

Message from the 2018 USENIX Annual Technical Conference Program Co-Chairs

Welcome to the 2018 USENIX Annual Technical Conference.

We are excited for ATC '18. We have had some very high-quality submissions, and clearly there has been a lot of work on behalf of both the authors who have contributed content and reviewers who have thoroughly reviewed submissions. In particular, we want to thank the program committee members and external reviewers who were willing to volunteer their time and also willing to take on a larger-than-expected load to ensure proper reviewing.

The incredible dedication by this year's program committee resulted in a program of 76 refereed papers and one keynote. These papers and keynote present novel research contributions and practical insights that advance the state-of-the-art in systems from a wide range of perspectives, demonstrating new capabilities or improvements for a variety of platforms and application scenarios. Given the spectrum of topics covered in the program, you are likely to find interesting ideas addressing your favorite areas and challenges.

For the traditional refereed papers track, we received a record number of paper registrations and submissions this year. Authors registered 557 papers, of which 377 (a 33% increase over last year) were complete submissions. The program co-chairs rejected one paper up front due to serious formatting violations. Of the submitted papers, 30 were short papers, which had to be at most five pages long (plus references), and the other 347 were full-length papers, which had to be at most 11 pages long plus references.

We required authors to submit abstracts a week before the paper submission in the hope of ensuring proper subject area coverage by the program committee and to get an idea of the reviewing load. This did not work. We had over 550 submitted abstracts, meaning almost 40% of the submissions were abandoned. In the end, requiring abstracts to be submitted early did not help with planning due to such a large number of abstracts that did not result in a submission.

The program committee had 72 members, excluding the 2 co-chairs. 28 of them had affiliations with industrial organizations, 42 with academic organizations (one member had dual affiliations), and 2 with government lab organizations. The committee represented three continents and seven countries. Program committee members were allowed to submit papers. The program co-chairs did not submit any papers.

We followed standard rules for handling conflicts of interest: conflicted members (or co-chairs) left the room during the discussion of conflicted papers. We followed the tradition of single-blind reviews. It was not a decision we explicitly made. Given the issues surrounding single-blind reviews, it was a decision that we should have thought about and justified. Reviews were done by the program committee in two rounds with a few external reviews. The chairs did not participate in any of the reviews. In the first round, each of the 377 submitted papers received at least two reviews. 219 (58%) of the papers moved to the second round. Each paper in round two received at least two additional reviews.

One of our goals was to get a large enough program committee so that we would not overwhelm members with review load and to give members enough time to produce quality reviews. Lower reviews also enable access to more potential committee members. We also had a light (20 members) and heavy committee (52). The light committee had an expected load of 12 to 16 papers and were not expected to attend the in-person committee meeting. The heavy committee had an expected load of 14-18 papers and were expected to attend the in-person meeting. As the load is relatively similar between light and heavy PC, we do not distinguish them on the website. When we saw the higher than expected number of submissions, we grew the committee. Furthermore, for papers where we lacked reviewer expertise in the main PC, we solicited 43 external reviewers, each reviewing on average one paper. In the end our committee members reviewed the maximum expected number of papers with a few going over the expectation. Altogether, we had more than 1,230 reviews.

After two phases of reviews, an online discussion was conducted among reviewers, during which the program committee decided to pre-accept 26 highly-ranked papers and pre-reject 69 more papers. These papers were not discussed in the PC Meeting while the rest of the round 2 papers, 124 papers, were discussed during the in-person program committee meeting.

The PC meeting was held on April 16–17 at the Facebook campus in Menlo Park, CA; more than 50 PC members attended the meeting in person and many others called in. During the meeting, 50 additional papers were accepted. Among these 76 acceptances, four were short papers. Because of the large number of papers to discuss, we had two parallel meetings run by each chair. We would like to thank PhD students Huaicheng Li and Mingzhe Hao of the University of Chicago for optimizing the scheduling of discussions for the meetings and for acting as scribes during the meetings. We also would like to thank Facebook engineers and staff for helping with the logistics of the PC meeting.

We added to the program one keynote, chosen from recommendations made by members of the program committee. We were not able to have any additional sessions due to the large number of presentations for accepted papers.

We are very grateful to all who contributed to ATC '18. In addition to the authors who submitted their work for consideration, the program committee, and the external reviewers, we would like to thank the USENIX staff for their outstanding conference management. By taking care of all organizational details, they enabled us to focus on building a strong program. We would also like to thank Facebook for their generosity in hosting the PC meeting.

We hope that you enjoy the conference. Thank you for participating in the USENIX ATC community!

USENIX ATC '18 Program Co-Chairs
Haryadi Gunawi, *University of Chicago*
Benjamin Reed, *Facebook*