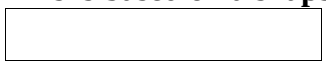
The following is an archived version of a discussion on Meta Stack Exchange. It exists for archival purposes, in case the GoFundMe page is removed or altered. The aim of this archive is to preserve the content, not to provide functionality or retain the original appearance. Some links have been removed to avoid confusion.

The original of this page was https://meta.stackexchange.com/questions/333965/firing-mods-and-forced-relicensing-is-stack-exchange-still-interested-in-cooper

This is based on a snapshot taken on December 22, 2019.



2.

6. Log in Sign up
7.

By using our site, you acknowledge that you have read and understand our Cookie Policy, Privacy Policy, and our Terms of Service.

Firing mods and forced relicensing: is Stack Exchange still interested in cooperating with the community?

Ask Question
Asked 2 months ago
Active today
Viewed 166k times

2065

The bounty expires in 7 days. Answers to this question are eligible for a +100 reputation bounty.
FrankerZ wants to **draw more attention** to this question.

The last weeks and days have seen some erratic behaviour by Stack Exchange Inc., such as likely illegal changes to the content license and the firing of an upstanding community moderator with no explanation except copy-pasted responses, leaving many to believe it was for no good reason. It would be nice if those just were examples of ill judgement, but the disturbing alternative is that SE has given up on cooperating with the community.

An increasing rate of incomprehensible actions

There's a long history of Stack Exchange alienating more engaged community members, and I know many that have already left as a result. That neglectful approach is regrettable, but not outright malicious. This seems to have changed for the worse.

On September 5th, SE announced without prior discussion that the content license was being retroactively changed. Even though that change might be desirable, it was widely questioned as being illegal. It took three weeks to get any response from SE, and even that doesn't address any concerns the community raised.

On September 27th, SE fired community moderator Monica Cellio from all sites for... I'm not really sure, since I'm not a mod, but it seems to have been over an unrelated disagreement. De-modding isn't a proportional response to disagreements and goes against Stack Exchange principles. This is extremely concerning: is disagreement no longer allowed? Does SE now demand unquestioning loyalty from community mods? This is really odd, since Monica was otherwise known for being a prolific and reasonable moderator. (Update: a community-maintained neutral accounting of events has been created in the meanwhile.)

The following mods have been fired or resigned in protest over the way this was handled:

1. fired: **Monica Cellio** on Judaism, The Workplace, Worldbuilding, Writing, Beer Wine & Spirits, and Meta Stack Exchange (provides background)
2. resigned: **Gilles** on Computer Science, French, and Emacs (provides background)
3. resigned: **Snow** on The Workplace, requested reinstatement, confirmed reinstated by SE, resigned again November 15, unrelated to any one specific event. Subsequently deleted all Stack Exchange accounts, see Meta answer for details.
4. resigned: **Jane S** on The Workplace
5. resigned: **Dennis** on Code Golf
6. resigned: **Brock Adams** aka Awesome Poodles on Stack Apps
7. resigned: **Robert Harvey** on Software Engineering and Stack Overflow, later also temporarily suspended on main meta for a week, and then again suspended for a year and later had account removed from MSE.
8. resigned: **GlenH7** on Engineering and Software Engineering (later, left these sites completely having the account deleted)

9. resigned: **Nathaniel** on Christianity and Latin Language.
10. resigned: **Caleb** on Christianity and Biblical Hermeneutics (provides background)
11. resigned: **anonymous2** on Internet of Things
12. ~~resigned: **Mister Positive** on The Workplace~~ (later requested reinstatement, confirmed reinstated by SE)
    (only one moderator active on Workplace)
13. resigned: **Ed Cottrell** on Stack Overflow and Ebooks
14. resigned: **DoMiNeLa10** on Emacs
    (only one moderator left on Emacs)
15. resigned: **a CVn** on Worldbuilding and Writing
16. resigned: **Neil Fein** on Writing
17. resigned: **Glen_b** on Cross Validated
18. resigned: **Seth** on Ask Ubuntu
19. resigned: **Hohmannfan** on Space Exploration (previously suspended activity)
20. resigned: **Mego** on Code Golf, with the request to remove all network content
21. resigned: **ColleenV** on English Language Learners, previously took a break
22. resigned: **Stéphane Gimenez** on French Language
    (only one moderator left on French Language)
23. resigned: **terdon** on Ask Ubuntu, and Bioinformatics (still a moderator on Unix & Linux).

Additionally, others have taken other actions:

1. suspended activity: **Paul White** on Database Administrators
2. suspended activity: **James** on Worldbuilding
3. suspended activity: **HDE 226868** on Worldbuilding, Astronomy, History of Science & Mathematics, and Mythology & Folklore
4. ~~suspended activity: **Rand al'Thor** on Science Fiction & Fantasy~~ - Return to moderation on October 31.
5. ~~suspended activity: **Null** on Science Fiction & Fantasy~~ - Return to moderation on October 31.
6. stopped activity before new election ends: **Tensibai** on DevOps
7. suspended activity: **Rory Alsop** / **Doktor Mayhem** on Information Security, Music, Parenting, The Great Outdoors, Sound Design, and Video Production
8. ~~suspended activity: **anongoodnurse** on Parenting~~ - Return to moderation on October 27.

9. suspended non-critical activity: **AviD** on Information Security

10. ~~suspended non-urgent activity: **Anton Menshov** on Computational Science~~ – Return to moderation on November 14 with a very heavy heart. Supports the fundraiser campaign.

11. ~~suspended non-urgent activity: **Thomas Owens** on Software Engineering~~ Return to moderation on October 12.

12. suspended activity: **Kevin** on Science Fiction & Fantasy and The Great Outdoors
(only one moderator active on The Great Outdoors ~~and Science Fiction & Fantasy~~)

13. taking a leave of absence: **Cyn** on Writing
(no active moderators left on Writing)

14. suspended activity: **Xander** on Beer, Wine & Spirits
(only one moderator active on Beer, Wine & Spirits)

15. suspended activity / resigning soon: **Mad Scientist** on Skeptics

16. suspended activity: **jonsca** on Web Applications and Chemistry

17. suspended activity: **nicoguaro** on Computational Science
(only one moderator active on Computational Science)

18. suspended activity: **lois6b** on Stack Overflow en español

19. ~~suspended activity: **eykanal** on Academia~~ - Return to moderation on 11/26.

20. suspended non-critical activity: **AJ Henderson** on Photography, Video Production, Sound Design and Community Building. Same reasoning as **Rory Alsop** / **Doktor Mayhem**
(only one moderator active on Sound SE and Video SE)

21. suspended activity: **Michael Hampton** on Server Fault

22. suspended activity: **Sven** on Server Fault

23. staying away from queues and reduced activity: Bhargav Rao on Stack Overflow

24. Suspended activity: **David** on Blender

25. Suspended activity: **Duarte Farrajota Ramos** on Blender

26. Suspended activity: **gandalf3** on Blender

27. Suspended activity: **iKlsR** on Blender
(no active moderators on Blender)

28. Suspended activity: **gung** on Cross Validated

29. Suspended activity: **Hatchet** on Language Learning

30. Cashed in his chips: **J.R.** on English Language Learners

31. Deleted his Stack Moderators Team account and his Meta account (including access to the new Teachers' Lounge): **Loong** on German

Additional resignations that are related to the incident, but for their own reasons:

1. resigned: **Aza** on Literature, worth reading, predates other events; later wrote an update that's even more worth reading.
2. ~~resigned: **Journeyman Geek** *only* on Meta~~, remains a moderator of Super User (later requested reinstatement under the new policy)
3. resigned: **Keelan** on Philosophy
4. resigned: **PashaPash** on Stack Overflow на русском
5. resigned: **rolfl** on Code Review
6. resigned: **Tensibai** on DevOps
7. resigned: **Jack Douglas** on Database Administrators
   (only one moderator active on Database Administrators)
8. resigned: **Diego** on Spanish Language
9. resigned: **George Stocker** on Stack Overflow (later posted what SE should do to resolve the current situation)
10. resigned: **Sklivvz** on Skeptics
11. resigned: **user58** on Literature
    (only one moderator left on Literature)
12. resigned: **Jon Clements** on Stack Overflow
13. resigned: **fedorqui** on Spanish Language
    (only one moderator left on Spanish Language)

Finally, some moderators and community projects have written commentary or taken action as a result of the situation:

1. disappointed: **StrongBad** on Academia and Expats
2. declared support for Monica: **Cyn** / Writing mod team
3. ~~SOBotics has taken down Reports along with Rodgort and Higgs~~ later Reports came back up and Rogdort with Higgs were hosted by Das_Geek
4. disappointed: **called2voyage** on Space Exploration and Astronomy
5. on the brink of being done: **J.R.** on English Language Learners
6. disappointed: **El'endia Starman**, **Peter Turner**, and **Mason Wheeler** on Christianity
7. voiced support for Monica and stopping participating inside TL: **yagmoth555** on Server Fault
8. disappointed: **Mister Positive** on The Workplace
9. disappointed: **Ganesh Sittampalam** and **JoeTaxpayer** on Personal Finance & Money

Company *and* Community

I understand that Stack Exchange the company is under a lot of stress right now. They are transitioning to a new CEO and somehow need to finally become profitable, which might be the reason for odd statements about ad policies or aggressively pushing the Stack Overflow Teams product everywhere. But stress is no excuse for waging war on the user base.

Stack Exchange is not only a company but also a community. While the company provides the platform, the community provides the content that makes the platform valuable. Either party can only be successful by cooperating with the other. But at this point, it looks Stack Exchange Inc. has given up on communicating with the community and is taking an adversarial stance.

