

new faces

of FreeBSD

BY DRU LAVIGNE

The election for the FreeBSD Project's Core Team took place earlier this year and [results were announced on July 1](#). The FreeBSD Core Team constitutes the Project's Board of Directors, and as such is responsible for deciding the Project's overall goals and direction as well as managing specific areas of the FreeBSD Project landscape. Every two years, the Core Team is elected by the active developers in the Project. The 2020 election represents the 11th elected Core Team.

For this issue, we asked some new and returning members of the Core Team to introduce themselves and their goals.

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Baptiste Daroussin, Clusteradm Liaison

I have used FreeBSD for around 20 years on my personal servers and as my main desktop/laptop. My contributions to the Project take place mostly during my free time. I am the author of `poudriere`, have worked on `pkg` unicode collation, replaced `groff` with `mandoc`, and refactored/modernized many parts of the ports tree such as the option framework, `USES`, and flavors. I have been a FreeBSD developer for 10 years (ports and src), a member of `portmgr` team for 9 years, and have done 2 shifts for `portmgr` in the past.

I decided to run again for Core to help the community on the nontechnical side. I want to help make sure that FreeBSD remains open for modernization and continuous improvements while keeping its strength, which is the quality of the engineering and the community nature of the Project.

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Ed Maste, Git Transition WG and Security Team Liaison

I've used FreeBSD since 2003 or so. I was at a networking hardware company, and they began work on a new product built on FreeBSD. I got my start in the TCP/IP stack, which was undergoing fine-grained locking in the FreeBSD Project. Our product made some unusual demands of the network stack, so we often encountered issues that hadn't been seen before. I collaborated with FreeBSD developers to diagnose and report bugs and test fixes. This work led to becoming a committer in 2005. I remained with the same company for some time, leaving around 2012 to take on consulting roles, and since then have



been working with the FreeBSD Foundation to manage the Project's development efforts.

I previously served on two consecutive Core Teams, and then chose not to run in 2018 as a self-imposed term limit. After a term off, I felt ready to stand as a candidate again.

As the FreeBSD Project, I feel we can be rather resistant to change, but we also occasionally have pressure to make change without proper consideration or due care. Change is inevitable and is vital for us to remain relevant for new generations of computing users. I hope we can make FreeBSD even more interesting to students and others who are learning about and getting started with operating systems. I hope that they'll become FreeBSD users, developers, and future Core Team members.

There are two main technical projects that I plan to help move forward during my Core term: the transition to Git as our version control system and the full introduction of pkgbase. Core is not directly a technical body, but both of these projects require a significant amount of effort to be focused on coordination and communication with the community so that they can happen smoothly.

I believe it's vital for us to encourage new people with new ideas to help move the Project forward, and I am very happy to see a number of new, engaged committers on this Core Team, including two of my mentees in the Project.

One piece of advice I have for new Core members (and this goes for myself, too) is to figure out what's really important and learn how to respectfully decline tasks and topics that we don't have the capacity to handle. In previous Core Teams, we've had very long lists of tasks that were ostensibly being handled by the Core Team but, in reality, made very little progress. We need to focus the limited time and energy available from Core Team members on the most important tasks ahead of us, in order to make real progress.

George V. Neville-Neil, Foundation Liaison

I first started working with FreeBSD code before I was a committer, porting the FreeBSD network stack to VxWorks in the late 1990s. I've been a FreeBSD committer since 2004 and have been on Core several times since then. My main areas of work are networking, from drivers up through all the protocols, and, more recently, DTrace.

I ran for core@ this term for two reasons: the first was that the global situation was especially fraught with Covid-19 shutting down much of the planet, and the second was that I felt it was time to reinvigorate the Project with some new direction. One of the key elements of being on Core—as I know from previous terms—is that we are flag wavers, which is how leadership proceeds in a democratically run, open-source project. One of the flags to wave is simply that we, as contributors, are all in this situation together. Many of us in technology discount the human aspects of our work, but in the current situation, it's quite obvious that keeping things together will be more challenging than it has been in previous years.

The second flag I wish to wave is one whereby we, as a project, refine and target our software and our message. The message is that FreeBSD is absolutely great at being a technology toolkit. FreeBSD should be picked up by pretty much anyone—from a single individual through start-ups to large companies—to produce systems and products that carry technology forward, producing high-quality, dependable, and performant systems. It's clear looking at our shared history that this has happened many times (NetApp, Isilon, Juniper, Netflix, and others are mar-



queue names in this area), and it should be where we continue to focus and set our sights as a project. It's my goal during this term to make sure that message is clear and consistent both inside and outside the Project.

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Hiroki Sato, Code-of-Conduct Committee Liaison

I work as an assistant professor at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. In the Project, I am a member of the Release Engineering Team and Documentation Engineering Team, as well as a board member of the FreeBSD Foundation.

