USENIX Board of Directors Meeting
November 5, 2002
Marriott Hotel, Philadelphia, PA

The regular meeting of the USENIX Board of Directors was convened on November 5, 2002 at the Marriott Hotel, in Philadelphia at 8:50 a.m.

Attendance:

USENIX Board of Directors:
Kirk McKusick, President
Lois Bennett
Tina Darmohray (via telephone)
Jon "maddog" Hall
Peter Honeyman
Mike Jones
Avi Rubin

Absent:
John Gilmore

USENIX Staff:
Ellie Young
Barbara Freel
Dan Klein
Rob Kolstad
Jane-Ellen Long
Tara Mulligan
Catherine Vegher
Toni Veglia

Guests:
Nick Stoughton, Standards Liaison (joined at 11:35 a.m.)
Dave Parter, SAGE
Bryan Andregg, SAGE
Trey Harris, SAGE (joined at 10:25 a.m)
Jan Saell, EurOpen.SE representative
Dan Appelman, USENIX attorney

All were present at the start of meeting except as noted above.

Changes to the Agenda

Mike Jones asked for an update on the sales effort. Young distributed handouts consisting of a Tcl Conference proposal, a report on the future conference schedule, and discussion of the JVM workshop.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Honeyman moved and was seconded by Jones to approve the June meeting minutes. Passed: In favor: 7; Absent: 1 (Gilmore)

Action Item List

Most were in progress or will be discussed in the agenda. Bennett said that she would have a report on "lessons learned" with the SAGE Certification project later in the year. Hall reported that he is working on putting together the awards committee.

SAGE

Parter reported that the Executive Committee has laid out new goals for 2003, and there will be an election for the SAGE Executive Committee in early December. He thanked Kolstad for his efforts thus far as Executive Director.

Kolstad reported that his goals for SAGE are to increase the membership and its affiliate base; distribute a regular SAGE newsletter; complete the salary survey; and Certification, which will be discussed later in this meeting. Kolstad reported that there has been one staff reduction in the SAGE organization, and that expenditures have been cut. He said he would like to eventually de-couple SAGE and USENIX membership.

Kolstad reported on the various projects he is working on.

SAGE Certification

Bennett reported that the number of tests administered hadn't been what was projected, and that the SAGE Certification Board had presented two options to SAGE:

1. In February 2003 when the VUE contract ends, terminate the program, or
2. Move the program into a "coma mode" by keeping the testing live via a different vendor. There would be a one-time cost of $11,000 to switch the testing to the new vendor (Exam Express), and there could be revenue of $65 per test.

Bennett said the Certification Board recommended that during the "coma" period the m-SAGE test be developed. Klein offered to volunteer his time to develop training to go along with the certification testing. Geer suggested that government certification will be a reality in the future, and to focus on security aspects of the testing. Bennett said she will work with Hume to provide a detailed report by the end of the year.

Rubin left at 10:00 a.m., and returned at 10:03 a.m.

SAGE Budget

Andregg said that SAGE Executive Committee would like ongoing support for the SAGE Executive Director position. He would like to see a revenue line item from USENIX that reflects the SAGE Executive Director funding. The USENIX Board agreed to take this request under consideration during the Budget agenda item.

Harris joined the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Proposal to activate USENIX members mailing list

Kolstad felt that members want to hear about USENIX activities and proposed that we activate an opt-in list for communication.
Jones moved and was seconded by Bennett to activate the USENIX members mailing list. Passed: In favor: 7; Absent: 1 (Gilmore)

Andregg and Harris left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

USACO Funding

Kolstad stated that the goal of the USA Computing Olympiad program is to promote and encourage pre-college students to pursue careers in computer science. USACO made a request of $30,000 in funding for 2003, and USENIX agreed to fund $15,000.

Break from 10:45-10:55 a.m.
Kolstad left the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Finances

Report on 2002 Budget

McKusick reported that while USENIX had budgeted for a $675,000 deficit, the year-end deficit estimates would be much higher, perhaps in the $1.4 million range. Young said that the Association had net revenues for the 12 years prior to 2001 and 2002. For these two years the Association has sustained losses totaling $5 million. She felt that our inability to budget accurately is almost entirely due to the unexpected deep drop in conference attendance, the failure of the SAGE Certification program, and the losses on investments. Young strongly urged that the Board not approve a budget for a deficit in 2003.

