Rachel Greenstadt, Damon McCoy, and Carmela Troncoso

Editors' Introduction

It is our great pleasure to introduce the second 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 84 members of the Editorial Board and 40 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 interest. 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 39 submissions to this issue of PoPETs. Five of the 39 submissions had been invited to resubmit after major revision in a previous issue, and were re-assigned to the editorial board members that had reviewed the previous version. Additionally, eight articles that had been rejected from a previous issue were resubmitted to the journal, and were re-assigned to the same reviewers whenever possible. For all these resubmissions the authors provided a summary of changes between the prior and current version that explained how review concerns had been addressed.

In a first 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[1]. Further external experts were invited to review certain articles where necessary. The 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 to reach a consensus decision for each paper. 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 39 submissions, one was accepted with minor changes and six were conditionally accepted subject to minor revisions. For the latter, a reviewer was assigned as a shepherd to ensure that the important points from the meta-review were addressed in the camera-ready version. Seven articles were ultimately accepted and are published in this issue and will be presented at PETS 2018, to be held on July 24–27, 2018 in Barcelona, Spain.

The authors of 18 other articles were invited to resubmit to a future issue of PoPETs. Three of them received a Major Revisions decisions and, if submitted to one of the next PoPETs two submission deadlines, will be reviewed by the same editorial board members who

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1 https://bit.ly/2gxVDd8

will judge if the major issues pointed in the meta-review are addressed. The remaining 15 received an encouraging meta-review that pointed revisions needed that were deemed too serious or too abstract to be addressed in short time. Finally, 14 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.

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- Damon McCoy, New York University
- Carmela Troncoso, IMDEA Software Institute

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