Important Dates

- Proposals for talks and workshops due: Tuesday, November 12, 2019, 23:59 UTC
- Notification to talk and workshop presenters: Tuesday, December 10, 2019
- Proposals for lightning talks: Mid-February, 2020

Overview

For 2020, we’ve decided to dive deeper into how SREs work, including examining deep work, controlling for cognitive load, and sensemaking. There are many forms of work that SREs are required to do to be effective, whether it’s doing archaeology on a legacy service, a perplexing debug story that took you into the internals of a system, or mastering a tool you use in your day-to-day. We want to hear it all.

We’re interested in how SREs work along many dimensions, but would like to bring extra attention to facilitation. How does your team allow for and encourage learning? How do we balance the demands of keeping a system running while building for the long term? What has your team done to improve your ability to focus on cognitively demanding tasks?

Please join us in creating an excellent program for SREcon Americas West, which will be the fifteenth SREcon event globally. In 2019, we had over 2000 attendees from over 230 companies participate in the global SREcon conferences, with backgrounds ranging from small startups, through tech giants with tens of thousands of employees, to finance and enterprise sector companies adopting or expanding SRE in their organizations, to academia. New speakers are encouraged to submit talks; many of our best talks have come from people with new experiences to share.

Proposals

We are looking for proposals in the following formats:

- Talks:
  - 20-minute talk (including optional Q&A)
  - 40-minute talk (including optional Q&A)
- Workshops
  - Speakers are invited to submit workshop proposals ranging in subject matter from introductions to deep dives. Please specify what technical level your workshop is targeted at. One way to help with this is to think of the ideal attendee.
- Lightning talks:
  - TBA closer to the conference, after main CFP closes

To see the details of what we want to know about your proposal to speak, we encourage you to click through into the submission system linked from the Call for Participation web page.

The deadline for talk and workshop proposals is November 12, 2019. Proposals will only be accepted through the submission system and late submissions will not be considered. We’ll evaluate all submissions and get back to you by December 10, 2019. Accepted speakers will be required to confirm their plan to present along with their presentation information by December 17, 2019.

We will schedule practice sessions for all presenters, regardless of experience, because they help speakers adapt their message to our audience and improve the experience for attendees. Along with confirming their plan to present, speakers agree to participate in the practice sessions (details will be included in the acceptance notices).

Both presenters and organizers may withdraw or decline proposals for any reason, even after initial acceptance. Speakers must submit their own proposals; third-party submissions, even if authorized, will be rejected.

If you have questions about this Call for Participation, feel free to drop us a message at srecon20am-west_chairs@usenix.org.

Suggested Topics

- Tell us about your wild debug stories that took you into the internals of complex systems
- Tell us about how you approached a minefield of complexity to re-architect a system internally
- Tell us about how you became an expert on a particular tool most of us use in our day to days, but never give too much thought to
- How does your team create the time and space to dive into deep work? How do you effectively deal with toil?
- Tell us about the deep technical or people skills you have mastered as an SRE
- As SREs, how can we better share our knowledge gained through deep work?
Core Principles Track

With the popularity of the Core Principles track at SREcon19 Asia/Pacific and Europe/Middle East/Africa, we’ve decided to bring it to SREcon20 Americas West. Talks in this track will focus on providing an in-depth understanding of how the underlying technologies used by all SREs function, and why it’s important to know these details when supporting and scaling your infrastructure.

For this track, we’re looking for a number of topics, such as:
• Performance (e.g., CPU affinity, bottlenecks)
• Databases (e.g., how is data stored on disk in MySQL, PostgreSQL, etc.)
• Observability (e.g., monitoring overview, events vs. metrics, whitebox vs. blackbox, visualizations, etc.)
• Data & Streaming Infrastructure (e.g., how does Hadoop work? What is MapReduce?)
• Distributed Systems (e.g., consistency and consensus)
• Network (e.g., HTTP routing and load balancing)
• Languages (e.g., debugging systems with GDB)

Background (Overarching Goals of the Global SREcon Conferences)

SREcon is a gathering of engineers who care deeply about site reliability, systems engineering, and working with complex distributed systems at scale. Our purpose is to be inclusive as we bring together ideas representative of our diverse community, whether its members are focusing on a global scale, launching new products and ideas for a small business, or pivoting their approach to unite software and systems engineering. SREcon challenges both those new to the profession as well as those who have been involved in SRE or related endeavors for years. The conference culture is built upon respectful collaboration amongst all participants in the community through critical thought, deep technical insights, continuous improvement, and innovation.

For more information on the themes and programs of past conferences, see the list of past conferences at www.usenix.org/srecon.

Conference Organizers

Program Co-Chairs
Tammy Butow, Gremlin
Emil Stolarsky, Incident Labs

Program Committee
TBA

Steering Committee
Kurt Andersen, LinkedIn
Narayan Desai, Google
Sabrina Farmer, Google
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