First Draft Budget for 2003

Young went over the draft which contained most of the items that the Board agreed to in July when she presented recommendations for items that should be considered (see actions approved by Board in email sent July 25, 2002). After this meeting, a final budget would be prepared which would include actions at this meeting, plus revisions based on new information such as conference attendance and input from SAGE on their items.

Young explained that in the draft the essential functions of the organization -- conferences and member services -- might be close to breaking even. This is due mainly to reducing personnel and office expenses, publishing fewer issues of *;login:*, increasing member dues and conference registration fees, and further reducing the costs for producing conferences. This also presumes that conference attendance levels will be only slightly lower than in 2002. She feels that the organization may still be too optimistic in our budget planning, since attendance might fall further and penalties with hotel contracts could impact us severely. She suggested that we attempt to break even on core operations and that the Board look at cutting all non-core activities including Good Works and Student Programs. She also felt that USENIX should do all it can to help SAGE reach break even status, by encouraging them to limit expenses, increase revenues, and find alternative sources of subsidy.

Jones moved and was seconded by Honeyman that the stipend program budget be cut to $25,000 plus donations in 2003.
Passed: In favor: 6; Abstained: 1 (Rubin); Absent: 1 (Gilmore)

Stoughton joined at 11:35 a.m.

CRA

Young reported that USENIX spent $15,000 in 2002, $10,000 of which was for affiliate member dues. The Board recommended we continue our membership, but spend as little as possible. It was agreed to reduce funding to $6,000 in 2003.

Standards

Stoughton reported that most of the work is done in maintaining standards, but that there are some ongoing teleconference and email expenses. He outlined various Open Group (TOG) membership levels, and pointed out that membership at the $7000 level or higher has a vote. USENIX is currently one of twelve members at that level. The board agreed to reduce the USENIX membership in TOG to the $500 level in 2003, and the standards budget would be $13,000.

EFF

In 2001, USENIX had agreed to support the Electronic Frontier Foundation for three years at $50,000 each year. So far, only one year of that pledge has been fulfilled. The Board asked that Young talk to Gilmore about deferring our pledge again in 2003.

NordU/EurOpen.SE

Saell reported that NordU continues to do well, and they would like a grant of $10,000 for sponsorship of NordU in 2003, and a loan of $15,000. It was agreed to offer a $5,000 guarantee, for which, if there is any net revenue, USENIX will be repaid.

SAGE Finances

A discussion ensued about funding for the SAGE Executive Director position. It was pointed out that USENIX is unable make a motion to guarantee this for several years forward as we do not do multi-year budgets. Funding for SAGE activities and staff will be considered each year at the Fall budget meeting along with the rest of the USENIX activities and staff. Hall expressed USENIX's appreciation to SAGE for their efforts thus far to reduce expenses. Honeyman suggested that in the future requests from SAGE be given to the Board in advance in writing.

Conference Fees

Young suggested that no action be taken on conference fees at this time. The only change the staff had taken is to re-institute the $50 discount for web registration. McKusick called for a straw poll that indicated all were in favor of continuing this discount.

Lunch break from 12:25-1:30 p.m.

Executive Director’s Report

Young went over her report, and asked for the Board's guidance in setting the future conference slate for 2004, as well as what other organizations we might wish to partner with. She felt we had a particularly good crop of program chairs who had also been proactive in getting sponsorship support. Jones referred to the Sales & Marketing Reports, and raised concerns about sponsorship activity in light of terminating the contract with Gottlieb. Young stated that sponsorships were 50% down in 2002 from the previous year, and she felt confident that we could net the same with bringing this activity in-house in 2003. She also felt that given the number of conferences and reduced staff, the office was getting the job done. It was mentioned that the Bylaws & Policies document needs the recommendations of Andrew Hume, and Bennett agreed to contact Hume.

Supporting Membership Dues

Mulligan presented proposals for revised supporting memberships, and outlined the dues and benefits for separate USENIX and SAGE Supporting memberships at $2500, and the new category of Dual Supporting membership at $3500. The Board recommended that the monetary value of the benefits be posted at the web site and in promotional material. **Bennett moved and was seconded by Jones to adopt the Supporting Membership proposal with financial values added in. Passed: In favor: 7; absent: 1 (Gilmore)**

Update on Conferences

Tutorials
Klein suggested that we concentrate on tutorials that are practical, not cutting edge. A recent survey of comparative conferences revealed that the tutorial registration fees at USENIX are slightly on the higher end, but on a par with SANS. Klein asked for suggestions for topics for practical tutorials and new instructors.

