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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/

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/, or contact us via email (membership@usenix.org) or telephone (+1 510.528.8649).

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Communicate directly with the USENIX Board of Directors by writing to board@usenix.org.

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Community Survey: Some Answers, Some More Questions

Liz Markel, Community Engagement Manager

In early fall, USENIX asked its community members for their opinions on a variety of topics through its Community Survey— our first survey of its kind since 2013. We solicited responses across a variety of media including our email newsletter; our social media channels including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn; the USENIX website and blog; and personal outreach. At the conclusion of the response period, more than 1,000 individuals had taken the time to share their thoughts, and we are incredibly appreciative of your participation in this process.

We expect the analysis to be ongoing throughout the first half of this year. As we mentioned in the opening of the survey, we are aiming to:

◆ Paint a data-driven picture of the USENIX community.

◆ Assess community members' perceptions of the organization.

◆ Evaluate membership options and determine what USENIX can do to better serve our communities.

◆ Gather information that will help USENIX make strategic decisions about various timely issues.

To address all of those priorities, we had to ask a lot of questions, including inquiring about demographics; more on that below. As an acknowledgement of the time commitment this survey required, we offered high-value raffle prizes to six randomly selected participants who completed the survey.

Going forward, our plan is to make this survey an annual opportunity to hear from you and to help guide important organizational

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Notice of Annual Meeting

The USENIX Association's Annual Meeting with the membership and the Board of Directors will be held on the evening of Monday, July 8, in Renton, WA, during the week of the 2019 USENIX Annual Technical Conference.

Women in Advanced Computing Birds-of-a-Feather session at LISA18.

LISA18 Program Co-Chairs Rikki Endsley and Brendan Gregg deliver their opening remarks.

LISA18 attendees spend some time chatting and connecting during a break.

The evening reception at LISA18 included the opportunity to screenprint your own shirt.

Denelle Dixon, Mozilla, delivers her Enigma 2019 talk, "It's Not 'Our' Data: Do We Want to Create a World of No Surprises?"

decisions. Did you participate in the survey? If not, why not? If there was something that prevented you from answering this year, please provide your feedback to liz@usenix. org! We will take into account your input for the 2019 edition of this survey. Additionally, if you have any other things on your mind, you can always share those with me as well.

Why Demographics?

Some respondents wanted to know why we cared about demographic data, especially questions inquiring about gender and ethnicity. Demographic data is a way to slice and dice responses to other questions that help us identify trends that may be related to community member attributes such as age, gender or ethnicity.

For example, the gender imbalance in USENIX's community is reflective of the gender imbalance in the computing systems community at large. As part of our mission, we're striving to mitigate this issue through offerings like the Women in Advanced Computing Birds-of-a-Feather sessions at our conferences, and Diversity Grants that offer funding for conference travel to many underrepresented groups in the field, including but not limited to women.

By filtering responses to non-demographic questions against the gender demographic question, we are able to identify specific needs from the women in our community, and build programs around those needs that are more likely to be successful because they are in direct response to identified needs. As we gather more survey data year over year, we can track the overall gender balance for USENIX's community and see if we are moving the needle in the right direction.

There were some other key questions that required demographic data, including the following:

Who is in our community now? How is our community changing over time?

We've discussed the gender question above a bit, but there are other defining elements of our communities that will directly impact how we put our mission into practice. For

example, think about your career: with respect to networking, knowledge growth, and skills development, your needs have likely changed over time. Understanding the fields in which our community members work, the length of time they've spent in their areas of work, where they are on the spectrum of their career's lifetime, and whether or not they've pursued advanced degrees is important with respect to the content we produce for our conferences, as well as the additional support we provide for networking and professional advancement.

That evolution can also affect how we are communicating with you. Do you want more or less interaction on social media? How valuable is in-person communication for you? (Answer according to your responses: very valuable, and your responses indicate that this does not vary by age!)