Is Stack Exchange Inc. still interested in cooperating with the community? What is the vision for this relationship?

- If SE would like to start engaging with the community again, the incidents above are likely just regrettable mistakes. How will SE prevent this string of mistakes from continuing in the future? What will SE do to mend these issues?
- If SE wants to continue on this path towards an unyielding Corporate Overlord role, the community will likely bleed engaged members at an increasing rate. How will SE ensure continued high quality of the network sites? Just trying to grow faster will only exacerbate those problems.

I for my part expect to stop writing answers or participating otherwise until I see a good-faith effort towards mending the rift.

2019-09-29: 1st official response — Answer on Monica's resignation (copied elsewhere)

2019-10-01: Comments to the press — The Register publishes an article about the firing with comments provided by a Stack Exchange employee.

2019-10-03: 2nd official response — An Update to our Community and an Apology (net score < **-2k**)

2019-10-05: Monica's Timeline of the Situation — As a blog post

2019-10-06: 3rd official response — An apology to our community, and next steps

2019-10-06: Open letters from moderators — Dear Stack Exchange: a statement and a letter from your moderators, and The second letter addressing more specifically the issues the LGBT+ community feels it is necessary to address.

2019-10-10: Official FAQ on gender pronouns and Code of Conduct changes (deleted at net score -1930 (+449 / -2379), archived version)

2019-10-15: CM team member Shog9 comments on moderator removal and reinstatement process work

2019-10-18: Status Update from the Community Management Team

2019-10-21: Moderator Warning and Removal process, Moderator Reinstatement Process.

2019-10-21: Moderator process **feedback** post

2019-10-22: New pronouns FAQ

2019-10-22: New pronouns FAQ **feedback** post

2019-10-24: Monica posts a response to the situation Stack Overflow is doing me ongoing harm; it's time to fix it!

2019-10-28 Monica sets up a GoFundMe page to help pay for combating this issue. Defend Monica from Defamation by Stack Overflow

2019-10-31 Monica discussing current events in an audio interview. TTP #1 | Monica Cellio On The Fallout At Stack Exchange

2019-11-15 SE staffer JuanM states that under legal advice, there will be no further comment on the Monica situation; also direct links to her GoFundMe page are being actively removed by SE staff from posts and profiles. Community ads for the GoFundMe are also being removed. Why is SE removing links and community ads about legal issues?

2019-11-25 Sara Chipps and Juan Garza introduce the loop, a new way of obtaining user feedback and a moderator advisor group.

2019-12-11 Donna Choi introduces the first chapter of the loop, a deep-dive into research approach: what it used to be, what it is now, and how it continues to evolve.

discussion support moderators community
shareimprove this question
edited Dec 14 at 21:58

gnat
1
asked Sep 29 at 14:33

amon
9,36633 gold badges1212 silver badges1818 bronze badges

- 3
  The comments were lengthy.; this conversation has been moved to chat for archival purposes. A few comments were pruned cause they were not really needed. – Journeyman Geek♦ Nov 9 at 7:02

- 3

@GhostCatsaysReinstateMonica I had written a rationale in a now-deleted comment: while I think that legal action might be a sensible way forward, I cannot vouch for the person running that gofundme. In that respect, it is fundamentally different from Monica's fundraising. – amon Nov 13 at 9:19

- @amon Why "cannot [you] vouch for the person running that" GoFundMe? – Andreas -he-her- Nov 14 at 15:15
- 2

@R.. I'm not talking about pronouns here, but about things like SE's utter neglect of moderation tools. The welcome wagon demanded kindness, without providing tools that facilitated being kind. At least they could be convinced, after years of lobbying, to finally implement a question wizard on SO. The more engaged community members, those who care(d) about the success of their sites, naturally have some overlap but are absolutely not identical with these transphobes who get offended when asked to be respectful of other people's gender identity. – amon Nov 16 at 6:02

- 2

Well, i do have to say that i'm present in other communities, and everybody is complaining about SE doing nothing and not helping their mods to solve the massive amount of problems that they have – riki481 says Reinstate Monica Nov 23 at 13:12

- @Monica I asked J.R. if he intended to place his link in the resignation section when I was adding my link, and he did not (that's how my link ended up in the wrong place, doh) – ColleenV parted ways Nov 26 at 16:08
- 12

27 upvotes to go! Also, that's not a feedback survey, that's a rather half-hearted attempt to quell community outrage in the most token form ever. – Gloweye Nov 28 at 7:54

- 10

I just had 3 comments on the "The Loop" blog article deleted before having them publicized. One of them contained criticism of SE in response to a person praising SE, while the two others were harmless. Moving the feedback to the blog section is an effective means of censorship. With "The Loop", they will gain complete control over the feedback, hiding the feedback for themselves to be the only ones to read it. They really try to oppress all criticism... Are they even interested in the feedback, or does it all get discarded? – Andreas -he-her- Dec 2 at 14:42

- 3

@Andreas-he-her- Despite the troubling trajectory with these changes, it may be good to point out that SE is still a very transparent company, compared to e.g. Reddit or Quora. Requiring explicit approval on comments under a contentious blog post is normal and understandable. The bigger problem with less open feedback channels is that it potentially becomes easier for SE leadership to build their own bubble in which everything is just fine. – amon Dec 2 at 15:35

- 1

@amon Checking again today, those 3 comments are now displayed in that comment section. It means that it took 4-5 days for them to get publicly posted there, after I wrote and submitted them. It's good they finally went through, but this is, as you also say, less open, and problematic. – Andreas -he-her- Dec 5 at 3:13

- 33

  I'm wondering if Robert Harvey's year-long ban over posting a suggested improvement to the CoC (nocodeofconduct.com) and the locking of a question asking about the ban, should be added. – Ask About Monica Dec 6 at 22:04

- 12
  @AskAboutMonica I'd say yes. It's clearly a sign of not only the unwillingness to cooperate, but the fact that constructive discussion is no longer accepted here. This is not even close to "questioning the authorities" and even less to "criticizing decisions". It's really a disgrace to see how things have changed. – Marco13 Dec 11 at 0:53
- 6
  And now staff resignations (though we don't know the real reasons). – Peter Mortensen Dec 15 at 6:09
- 8
  I see that gnat was suspended for rule violations. Anyone knows what happened here? – Shaido - Reinstate Monica Dec 19 at 8:39
- 6
  Gnat? That's crazy. He's by-the-book and squeeky clean. Looks like a 30 day suspension. My guess is that it's for putting bounties on questions SE doesn't like. – Ask About Monica 2 days ago

show **2** more comments

44 Answers

active oldest votes

1 2 next

692
+600

Stack Exchange has a policy for how users are dealt with when they break the Code of Conduct. It's a policy that involves communication followed by a "cooling off" suspension (the words "cooling off" are actually used in the suspension templates). If the behaviour doesn't change after the first suspension happens, another (longer) suspension is often imposed. If this action doesn't work, then a more permanent suspension might be needed. Removing a high-rep user takes a lot of discussion and a lot more consideration. Removing a moderator from their post has a formal procedure - I've been part of one of these processes and it was handled with the utmost of respect and dignity.

Monica was one of the most senior and respected moderators on the whole of this community.

Monica wasn't offered the opportunity to have a time-out to reflect on the needs of the proposed CoC changes (Sabbat and Rosh Hashana involves a few days staying off-site). A time-out to reflect is a fundamental right that we offer to all users in cases of conflict.

Monica is my captain. There is no one else I would rather follow in this community - she is the perfect embodiment of “leading by example”. She has been a leading light and community builder on every community she's led, and more than a few that she hasn't. The value that's she's added to the platform as a whole is incalculable.

Within the confines of the moderator curtains, I witnessed at first hand this whole sorry story play out. Gilles' meta post carries most of the context.

I didn't resign due to the underlying issue, it's more about how SE went about sacking Monica that's the thing for me. Cold, calculating, and impersonal with no regard to her good standing or experience. I wouldn't have canned any user with that same lack of empathy.

SE does have a large disconnect between the company and the community that underpins it. I was hoping that things would get better after the previous Twitter/HNQ debacle.

Sadly, SE is no further on in talking with its users. I cannot in good conscience continue serving a community when I don't feel valued, heard, or supported by the level above me.

I say "SE" here, because I believe this is where the problem lies. In the previous Twitter/HNQ issue, it was SE taking a decision without informing or conferring with the moderators of the site that their change affected. Again, with Monica, SE took any input and decision out of the hands of moderators who were in the middle of passionately discussing this issue. I don't believe that any moderator was asking for Monica's dismissal - it was imposed on us all.

UPDATE (11 Oct 2019):

For the days following my resignation, I watched events further unfold. And my site was left unmoderated, through no fault of the users who go there to ask and offer help. After days of agonizing, I requested reinstatement.

Monica was fired on the 27th September, for a CoC violation of a CoC that didn't exist at that time. Moderators were consulted on various drafts of the CoC amendments and we successfully requested the removal of the compelled speech ("do not avoid using pronouns when requested"). This clause implies that people cannot address people by name or "The OP" if they declare a pronoun. This makes a mockery of how to address them individually among a discussion group of many participants. I thought that we had reached a clear, concise, straightforward wording.

We, the moderators, didn't expect the raft of FAQ clauses that followed, and the compelled speech enforced by them. The FAQ is bewildering, confusing, and intimidating. The net effect is that the CoC is more divisive than inclusive, and damages our relationship with our trans and non-gendered users.

And for what?

Apart from the much-publicized violation in the moderator chat (which was part of an ongoing discussion/clarification/understanding process), I have never seen any actual cases in the public spaces where this issue has arisen. I frequent the moderator shared chatroom - no one has shared any examples. No one.

