USENIX Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes
June 27, 2001
Boston, MA

The regular meeting of the USENIX Board of Directors was convened at the Marriott Copley Place Hotel, in Boston, MA at 9:05 AM.

Attendance:

USENIX Board of Directors:
Dan Geer, Chairman
John Gilmore
Jon "maddog" Hall
Peter Honeyman
Andrew Hume
Mike Jones
Kirk McKusick
Avi Rubin

USENIX Staff:
Gale Berkowitz
Iris Casey
Barbara Freel
Alain Hénon
Dan Klein
Jane-Ellen Long
Catherine Vegher
Ellie Young

All of the above were present at the beginning of the meeting except:
Freel, who arrived at 9:25 AM; Klein arrived at 10:30 AM.

Guests:
David Parter, SAGE Executive Committee
Peg Schafer, SAGE Executive Committee
Strata Chalup, SAGE Executive Committee
Geoff Halprin, SAGE Executive Committee
Trey Harris, SAGE Executive Committee
Jan Saell - EurOpen.SE rep and USENIX affiliate
Dan Appelman - USENIX attorney
Rich Jaross, Consultant
Nick Stoughton, Standards liaison
Glenn Samson, Morgan Stanley
Joe Buress, Lazard Freres
Yoonho Park, Program Chair
Clem Cole, Freenix Program Chair

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Hume moved and was seconded by Honeyman to accept the minutes as amended. All in favor: 8.

Action Items
Action items were reviewed. Most action items were either completed, in progress, or included in the agenda.

Freenix Trademark
Around $5000 will be allocated for the freenix.com trademark. Hume will follow-up.

Freel arrived at 9:25 AM.

SAGE Strategic Plan

Hume introduced the SAGE Strategic Plan, asking for comments and discussion. A vote will likely be taken sometime this fall about restructuring. Parter gave a presentation on the strategic plan, its purpose, organizational goals, operational goals, necessities, and next steps. He explained that proposals for the implementation of the plan will be sought in August, and afterwards a selection of the best proposal will be made. He hoped that the USENIX Board would share their vision of SAGE.

The following comments were made:
- Jones noted that it is a good vision document, but questioned the feasibility to reaching all types of system administrators. He requested that the expenses and revenues should be included in the Strategic Plan.
- McKusick would like to see a prioritization of the goals and services, given that it would not seem financially nor operationally feasible to implement all the services immediately and simultaneously.
- Hall suggested that a survey should be conducted of the membership to estimate the proportion that would join SAGE if it were decoupled from USENIX membership.
- Jones stated that he thought that the plan included adequate goals, but priorities need to be assigned, and revenues and expenses included.

Klein arrived at 10:30 AM.

Hume summarized the sentiments of the Board as being supportive of the scope, range, content, and timeline of the SAGE Strategic Plan. He stated that this was the endorsement that was needed to solicit implementation proposals. Further comments from the Board on the Strategic Plan should be directed to Peg Schafer. Following the meeting, the SAGE Executive Committee will publicize the plan to the membership and discuss it with them.

Halprin and Harris left the meeting and did not return. Appelman left the meeting.

Break from 10:37 AM to 10:50 AM.

E-Learning Proposal

Jaross gave a presentation on an e-learning/distance learning proposal. The proposal included the following:

1) Virtual Classroom
2) Web Based Training
3) University programs (i.e., USENIX University)
4) Bridging the digital divide (i.e., Good Works)

USENIX Virtual Classroom: USENIX would establish a biweekly or monthly technology series using Virtual Classroom Web technology as its basis. This allows for live broadcast (generally 1-2 hrs), of audio, and class slides and other visuals that enable interaction and the delivery of materials regardless of where the students are rapidly anytime anywhere. The technology is available software and the students simply need a client version of the free software. A demonstration was conducted.

Several cost models were proposed for the various components of the proposal, including the programs, host, support and instructors. Revenue would be derived from attendance fees and sale of recorded libraries.

The merits, advantages, disadvantages of e-learning were discussed.

Appelman returned at 12:07 PM.

A virtual classroom pilot project was proposed, requesting $7,000 for a single presentation for one audience up to 500 participants. A topic and speaker would need to be selected, and the presentation prepared, installed, and delivered.