Just as your individual career and your communications needs have evolved, so too have the needs and the face of the larger community. With regular surveys and year-over-year data, we can stay on top of these changes and adjust our programmatic offerings accordingly to be as supportive of you as possible.

Are we effectively serving those who are in our community?

What about those who might be part of our community in the future? We already have policies in place like our USENIX Conference Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Speakers that spell out our position on harassment (tl;dr: we don't tolerate it, and there is a reporting and enforcement process). What other policies are necessary for our current and future community members to ensure a positive experience for them while they are participating in USENIX-supported activities? With a demographic portrait of our community, we can continue to create and enforce relevant policies and support the growth of the advanced computer systems profession.

Where are you?

USENIX is an international organization, and we would like to continue to increase

our international presence via our conferences. We have primarily done this with our SREcon events to date, and community members are showing up! For example, more than 55% of all of the survey respondents who indicated they have attended SREcon Europe/Middle East/Africa said they reside in one of those regions. For survey respondents who have attended SREcon Asia/Australia, just over 30% identified as residents of the region. We are excited about the success of these events, and the local response, as well as the rich exchange of ideas that comes from folks visiting other parts of the world and finding out the issues that affect particular regions. Questions tied to survey participant geography will help us consider future conference locations, both domestic and international.

Who Are You?

So, who is the USENIX community comprised of? While we know that there are many communities underneath the umbrella of USENIX, we were curious to know how you defined those communities for yourselves.

When we designed the survey, we debated about how to ask which community you belong to: practitioner or academic? Sysadmin or SRE? We ended up with two questions: one that asked about conference attendance, and one that asked respondents to self-select their areas of work. Our expectation was that the responses to these questions would be consistent. We also had certain expectations about where overlaps of interest and work would occur.

Our very preliminary analysis of these responses was surprising. For example, many people who identified as LISA attendees and/or sysadmins also identified as USENIX Security attendees and/or those working in areas related to security, but this does not correlate with the profiles of those who have registered for USENIX Security, meaning that the two items should be mentioned distinctly. How does this overlap affect what is happening in industry and academia? Can USENIX facilitate produc-

tive collaboration in this area? What does this mean for our conference content?

We are asking some more questions of the data, but we also want to ask you: how do you define the professional community you are a part of? Do you consider yourself part of communities that your work supports? How important is engaging with that community, and how do you go about that engagement? How do you decide which conferences to attend? Please send me your thoughts: liz@usenix.org.

Food for Thought

Of course, one of the potential (and potentially fun) outcomes of doing research is that you wind up with more questions than answers. Many of the thoughtful responses provided throughout the survey have prompted other questions on the following topics.

Volunteering

The majority of my professional work for the past decade has been alongside committed and talented volunteers. When I joined the USENIX team, I was immediately impressed by the corps of volunteers involved in the organization whose subject matter expertise and leadership is a significant part of our success.

Conferences are a big part of who USENIX is and what we do. Many of you said you would be interested in helping at conferences, and I find myself wondering what new roles volunteers could fill that would enhance attendees' experiences—especially first-time attendees—and create a more fulfilling and valuable conference experience. For example, a conference I recently participated in as an attendee asked local attendees to volunteer to organize small dinners at nearby restaurants. It was an opportunity for new attendees to see a bit of the city and easily meet people in what might have otherwise been an overwhelming environment. Think back to your first time attending a particular conference: did you participate in an event like this? How did it help your overall event experience? If this wasn't an opportunity, did you wish

Enigma 2019 Program Co-Chair Franzi Roesner, Enigma Steering Committee member Parisa Tabriz, and USENIX Executive Director Casey Henderson enjoy one of the evening receptions in Burlingame.

Max Smeets of Stanford University delivers his Enigma 2019 talk, "Countering Adversarial Cyber Campaigns."

Nicholas Weaver of the International Computer Science Institute (ICSI) and University of California, Berkeley delivers his Enigma 2019 talk, "Cryptocurrency: Burn It with Fire."