This tells me that the users here on Stack Exchange are already really good at communicating with people and showing others the necessary respect when it comes to their gender.

We are now left to wait and see what other groups of users will be marginalized in the name of "inclusion".

Update 5th November 2019

One month on and where are we now?

After the new & improved CoC amendment FAQ, the community has largely quietened down about the pronoun usage.

There's new & improved moderator action processes (outgoing and incoming) for which there's a transparency in the process, but no transparency in usage.

Monica has been invited to go through the process, but obviously without transparency, there can be no assurance of impartiality. The new process has already failed Monica, without her even needing to lift a finger.

The key, and most important, aspect of this situation is Monica's personal and professional hurt that's been imposed by Stack Exchange in speaking to the press and not attempting to correct the erroneous story which was paraphrased as "We sacked Monica because she's an unrepentant bigot".

David Fullerton offered an apology for this hurt in his statement of regret:

> Second, we hurt a longstanding member of the community and an important volunteer moderator. She deserved the benefit of a private, comprehensive process. In the absence of a clear process for handling this kind of situation, we should have taken inspiration from our existing Moderator Action Review Process. We made a decision to act quickly, which I personally approved, but in doing so skipped several critical parts of the process. In acting quickly, we also acted at a time which coincided with a Jewish holiday which she and many other members of our community observe, and we should have taken that more into account in the process.
>
> I’m responsible for that, and I’m sorry. We’ll be reaching out to her directly to apologize for the lack of process, privacy, and to discuss next steps. We’ll keep those discussions completely private unless we both agree to share any of it with the community.

From what Monica has said, this personal apology didn't reach far enough and didn't do anything to redress the personal and professional damage caused.

Monica has therefore been forced into the only action possible - legal action.

Stack Exchange has faced a barrage of criticism and moderator resignations over their actions and approach to this situation but has remained steadfast in **not doing anything about it**.

And there are few signs of anything happening any time soon.

Update 15th Nov 2019

After being unhappy for quite some time, I am again resigning my commission.

- This isn't about Monica
- This isn't about pronouns

- This isn't about the Code of Conduct
- This isn't about Sara
- This isn't about the CM team (you're all awesome by the way)
- This isn't about Stack Exchange

This is about the community, and the moderation team.

I used to enjoy moderating and contributing to the community, both within my base site and the wider community, and now that enjoyment is no longer there. I no longer feel supported, I no longer feel welcome, I no longer feel included.

The Community Moderation team continue to be fantastic and are doing their level best to support the company, the community, and the moderators in between.

However, the toxicity within the moderator space continues, there is a continuing and relentless drive toward negativity. Every day, I enter the Teacher's Lounge and I'm made depressed by the comments that are in the star board. It's just not pleasant and I am quite frankly tired of the drama.

There seems to be an inability or unwillingness for people to separate supporting Monica from supporting the community, and the end result is the community is being harmed.

I don't see anything improving because no one is interested in anything improving.

The same is also evident here in MSE, waves of negativity - it's tiring and I need my life back.

Update 18th November

My diamond how now been removed and I have scheduled the deletion of all of my accounts across the network.

Whatever the interpretation for my action, this wasn't done out a sense of pettiness, attention-seeking, or of protesting against Stack Exchange.

This is my protection from the self-harm that seems to be endemic in the community right now. As much as I support Monica and despise the way in which she was deposed, there is seemingly no end to the amount of conflict that this situation and the events around it has plunged the community into.

I really care about this community, and the amount of care is roughly equal to the amount of hurt I'm feeling in seeing it the way that it is. I feel impotent in the face of the community that seems like it has no wish to heal.

There are those who say that the community should not be allowed to heal while Monica is still in the situation that she is. However hard and hurtful that situation is, it's in the hands of the lawyers, and lawyers move slowly. I don't know how long that wait will be, but I feel uncomfortable being part of a community that remains in conflict with itself while that plays out.

And so I'm leaving, and seeking closure in having my accounts deleted.

I'm sharing my parting words from the Teacher's Lounge. Ordinarily, doing so will get me fired, but these are my words, mine to share.

> ***Parting words:*** Be good to each other. Find ways of working together for a common, positive, purpose. Avoid needless conflict. Think of the effect of your words on others before committing them to the keyboard. Write for the entire audience and not simply the person you're answering to.

So long, and thanks for all the fish.

shareimprove this answer
edited Nov 18 at 19:22
answered Sep 29 at 15:37
user351483

- 478
  In fact, if a moderator sanctioned a user (like suspending) not for any problem behavior but merely for suspicion of future problems, the CMs would have a word with that moderator. Moderators are told to respond to actions, but SE didn't follow that policy here. We're supposed to assume good intent, but I was not given a chance to demonstrate goodwill through my actions. – Monica Cellio Sep 29 at 16:48
- 190
  @MonicaCellio I am appalled by how you were treated. I am so sorry this happened. – Modus Tollens Sep 29 at 16:51
- 83
  @MonicaCellio If you are allowed to run again, I'm sure the community would vote you back. As far as I know, you've done a fantastic job. Those who took away your status did not speak for the vast majority of the users here. – Jason Bassford Supports Monica Sep 30 at 4:09
- 26
  @MonicaCellio: I have no clue what happened yet (I just read this like 5 seconds ago) but I just wanted to chime in that nothing I've ever seen from you has left me with anything but admiration and respect, and I say that as someone who's had his own spats with some of the other moderators. It's hard to thank people over the internet, but for whatever it's worth: thanks for everything, and I (and I'm sure many others) wish you the best moving forward. – Mehrdad Sep 30 at 18:29
- 29
  I'm sorry you were a victim of this sort of mentality, @MonicaCellio. While I've never interacted with you personally (to my recollection), you've done nothing but leave a good impression on everyone you've encountered. As far as I can tell, you are one of the best examples in this community of what diversity, tolerance, and respect *should* look like, which makes this decision highly questionable on their end, IMO. But alas, we have always been at war with Eastasia. – Justin Time - Reinstate Monica Sep 30 at 21:31
- 18
  @JustinTime I agree with you wholly, another sad day for SE. The false accusations against anyone not far enough left has been going on for a couple of years now. Unfortunately the only

two mods who I would like to see go (for the reason of always taking sides based on skin tone and politics) haven't resigned, so their influence now grows. This is good for the individuals who resigned (and I support them) and bad for the stack exchange. – Nick Cardoso Oct 1 at 14:52

- 11
  Not good enough. One-sided enforcement of policy - and coercive policy at that, in the form of tightening the infamous code of conduct - is not made all right by people being given "time to reflect" before being expected to be on-board-or-else. – einpoklum - reinstate Monica Oct 3 at 21:16
- 5
  @MonicaCellio not to mention (based on what I've read) you never once stated that you wouldn't follow the policy or the spirit of the policy should it put in place. You merely asked for clarification of what the policy was. In order words, they didn't just sanction for "suspicion of future problems", they sanctioned you for the equivalent of "this person is too stupid to follow our policy". In my opinion, that's flat out insulting to your intelligence! – The Great Duck Oct 10 at 5:02
- 8
  I also don't understand the purpose of posting the CoC early for moderators to review if challenging them or asking for clarification results in a sanction. At that point why are they even having you review them? Just post them universally for every user at the same time (including non-paid stack exchange employed moderators) and tell mods to enforce them to the best of their ability... – The Great Duck Oct 10 at 5:04
- 14
  You still want to be a volunteer for this company at this point? – faintsignal Oct 11 at 22:16
- 10
  To me, the users are more important than the company. That’s why I stay. – user351483 Oct 12 at 6:49
- 13
  Sorry to see you go again, but very much sympathize with the reason. Hope this time you can get some well-deserved peace and relaxation :) – Em C Nov 15 at 19:03
- 6
  Your leaving is a loss for the community, but you need to take care of yourself. I wish you the best in all of your future endeavors. – John Omielan Nov 18 at 19:48
- 6
  Congrats on dumping one of your best mods on any site. This is maybe the worst decision since Galileo's trial. The shortsightedness and self-destructive determination to shoot yourselves in the foot is staggering. @shog9 has a problem seeing boundaries and controlling his less reasonable instincts. – Wad Cheber stands with Monica Nov 22 at 7:28
- 5
  My upvote became a downvote. Of course, there's toxicity in the mod community. In fact, your answer is pretty toxic in its own way... This is unavoidable when... people have things to

complain about. People *will* complain given enough incentive. The downvote is because you have forgotten where that continuing incentive originated. – Sklivvz Nov 23 at 8:25

show **11** more comments

413
+50

Update (30.10.19)

We're officially well over a month into this mess, and extremely little has changed.

The CoC received an update that was at least received better than the initial FAQ. They've also released a plan they actually followed, unlike the second (third?) apology. We're still waiting for a reply to the letters to SE, and to top it off, all our concerns regarding the legality of SE's license change have been ignored

I haven't decided whether I think Monica is "innocent" or not, simply because I don't have all the info. The reason I'm writing this part is because regardless of which side I'm on, I still think the way SE treated her is horrible. SE has failed to handle the Monica situation - in fact, they still haven't responded to her. She's now going for an approach through the legal system, which she initially said she didn't want to do.

Aside the way they've treated Monica, the way the situation was handled has caused a massive amount of friction in the community. Real toxicity is unnecessarily common, and it's not just against the LGBTQ+-community (although we're definitely targeted too). Currently, no one wins. This is no longer the network I joined. I'm going to stop contributing entirely for the next few days with the exception of chat and on my posts while I get ready for the worst-case scenario: if nothing changes, I'm going to take an indefinite break from the network. After that, I'm in for a long run - if nothing changes in the next year, I'll be deleting my account.

