

Rachel Greenstadt, Damon McCoy, and Carmela Troncoso

# Editors' Introduction

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It is our great pleasure to introduce the first issue of the fifth volume of PoPETs, an open access journal that publishes articles accepted to the annual Privacy Enhancing Technologies Symposium (PETS).

Since 2015 PoPETS/PETS follows the hybrid conference-journal model started by PVLDB, and now adopted by many other conferences in the field such as FSE, CHES or the IEEE Security and Privacy Symposium. This model, that brings journal-style reviewing to conferences, has improved the quality of the published articles, and has improved the authors' experience regarding the review process. PoPETS double-blind peer review process is similar to that of top-tier computer security conferences, including phases for bidding, individual reviews, author rebuttals, discussion among reviewers, and consensus recommendation. By having four issues per year, to which articles can be resubmitted once previous reviews have been addressed, PoPETS provides a more predictable path to acceptance for authors while maintaining a high quality rigorous peer-review process. Recognizing the need to increase the free, public availability of scientific publications, PoPETs is published under the open-access Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs license.

Articles submitted to this issue were reviewed by 76 members of the Editorial Board and 33 External Reviewers, all of whom are internationally recognized researchers in the field of computer security and privacy. The submitted articles, reviews, and discussion were available to all members of the editorial board that did not have a conflict of interest with the authors of the article. To identify conflicts of interest, the editorial board membership was published before submissions were opened and authors were asked to indicate members with whom any of the authors had a conflict of in-

terest. In addition, editorial board members were asked to list the authors and institutions with which they have conflicts of interest. Finally, the editorial board chairs also checked for missed conflicts. Editorial board members were welcome to submit articles, while the chairs were precluded from doing so.

There were 40 submissions to this issue of PoPETs. Six of the 40 submissions had already been submitted to a previous PoPETs issue, and been invited to resubmit after major revisions. These six revised articles were re-assigned to the editorial board members that had reviewed the previous version. Additionally, five articles that had been submitted and rejected from a previous issue of the journal, were resubmitted to this issue. These revised versions were assigned the same reviewers that had evaluated it in a previous round whenever possible. Authors of resubmitted articles (either rejected or invited to do major revisions) provided a summary of changes between the prior and current version that explained how review concerns had been addressed.

In a first double-blind reviewing phase most of the submissions received four individual reviews (in a few cases, articles received three or more than four reviews). Most articles had an external review drawn from a pool of young experts proposed by the community<sup>1</sup>, and further external experts were invited to review certain articles where necessary. These individual reviews were sent to authors, who were given the opportunity to submit a rebuttal. After the rebuttal period there was a discussion among the reviewers, other members of the editorial board and the chairs, before a consensus decision on the paper was reached. One of the reviewers was then selected to write a meta-review that summarized the conclusion of the discussion and the justification for the decision.

Of the 40 submissions, three were accepted with minor changes and four were conditionally accepted subject to minor revisions. For the latter articles, a reviewer was assigned as a shepherd to ensure that the important points from the meta-review were addressed in the camera-ready version. One article was co-shepherded by two reviewers, one of them with the sole role of revising the cryptographic proof in the paper. Seven articles were ultimately accepted and are published in this is-

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bit.ly/2gxVDd8>

sue. We owe special thanks to all the shepherds for the effort they put into ensuring that important revisions were made. These accepted papers will be presented at PETS 2018, to be held on July 24–27, 2018 in Barcelona, Spain.

The authors of 23 other articles were invited to re-submit to a future issue of PoPETs. Four of them received a Major Revisions decision and, if submitted to one of the next PoPETs two submission deadlines, will be reviewed by the same editorial board members who will judge if the major issues pointed in the meta-review are addressed. The remaining 19 received an encouraging meta-review that pointed revisions needed that were deemed too serious or too abstract to be addressed in short time. Finally, 10 papers were rejected due to them requiring a major rewriting that effectively results in a new paper, or due to not being considered sufficiently close to the topics listed in the call for papers.

We thank the following people for making the first issue of PoPETs Volume 2018 possible:

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- Gemma Galdón Clavel, Etics

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Finally, we are happy to introduce Carmela Troncoso as the new Co-Editor-in-Chief for the current and next volumes, starting in this issue. Rachel Greenstadt and Damon McCoy will continue to serve as Co-Editor-in-Chief

for this volume. We thank Claudia Diaz for her service as Co-Editor-in-Chief for Volumes 2016 and 2017.

Sincerely,

Rachel Greenstadt, Damon McCoy, and Carmela Troncoso

Program Co-Chairs of PETS 2018 and Co-Editors-in-Chief of PoPETs volume 2018.