

# NOTES

## USENIX Member Benefits

Members of the USENIX Association receive the following benefits:

**Free subscription** to *login*, the Association's quarterly magazine, featuring technical articles, tips and techniques, book reviews, and practical columns on such topics as security, site reliability engineering, Perl, and networks and operating systems

**Access** to *login*: online from December 1997 to the current issue: [www.usenix.org/publications/login/](http://www.usenix.org/publications/login/)

**Registration** discounts on standard technical sessions registration fees for selected USENIX-sponsored and co-sponsored events

**The right to vote** for board of director candidates as well as other matters affecting the Association.

For more information regarding membership or benefits, please see [www.usenix.org/membership/](http://www.usenix.org/membership/), or contact us via email ([membership@usenix.org](mailto:membership@usenix.org)) or telephone (+1 510.528.8649).

## USENIX Board of Directors

Communicate directly with the USENIX Board of Directors by writing to [board@usenix.org](mailto:board@usenix.org).

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## The Big Picture

Liz Markel, *Community Engagement Manager*

Summer and fall are my favorite seasons, with my current preference being determined by the weather of the moment; both are equally dazzling where I grew up in New England. Consequently, I was thrilled to find myself in Boston for USENIX ATC '18.

Every visit to Boston as an adult is an opportunity to discover this city through fresh eyes. My opinion about the city evolves with the pursuit of activities I now enjoy, such as bicycle rides along the Charles River. Participating in ATC as a still-new USENIX employee whose background is not in computer science also offered an additional perspective on a previously unfamiliar part of the landscape: the advanced computing systems research space and the tech industry in and around Boston.

In addition to broadening my perspectives on the constituencies that USENIX serves, ATC was an opportunity to observe the research side of USENIX following my exposure to the practice-focused side at SREcon18 Americas. I also met more of our amazing volunteers, including the newly elected Board of Directors, the multitude of program committee members, and the LISA18 organizing committee. Interacting with these groups made me appreciate the diversity of our leadership teams at USENIX, who represent a wide variety of sectors, genders, backgrounds, and experiences. I saw this diversity reflected in our conference attendees as well. It seems that we are at the leading edge of the social and community aspects of computer systems research and engineering just as we are with the technical content that comprises our programs and talks. Furthermore, where

we are and where we are headed—driven by a thoughtful and strategic decision-making process—is consistent with our values as an organization, as well as my personal values about equity, opportunity, and the value and richness diversity brings to life.

All of this talk about the people at USENIX conferences is a perfect segue to important news about an upcoming survey that offers you an opportunity to share valuable information with us and express your opinion about:

- ◆ How effectively you feel USENIX is implementing its mission
- ◆ Your thoughts about trends in your field
- ◆ Your story: how your professional career evolved, what role professional development has played in that progression and growth, and how USENIX has been involved in both
- ◆ The ways you're interested in engaging with your peers and with USENIX
- ◆ What value USENIX membership offers you

As a nonprofit organization, USENIX exists to serve you and your colleagues across the advanced computing systems profession. The information you provide through your survey responses will help us understand the needs of both the broad computing systems community and those of different segments, such as different generations and different genders. When we have a clear picture of your needs, we can better serve you and more effectively fulfill our mission.

The questions in the survey are a blend of data that we'll gather year over year to track trends as they're in development, plus questions that are pertinent to strategic and operational decisions we'll make within the next 12 to 18 months. Many questions are quick, but others are open-ended inquiries that may require a few minutes to answer. We hope that you'll take the time to answer all of these questions thoughtfully: your investment in this survey will be met with an equal investment on the part of USENIX staff and volunteer leadership to convert this data into actionable items.

Keep an eye on your inbox for a link to the survey coming in late August. If you have feedback or ideas beyond what's asked in the survey, I would love to hear from you at [liz@usenix.org](mailto:liz@usenix.org). I've long believed that alone we'll go faster, but together we'll go farther. I am looking forward to traveling that road with you.



### Meet the Board

*Meet Amy Rich, one of the new members of the USENIX Board of Directors. Liz Markel asked Amy a few questions about her professional activities, her personal interests, and her relationship with USENIX to help you get to know her better.*

#### **Tell me about your current role and what kinds of problems you're working on solving.**

I'm one of the engineering directors at Nuna, Inc., a healthcare technology company in San Francisco that builds data platforms and analytics solutions to help healthcare industry decision-makers understand cost and quality trends. With the insights we provide, they can make changes that increase access to effective, affordable care.

I lead the organization called Foundational Engineering, which includes Infrastructure, Security, and IT. Together, those three teams provide operational resilience through continuous integration and deployment, security, developer productivity, and system user support and support for the entire company.

Each of these teams has a specific focus, but the overall problem they're all trying to tackle revolves around transitioning from a startup to a young company. We walk the fine line between being agile and fast enough to find a product fit in an emerging market while still being secure and not accumulating so much technical debt that it significantly hampers our progress. Because we're a healthcare company that performs significant work for the Medicaid and Medicare arm of the Federal Government, we also have a number of

regulatory and compliance constraints to add to the mix.

#### **Are there any emerging trends you're observing in your field?**

When it comes to US healthcare, one of the most prominent trends over the last decade has been the move toward payment delivery models oriented towards value—that is, rewarding healthcare providers when they deliver high-quality, affordable care, instead of paying the same for all care, regardless of whether it was cost effective or achieved the desired outcome. To do this right, the government, and companies who provide healthcare for their employees, need good data platforms and analytics with which to measure the cost, quality, and experience of care, as well as to administer these new payment models. Significant investments have also been made to modernize the Medicaid program in its structure, policies, and information systems. This year we finally celebrated the final US state's conversion to submitting digitized healthcare claim records to the Federal Government! The emerging popularity of the fields of data science and machine learning is a huge benefit to programs like these and is one of the ways we can create systems to change US healthcare for the better.