SE said they realized the way they handled the situation was bad, but they've done the same exact thing again and again, and it's now enough. I still have a tiny shred of hope they'll turn things around, but it's very, very unlikely they'll turn the situation into something positive at this point. More specifically, I find it extremely unlikely a certain director is going to do what's necessary to get the situation back under control in a time frame that isn't 6-8 and in a way that doesn't involve more fires.

No matter what excuses they come up with at this point, unless they act on it, the network doesn't have a future. They listened to feedback on the CoC situation, but they're still so slow at handling things it lets the situation explode out of control while concerns are ignored. The company are ignoring concerns while putting out small fires, leaving the massive flames untouched and able to spread.

If you have any energy left to deal with this (I know I don't), I highly encourage you to take to Twitter. It seems to be the only thing they'll end up understanding. To me, it seems like

> the only way this situation has any chance of coming to an end, is if SE steps in. So far, they've failed to do so.
>
> Take this update any way you want - this is me saying I'm done. The situation is about to hit critical mass, and I don't want to have an exit if (when? :/) it collapses into a black hole. SE still has a chance, but from the events so far, they're most likely not going to take it.
>
> **Update 15.11.19:** This is my last day here on SE. I'm going on an indefinite leave for reasons I've elaborated on my blog

I wasn't planning on writing an answer, but the so-called official response (copy one, copy two, all answers in the order I saw them, not the order in which they were posted - feels nice to be addressed personally, doesn't it?) was the triggering event for this answer.

Magisch sums up this mess perfectly:

> That is incredibly weak. It would have been better to say nothing at all. Taking pot shots at someone while depriving us all of the context necessary to judge their validity is a dirty bad faith move I would never have expected from a Stack Exchange employee. I hope none of this was intentional and a clarification is forthcoming, but I fear my hope will be in vain

Currently, we have the facts we've received from the mods. Some of it made me physically sick. Stack Exchange is refusing to reveal anything, and speaking for myself, I read that as admitting it. All the facts are out there, and they're supported by highly respectable people - Stack Exchange is not denying it, nor are they talking further about it. At least I read that as admitting it without admitting it.

I ran for moderator on Stack Overflow. I think most candidates who don't win are disappointed, but after reading that post, I was glad I didn't. Not winning means I avoided being a pawn in whatever messed up game Stack Exchange is playing. Good intentions? Sure. But the execution is so awful I can't think of a word to properly describe it. Stack Exchange has often been called unwelcoming, but I'm surprised the company is more unwelcoming than the community.

I'm personally tired of the abstract guessing games. There's also been a rumor about a massive change coming, that's currently being planned out in private without any canonical details mentioned, with a promised meta post "in a couple of weeks". Yet, these are concerns that need to be addressed now. Off the top of my head, the network is now low on mods. Some sites are **heavily** affected by this, and have lost well over half their mods. Yet, the only response we get is yet another promise of more details soon. Is a plain-text answer so much to ask for?

EDIT: SE has made statements to the media, and they've explained more to them than to us (and as a plus, they didn't get copy-pasta).

~~**EDIT:** workplace.SE is now the first SE site to have no more active moderators.~~ Workplace.SE has since had two mods reinstated by their own request.

EDIT: Writing.SE is now the second to fall.

And the fun doesn't end there - they're violating their own principles, and as outlined in one of the linked questions, and firing a moderator for reasons I can only classify as malicious and self-destructive.

I highly encourage everyone to stop moderating right now.

The only way we're going to get anywhere is if we pressure Stack Exchange - and I hate that I have to say that. They've made it abundantly clear through the licensing change and the removal of Hot Meta Posts that they have no intention of responding to legitimate concerns, and they're not going to take any of the input. I'm not a mod, so this won't have the biggest impact, but until this is resolved, I won't moderate anything. Full stop. I've also gone off-site in an attempt to get more attention to these problems.

And like I said in a bounty notice the company later removed: ignoring these issues will not make anything better. Ignorance is bliss until it hits you in the face. I have no idea what you're doing internally, but this needs to end **now**, or you risk not having a network to push whatever changes you have planned. The longer you wait, the more people will go on a strike, and the more mods will step down, and the worse of a state Stack Exchange will be left in.

shareimprove this answer
edited Nov 15 at 19:43
answered Sep 30 at 9:03

Zoe
4,27488 gold badges2020 silver badges5353 bronze badges

- 170
  I am going to take a break, because I don't see the point in putting in all this effort to get people to follow the guidelines and to be fair and reasoned in the face of the occasional nasty provocation from users when at any moment some staff member could throw a hissy fit and have me banished. I'm so demoralized, I'm going to generic my profile. If all of Monica's good work didn't earn her any respect, I might as well keep my head down and be user9161. It's not like SE cares who I am or what I think. – ColleenV parted ways Sep 30 at 10:15
- 5
  Let us hope they will not announce the massive change on a Friday... It would be better in the beginning of a week. – Peter Mortensen Sep 30 at 12:51
- 43

@Mari-Lou, Monica was also needed, but that didn't stop anybody. – Frédéric Hamidi Sep 30 at 14:07

- 14

@Mari-LouA needed for what? The ship has already sank. – Shadow The Burning Wizard Sep 30 at 14:36

- 10

@anonymous2 I might not have been clear enough - the bounty itself wasn't removed, but each bounty also comes with a notice (stating the stock reason, along with the optional reply). Said notice was removed by an employee. I have not been informed why, and I randomly stumbled over it when I got a notification and thought the bounty looked weird. For the record, I posted a link in the comments to an archived version which includes the post notice – Zoe Sep 30 at 14:47

- 11

  @Mari-LouA I'm just taking a break. I like to wait until I'm less emotional about a situation and have had a good long think before I take drastic action. If certain staff had similar habits, I probably wouldn't need a break. – ColleenV parted ways Sep 30 at 15:16
- 13

  The archived versions of the page containing the notice have since been deleted. I... I have no idea how, but I think archive.org has a policy allowing site owners to request deletion – Zoe Sep 30 at 15:55
- 18

  @PrincessOlivia I've taken your call to action and given it it's own Meta post: It's time to go on strike – David K Sep 30 at 15:56
- 47

  Nevermind, the moderators deleted it. Per Tim Post: "This reaches the limit of the platform we're willing to give you. If you want to organize this, you're going to need to do it on your own blog or website." – David K Sep 30 at 16:01
- 47

  The common sense is *stop contributing to a for profit company that does not respect you or your contribution* as has been repeatedly demonstrated. If I could I would sue them to remove all the content I have provided because they broke their agreement with me when they relicensed **my content** without my permission. But is really is not worth that much trouble, they have already torpedoed their own ship and continue to do more damage than 1000 of us could by quitting. – user148287 Sep 30 at 18:21
- 66

  I got my SO account locked for talking about my frustrations with this situation. I was not being disrespectful or getting out of hand, just talking like everyone else. It just seals it for me -- they have the content, they don't need the authors anymore. It makes me sad and angry that it's come to this, and for being so naive to think I actually mattered to these people. This isn't a community, it's a honeypot to get content that can be monetized. – Chris Sep 30 at 20:39
- 44

  @Chris Not to mention they feel they can relicence said content whenever they please. – Lightness Races with Monica Sep 30 at 21:28
- 18

  Strike. Strike. Strike. (I'm not a mod though, I'm just cheering for you.) – einpoklum - reinstate Monica Oct 3 at 21:18
- 7

@einpoklum I'm not a mod either, but every person who goes on strike helps - mod or not. – Zoe Oct 4 at 12:18

- 8
  I highly suggest not reinstating if you are a Mod. They want you to do that, and that is precisely the reason they're waiting it out. Don't let these bad practices they're trying to shove down our throats go unpunished. If you give in, they win, and if they win, then nothing changes and good people will remain hurt for the benefits of a buzz word for the press. Companies that step on people for their profit deserve to die, and if that's the direction that SO wants to go, then this site should die like the rest. – Catch 44 - Reinstate Monica Oct 29 at 22:19

show **25** more comments

286

I wish I could share some of what's been happening in the moderator chat, but suffice it to say that Stack Exchange has gone beyond the pale in the "1984" abuse of language and thought/speech crime department. Even so, it's not clear that Monica violated the new guidelines (yet) -- but I didn't do a comprehensive search.

The only good thing about this is that it's a company doing this and they don't (yet) have government thought enforcers (at least for the most part in the USA).

As of right now, I'm done with Stack Exchange. I had already cut way back a few years ago in my posting and moderation due to previous outrages.