Klein left the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

Linux Kernel Developers Summit
Young reported that USENIX had severed its co-sponsorship agreement with OSDN in 2003. She felt confident that USENIX can bring in the same number of sponsors as in the past.

JVM
Young reported that there is an active core of academics, and the program committee had suggested we remove "Java" from the title and expand the program. If the Board wishes to repeat this event, it should be held in the Spring of 2004. The net cost to USENIX will be about $50,000-$100,000, depending on attendance and the number of conferences we are sponsoring in 2004.

Security
Freel reported that the 2002 conference had about 600 in attendance, which was better than expected. Geer suggested risk management, focusing on government agencies, and "trusted computing."

LISA
Young reported that there are 1200+ in attendance, which is better than expected, and that the conference's bottom line is better than what was budgeted. She commended Alva Couch for his role as Program Chair. Æleen Frisch had been appointed chair of LISA 2003 by the subcommittee.

CARDIS
Honeyman reported that all of the accepted papers were from Europe, and there was very little participation from the US. He thanked the Board for their indulgence in having USENIX sponsor the workshop, which should probably not have been held in the US.

OSDI/WIESS
Jones reported that OSDI is regarded on par with SOSP. He felt that WIESS continues to be a difficult forum for which to attract paper submissions.

USITS
Honeyman reported that the Program Committee met last weekend. They have a strong program with good papers, and all is on track.

FAST
Honeyman reported that Jeff Chase did a great job with the program committee, and it will be a great conference.

Mobisys
Honeyman reported that the program committee received 130 submissions. He suggested that the Guidelines for Program Committees be updated and enforced with regard to paper submission lengths being held to the 12-page limit.

HotOS
Jones said that there will be 65 attendees, the registration fees would cover our costs for producing this workshop, and the risk management was relatively low with the hotel. Judy DeHarnais will handle on site logistics as she is in Kauai.

USENIX 2003
Young reported that the keynote will be author Neal Stephenson. Young said that the office is budgeting conservatively for attendance, but the economy and venue might impact attendance even more.

BSDCon
McKusick reported that the submission deadline is in April, and there is a potential problem if O'Reilly schedules their Mac OS X Conference either at the same time, or very close to it. Young said the she would contact them about this issue.

Break from 3:25-3:35 p.m.

Future Conference Slate

McKusick asked that we outline ideas for new conferences and also come up with a slate for 2004. The following ideas for topics were suggested: trusted computing (as a panel at Security), OS X, and e-commerce. Rubin felt that we shouldn't spread ourselves too thin. Honeyman stated that new conferences are rarely profitable, and we should focus on limiting the number of new events.

For 2004, Young said that a maximum of seven conferences with existing staffing levels might be doable. It was agreed to schedule the following:

USENIX Annual Technical Conference
Security
LISA
OSDI
VM

The following would be decided later:

Mobisys
Linux Kernel
FAST
BSDCon

Jones, Honeyman, and Young will discuss with Sigcomm and Sigops the idea of a network systems conference, which might replace USITS.

Young was requested to get a proposal from Sigcomm for us to co-sponsor the Internet Measurement Conference in 2003.

Honeyman moved and was seconded by Rubin that USENIX accept the request of the PKI workshop organizers to co-sponsor their 2nd Annual Workshop.
Passed: In favor: 7; Absent: 1 (Gilmore)

Other Business

A discussion was held regarding the GCC conference in Ottawa, Canada. Hall felt we should work with them as long as it is a low/no-cost risk for USENIX.
Hall moved and was seconded by McKusick to authorize Young to talk with the coordinators of the 1st GCC Workshop about our co-sponsorship.
Passed: In favor: 4; Opposed: 3 (Jones, Honeyman, Rubin); Absent: 1 (Gilmore)

Honeyman moved and was seconded by Jones that USENIX co-sponsor the 2003 Middleware conference. Passed: In favor: 7; Absent: 1 (Gilmore)

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled to occur in Berkeley, CA on Tuesday, March 4th.
The subsequent meeting will be held at the Annual Technical Conference in San Antonio on Wednesday, June 11, 2003 with a staff/board dinner that evening. The Annual Meeting with the membership will be held on Thursday, June 12th.

The meeting adjourned to an executive session at 4:25 p.m.
The regular meeting resumed at 5:25 p.m.

Rubin moved, and was seconded by Darmohray, that we accept the changes to the budget, and the future conference slate as previously discussed.
Passed: In favor: 7; Absent: 1 (Gilmore)

Honeyman moved and was seconded by Rubin to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.