

new faces

of FreeBSD

BY DRU LAVIGNE

This column aims to shine a spotlight on contributors who recently received their commit bit and to introduce them to the FreeBSD community. In this month's column, the spotlight is on **Sergey Kozlov**, who received his ports bit in September, and **Vinicius Zavam**, who received his ports bit in October.

Tell us a bit about yourself, your background, and your interests.



- **Sergey:** My name is Sergey Kozlov and I'm a FreeBSD addict. I was born and spent most of my life in the Ukraine, Kyiv, but since 2015, I've been living in Gdansk, Poland. I'm a Python programmer, sysadmin, and tester. I'm working at Intel on automatic testing of Intel's FreeBSD wired Ethernet drivers (em, igb, ix, ixl, etc.).



- **Vinicius:** I was born and raised in Fortaleza, with roots in Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais. My family's name comes originally from Italy and was misspelled during the Italian migration to Brazil, so I'm also the inheritor of the tasty tradition of dipping bread in coffee. The original family's name is Zavani. Now I'm living in Germany

(and "crazy" homesick, especially in winter) working for cleverbridge, which employs a massive use of FreeBSD.

As a kid, I got into computers after encountering a TK 85 and later graduated in computer engineering. I enjoy learning different languages. I'm engaged and motivated by the use and benefits of free and open-source software (FOSS), especially the ones under the BSD license, and have made contributions and donations to different projects over time. In the last few years I have been working to get more privacy-enhancing technologies (PET) support working on *BSD operating systems. These efforts brought me to the TorBSD Diversity Project (TDP, <https://torbsd.org/2016/12/17/welcome-aboard-vinicius.html>) where I became a core team member (<https://www.torproject.org/about/corepeople.html.en#egypticio>).

How did you first learn about FreeBSD and what about FreeBSD interested you?

- **Sergey:** When I was a beginner sysadmin, I worked mostly on Windows Server, but wanted to learn UNIX-like operating systems, as I had heard so much about them. I started with the most popular, Linux, and I was trying to learn it for quite a while. I installed different distributions, versions, flavors, all the while looking on the Internet for books and articles related to Linux but couldn't learn a thing. I just felt that I hadn't started at the right place and didn't see a clear path for mastering my Linux skills. I was very surprised that all those operating systems were even called Linux, because I could hardly find anything common in them.

Later, I heard about FreeBSD from one of my friends. He said that somewhere out there, in the land of heavily loaded web servers and routers, there's a caste of old sysadmins with long beards who prefer tidiness and order. Those guys know everything about how their tools work and the OS they're using is called FreeBSD. And that's exactly what I was looking for! I downloaded the ISO and got a copy of Michael W Lucas's *Absolute FreeBSD* and that's where the world of UNIX opened to me. One thing at a time, step by step, I was getting more and more knowledge about what I was really doing and how the whole thing worked "under the hood." This feeling of order and clarity is what got me hooked on FreeBSD.

- **Vinicius:** My first steps into FreeBSD were about 15 years ago while I was working for an ISP in my hometown. The person who introduced me to FreeBSD was a good friend I met on the BRASnet Internet Relay Chat (IRC) network. Sadly, I was the only one at the ISP who really got into *BSD and I was even running it on my workstations. After moving forward, I didn't abandon

Beastie and kept using FreeBSD for everything I could, even if others said I was just wasting my time—which I heard a lot.

It's still not easy for me to describe exactly what brought me to FreeBSD. I cannot just pick one single feature and say it was that. But there wasn't a single time that running it on my laptop or on any server got me mad or disappointed. The OS is rock solid, the Project and its documentation are well maintained, the developers care about the community and are in touch to get new features and/or hardware support working. And I like the license, the great companies that adopt FreeBSD, the research/products/solutions it empowers, the standards it follows, the certifications it's compliant to.

When FreeBSD landed on hardware like RaspberryPi and BeagleBone, I got very little sleep but had lots of fun. I got familiar with Poudriere and presented it together with a cross-compiling setup to the Institute of Technology (where I had graduated) during one of the Compilers 101 classes. At the very same Institute (Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Ceará—IFCE), I talked about KAME/IPv6 on FreeBSD and recommended the net/sysadmins use it to handle packet filtering. At the lab where I did my research (things like playing with Docker+Jails or developing an embedded system), I was also the net/sysadmin. Most of the servers were running FreeBSD, and one of the official FreeBSD Brazilian mirrors was running at that lab (it was the only one in Brazil serving the /snapshots folder, by the way).

