Message from the Program Chair

Welcome to LISA '08!

My first LISA was in 1997. I had switched to sysadmin work from programming about 6 years earlier. I don't remember exactly how I discovered LISA, but it was most likely through searching USENET (how times have changed) for training reviews. I was able to persuade my employer to fund me for the tutorials but not the tech sessions.

Wandering through the registration hall and taking in the sights and conversations, I realized I had discovered a subculture. When I returned to my wife, she remarked, "Everybody here is dressed like you." Confirmed – my people!

In the next three days – especially in the BoFs, lunches, and famous hallway track – I reveled in being among people with the same technical and career challenges I had, in places large and small.

Fast-forward to 2008. The LISA Conference has been a priority in my annual training plan ever since. The history of our profession is unfolding here and being recorded in no small part in the written artifacts of this conference.

Make no mistake, putting together this conference takes work. The efforts of the USENIX staff and Organizing Committee have resulted in the excellent set of tutorials, invited talks, workshops, Guru track, WiPs, and posters presented at LISA '08. Forty-two brave souls submitted papers to our refereed papers track; 17 of those were chosen for further refinement and publication. Especially noteworthy are the timely keynote and plenary session speakers we have in our lineup.

For half of you, this is your first LISA. I encourage you to engage in discussions, ask questions, mingle and make contacts. For the other half, the LISA veterans, I encourage you to similarly stretch out of your comfort zone. Go attend a session on a topic you are not that familiar with. If you are a technical topic junkie, go check out one of those squishy, subjective, non-technical topics you usually avoid. And please reach out to the LISA newbies; they are intimidated enough as it is, especially the ones who came here alone. Encourage them to join discussions, attend a BoF with you, or ask a speaker their question. For all of you who came with a group, please try to do some of the sessions and activities without that group.

If you like what you see and hear this week, please let the organizers know that it worked for you. It's one of the few explicit thanks they will get. If the speakers, tutorial instructors, paper and poster presenters, Gurus, workshop organizers, and USENIX staff contributed to your week, please tell them so. And please start thinking about what *you* might contribute to LISA '09.

The reason I tell my employer I want to attend LISA is for the intellectual stimulation, the training, the exposure to the state of my profession, and networking with colleagues. For these and other reasons, this conference has earned a special place in my heart. I hope it will have a similar effect on you.

Mario Obejas
Program Chair
LISA '08