I know that most of you don't know me or care that I'm leaving. But I urge you to explore the history of this language corruption and tyranny. It may just be some tech company this time, but it won't stop there.

shareimprove this answer
answered Sep 29 at 18:55

Awesome Poodles
19.4k55 gold badges3838 silver badges8181 bronze badges

- 200
  Even though the new guideline hasn't been published yet, I have been scrupulous in not violating it. I asked questions about how it was being interpreted *so that* I could avoid violating it. Those questions have largely gone unanswered and I erred on the side of caution, as I will when something is actually published if I'm still here. – Monica Cellio Sep 29 at 19:14

- 22

@MonicaCellio I got your message, I'll flick you an email later today. I stepped down because I'm tired. My life is busy and tiring and modding was one thing on top. I've left all social media, even cancelled netflix so I spend time on the things I need to. – user310756 Sep 29 at 22:33

- 43

So Caleb on Christianity has thankfully broken the silence and confirmed what some may have suspected: the discussion was about the use of incorrectly gendered pronouns and whether this use should be considered “rude”. SE should thank him, it clarifies the discussion immensely (and, FWIW, changes my own view of the debate — somewhat). – Konrad Rudolph Sep 30 at 16:27

- 73

@KonradRudolph *"about the use of incorrectly gendered pronouns"* - or rather, about the use of *preferred* pronouns. Per Caleb's post, apparently something in the new CoC would forbid those who morally object to using someone's "preferred pronoun" from instead simply referring to the person by *name* to sidestep the conflict; instead, it would be *mandatory*, upon request, to re-engage with them and work their preferred pronouns into one's subsequent comments. We also don't know for sure yet whether this is the same issue Monica objected to. – Mark Amery Sep 30 at 16:57

- 39

@MarkAmery, the Hebrew language has a feature called grammatical gender, where words are inflected based on features of the noun they refer to. Reading between the lines, it sounds like Monica was fired for asking how this would interact with the requirement to use preferred pronouns: whether it requires writing grammatically-incorrect Hebrew. – Mark Sep 30 at 22:04

- 2

@MonicaCellio What do you think about this? – Victor Stafusa Sep 30 at 23:20

- 7

@VictorStafusa contains errors; I'll comment there. I also made an update to my post on Mi Yodeya meta, since the nature of the CoC change is now public. – Monica Cellio Oct 2 at 1:07

- 6

@MarkAmery I fthey insist on that, its going to be interesting when they find out what my new preferred pronous are going to be. Yours, My Lord Master God gbjbaanb. (that was the clean version :) One of the best ways to deal with autocrats is simple mis-obedience to their rules. – gbjbaanb Oct 2 at 14:11

- 18

@KonradRudolph everyone agrees that knowingly using incorrect pronouns is wrong. That's rude. The issue is that apparently writing in a gender-neutral way (about everyone, not just some folks) to avoid gender landmines isn't acceptable. There's a new footnote in my Mi Yodeya meta post about this (now that the info is out and I don't have to worry about being accused of leaking it). – Monica Cellio Oct 2 at 15:34

- 7

@MonicaCellio - "everyone agrees that knowingly using incorrect pronouns is wrong... ...apparently writing in a gender-neutral way (about everyone, not just some folks) to avoid gender landmines isn't acceptable." I am someone, part of everyone, who has been using the gender neutral "they" in my answers and comments on SE sites for years. Sometimes I slip up and use "he/she", but "they" is fine with me. So please, though I admire you greatly, support you and am standing up to TPTB because of your termination, do not make this an "everybody knows/it's not acceptable" issue, because it's not. – anongoodnurse Oct 2 at 19:40

- 26

@anongoodnurse sorry; maybe I wasn't clear enough. I didn't see anybody that discussion support using incorrect pronouns. Some people seem to think that some mods support that; I'm saying I'm not one of them and didn't see it in this discussion. I specifically asked if writing in a gender-neutral way -- which for me means avoiding third-person singular pronouns in favor of plurals, names, other references, or other sentence structure -- was ok. Some mods told me it's not and Sara dismissed my question. That reaction astounds me, because many people including you and I write GN now! – Monica Cellio Oct 2 at 20:02

- 'those who morally object to using someone's "preferred pronoun"' - There's a case to be made for not allowing people who harbor such petty "moral objections" to occupy positions of power and privilege. If your moral high-horse prevents you from showing others a basic courtesy when they ask for it, you really shouldn't be a moderator. Not saying that applies specifically to the case being discussed, but some of the commentary makes it clear that some people do feel there's a legitimate moral basis for disrespecting others. If your moral conceit means that much to you, don't mod. Simples. – aroth Dec 18 at 3:18

add a comment

277

I've been asked a few times why I stood down as a moderator on Meta Stack Exchange. The simple, honest answer is simply that... I'm tired. The past few days has been an emotional roller coaster.

As a moderator, I've always felt an essential part of my role was to bring a community together. To help build bridges, and to heal rifts. To let folks know before lines are crossed, so we can pull ourselves away from the brink.

Right now, I feel lost and confused. My hammer feels too heavy to pick up. I see folks at each others' throats - seeing every shadow as a threat. I wish I was up to what I feel we need. I'm not entirely sure anyone is. I'm sorry I don't even feel up to trying. Maybe some day I'll feel up to what I expect myself to be as a moderator here. For now, I'm not sure where I stand, or the community. I'd say though I'm grateful for the chance to serve, and to serve alongside some of the finest people I've had the privilege of modding with.

This isn't our finest moment. This doesn't feel like anyone's finest moment.

I'd like folks to come together and resolve differences. This isn't going to be easy. A lot of the folks involved are fine folks, but proud, and least from what I've seen, the wounds run deep.

I have my reservations of how this has happened. I'll talk to folks as I feel fit. I hope it does some good. I don't feel like everyone will listen. At my lowest, I'm not sure anyone will. But I love this community, and all I can do is try.

Lots of people are hurt. I don't dispute this. But I ask that well - sometimes we need to take the high ground. To reach out to those who hurt us, and to realise the hurt we could have caused unknowingly. If someone has hurt you, try to heal. If you can talk to them, make peace. We're much stronger than we are fighting each other.

I know a lot of people are curious about what's happening. A lot of this will likely get discussed over the coming days. I'd urge patience and empathy.

We've seen a lot of folks act as their conscience saw fit. I respect that. Resigning as a moderator feels like the only way to make a stand. Mine would be to plead for empathy.

That said, we're all stronger together. It's tempting to assign blame. To fight the folks who we fear wish to do us harm.

Maybe it's a cultural thing. I'd rather make a friend, or an ally than a scene. But as everyone can see, I'm just an ordinary person in the periphery of an extraordinarily messy situation.

I'm asking a lot. For folks to examine their biases. To make friends with people they were hurt by. But if it was easy, we'd have done it already.

shareimprove this answer
edited Oct 1 at 1:42

Samuel Liew
5,1241919 silver badges4343 bronze badges
answered Sep 29 at 20:30

Journeyman Geek♦
75k2323 gold badges130130 silver badges296296 bronze badges

- 27
  "I've been asked a few times about my demodding. The simple, honest answer is simply that... I'm tired" Yes, I understand that. I'm tired, my life is busy and it can be utterly exhausting being a moderator. Take care. – user310756 Sep 29 at 22:29
- 18
  While I appreciate the sentiment of statements like "*To reach out to those who hurt us, and to realise the hurt we could have caused unknowingly,*" it's way too easy for talk about healing rifts and the like to become just another form of what Aza said: "I think they hope that the more we share, the better the situation will become. That has never been true. The same voices push back against our presence, every time." Telling such a person to heal themselves and stretch out a bridge building hand seems naive. – Nicol Bolas Sep 30 at 0:46
- 6

And yet after all this - that's what I feel about it. I'll leave the anger and outrage to others. Maybe they'll change things. Faith in people's better natures is a perfectly fine hill to choose to die on. – Journeyman Geek♦ Sep 30 at 1:04

- 90

The irony...Unicorn Meta Zoo #9: How do we handle problem users? There should be a new podcast entitled: **How do we handle our handling of trusted users?** – Mari-Lou A Sep 30 at 6:05

- 42

This stinks. Between you, Yvette and Monica going, the last people I trusted to nudge SE in the right direction are gone from influence. – Magisch Sep 30 at 6:19

- 49

@Mari-LouA or more likely "Unicorn Meta Zoo #10: How we destroyed Stack Exchange, bit after bit" – Shadow The Burning Wizard Sep 30 at 7:54

- 1

Were you demodded or did you stand down - subtle differences matter in these extraordinary times? – user619714 Sep 30 at 11:17

- 26

I stood down. I believe the exact words I used were "I need to take a break". At no point was I asked to step down by anyone. This is *clearly* and *unequivocally* a choice I made voluntarily. – Journeyman Geek♦ Sep 30 at 11:20

- 3

  This is one of the most well written posts I have ever read. – Mister Positive Sep 30 at 13:39
- Thank you, Journeyman. Very well explained, very well put. I sometimes do feel like there is no solution, since we're at the point where the slightest provocation (from whichever person, on whichever side of the issue) causes SUCH a big jump.... nothing can be expected to move. It's a bit disheartening, really.... hopefully something CAN change :/ – Patrice Sep 30 at 15:34
- 2

  Thank you for doing things that many of us would want to, but for one reason or another don't. – Simon Forsberg Sep 30 at 17:14
- @JourneymanGeek ty for your kind of word. – Andy K Oct 2 at 9:10
- Still see a diamond next to your name. Feels like this post should be updated. – faintsignal Nov 24 at 3:22
- That's an interesting point. I can't actually say that I feel worthy - but it felt like the situation got bad enough that I didn't feel comfortable standing by. Maybe I'll update when I've collected up my thoughts and have something coherent to say – Journeyman Geek♦ Nov 24 at 3:44

add a comment

262

> Is Stack Exchange Inc still interested in cooperating with the community? What is the vision for this relationship?

Obviously, no.

Kicking Monica out is the last straw for me. I'm done giving SE any kind of help and won't report any bugs, request any feature requests, or do any moderation actions like review or cast close votes from now on. I won't give a hand to such an evil company.

I'll keep helping people here or in chat because they're also victims, and hope for a miracle rescue to arrive.

shareimprove this answer

edited Sep 30 at 22:53
answered Sep 30 at 7:57

Shadow The Burning Wizard
137k2424 gold badges315315 silver badges652652 bronze badges

- 16
  We're sorry to see you go. ;) – Bart Oct 1 at 0:46
- 9
  @Bart I hereby give you my dupe hammers, use them wisely! – Shadow The Burning Wizard Oct 1 at 12:34

add a comment

254

> Is Stack Exchange Inc still interested in cooperating with the community?

It seems that they lost any interest long ago. They are following a pattern.