I began working on FreeBSD around 2000 and have been involved in various aspects of it since then, including the IPv6 stack, userland utility improvements, the documentation framework, and maintaining ports. I also have maintained one of the official mirror sites, which is for the Asia/Pacific region, and I host AsiaBSDCon, an international conference on BSD operating systems in the Asian region.

I decided to run for Core because I am interested in improving our community and I believe we should be aware of how geographically widespread our community has become. For much of the early history of the FreeBSD Project, most of our community members were in North America or Europe. The number of contributions from people in Australia, South America, Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, or East Asia has been increasing, and with so many different regions involved, there have been increased opportunities for international collaboration. That said, there are also problems we should address. As a person in Asia, I can offer this region's viewpoint to the Project.

I would also like to help improve interactions between the Project and enterprise users. Although several such collaborations have been attempted, interviews with companies using FreeBSD indicate that the question of how to make a relationship with the Project mutually beneficial is still an open one. I believe we should discuss it and look beyond conferences and vendor summits.

I look forward to pursuing the goals of improving diversity and discussions concerning interactions with enterprise users. These are topics that require continuous discussion. And, we should have geographic diversity in our Core Team as well. While the number of people who run for Core in Asia is often small, I hope as an individual from Asia to provide ideas from a different perspective.



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Kyle Evans, Portmgr Team Liaison

I'm relatively new, having only been with the Project for around four years. The majority of my work has been centered around userland and lualoader. FreeBSD is mostly a hobby for me—I've deployed a small fleet of FreeBSD/arm boards at work for various purposes, but they're pretty rock solid and don't require much work on FreeBSD. I'm generally drawn to the Project because it has interesting challenges to solve and, of course, I stay for the goat.

I wasn't initially planning to run for Core, but I was prodded toward the idea. Upon reflection, I decided that I wanted to run for Core and work on some of the social/communication issues I've noticed or even been bitten by in the past. My general goals are to improve



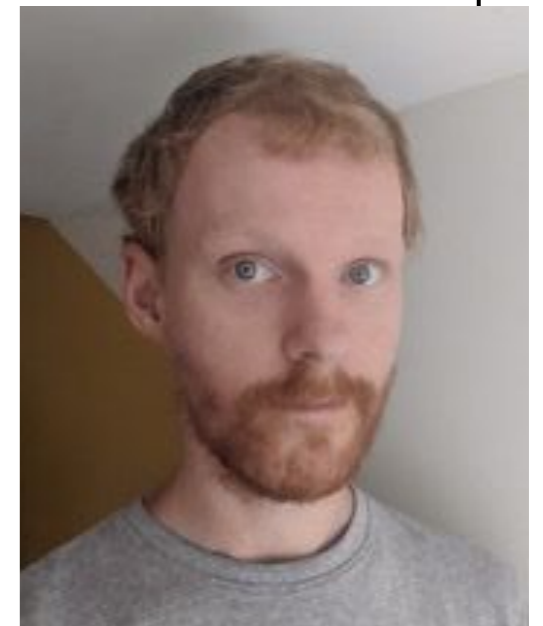
how we interact with each other and our contributors and to help the Project remain sustainable through committer retention and recruitment.

As the portmgr liaison for this term, my aim is to help portmgr improve as an organizational unit in all aspects. Some more specific goals are:

1. Reduce friction for non-portmgr proposed changes without lowering the quality of the ports tree.
2. Improve socialization of the direction for framework advancements.
3. Identify how portmgr works internally and determine if the dynamics are a match for how the team is organized.

Mark Johnston, Bugmeister and CI Team Liaison

I got into FreeBSD because of a student internship at a company that used it to build a networking appliance. At the time, I really wanted to get involved with open source and was interested in operating systems, and, fortunately, I managed to get a job on the fairly small OS team at this company, which happened to contain a couple of FreeBSD committers who helped mentor me into the Project. Since then, I've worked for several appliance vendors, and I now do freelance FreeBSD development. Many of my contributions have been in the form of bug fixes for the kernel—for some perverse reason, I enjoy trying to track down obscure concurrency bugs. I've also done some work on our DTrace port and on the VM subsystem.



I ran for Core because I wanted to get a better handle on the communication challenges of the Project. FreeBSD has a large, distributed developer base, together with many downstreams that vary in their level of interaction with the FreeBSD Project. At the same time, FreeBSD is also a much smaller and more cohesive project than certain other well-known, open-source operating systems, and as a consequence, it's often possible to make quick progress on problems by getting the "right" people involved. This doesn't happen as often as it could, especially with large downstream vendors, and I would like to better understand the needs of our downstreams and developers and try to identify the gaps in our development process. Right now, I think it is still overly difficult for non-committers to get patches submitted, reviewed, and committed.

With the transition to Git, I expect to see an even larger volume of patch submissions from contributors, and the distinction between "contributors" and "committers" will become blurrier. As a member of core@, I would work on policies that help define and streamline the workflow for contributors to submit patches and for the committers who test and review contributed patches.

DRU LAVIGNE is the author of *BSD Hacks* and *The Best of FreeBSD Basics*.