When it comes to infrastructure engineering and IT, most things are moving towards the cloud, automated continuous integration and deployment, and serverless where workloads permit. We won't escape the need to understand and run the infrastructure anytime soon, but the ways in which we do so are drastically changing. Cloud has lowered the barrier to entry for a number of small companies who don't have dedicated infrastructure/security/IT roles, but the complexity of abstraction and scale almost always results in needing those folks after an initial minimum viable product phase. DevOps and SRE have become hot topics with different meanings, depending on who you talk to, but we've come back around in the cycle of trying to more closely align the developers and operations people, if

not looking for both sets of skills in one individual.

Regarding security, with the ubiquity of the Internet and people being online on both their work and personal devices 24x7 also comes the ubiquity of personal and corporate information theft. Security is more important than ever, and yet is neglected, as businesses try to move fast and be disruptive in creating the next big thing. Even more so than DevOps and SRE, there are few qualified people in the field, making those with the skills extremely sought after.

### **How were you first introduced to USENIX?**

As an undergraduate work-study student in college, I had far more interest in system administration than programming. I was responsible for helping run the servers in the Computer Science department and also moonlighted in various other computer labs on campus. As my senior thesis, I chose to perform a risk analysis on our CS department systems and write up the results. I argued that attending the 1994 USENIX Summer Technical Conference (conveniently held nearby) would provide significant background and training in my field, help with my degree and thesis, and also directly benefit the department since I could immediately apply the skills I learned. I presented a good enough case that they paid for a student ticket and subsidized my hotel for half the week.

### **What involvement have you had with USENIX?**

For the most part, I've always preferred to work behind the scenes than be a presence on the stage. In the early days, I volunteered with the registration desk to help offset the cost of attendance to USENIX ATC and LISA. After several years, I was well-known and respected enough to be asked to volunteer as a paper reviewer for the LISA program committee. That eventually led to being the LISA Invited Talks Co-Chair, the LISA Program Co-Chair, and then a member of the LISA Steering Committee and conference liaison. At various points I've also acted as an unofficial volunteer to help

publicize and solicit speakers/trainers (or just carry around boxes) for LISA, ATC, and SREcon. I've gotten on stage in front of the crowd as part of a WiAC panel and also led a number of BoF sessions over the years.

### **Why did you decide to pursue a seat on the board?**

USENIX had a profound impact on my life and career. The USENIX ideals about research, education, and OSS encouraged me to focus my skills on projects that positively impacted the world and shaped my career progression from sysadmin to technology director at mission-driven organizations. At this point in my career, I hope to exert a positive influence on the future focus and direction of the organization to ensure its continued relevance and ability to provide similar exposure to technology, professional networking, and peer support.

### **Why should someone consider becoming involved in USENIX?**

The rise of social media and availability of online instructional content was a huge leap forward for those trying to learn today's fast-moving skills that aren't taught in traditional classroom environments. USENIX is a premier provider of such content and also provides a venue for academics to showcase their latest research. Beyond that, USENIX conferences also provide ample opportunity for professional networking, something you still can't obtain by watching an online video. The people you meet at USENIX conferences may be your next coworkers, co-authors, research partners, or lifelong friends.

### **Aside from your work (and USENIX), tell me about your passions and how you spend your time.**

Tangential to work, I'm passionate about diversity and inclusion and building strong, healthy leadership and management structures. I mentor folks from other companies and participate in various slack workspaces geared towards these topics. To unwind from all the serious stuff, I occupy my mind by reading fiction, playing games, solving puzzles, and building LEGO.

### **Do you have one unique fact about yourself you can share with us?**

I'm an Adult Fan of LEGO (AFOL) and have accumulated an extensive collection (specializing in Space, Star Wars, and Speed Challenge sets) since becoming solvent.

### **In the spirit of the Board Game Night BoF, what's your favorite board game?**

I'm an avid board and card gamer, so trying to pick just one favorite might be the hardest question of this whole interview. I'm a particular fan of "hidden traitor" mechanics or "one against many" deduction games, but I also enjoy a good brutal co-op game that kicks your butt. After rolling 3D6 + 1D4 damage bonus, the randomized answer on my lookup table is Dead of Winter. It's the other people, not the zombies, you really need to guard against.

### **Tell me a bit about the region of the country you live in: what you like about it, the tech scene, and why someone might consider visiting or relocating there.**

I grew up in the country (hometown of 200 people), so I like having a perimeter of personal space, but I also like being relatively close to the convenience of stores, culture, and a major airport. This means I'm going to live in the suburbs of a decently sized, but not huge, city. I also like trees, hills, having four seasons (yes, I love my snow), and being on the ocean. All of those things together mean that the northeast, and specifically the coastal suburbs of Boston, are where I make my home.

Boston has a number of very well-respected universities with excellent STEM programs, and therefore also has a burgeoning tech scene. Visitors to the area come to satisfy a wide array of interests including, but not limited to, US history, animals and nature (no matter the season), foodie lifestyle, recreational or professional sports, liberal ideals and politics, art, theater, science, and craft beer.

### **Anything else you'd like to share?**

I'm excited to join the other great members of the Board and ready to do some work!

# Register Now!

usenix

# LISA.18



**October 29–31, 2018**  
**Nashville, TN, USA**

LISA: Where systems engineering and operations professionals share real-world knowledge about designing, building, and maintaining the critical systems of our interconnected world.

### Featured Speakers



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**Register by Monday, October 8 and save!**

[www.usenix.org/lisa18](http://www.usenix.org/lisa18)