1) October 2018: Twitter Driven Development Part 1

Someone complained on Twitter about titles of HNQs, especially questions on IPS. The issues with HNQ had been discussed on that site's meta before, but no one cared. However, after the Tweet it took no longer than 40 min to ban IPS from HNQ for several months. Not only that, even back then they threw moderators under the bus.

Links:

- Magisch's answer
- Marie-Lou's answer
- Remnants of the Twitter thread
- Monica Cellio's post on medium

2) July 2019, Twitter Driven Development Part 2

Someone suggested an edit to an old answer, solely changing gender pronouns and "guy* to "person". They even edited code. The edit was rejected. So they took it to ~~Meta~~ Twitter and a Community Manager approved the edit.

Links:

- Mari-Lou's answer
- Suggested edit
- Twitter thread
- Old, relevant comment by animuson

3) September 2019: Firing a moderator

I'm still in shock over what happened. I could never have imagined Monica Cellio getting fired. A lot has been written here, so I will just quote two posts in full, because I consider them that important.

The first one is Stack Overflow moderator Bhargav Rao's comment summarizing what happened:

> The reason why Monica was fired has been out and clear. She had a different view point from what the director of Q&A had, and was therefore thrown out like street garbage. The director has repeatedly demonstrated that they don't care about the community's feelings. There used to be a time when users were free to oppose whatever the company had done, and were able to remain on the site. But in the past few days, the Stack Exchange staff have tried to take down posts on MSE and Stack Moderators teams which were focused on the resignations, and suspended a user for posting that.

Furthermore, Director of Public Q&A at Stack Overflow Sara Chipps's reply to Monica's Mi Yodea post (emphasis mine):

> We understand there are some folks upset about this decision. **We aren’t going to share specifics out of respect for all individuals involved** but this is a site reaching millions of people and **we have to do what we believe fosters a spirit of inclusion and respect. When a moderator violates that, we will always do our best to resolve it with them privately. When we can’t we must take action.** This is always done based on what we believe is best for all SE users.

I emphasized what strikes me as a bit of a contradiction. The part about "all individuals involved" looks somewhat misplaced, considering what comes later. Doesn't look to me like the moderator they fired is included in "all individuals involved".

Certainly, 2) is rather a minor issue, but it's needed to show the new pattern. Whenever Stack Exchange staff had the choice, they acted with total disregard to the wishes of the community. SE is not run by the community, but Authoritarian.

These minor issues (some possibly questionable titles, a rejected, superficial edit, some questions asked about a change to the CoC and a "possible CoC violation in the future") lead to drastic consequences, totally out of proportion. It would have been understandable had this been real, grave issues. But they weren't. And you know why? Because the community works that well.

And it shows what SE truly thinks of its moderators. People, volunteering to make SE what it is (still) known for.

shareimprove this answer
edited Sep 30 at 15:10

Lightness Races with Monica
30.1k55 gold badges7171 silver badges137137 bronze badges
answered Sep 30 at 13:27

Anne Daunted GoFundMonica

6,34955 gold badges1515 silver badges4646 bronze badges

- 4
  I want to share this interesting answer. It's not directly related but sheds some light on SE's behavior. – Anne Daunted GoFundMonica Sep 30 at 13:28
- 10
  I don't see the relevance of the “Twitter Driven Development Part 2” thing in this context. The issue at hand is not excessive political correctness by SE, but a culture of ignoring the community – and firing a moderator in a pathetic manner. – amon Sep 30 at 13:36
- 25
  @amon It also shows how and that the community is being ignored. A decision that wasn't wrong was overturned by a Community Manager after a complaint on Twitter. – Anne Daunted GoFundMonica Sep 30 at 13:39
- 51
  @amon The recent issue pretty much *is* excessive political correctness by SE. Or at least it's a significant part of it. – Chris says Reinstate Monica Sep 30 at 14:30
- 24
  You forgot an instance of Twitter-driven development earlier in 2018, March/April 2018 (the first one, I think). 2019-03-05 – Peter Mortensen Sep 30 at 15:04

- 12

@PeterMortensen Thanks for reminding me! Somehow, April's post always falls off my radar. Maybe I will add it later. I tried to read it, but it's tough and I couldn't finish it (yet). On the one hand, I understand where they're coming from, on the other hand, the criticism seems based on **not understanding** what SE is (about). They tried to use a tool without knowing what it's for, it didn't work and instead of trying to find that out, they complain somewhere else. And I've read too many complaints about "unfriendly" DVs and people editing out "thanks" etc. It's tiring. – Anne Daunted GoFundMonica Sep 30 at 17:08

- 9

@ChristianRau Now that I understand more of the background of the firing, I agree with your assessment. I love gender-neutral language, but forcing it on people only stokes resentment. Monica might have been stubborn, but SE's demands are ridiculous. – amon Sep 30 at 17:33

- 6

I also fail to see the relevance of "Twitter Driven Development Part 2" here. Even if you believe that should have been handled differently with the community, a user who tried to remove unnecessarily gendered language from an answer got a rejection with the message that they "deface[d] the post" and were "deliberately destructive." After that, do you really expect someone to take it to meta and receive further invective? It's just not relevant to the issues here. – Zach Lipton Sep 30 at 22:45

- 4
  Not to mention that they stopped the monthly product updates without announcing. meta.stackexchange.com/q/329659/271215 – Kolappan N Oct 1 at 7:36
- 13

Why Twitter drives anything other than nonsense into the minds of simple people is beyond me. – user212646 Oct 2 at 23:29

- 2
  I also recall the welcome bandwagon and the way it was... implemented (imposed?), and how rude/abusive started to be weaponized. I also see we have (will have?) a new CEO – DarkCygnus Oct 3 at 0:13
- 7
  The writing on the wall - about a tendency towards authoritarianism - was very clear IMHO already with the publishing of the CoC originally. I see this as a "natural" development of the atmosphere it exudes. – einpoklum - reinstate Monica Oct 3 at 23:16
- It is actually an official meme. – Peter Mortensen Oct 6 at 2:00

add a comment

244

tl;dr - I mod 6 sites: Security, Music, Parenting, Outdoors, Sound and Video - I'm suspending all my mod activity on them until SE sort this out. I am just one voice among many, but I hope I add to the clamour.

I have been hovering in TL hoping someone from Stack Exchange would come in with any information on what they are going to do to improve things. Yes, we need more protection and support for the LGBT+ communities, and also for other minorities, and in fact all mods, who suffer under continuous personal attacks and stress.

And we also need a framework that protects us from Stack Exchange, from the capricious whim that can remove a mod at a moment's notice whilst they were trying to identify compromise, or that can change rules or tools off the back of a single tweet, rather than by following request from mods reaching back years sometimes.

We have very little agency, and as the liaison between the company and the millions of visitors every day I think we need it.

But so far SE have remained close-mouthed, using only canned responses that mean nothing other than our voices and our efforts are not respected or heard.

I have been a moderator for nearly 9 years, and have moderated 7 sites (sadly one failed, so I only moderate 6 currently.) I love and respect the communities built up around them, and have put so much effort into helping them grow, keeping them safe and tidy, and think that my efforts, like all the mods, should be supported and respected.

Yes, we are volunteers, so we may be seen as a free resource, but our value is far from free.

I hope SE does the right thing.

shareimprove this answer
answered Oct 1 at 16:48

Ro-Reinstate Monic-Alsop
15.4k88 gold badges3434 silver badges8181 bronze badges

- 12
  You may think that Jarrod - I am holding out some hope. That's 40-odd mod roles stepping away or down entirely, a not insignificant percentage. There will be reputational impact, and day-to-day impact from mod tasks not being completed. – Ro-Reinstate Monic-Alsop Oct 1 at 17:51
- 5
  I sincerely hope that SE hears the message loud and clear. – Anne Daunted GoFundMonica Oct 1 at 17:54
- 2
  Me too, @AnneDaunted – Ro-Reinstate Monic-Alsop Oct 1 at 17:58
- 10
  Rory, you and all the other mods have been doing a great job on Security.SE. I understand why you take this step, and I really, really hope SE sorts this out so we can have you back. Either way, I am very grateful for all the hard work you have been putting in. Thank you! – Anders Oct 1 at 18:40
- 9
  Rory, I'm deeply and genuinely saddened by what has happened. I don't want to lose you, but joining others in taking a stand indicates unselfish loyalty and integrity. You're dedication to the sites you mod is way beyond what's expected. You're a mentor, ambassador and gentleman. It's not easy to avoid being embroiled in conflicts, but somehow you do it! When a firm hand is needed, you do it gently. When I've struggled at TGO, your handling of things is why I've stayed. I'm a tiny part in the large group of people who've been blessed by you. I hope this gets fixed! – Sue Saddest Farewell TGO GL Oct 4 at 0:06
- 1
  I enjoyed moderating with you on Music. I've been inactive for a long time, but always thought I would come back. It seems that no matter where a mod falls on the particular issue at hand, at the end of the day we remain looked down by SE and exploited for our time. I finally sent a request to de-mod me to community@ yesterday. – Matthew Read Oct 30 at 19:26
- 1
  Sad to hear that, Rory, but I believe it's the right thing to do. You've been a great mod on the m-p&t site. When **every** mod stands down, perhaps then the 'powers that be' will stop, listen and do some thinking - about the whole of SE, not just themselves, which was great but has now descended into an organisation which doesn't command any respect. I was considering joining mods soon - that thought has disappeared funnily enough! – Tim Nov 1 at 15:31
- 1
  We on TGO have been spoiled by having such a thoughtful and responsive moderator as you, Rory. Since I joined TGO in 2015, it has evolved to include more aspects of the outdoors, in no small part because you listened to users and, when presented with well thought out arguments, changed your mind! You stuck to your guns when you should, and you changed your mind

when you decided it made sense to do so. I hope we can all go back in good conscience, eventually. – ab2 ReinstateMonicaNow Nov 6 at 0:56

add a comment

232
+200

Update 2019-12-03

Since SE insists on ignoring the community, and has refused to retract the harmful statements made to the press or even address our questions about the legality of the licensing change; since, in short, SE is showing every sign of wanting to continue along the same path, I have decided to step down as a moderator on two of the three sites I moderate(d). I will stay on as a moderator of Unix & Linux, for the moment, because I am not ready to abandon all of my communities and I still feel I might be able to do more from within than from without.

