.m.-10:45 a.m.
Samson left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.
Noble left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.
Hall left meeting at 10:30 a.m.

REPORT ON CRA MEETING

Jones reported that he recently attended a CRA Board and Leadership Summit meeting in Washington DC. Representatives from the National Health Institute and DARPA were in attendance, and one mentioned that he is having a difficult time funding the number of foreign students in graduate programs. He said that the government has scaled back the number of H1B Visas being given to foreign researchers, and that graduate students and those with master's degrees are competing for outsourced jobs overseas. He also remarked that the statistics of Information Technology employees are showing that there are fewer programmers, but increases in system analysts and system administrators, which may be due to jobs being re-categorized. Jones said that CRA has decided to conduct a survey to gather more information about what is going on in the IT industry.

Hall returned to the meeting at 10:55

SAGE

Kolstad reported that he will be working further on the SAGE Web site, where he hopes to post white papers weekly. He also hopes to figure out how to fund a printed SAGE newsletter. Halprin added that SAGE seems to have turned their membership deficit around, as it has been growing slightly over the last three months. He said SAGE has a long way to go, but believes they are off to a good start. Kolstad reiterated that their primary goal is to increase membership and they would know by June whether this is possible.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE REPORT

Young reported on the conference venue booking plans. She said that planning far into the future has been scaled back, and we are booking events only in areas that will draw the local technical community. She reported that offering insurance as a member benefit did not look feasible due to the fact that there is no guaranteed coverage, and that members could buy individual plans at the same price. Young stated that the work involved in reformatting the Annual Technical Conference has taken a large amount of staff time, and extra costs.

Allman reported that there has been growth in supporting memberships due to selling them as part of sponsorship packages of over $15,000. She is trying to streamline some of the benefits such as offering discounted registrations for groups of employee's from a company attending conferences. She would like to expand awareness of USENIX through non-traditional partnerships, and asked for suggestions for partnerships and exchanges.

Gilmore joined the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Current Program

LISA '03
Young reported that it was well received. Onsite registration and exhibit attendance was down because of the nearby wildfires.

LISA '04
It will be held in Atlanta, for the first time, and we hope to be able to leverage the strong technical community in the area.

FAST '04
Young reported that USENIX budgeted for 250 attendees at this event. FAST had fewer papers submitted than in past years, and even fewer were finally selected. She stated that this event gets a lot of sponsorship support, $40,000 this year. The steering committee would be meeting to decide on a future schedule and program chair.

NSDI '04
Young reported that this event was entered into as a three-way partnership with ACM SIGCOMM and ACM SIGOPS, but that the ACM groups eventually requested "in-cooperation" status only. She said that left USENIX to fully own and manage the event, which is simpler. Jones reported that some great papers were submitted. USENIX has budgeted for 200 attendees at this event.

Lunch break from 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.
Gilmore returned to the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

VM '04
Young reported that the program is up, and that only 14 papers were accepted. She said the event is being promoted electronically, with only one paper mailing.

Appelman joined the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

USENIX '04
Young reported that the office has been working on this event since January pulling together materials and marketing plans. She said the new format will include fewer Invited Talks and a five day track of SIG Sessions, including: Extreme Linux, UseLinux, UseBSD, Advanced System Administration, and Security. Young requested ideas for evening or BOF events. The following ideas were being explored:

- Open source development group demos
- Legal session regarding the SCO controversy
- Board BOF - an informal, "new ideas"/strategic BOF
- "Demo" room for vendors
- Install-fest by a Local User Group
- Flashmob computing
- FSF GNU BOF

Dickison reported that additional marketing is being done via purchasing extra mailing lists, and by having a consultant working the "local angle" with user groups and universities.

McKusick left the meeting at 1:35 p.m., and returned at 1:45 p.m.
Darmohray left the meeting at 1:45 p.m., and returned at 1:50 p.m.

Linux Kernel Developers Summit '04
Ts'o reported that he has people committed for the program committee. He will work with Allman to contact sponsors.

Security '04
Young reported that there were a record number of submissions, but many were submitted to multiple events, and that the program will be out in April. She said the program committee meeting is in three weeks, and that Blaze is working on lining up a keynote speaker.

OSDI '04
Jones reported that the call is out. He said that there seems to be a move away from having keynotes, and that while he feels it would be good to have at least one, he does not feel that it is necessary for attendance.

