

Message from the Program Chair

Dear LISA Attendee:

Back in 1989, LISA was just a small, two-day workshop, while the conference we now call the USENIX Annual Technical Conference was held twice a year and was known as “Summer USENIX” or “Winter USENIX.” Most of the attendees were programmers, often researchers, but some of us were either dual-role programmer-sysadmins or dedicated sysadmins. The papers were mostly about operating system research, but a few were clearly of interest to system administrators: for example, Brent Callaghan had just introduced the automounter, two guys from BBN presented an implementation of dial-up IP for UNIX, people from NYSERnet had an implementation of SNMP, and Denise Ondishko from the University of Rochester delivered her paper “Administration of Department Machines by a Central Group.” In 1990, LISA changed from a “workshop” to a “conference,” but many LISA attendees remained regulars at the general conference. LISA added a third conference day in 1991. By the time I went to my first LISA, in 1994, a handful of tutorials had been added, on the Monday and Tuesday before the conference.

We’ve all come a long way since 1989. LISA is now one of USENIX’s flagship conferences, with six days of tutorials, three days of workshops, and three days of multitrack technical sessions. LISA papers have moved from talking about line printer systems and early implementations of what would eventually become sudo, to automated virtual networks, high-level languages to make dealing with SELinux easier, and protection schemes for USB keys using trusted virtual domains. Most importantly, most of the LISA attendees are dedicated, professional system administrators rather than programmers who drew the short straw and got “taking care of the systems” added to their regular duties.

Some things about LISA don’t change. In particular, it takes a small army of people to make the conference happen—far too many to name or count here. Let’s just say that a quick count puts the number well over 200, and that doesn’t include the on-site staff. This conference wouldn’t be possible without all these people. Compared to all of them, my role as program chair is more of a figurehead and high-level organizer than anything else. As you move about the conference, please take a moment and say “thanks” to anyone you see wearing an official badge holder or ribbon.

Of the 38 papers submitted (or 34, depending on how you want to count them), we accepted 12. Those papers, the full text of which appears in these proceedings, are a relatively small but significant part of the conference, and, like those of every LISA past, represent the best research and “deep thought” about system administration today. I encourage you to read every one of them. I also encourage you to make an effort to meet new people, to listen to a talk or paper that covers material outside your usual interests, and to attend a LISA activity that’s new to you. Finally, remember to have fun. After all, how many times do you get to hang out with hundreds of people who all understand what you do for a living, who know the same acronyms you do, and who don’t think you’re weird? Take advantage of this opportunity while you can!

Adam Moskowitz
Program Chair