However, I will essentially be doing my best to pretend SE does not exist. I no longer have any hope that the company even cares to bridge the gap between it and its users, nor that the company is anything but the latest unethical US tech corporation. At this point, the only difference I can see between SE and the "evil" tech giants is size.

So I will go back to my corner of the Network, close my eyes and do my best to pretend there is no company. I will no longer expect anything from SE. I'll just do my best to moderate a single community and try to keep at least that from being destroyed by the company's bumbling, malicious ineptitude.

---

tl;dr I am a moderator on Unix & Linux, Ask Ubuntu and Bioinformatics. I am stopping all moderating activity until further notice.

I too will be suspending modly activities for a while. I am 100% in favor of just about any measure I can imagine that would make any marginalized group feel more welcome. This is a position dear to my heart in real life and on SE. I have no issue with any of the points in the current or forthcoming CoC. I do, however, take issue with the way SE has behaved.

For me, the straw that broke the camel's back was the non-answer copy-pasta response that was posted under so many resignation notices across the network. It was obviously boilerplate, impersonal, and graceless. It blithely dismissed people who've done their best to help these sites grow and flourish, some for almost a decade or even more.

Most importantly, its very vagueness allows people to come to their own conclusions about what actually happened. It allows folks to assume the very worst, as humans are so good at doing. And when you say a moderator "*violates [...] a spirit of inclusion and respect*", it's like you're asking people to assume the worst.

And all this about a user who participates here under her own name! A user who is now put in danger because SE seems to be running from one desperate, knee-jerk reaction to the next. In the past, SE reacted with more decorum and decency when a moderator had actually been arrested for one of the ugliest crimes a human is capable of.

When I first became a moderator, I felt that the SE had my back. I still have enormous respect for the wonderful team of Community Managers it has been my privilege to interact with. They are decent, kind, intelligent, articulate, and a pleasure to be around. But I no longer feel that their character is representative of the company they work for.

It seems SE has come to the point of considering its faithful users as nothing more than a resource, and a renewable one at that. I am not resigning my diamonds. I care very deeply about the communities I belong to. I don't know how I will continue from here, but I do know I feel I needed to make some form of public protest. This is it.

shareimprove this answer
edited Dec 3 at 11:01
answered Oct 1 at 17:55

terdon - stop harming Monica
12.1k33 gold badges3030 silver badges5858 bronze badges

- 42
  "SE reacted with more decorum and decency when a moderator had actually been arrested for one of the ugliest crimes a human is capable of." That's the first time I heard about that! – Anne Daunted GoFundMonica Oct 1 at 17:58
- 4
  @AnneDaunted it was quite a few years ago and I don't want to share details. I'm sure you can find them if you really want to. – terdon - stop harming Monica Oct 1 at 17:59
- 10
  The CM's have been incredibly supportive, when they are allowed, and within the limits imposed upon them. – Ro-Reinstate Monic-Alsop Oct 1 at 18:03
- 4
  @RoryAlsop they absolutely have. They have gone above and beyond what could be expected of them. – terdon - stop harming Monica Oct 1 at 18:11
- 2
  Will you be posting about this on U&L or AU meta? It's not necessary since you aren't resigning, I'm just curious. – muru Oct 2 at 0:09
- 5
  @muru probably not. I've let the other mods know but I'd rather not cause more disruption to the communities I love. I will post if this becomes a long term thing. – terdon - stop harming Monica Oct 2 at 0:12
- 10

"I have no issue with any of the points in the current or forthcoming CoC. I do, however, take issue with the way SE has behaved." Well, I believe it's not really the essence of the policies *per se* that the resounding disapproval is against but the fact that these policies will possibly be enforced by *the last kind* of people you'd want i.e. who not only would claim that *their interpretation* of the policy is the absolutely sound but also that their understanding of the situations they're policing is always perfect and beyond public criticism (as is evident from Monica's firing). – S.D. Oct 3 at 5:13

- @terdon Is there any more you can provide us with? I think the comparison of how they acted then and now may be relevant (to show a pattern of changing behavior from SE). – JBis Oct 3 at 21:43
- 2

@JBis They acted as they used to act: with decency, compassion and decorum. So much so, that even as a mod at the time, I don't know the details. As I shouldn't. – terdon - stop harming Monica Oct 3 at 22:37

- @terdon Fair enough. Wonder why the sudden change in behavior... – JBis Oct 3 at 22:47
- @JBis I suspect (but do not know) that most of it is down to the difference between being a small startup where everyone knows each other and everyone is deeply invested in what they're doing, and being a larger entity with all that entails. – terdon - stop harming Monica Oct 3 at 22:56
- 3

@Blue various people are objecting to and disapproving of various things. I am only speaking for myself here and *my* main issue is with the way a user was publicly pilloried and put in danger. – terdon - stop harming Monica Oct 5 at 14:39

- @terdon Didn't claim otherwise. – S.D. Oct 5 at 15:17
- 1

Intellectually I'll miss all the help you've given me in Ask Ubuntu over the years, and the website will suffer as a consequence. But emotionally I'm 100% behind you and I'll have to go to Ubuntu Forums and Arch Linux Websites more often. It's a shame because a large tight knit community is being demoralized by a miniscule political / philosophical community that doesn't even visit Ask Ubuntu. They're trying to make the gold standard yellow painted lead and probably don't even know they are doing it. – WinEunuuchs2Unix Nov 2 at 2:34

- 2

"I no longer have any hope that the company even cares to bridge the gap between it and its users, nor that the company is anything but the latest unethical US tech corporation." Neither do I. I wish I knew exactly what to do, but every choice is sub-optimal. – anongoodnurse Dec 11 at 22:14

-

show **3** more comments

201

tl;dr I am a moderator on Parenting.SE. I am stopping all moderating activity until further notice.

From a tiny minnow in a pretty large pond: I spent the better part of a day reading many days worth of transcripts from the TL in which the issue originated.

While I take no issue with the only proposed change in the future CoC that I know of, I do believe that one of our most remarkably dedicated, kind and incisive moderators was fired in a very unkind manner. This is disturbing enough, but the non-response (quoted in answers above) posted on many sites now is downright scary.

I've been part of the SE community for a number of years now and value the service they provide to the public. However, I do not know much about the company that I am volunteering my time and effort for. All I know right now is that it might not be a company I am willing to freely contribute to anymore. Time will tell.

shareimprove this answer
edited Oct 2 at 5:58

Gryphon - Reinstate Monica
2,05711 gold badge55 silver badges1414 bronze badges
answered Oct 1 at 21:21

anongoodnurse
4,61044 gold badges1515 silver badges2626 bronze badges

- 13
  I agree with all of what you write, but especially with "All I know right now is that it might not be a company I am willing to freely contribute to anymore." I very much feel the same. – Anne Daunted GoFundMonica Oct 2 at 12:03
- 8
  "the non-response" Yes, that is indeed bothering. The silence in the last days feels a bit like a couple shortly before divorce with nothing to say to each other anymore (if a company would be a person). – Trilarion Oct 2 at 12:12
- 35
  I've seen and read a lot of content you've produced. You might think of yourself as a tiny minnow, but your opinion here holds a lot of weight for me at least. – Reinstate Monica Oct 2 at 17:35
- It's now December 5th, and no real headway has been made in order to address the issues in this post. You originally posted that you're stopping all moderating activity: But *what* has made you return to moderating? – FrankerZ Dec 5 at 10:03
- @FrankerZ - I generously supported Monica's GoFundMe, which to SE apparently speaks louder than our collective suspensions (as you said, nothing has changed here.) Then the site had 2 HNQs at the same time, and the comments on one of them were brutal (e.g. suggesting that the OP euthanize his misbehaving child.) I felt that the OP didn't deserve that. I care about

people, just as I care about Monica. I stopped again after that but felt the site was being harmed. I'm on the fence about staying on the network, leaning strongly towards leaving, but it's not an easy decision. – anongoodnurse Dec 5 at 14:04

-

add a comment

189
My latest thoughts on this matter are posted on SciFi meta.

I am suspending my activity as a moderator. Combined with the fact that some of my fellow moderators on my site have also suspended their activity (Rand al'Thor and Kevin), this means Science Fiction & Fantasy is currently without its three most active moderators.

SE has acted deplorably in summarily removing a respected moderator in order to make an example out of her. Moreover, SE appears to have been completely unprepared to deal with the consequences of their actions since the company has only managed to post perfunctory and ill-received responses (most of them canned, e.g. this one) and has not even released the new CoC which triggered their action.

How are moderators supposed to enforce a CoC which hasn't even been released to us, much less to users who might be in violation of it? And why should we moderate if we are in danger of being removed for failing to properly enforce an unreleased CoC?

