Message from the FAST '22 Program Co-Chairs

Welcome to the 20th USENIX Conference on File and Storage Technologies (FAST '22). This year's conference continues the tradition of bringing together researchers and practitioners from both industry and academia for a program of innovative and rigorous storage-related research. As we continue living and working in unprecedented times, this year's conference is the first hybrid FAST (both in-person and online). This is a welcome return for at least some of the storage community to be able to congregate after last year's first fully virtual conference. We are pleased to include activities that allow wider participation than a strictly in-person event, as well as accommodate "mask-to-mask" interaction for those who can make the trip. We have a program with talks and posters on a wide range of topics, including emerging and traditional storage technologies; distributed storage; key-value stores and graph analytics; deduplication; performance analysis; and, as always, new file system designs.

To commemorate the 20th FAST conference, we will have several small activities throughout the conference, including trivia and memories from early FAST conferences and an opportunity to make predictions for the future of storage. We will share some predictions and memories throughout the conference, and put them in a time capsule for a future FAST conference where the capsule will be opened to see our community's ability to predict the future. We hope these activities will be fun, informative, and a good chance to think about where we want our community to grow and evolve over the next two decades.

FAST '22 received 130 submissions from authors in academia, industry, government labs, and the open-source communities. Of these, we accepted 28 papers, for an acceptance rate of 21%. The Program Committee (PC) used a two-round online review process. In the first round, each paper was assigned three reviewers. This year, we adopted an early rejection notification for papers that did not advance to round two, allowing authors to receive and act upon feedback earlier. In the second round, 72 papers were assigned at least two more reviews, and these authors were invited to submit a response to the reviews before the PC meeting. This is the second year that FAST has included an author response period. After the author response period and online discussion, the PC discussed 51 papers to select the final program. The two-day hybrid PC meeting was held on December 6-7, 2021 and had six PC members attend in-person in Chapel Hill, NC, with the rest joining virtually from global locations that spanned 10 time-zones. We used Eddie Kohler's excellent HotCRP service to manage all stages of the review process, from submission to author notification. All accepted papers were assigned a shepherd from the PC, who worked with the authors to address comments from the reviews and provided editorial advice and feedback on the final manuscripts.

We continued including a special category of deployed-systems papers, which address experience with the practical design, implementation, analysis, or deployment of large-scale, operational systems. We received three deployed-systems submissions and accepted one.

This year we introduced a new mentoring program, which was spearheaded by Vasily Tarasov. Joining a new community can be daunting. The goal of the mentorship program is to match FAST community newcomers with more seasoned participants to nurture a sense of belonging and remove barriers by introducing them to others, answering questions, offering advice on how to get the most out of the experience, and even just meeting up for a chat. We hope the FAST community benefited from the program and would like to thank all mentors, mentees, and particularly Vasily for leading this valuable program.

We wish to thank the many people who contributed to this conference. First and foremost, we are grateful to all the authors who submitted their work to FAST '22. We would also like to thank the attendees of FAST '22 and the future readers of these papers. Together with the authors, you form the FAST community and make storage research vibrant and exciting. We extend our thanks to the entire USENIX staff, who have provided outstanding support throughout the planning and organizing of this conference with the highest degree of professionalism and friendliness. Most importantly, their behind-the-scenes work makes this conference actually happen. We would like to thank the Work-in-Progress Session Chairs, Alex Conway and Deniz Altinbüken and our delegates to the *;login:* editorial board, Sasha Fedorova and Xiaosong Ma. Our thanks go also to the members of the FAST Steering Committee who provided invaluable advice and feedback, and to our Steering Committee Liaison, Keith Smith, for his guidance and encouragement on many issues, large and small, over the past year.

Finally, we wish to thank our Program Committee for their many hours of hard work reviewing, discussing, and shepherding the submissions. In total, the PC wrote 529 thoughtful reviews and 1282 online comments. HotCRP recorded approximately 344,209 words in reviews (excluding HotCRP boilerplate language)—the same rough length as one book in George R.R. Martin's *Song of Ice and Fire* series (a.k.a. *Game of Thrones*). The reviewers' evaluations, and their thorough and conscientious deliberations at the PC meeting, contributed significantly to the quality of our decisions. Similarly, the paper shepherds' efforts led to significant improvements in the final quality of the program. We look forward to an interesting and enjoyable conference!

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