Hume moved and was seconded by Hall to conduct the virtual classroom pilot project to assess whether or not the technology is sufficient, testing various servers, allocating up to $21,000, as well as getting a detailed proposal for the web-based training and university program modules. All in favor: 5; opposed: 3 (Rubin, Honeyman and Gilmore).

Break for lunch from 12:50 PM to1:50 PM .

Klein did not return.

Samson arrived at 1:50 PM.

Report on Investment Portfolio

Glenn Samson from Morgan Stanley and Joe Burres from Lazard Asset Management, a global investment bank, gave a report on the performance of the USENIX investments. Samson reported that the USENIX portfolio continues to out-perform leading indices within each investment style. He recommended that the fund does not need to be re-balanced at this time, but that he will re-assess the need for rebalancing in the fourth quarter so as to stay within the USENIX investment policy guidelines.

Jones returned at 2:00 PM.
Samson and Burres left at 2:40 PM.

Estimated Year-End 2001

Young gave a summary of the 2001 budget and estimates for the end of the year, noting that adjustments made at and since the last Board meeting in April have been included, as well as adjustments made based on improved estimates. A scenario in which revenue is 20% less than originally budgeted yields an end of the year estimate with a net loss of $1,100,000 in operations.

Clem Cole arrived at 2:40 PM.

Update on Felten Case

Gilmore gave an update on the Felten case. The case is progressing in favor of EFF, Felten, and USENIX, with lots of support from members, and good public relations. Three of the defendants issued statements that they would not sue the authors over the delivery of the Felten paper.

When asked what actions USENIX should take next with regard to publishing the paper, Gilmore replied that USENIX should do nothing at this point until given guidance by EFF counsel.

Schafer left at 3:25 PM.

Bylaws and Policies Review

Hume reported that the committee has reviewed the bylaws and policies, and has made revisions, which were included in the board packet. He asked for direction from the Board regarding the revised voting bylaws.

Straw Polls were taken and the results as follows:
In the Bylaws:
7.0 Preferable to elect 7 directors at large and one president.
7.2 Timing of the elections will be kept vague, stating that they should take place every two years, no less than 18 months, and no more than 30 months (and deleting the date)
7.2 For directors at large, there is a preference for plurality of votes (versus proportional representation)

Hume, Gilmore, Appelman, and Long constitute the bylaws committee.

Funding for SPI

Honeyman summarized a report that was submitted by the Software Patent Institute, including a request for additional funding for 2001 to be used for cleaning, formatting, and loading documents during 2001, in the amount of $55,000. The no-cost extension was granted at the last Board meeting. It was suggested that SPI should be asked to provide evidence of their effectiveness. Honeyman recommended that they be funded once again, but that there be requirements to demonstrate effectiveness. He will ask SPI to produce metrics of their effectiveness, such as who uses their database.

Break from 4:15 PM to 4:30 PM.
Park arrived at 4:40 PM.

Awards Committee

Hume reported on the lack of effectiveness of the awards committee. He felt that participation from the committee as well as the membership was negligible. Hume resigned as Chair of the committee, and Mike O'Dell also resigned from the committee. Geer will appoint a new committee.

The 2001 USENIX Lifetime Achievement Award recipient was given to the GNU Project and all its contributors, for the ubiquity, breadth and quality of its freely available redistributable and modifiable software, which has enabled a generation of research and commercial development.

The 2001 Software Tools Award (STUG) was given to those who contributed to the development of Kerberos, a security system that set the standard for authentication and key management in distributed systems.

Report on the Research Exchange Programme (ReX) and Student Programs

Honeyman and Berkowitz gave an update on the ReX project. Honeyman met with members of Stichting NLnet since the last board meeting. Over the past several months, there has been a significant increase in activity. The two projects that were funded in 2000 were completed, and reports have or are being prepared for submission to ;login:.

Five proposals were received to date for 2001, and four have been funded. A brief description of the proposals was included in the board packet.

The ReX programme committee will be meeting later this week to review the status of the project, review application, funding, and monitoring procedures, assess committee communication, and make plans for the future.

Freel arrived at 5:00 PM.

Executive Director's Report

Young summarized her report. She noted that the registration firm being used at USENIX Annual Technical Conference will also be used for ALS. NUUG has become an affiliate member.

Report on Baseline Findings Project by Marketing Services Firm

Young gave a brief presentation on the results of the marketing survey to our database that was conducted on the web. She noted several surprises, including the high proportion of respondents who do not attend conferences; the high rate of those that value *;login*:; and the lower than expected value of contacts at conference.