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How did you end up becoming a committer?

• **Sergey:** It all started when I found two pieces of software: p910nd and mjpg-streamer. I needed them, but I was forced to use Linux because they weren't available in the ports collection. This made me angry—"Why can they use it and we can't? How hard could it be to make such a small app work on FreeBSD?" This is when I decided to make my own port. I made several—every time someone at my workplace approached me and said, "Hey, we need <app_name>, but there's no version for FreeBSD on the website," I would just smile and say, "Don't worry, I'll port it by tomorrow."

After a while I joined Intel where I was able to (finally!) make working on ports part of my job duties. Many Phabricator reviews later, sbruno@ apparently got tired of committing my code and decided that it was time for me to start breaking stuff myself.

• **Vinicius:** Well, time flies very fast! It seems like only yesterday when I ran sysinstall for the first time and upgraded my machines using cvsup, when I was subscribed to the FreeBSD Users Group Brazil mailing list. At that time, I was giving talks, facilitating tutorials, writing articles about FreeBSD, and getting people familiar with its features and what it's capable of. Sometime in between, I engaged in a great effort to translate the FreeBSD Handbook to Portuguese, and then I helped review and update a book chapter about network and Internet services powered by FreeBSD (FreeBSD: O Poder dos Servidores em Suas Mãos). One day in 2015, I found myself organizing the very first international BSD conference in Brazil!

Finally, a couple months ago I attended EuroBSDcon 2018, and there I met some other committers. During one of the coffee breaks and an off-the-record chat about PET support and alternatives to freebsd-update and what's going on regarding pkg-base and bhyve development, araujo@, beat@, and rene@ decided to punish me with a commit bit.

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How has your experience been since joining the FreeBSD Project? Do you have any advice for readers who may be interested in also becoming a FreeBSD committer?

• **Sergey:** Before joining, I was eagerly searching for any news about the Project. I checked out every change on the wiki and looked forward to every quarterly status report. All the people working on the system were nothing less than rock stars for me. And then, all of a sudden, I get my commit bit and go to DevSummit 2018 in Bucharest. I'm sitting in the same room with all those stars, discussing the future of the Project and being treated like one of their own. I just couldn't believe it. In addition to all the excitement I had, lots of people wanted to help with my "new committer steps," like setting up mail, adding myself to docs, etc.; des@ even accidentally reset his password while helping me with SVN! It just really felt like a family.

For anyone who wants to become a committer, I can suggest three things: work, socialize, behave. First of all, make sure you're contributing to the Project on a regular basis. It may not be every day or week, but it has to be regular. Also, make sure to join one of the IRC channels and introduce yourself, start a conversation with someone. To be honest, I wasn't doing that, as I was too shy, and only after I joined the Project, did I realize how valuable

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this can be. And last but not least, respect people around you, their work, time, and opinion. Make sure you fit into the family.

- **Vinícius:** I have gotten great input from many developers involved with the Project and learned more about FreeBSD internals over these last months—and that's amazing! There is really good stuff going on. In the past I just chatted, mostly with Brazilians, on IRC, and shared thoughts or experiences regarding all kinds of scenarios where FreeBSD is involved. Now, I can make a direct impact and contribute to solving other users' or even other developers' issues—especially when we all use it every single day on servers and worksta-

tions or embedded devices.

Before I officially got the title of ports committer, I was already maintaining a few ports and adopting others slowly. It is a great journey and a lot of fun!

What else can I say to others wanting to contribute? Just do your thing and have fun doing it. Contribute small changes, submit your patches, get stuff done. It's not a race, and it may take time. Chill. Help others and you will also help yourself.

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

Thank you!

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“Congratulations to the RE team and all the contributors for the release of 12.0! We’d also like to thank our community of donors whose support helps us fund a full-time staff member dedicated to leading the Release Engineering team and overseeing the release process.”