Paul Lintilhac

Approval Request form for attendance at “Spark Summit 2017” in San Francisco on June 5-7.

Background: As a data scientist on the Alethio team, my very first assignment has been to familiarize myself with the Spark framework. Spark allows a way of doing distributed computing in a way that is much more efficient than Hadoop. In Alethio we are going to be doing analytics and machine learning on extremely large data sets, such as the full set of ethereum transactions, or 500,000x500,000 adjacency matrices that will be used to run graphical algorithms. This is why spark is going to be completely necessary for our future work.

Saulo and I both have minimal experience with spark, though Saulo has slightly more experience. Saulo is familiar with the PySpark framework for python, whereas I am learning about the the SparkR framework for R, which only recently was released in 2015 and is quickly evolving. We are currently in the process of determining which of these frameworks, and/or pure scala, would be the best way to take advantage of Spark’s capabilities. Databricks is a leading authority on Spark-based applications, and I have even spent some time watching videos from past years of this conference dring my background research this past week.

For these reasons, I think it would be extremely beneficial for either me or Saulo (or both of us) to attend this conference, and hopefully go to at least one workshop if there are still tickets. In fact, I would say this summit is really the only way to be fully aware of the state-of-the-art in distributed computing, since these technologies and other software that uses them are moving very quickly. As one example, the GraphX library for Scala, which is considered the most advanced library for graphical algorithms, is a part of Spark, and people like Dan Crankshaw (UC Berkeley), who helped lead development on Graphx, will be speaking at the event. We already use GraphX, and will probably only rely on it more heavily in the future.

**Guidelines for Conference Attendance**

Before embarking on this approval process, Joe would like to know the following:  
  
A. Is the conference local to you?

No, I am in NYC. It is closer to Saulo, but still several hours away (San Diego to San Francisco)

B. What are the expected flight and lodging costs? And the number of days you will attend the event?

The total cost for the ticket for general admission is $1125 per person. There are also tickets to the one remaining workshop that isn’t sold out going for $825. Round trip plane tickets for me (Paul) are likely going to be around $500, while for Saulo travel would be less expensive. If any or all of these costs could be covered by Consensys, it would make the trip much more feasible.

C. Statement from requester indicating if you have spoken with any spokes and circles involved and has support for taking this time at the conference on ConsenSys's dime.

I spoke to my teammates Saulo and Johannes about this, and they both think it would be useful to attend.

D. Do you really need to go to this conference? Remember to be mindful and do not expense ConsenSys on conferences you do not need to attend.

The Alethio team already relies on the technologies that will be discussed in this conference, and will probably only rely on them more in the future. While it isn’t strictly necessary to attend, we would be missing out on the state-of-the-art in our field if we didn’t. Furthermore, since we will be using this software anyways, the short time spent at the conference learning directly from experts would probably be much less than the time we would otherwise spend trying to answer questions about the software, debugging, and doing research in online forums and youtube videos.

**Level 3 - Maybe With Approval Process**

Highly relevant audience to your market  
You want to attend but don't have an offer to be a speaker or panelist  
Will write a retro on event showing clear business value derived (meetings, sales, influential contacts)  
Need some or all expenses paid by ConsenSys  
You are the right person to go to this of all people at ConsenSys  
Spokes/circles you are in may be unduly adversely affected