Update on Conferences

USENIX Annual Technical—Various people reported, and attendance is around 1600. The quality and diversity of the papers submitted and accepted were high. The AFS workshop seemed to be successful. Honeyman suggested looking into getting potential funding for this workshop.

Freel left at 5:20 PM.

Java VM—Honeyman reported that this event was very successful. Geer volunteered to be the liaison for JVM 2002.
Security—Rubin reported that work on the program committee increased significantly when the Felten paper was submitted.
LISA—Young reported that the conference is progressing well, that over 80 papers were submitted, of high quality, and the program would be put together in July.
SNAC—Young reported that there an organizing meeting would be held later this week to determine whether or not to proceed.
Linux Kernel Summit—Young said that Ts'o and OSDN were interested in repeating this next year.
USITS—Young and Honeyman were looking for a program chair.

COOTS—The future of this event is in question. Honeyman suggested combining this with the Middleware conference, and he would discuss this with them.
MobiCom—Jones reported on an opportunity for USENIX to sponsor this event with other partners. There was general consensus to pursue sponsoring/participating in this.
ASP—Geer is interested investigating if there is sufficient technical material in this area to support sponsoring an event.

Rubin left at 5:55 PM.

Report on EurOpen.SE and NordU

Jan Saell reported that progress on NordU 2002 is progressing well, and will be held in February in Helsinki. There were around 400 attendees at NordU 2001, that there will be a small deficit, and that overall attendees were satisfied. Funds for 2002 will be requested at a later time.

Parter left at 6:15 PM.

Standards Report

Stoughton reported on the activities of the Standards Committee.

Appointment of Nominating Committee

Honeyman moved and was seconded by McKusick to appoint Hume to chair the Nominating Committee. In favor: 5; abstain: 2 (Hume, Geer); absent: 1 (Rubin).

Agenda for Annual Meeting with Membership

The open meeting with the membership will be held on Friday, at 5:45 PM. Agenda items include: Good Works, SAGE, Nominating Committee, financial status, and general state of the union items.

ISC Mailing List

Geer will speak with Vixie regarding the status of the bug report.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled in conjunction with ALS in Oakland, on November 7, 2001.

Honeyman moved to adjourn the regular meeting and was seconded by Hume. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Actions Taken by the USENIX Board of Directors from June 28, 2001 through November 6, 2001.

LISA 2001 Registration Fees
On July 27, 2001 a proposal was submitted via email from Ellie Young for changing LISA 2001 registration fees. As an incentive to use the Web to register for the conference, both tutorial fees and tech session fees would be increased by $50.00 for those who do not use the web to register.

Passed: 5 in favor (Hume, McKusick, Honeyman, Jones, Rubin) Absent: Geer, Gilmore, Hall.

Software Patent Institute (SPI)
Via email on 08/09/01, Honeyman reported that he was pleased with the reports from the SPI and would like to fund their renewal request. It was moved by Honeyman, seconded by Hume, to fund the SPI's renewal request for $55,000. Passed: 7 in favor; 1 absent (Gilmore).

Richard Tapia Celebration of Minorities in Computing Symposium
Young reported that the conference, to be held October 18-20, 2001 in Houston, is being organized by the same group (CRA) who produce the Grace Hopper conference. Hume moved to support this event in the amount of $10,000. In favor: 6. (Geer and Hall did not respond.)

Middleware Conference
Via email on 08/09/01, Honeyman moved to contribute $5,000 to the Middleware 2001 Conference to be used for student stipends to attend the event. In favor: 6. (Geer and Hall did not respond.)

Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA)
A meeting via phone on October 1, 2001 at 2:00 PDST, it was moved by Honeyman, seconded by Rubin that the Board wishes to alert the members of its concern regarding provisions in the proposed Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) currently under consideration in Congress that would treat all computer trespasses as terrorism, and that it authorizes a subcommittee to draft a statement to be published on our Web site and sent to our members. Passed: 5 in favor; 3 absent (Geer, McKusick, Gilmore). The subcommittee of Jones and Hume was struck.

ALS Conference Registration Fees
On October 8, 2001 a meeting of the Board by telephone was held. It was moved by Hall, seconded by Gilmore, that we drop the registration fees to the technical sessions at ALS to zero. Passed: 5 in favor; 1 abstain (Rubin); 2 absent (Honeyman and McKusick).