Enigma 2019 Student and Diversity Grant Recipients

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there was something like this to help you break the ice and make connections? Would you like to give back to our current conference participants and provide a meaningful experience? Again, I would love to hear from you with your thoughts on these questions, and encourage you to reach out to me via email, find me at a conference and share your feedback, or include your comments on a post-conference survey.

For this particular idea of attendee dinners to come to fruition, we would need a number of things to fall into place—including willing volunteers. While that particular idea is germinating, I'd ask you to consider what other ideas you have for volunteer-driven activities on-site at conferences that would improve the conference experience, and that you would be willing to lead or participate in. Make sure to tell me about them by sending me an email at liz@usenix.org.

Building My Reading List

If you send me your ideas related to conferences, I would love to hear about books, blogs, podcasts, e-newsletters, and other resources that I should know about, too! Many of you mentioned *Wired* magazine in your survey responses as one of the publications you frequently read. I've combed through the back issues of *Wired,* but I'm ready for more in the new year to help me better understand the work that you do. My goal is twofold: gain more insight into your work so that USENIX can serve you better, but also understand the relevance of your work to the general public, which will inform my conversations when advocating for USENIX outside of your community.

In the interest of fair exchange, if you send me your resource recommendations, I'll leverage my English degree and experience serving librarians and will send you some book recommendations sure to keep you entertained on flights to USENIX conferences. You might also check out the book reviews section of *;login:* for excellent suggestions, too!

How Are We Doing?

If you've read any of my previous USENIX Notes entries, you may have noticed my genuine enthusiasm for USENIX's work, and my belief that we're doing some really great work, both in terms of the content and conference experience we provide.

Respondents to our survey question about how we're doing on fulfillment of our mission tend to agree with my assessment: on a scale of 1 to 4, from (1) needs significant improvement to (4) amazing work, we earned the following weighted averages for each area of our mission:

◆ Foster technical excellence and innovation: 3.3

◆ Support and disseminate research with a practical bias: 3.3

◆ Provide a neutral forum for discussion of technical issues: 3.2

◆ Encourage computing outreach into the community at large: 3

This is a great starting point, but there is still room for improvement: our performance, our ability to meet your needs, our communication with you about what we're up to. It gives us a measuring stick as we consider where to put our resources and creative energy in the coming months.

Several open-ended comments from respondents have me thinking beyond these results: many spoke highly of what USENIX has to offer and the value we deliver. These same respondents also wondered why more people aren't aware of USENIX. The idea of USENIX as a "best kept secret in advanced computing systems" does have some allure, but we'll be a much greater force for good if more people know about our work and get involved. How can we accomplish this? How can you help?

My inbox is always open: liz@usenix.org.

Bob Lord presents his Enigma 2019 talk, "Mr. Lord Goes to Washington, or Applying Security outside the Tech World."

Daniela Seabra Oliveira delivers her Enigma 2019 talk, "Why Even Experienced and Highly Intelligent Developers Write Vulnerable Code and What We Should Do about It."

Two conferences' worth of Enigma leadership: Franzi Roesner, Ben Adida, and Daniela Seabra Oliveira.

SAVE THE DATES!

SRE CON® _ AMERICAS

MARCH 25–27, 2019 • BROOKLYN, NY, USA
www.usenix.org/srecon19americas

SRE CON® _ ASIA AUSTRALIA

JUNE 12–14, 2019 • SINGAPORE
www.usenix.org/srecon19asia

SRE CON® _ EUROPE MIDDLE EAST AFRICA

OCTOBER 2–4, 2019 • DUBLIN, IRELAND
www.usenix.org/srecon19europe

SREcon is a gathering of engineers who care deeply about site reliability, systems engineering, and working with complex distributed systems at scale. 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 based upon respectful collaboration amongst all participants in the community through critical thought, deep technical insights, continuous improvement, and innovation.

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