

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 installment, the spotlight is on **Doug Moore**, who received his src bit in April, and **Sergio Carlavilla**, who received his docs bit in May.

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



*Doug
Moore*

• **Doug:** Being a smart kid, growing up in Texas, I never really considered anyplace but Rice University, and I've been circling around it ever since. I got a CS PhD somewhere else and came back to Rice to lurk at the lower fringe of an academic career. Then some Rice folks launched a startup and I jumped in, which led me to work for Cisco two acquisitions later. After that played out, I went back to lurking at Rice.

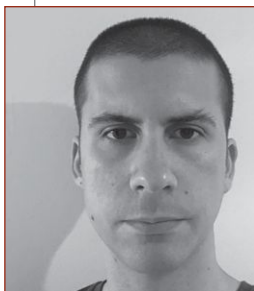
I'm interested in fast computing for discrete math problems. I wrote code for sorting points along a multidimensional Hilbert curve and for finding the next point on the curve after a given point to enter a box. I think it's a great way to manage and search multidimensional data. I wrote some code for doing arithmetic in a fixed-size version of Gosper's continued logarithms, which is way better than floating point, since it allows you to represent concepts like $1/3$. But these have remained private amusements so far, with the world not buying in yet.

• **Sergio:** My name is Sergio Carlavilla. I was born and raised in Valencia (land of the "Fallas"), Spain.

I currently work as full stack developer (Angular/Java) at ViewNext/IBM. In my spare time, I like to program in C/C++ and I'm the current maintainer of QtEmu.

When I am away from the PC, I like to walk, read history books, and cook. I really love cooking. I also like traveling in Europe as I think it's a continent with a lot of history and wonderful landscapes.

My interest in FreeBSD lies in the text-processing tools like our `bsdgrep`, `cat`, etc.



*Sergio
Carlavilla*

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

• **Doug:** I met Alan Cox when he became a Rice professor, and he's been a longtime FreeBSD committer. He started the company that I

joined, using FreeBSD as the basis for a web-caching software product. I attended several FreeBSD meetings with him and wished that I had something to do while everyone around me was talking FreeBSD. I was interested in helping, but it seemed doing anything required specialized knowledge I didn't have.

- **Sergio:** The first time I heard anything about FreeBSD was when I was in network class and we were studying the TCP/IP protocol. The professor explained that the best implementation of the protocol was in the FreeBSD operating system. Afterwards, I saw that other operating systems have taken ideas from FreeBSD, owing to its good documentation and its robustness. What interests me most about FreeBSD is its good documentation and the fact that it is distributed as a complete operating system. Everything is built at the same time; it's not a puzzle.

How did you end up becoming a committer?

- **Doug:** Alan pointed out a bit of FreeBSD code he was working on and asked if I had any ideas. I thought I could write something better than what was there, without knowing anything more than a few C-language tricks and a few data structures, so I did. After repeating that a few times, Konstantin Belousov suggested that I become a committer, so that I might stop nagging him and Mark Johnston to commit my changes. So now I nag them for code reviews instead.

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• **Sergio:** Well, as I said before, I'm very interested in documentation. As a programmer, when I use an operating system, a tool, or a framework, I like it to have a good documentation and I like to understand how it works.

I became interested in translating FreeBSD into my language, Spanish. I started to translate articles and then send the translations to @gabor for validation and to commit the articles into the FreeBSD repository. In the following months, @gabor proposed me for a commit bit so I would be able to perform the commits myself.

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?

• **Doug:** I screwed up my first big commit, and then I screwed up fixing it. People seem pretty forgiving if your intentions are good and you make sure to let them know what's going on. A screwup and a mystery together will annoy people. A newcomer just needs to be patient; your mentor may be a roadblock to you, but you are just one of a dozen FreeBSD-related tasks to your mentor, so be patient.

• **Sergio:** My experience since joining the FreeBSD Project is very positive. The reception by the community has been great. We are currently trying to implement a new way to translate the FreeBSD documentation, so stay tuned.

As for tips for people interested in participating in FreeBSD I would say:

- Take an area that you think you can improve (src/docs/ports) and make the necessary changes.
- Talk to the community. Luckily, the FreeBSD community is very open and willing to help.
- Be patient. Do not despair if a developer is slow to respond; the FreeBSD Project is made up of volunteers.
- And finally, it should be fun.

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

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