

Message from the 23rd USENIX Security Symposium Program Chair

Welcome to the 23rd USENIX Security Symposium in San Diego, CA! If I were to pick one phrase to describe this year, it would be “record-breaking” with “server-breaking” as a close second. This year’s program will literally knock your socks off, especially the session on transparency. The Program Committee received 350 submissions, a whopping 26% increase over last year. After careful deliberation with an emphasis on positive and constructive reviewing, we accepted 67 papers. I’d like to thank the authors, the invited speakers, the Program Committee members and other organizers, the external reviewers, the sponsors, the USENIX staff, and the attendees for continuing to make USENIX Security a premier venue for security and privacy research. I’d also like to welcome our newcomers—be they students or seasoned researchers—to make the most of our technical sessions and evening events.

The USENIX Security Program Committee has followed a procedure that has changed little since the late 1990s, even as the number of submissions has grown from several dozen to hundreds. I evaluated the attendee survey of the previous year, interviewed both elders and newcomers, and performed a linear regression on paper submission statistics collected over the last 15 years. As a result, I instituted a number of changes to cope with the growth and maturation of our field. The changes include: introducing the light/heavy PC model to USENIX Security, the shadow PC concept, a hybrid unblinding process during the final stages of reviewing, a Doctoral Colloquium for career building, a Lightning Talks session of short videos, and enforcement of positive and constructive reviewing methodologies during deliberation.

I initially invited 56 Program Committee members (in honor of DES) to cover the advertised topics while attempting to increase diversity across dimensions of country, gender, geography, institution, and seniority. Each paper reaching the discussion phase had multiple reviewers who could speak at the PC meeting having read the paper. The authors of submissions were not revealed to the reviewers until late in the decision-making phase, and every paper was reviewed by at least two reviewers. The median number of reviews per paper was five. The heavy Program Committee met to discuss the submissions in May at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Attendees enjoyed quintessential and memorable Ann Arbor cuisine, including NSA-themed cocktails provided by Duo Security. Ahead of the meeting, each paper was assigned a discussion lead. We used punch cards and the “meeting tracker” feature of the HotCRP software so that each paper received ten minutes of discussion in an order planned ahead of time to ensure efficient and fairly allocated deliberation time. We finished exactly on schedule after two days.

The entire Program Committee invested a tremendous effort in reviewing and discussing these papers. PC members submitted on average 23 reviews. They received no tangible rewards other than a complimentary webcam privacy lens cap. So please, thank the all-volunteer PC members and external reviewers for their countless hours of work.

I would like to thank Patrick Traynor for chairing the Invited Talks Committee that selected a thought-provoking set of invited talks. The Poster and Works-in-Progress sessions are also “can’t miss” events for glimpses of cutting-edge and emerging research activities. I would like to thank Franziska Roesner for serving as the Poster Session Chair, and Tadayoshi Kohno for serving as both the WiPs Chair and Shadow PC Coordinator.

I am especially appreciative of Jaeyeon Jung for accepting the responsibilities of Deputy PC Chair after I had to deal with an unexpected disaster and relocation of my children after our house collapsed. When evaluating excuses for late reviews, I would consider whether the PC member’s house had recently collapsed. I also thank the USENIX Security Steering Committee and Niels Provos in particular for serving as USENIX Liaison. Eddie Kohler earns MVP status for his fast responses to various HotCRP questions. Finally, I would like to thank all of the authors who submitted their research for consideration. Our community is in its prime, so please enjoy the 23rd USENIX Security Symposium!

Kevin Fu, *University of Michigan*
USENIX Security ’14 Program Chair