Planetary Scale Systems, AKA: WORLDS '04 (Workshop on Real Large Distributed Systems)
Jones offered to be the liaison for this event, which will be held the Sunday just prior to OSDI '04. Young is working with Culler on the Call for Papers and logistics.

Gilmore left the meeting at 2:10 p.m., and returned at 2:15 p.m.

NordU
Young reported that USENIX has lent its name to the event for several years, and that USENIX receives a primary listing (not just as a co-sponsor). The event is usually managed by our Swedish affiliate, EurOpen.SE. She said that USENIX usually helps to find the keynote and some speakers for the event, and also has helped with funding in the past. The event was scheduled to occur in late January 2004, but was cancelled 13 days prior due to low attendance (a few tutorials were offered). Young feels this reflects poorly on USENIX's reputation, and suggested we consider formalizing our future sponsorship arrangement.

Jones moved and was seconded by Hall to have USENIX contact the organizers of NordU and prohibit them from using the USENIX name for future conferences until such a time as they have in writing clear rights and responsibilities. Passed: in favor: 6; absent: 2 (Honeyman, Rubin).

Future Conferences

Young reported that following events are scheduled for 2005: Annual Technical Conference in April, Security in August, LISA in December, NSDI in May, and HotOS, for which the venue and date is not yet chosen. Other potential conferences were discussed as follows:

MobiSys
Young explained that USENIX has an agreement to alternate the running of this event every other year with ACM. She said that the SIGMOBILE chair contacted her recently, and asked if USENIX wanted to sponsor it in 2005. The Board decided to wait until the '04 event has occurred in June to make a decision. We also need to have input on the selection of the program chairs.

VM
The Board decided to wait until the May event has occurred to make a decision on when or whether to hold this event.

BSDCon
All agreed that this topic be rolled into the Annual Technical Conference.

Young said that there are open slots for events in 2005, and asked the Board for their suggestions. Various forms of GRID computing were mentioned. Cole offered to do the leg work on what USENIX might do regarding GRID. Windows NT, as a track at LISA, was also mentioned.

Report on Conferences at Campus Venues

Young went over the report that she and Barbara Freel prepared which involved packages at campuses for providing accommodations, food, and meeting space. She said that universities generally do not offer the same kind of catering and accommodations that USENIX conference attendees are accustomed to. The staff was asked to look into costs associated with having an event on a campus during a weekend, or holiday break, utilizing meeting space only vs. booking accommodations.

Break from 3:05 p.m.-3:20 p.m.

DISTILLATION OF STRATEGY MEETING TO GOALS AND ACTIONS

McKusick began the discussion reviewing the highlights of the meeting held on March 1, 2004 with several current and former Board members, Board candidates, long-time USENIX members, and staff. He said the point of this upcoming discussion is to try to get some specific actions for the staff and Board. He listed the ideas that came up most during the meeting, and asked for a show of hands as to how important present attendees felt they were (follow in parentheses, with the the subjects that were subsequently discussed in bold):

- Interchange between developers and users (4)
- Low cost conferences (4)
- **Regional conferences or tutorial only events (8)**
- International conferences (5)
- **Inter-disciplinary conferences (9)**
- "Train the trainers"/franchise USENIX materials (1)
- **Advocacy (8)**
- Practical offerings vs. theoretical (7)
- Managers track (3)
- **10-year most influential USENIX presentation (7)**
- Managing heterogeneity/LISA NT (6)
- USENIX Journal/repository (5)

The USENIX constituency was discussed, with no consensus reached. It was generally agreed that while we have been successful in the developers/researchers/sys admin arena, we need to reach out to "users at large" for revenue streams. That would lead to a heterogeneous group of members (and some felt that is already the case).

A discussion ensued on the top vote getters list from above.

Interdisciplinary conferences

Several areas were discussed, with the following people agreeing to approach organizations or contacts they know regarding what events are currently being held to address industry technology needs, and the potential for collaboration with USENIX:

- Physics: Hume
- Legal area: Darmohray and Gilmore will approach the Electronic Frontier Foundation
- Nicholson mentioned he had a contact at the American Bar Association
- Bio-infomatics: Appelman and Cole have contacts, and Allman will contact a relative at Kaiser

Regional Conferences/Training only

Jones stated that tutorial only events are a good opportunity to make money and educate folks. He suggested contacting some current tutorial speakers to see if this would be of interest to them. Ts'o noted that such a program could lead to speaker burnout, as well as drawing them away from being available for the major USENIX events. Cole stated that conversely, these events could be "feeders" to the larger conferences, but said that USENIX should come up with a list of topics for the regional/training events.

