

Message from the Program Co-Chairs

Dear colleagues,

We are very saddened that Jay Lepreau, OSDI's founder and first program chair in 1994, passed away on September 15 this year. Although our community will miss him deeply, we are proud to carry on his vision of OSDI as a top-tier systems conference and complement to SOSP for bringing together professionals from academic and industrial backgrounds.

OSDI '08 received 193 submissions, tying the record of four years ago. We used Eddie Kohler's HotCRP software to handle submissions and Geoff Voelker's Banal program in the submissions process to check compliance with the formatting guidelines. We also used the commercial word-counting program AnyCount to check for papers that somehow managed to squeeze an excessive amount of content into 14 pages. (Most submissions had well over 10,000 words.) One submission stood out in violation of the guidelines, but as this was due to a misunderstanding, we allowed the authors to delete some subsections. Ultimately, that paper was not accepted.

Following the lead of several recent systems and networking conferences, we used a two-tiered PC structure to spread the reviewing load and three reviewing rounds to focus effort on the most promising submissions. We had 16 "heavy-load" PC members (including the co-chairs) who agreed to participate in all three reviewing rounds and attend the PC meeting. The 17 "light-load" PC members participated in the first two reviewing rounds. We also solicited external reviews for papers for which additional expertise was needed.

In the first round, all papers received three reviews. With few exceptions, the 105 papers receiving at least one "accept" recommendation or at least two "weak accept" recommendations moved forward to the second round. In the second round, surviving papers received two more reviews. The 65 papers with at least one "accept" recommendation moved forward to the third round. In this last round, surviving papers received at least two more reviews. Ultimately, papers discussed at the PC meeting had at least seven reviews, with at least four reviews by heavy-load members. In all, the 193 submitted papers received 948 reviews.

At the PC meeting, we relied on HotCRP to manage the discussion and record the committee's decisions. Because HotCRP prevents PC members from viewing papers for which they are conflicted, this meant that during the meeting and until the official notifications went out, the PC did not know the outcome for conflicted papers, including their own.

We accepted 26 of the 193 papers, or 13.5%. The PC took a broad view of the systems area and ultimately accepted papers on a diverse set of topics, including operating systems (of course), cloud computing, file systems, distributed systems, security, concurrency, and systems based on techniques from the PL community. The PC also continued the OSDI tradition of preferring "exciting but flawed" submissions over "boring but correct" ones. As usual, we assigned each accepted paper a shepherd to supervise the revision process. We believe the final program represents some of the best work being done in systems research today.

Creating a conference program is a significant undertaking. Our role as program co-chairs was to lead and give direction to the many folks who did a tremendous amount of hard work. We thank the authors for their efforts, especially those whose papers we could not accept. We thank the program committee for their hard work—heavy-load members reviewed at least 33 papers each and light-load members reviewed at least 20 papers each. We thank our external reviewers for contributing much-needed reviews on short notice. We thank the steering committee for its support and guidance. We thank Eddie and Geoff for developing and supporting their software. Finally, we thank the USENIX staff for all the behind-the-scenes work that makes the conference actually happen.

Richard Draves, Microsoft Research
Robbert van Renesse, Cornell University
Program Co-Chairs