Young will investigate the cost of doing market research for this kind of program. It was suggested we might be able to help local chapters organize events. Ts'o will contact Linux User Group leaders, Halprin will contact SAGE local group leaders to gauge their interest.

10-year most influential Presentation

It was agreed that this could be any type of USENIX presentation (e.g., WIP, paper presentation) that has had the most impact. Hall would look into this with the awards committee.

Advocacy

The discussion began regarding how to best find subjects of interest. Nicholson stated that it would be difficult to "troll" the membership, as there would be too many differing opinions, and suggested that if the Board received at least 10 or 20 comments on a subject, that would be a good time to consider action on it. Gilmore believes that having "antennas out" for issues would be a good start, and he believes that it is a mission of 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations to educate the public. Gilmore also feels it would be a good idea to have our members learn to lobby Congress regarding technology legislation and issues. Jones said that the USENIX Board should always vote, preferably unanimously, before taking action on issues, and should avoid angering the membership.

Appelman stated that he finds it exciting that USENIX is taking positions, but cautioned about the following:

1. Advocacy is peripheral to what we can do to increase membership and revenue
2. It is difficult to arrive at a consensus on issues
3. As membership becomes more diverse, it becomes harder to please all, and that positions should reflect the opinions of the membership at large

Others felt that advocacy is a good way to get the USENIX name more visible, and it was suggested that there be a BOF session at the Annual Technical Conference for attendees on how to approach Congress regarding issues. It was also stated that simply presenting facts to the

membership in an ordered manner could help to inspire members to want to take action on their own.

Appelman, Bennett, and Hume will create a proposal about advocacy, e.g., a BOF, white papers, etc.

NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled Board meeting will be Sunday, June 27th, 2004, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., at the Annual Technical Conference in Boston, MA. The newly elected Board members will be invited. Newly elected Board members will take office after the open Board meeting at the conference, which will be scheduled sometime on June 27th or 28th.

Bennett moved and was seconded by Hall to adjourn the meeting. Passed: in favor: 6; absent: 2 (Honeyman, Rubin).

Summary of Actions Taken by USENIX Board of Directors via e-mail and teleconferences from October 29, 2003 – June 22, 2004

The Board approved by unanimous email vote from November 4-5, 2003 to be a sponsor of the 2004 CRA-Snowbird Conference in the amount of $3,500.

The Board approved by unanimous email vote on December 2, 2003 to increase stipend support for the Internet Measurement Conference in the amount of $5,000 (for a total of $10,000).

On a January 26, 2004 teleconference attended by all Board members except John Gilmore, registration fees for the 2004 Annual Technical Conference were approved as follows:

	Member	**Non-member**	**Student member**	**Student, non-member**
Event Type				
Annual Tech Conf - Technical Sessions	1-day: $250 2-day: $450 3-day: $600 4-day: $700 5-day: $775	1-day: $350 2-day: $550 3-day: $700 4-day: $800 5-day: $875	1-day: $75 2-day: $145 3-day: $210 4-day: $270 5-day: $325	1-day: $105 2-day: $175 3-day: $240 4-day: $300 5-day: $355
Annual Tech Conf - Tutorial rates	1-day: $600 2-day: $1100 3-day: $1550 4-day: $1950 5-day: $2300 6-day: $2600	1-day: $600 2-day: $1100 3-day: $1550 4-day: $1950 5-day: $2300 6-day: $2600	1-day: $150 2-day: $300 3-day: $450 4-day: $600 5-day: $750 6-day: $900	1-day: $150 2-day: $300 3-day: $450 4-day: $600 5-day: $750 6-day: $900

On February 3rd, the Board voted by email to host the First International Workshop on Real large Distributed Systems (WORLDS) to be held on December 5, 2004 in San Francisco.

From February 16-19, 2004 the Board approved a revised response letter to the SCO Group to be sent to members, posted on the USENIX Web site, and sent to Congress.

On May 21, 2004 it was moved via email by Honeyman and seconded by McKusick to authorize Young to allocate $5,000 in the Berkeley G&A budget to engage a consultant to do market research on "training only" regional events. The motion was unanimously approved.

On June 15, 2004 it was moved via email by Bennett and seconded by McKusick to set the 2004 LISA Technical Session non-member pre-registration fees as follows:
1 day = $400; 2 days = $700; 3 days = $795
The motion was unanimously passed.