I may or may not resume my activity as a moderator depending on SE's actions going forward. I will wait for SE's next move before making my decision. The ball is in your court, SE. You need to do a much better job going forward.

shareimprove this answer
edited Nov 8 at 4:20
answered Oct 1 at 15:22

Null
4,06533 gold badges1111 silver badges3131 bronze badges

- 47
  The director has also responded to questions from The Register - I find the response makes it even worse but just fyi. – LinkBerest Oct 1 at 16:29
- 4
  Null, modding together with you has always been a pleasure. I hope that we can both go back to it in the future. If you want to chat outside of SE, you have my email address. – Rand al'Thor Oct 1 at 17:35
- 2

> @Randal'Thor I agree completely with you: it has been an absolute pleasure to work with you and I hope we can get back to our normal routine. I'm still catching up on the events over this weekend but I was already planning to send you an e-mail. – Null Oct 1 at 17:48

add a comment

186

This spurred a lot of related topics everywhere else in the network. To not lose sight of posts about the controversy and make things more searchable, I'm adding links to other related questions here.

This post is community wiki, feel free to edit.

In site alphabetical order (with MSE at the top) and then in chronological order. **Through Oct 26th** (link to **PART TWO**)

Legend:
★ for each 200 upvotes (positive score)
▼ for each 200 downvotes (negative score)
☛ official statements
⚑ deleted posts
Questions with >10K views are in parentheses.
Some deleted questions also feature a **(screenshot)** for those with <10K rep.

Meta Stack Exchange

1. Voluntary gender indication
2. Show MSE posts authored by staff members on the homepage regardless of the vote count

September 29, 2019

3. Firing mods and forced relicensing: is Stack Exchange still interested in cooperating with the community? ★★★★★★★★★★ (161k views)
4. How is the CoC about to change?
5. Is there a plan for dealing with all the moderator vacancies?
6. Will we really have "democratic" moderator elections?
7. Remove misleading statements from the blog and the tour pages
8. An open letter on the state of curation and moderation ★
9. ⚑ It's time to go on strike **(screenshot)**
10. A very recent post asking people to go "on strike" was just deleted
11. So disappointed to see the fall out this week
12. Can one take the entire Q&A base and move it to a new site?
13. ⚑ Support for gender pronouns

14. Are there specific issues with unwelcoming behavior toward LGBTQ persons on Stack Exchange?
15. How can the community assist in welcoming LGBTQ users?
16. Stack Exchange staff speaking to the press instead of the community ★
17. A general call for increased transparency from Stack Exchange, Inc .
18. Is it OK to continue Reviewing?
19. Has Stack Exchange made anything approaching a clear or detailed statement on the current crisis?
20. Are there any objections to using singular they for everyone?
21. Disclose the discussion that started the current SE-moderators debate
22. ⚑ What is the correct way for SE to handle the pronoun issue?
23. ☛ An Update to our Community and an Apology 11x▼ (118k views)
24. Should I consciously protect myself from becoming too invested in the Stack Exchange community?
25. Publish a procedure for reinstating a removed moderator
26. Perhaps someone from the Stack Exchange Leadership Team should hold a town-hall meeting?
27. Why was the CoC page changed to remove Jeff Atwood's original one?
28. Allow Monica to have a structured conversation (à la mediation) with SE leadership
29. Avoid "shipping" news on a Friday evening
30. Are the meta mods overwhelmed?
31. What disputes need to be resolved with respect to "An Update to our Community and an Apology"?
32. What level of English proficiency do we expect of people participating on SE sites?
33. New lock type: "Official Announcement Lock"
34. ⚑ Require pronouns next to user names
35. Summing up the main issues (The Story So Far) (19k views)
36. What changes are needed to the Moderator Action Review Process?
37. Why do moderators behave as a separate, private sub-community? (i.e., why does the Teacher's Lounge exist in its current form?)
38. What does the self-requested reinstatement of two Workplace moderators mean for the community?
39. Does Stack Exchange insist on a special language for posts? Please describe
40. The ship is sinking, but communication is down (need orders from the captain (CEO))
41. Has Stack Exchange seen an outrage like the current one before?
42. A proposed turnaround plan after Monica's firing
43. Kings, Farmers, and Moderators
44. This is not the same site I registered on
45. Why does Stack Overflow seem to be less welcoming to its top contributors?
46. Can we resolve the differences between statements by moderators and Stack Exchange with respect to recent events?
47. Could Stack Exchange sites be shut down because of recent events?
48. How long does it take to resign as an elected moderator?

49. Anyone support creating a new StackExchange?
50. How much experience does SE staff have on diversity issues?
51. ☛ An apology to our community, and next steps ▼ (150k views)
52. Can we get timestamps added to the CoC page?
53. ☛ Dear Stack Exchange: a statement and a letter from your moderators ★★★ (22k views)
    - The Community Management Team's response
54. Ask hard questions on the Moderator Questionnaire
55. ⚑ Site infringing on trademark in URL, currently integrating with API
56. Are there any observable effects of a "strike"?
57. Should we have a tag for significant points in time?
58. When is incorrect pronoun usage likely to offend people based on gender?
59. Why was the *pronoun* tag removed?
60. Where do we go from here?
61. How did various SE sites react to the pronouns controversy?
62. Can a fired moderator be elected as a moderator?
63. Time to get back to work?
64. An update on my resignation notice ★
65. Why do you stay?
66. Are there any topic boundaries for the private chat room Teachers' Lounge?
67. ⚑ Why hasn't any moderators from Interpersonal Skills resigned? **(screenshot)**
68. Dear Stack Exchange, it is time for a change
69. ☛ ⚑ Official FAQ on gender pronouns and Code of Conduct changes 9x▼ (118k views)
70. Please give moderators better tools to understand the interactions between two users
71. Kind, courteous, inclusive, intolerant of bigotry, racism, etc. Fine, I agree. Now what about my feelings as a mod?
72. Different CoC for different sites at the SE network
73. What about officially adopting a gender-neutral singular pronoun?
74. Can the official FAQ be changed slightly with respect to editing old posts?
75. We need "assume good intent" back in the Code of Conduct ★★
76. Define "gender-neutral language"? (CoC FAQ)
77. Show Code of Conduct and other terms of service within version control highlighting
78. ⚑ You're only being asked not to misgender people intentionally **(screenshot)**
79. Bye Stack Exchange, I'm done. Coerced speech is incompatible with freedom ★
80. May I put my pronouns in my username?
81. Why are the Code of Conduct changes received so negatively, and what can / could have been done to change that? ★
82. How should we refer to members of the SE network in a neutral way, and will we be punished for remaining neutral for all reasons?
83. How do downvoted questions/announcements affect staff/moderators?
84. Why taking responsibility for other people's feelings doesn't work ★
85. How often is gender actually used in comments?

86. SE Inc. Director of Public Q&A retweets bad-faith, misrepresentative tweet ★★ (16k views)
87. Social Change, the CoC, and credibility
88. Fundamentally, what should a Question and Answer site look like?
89. Prefer only 'they' for personal pronouns due to privacy and security
90. How should I deal with the new CoC as non-native English speaker?
91. A Pronominal Proposal ★
92. How can the prohibition on pronoun avoidance possibly be enforced?
93. Update Coral Project Code of Conduct link in our CoC page
94. Meta: Can we influence and change policy or is our role reduced to exegesis of company commandments and acclamation?
95. ⚑ Thank you for taking action on inclusion - what are the best ways to dialogue with those who dislike the CoC change?
96. ⚑ I identify as an English Language Speaker
97. ⚑ Are voi allowed to chose first and second person pronouns?
98. Is there even an attempt by SE to make existing users more welcomed?
99. Feature request: Add pronouns to usercards?
100. How can I keep track of all the developments surrounding the current controversy?
101. Is calling for protest actions allowed on metasites?
102. A clarification that might go a long way: What in the CoC is required and what is preferred?
103. What is actually being done about the SE/SO culture?
104. What is on the mind of Stack Exchange management?
105. A storm in a teacup, please calm down
106. Open hostility from SE staff towards the community - trying to understand it
107. Help people learn how to write good comments instead of just flagging them
108. What did Monica do to violate the CoC? ★
109. How many more casualties in the war on pronouns?
110. Why should we be forced to consider titles when discussing a topic that has nothing to do with them?
111. Things you Should Never Do, Part I, or Iterating on Inclusion - so why stage a Revolution?
112. Why was "Be kind and friendly" removed from the code of conduct?
113. How does the new CoC apply to second-person pronouns?
114. Does the management or the Welcome Wagon care to know about activity that makes users want to leave their platform?
115. Monica's situation continues unresolved, is SE hoping the problem just goes away? ★★ (17k views)
116. ⚑ Do we require users to be nice when correcting pronoun usage?
117. Is the updated pronoun guidance in any way related to the New York City Human Rights law on preferred pronouns?
118. Is the current outrage by the long time community contributors really about pronouns/trans people/Monica?
119. How should pronoun-only edits be handled?
120. What is so bad about "Nancy"?

121. ⚑ Is this a valid request, concerning CoC
122. ⚑ Argument to favor neutrality to prefered pronouns in CoC
123. Is the usage of 'folks' mandated by policy?
124. Under what circumstances will Stack Exchange, Inc. share private/sensitive information with the press?
125. How can we resolve the current drama without causing any more harm to vulnerable groups?
126. Does or should the Stack Exchange team serve at the pleasure of the community?
127. Did anyone consider the impact on autistics of recent Code of Conduct changes?
128. Could we get some troll fencing up around meta?
129. Can a duress code(s) be designed for the moderators to indicate type of coercion?
130. I am non-binary - recent events have made SE less safe for me (and other members of the LGBTQ community) ★
131. Do you think it's right to stymie opinions on important topics?
132. Why was “What did Monica do to violate the CoC” deleted?
133. Let's not waste all that reputation and increase the limits during the crisis
134. A peculiar justification for closing a post - seeking explanation
135. Will the public Q&A network stay completely free, and remain the company's main focus?
136. Does Stack Exchange, Inc. really care about the LGBTQ+ community?
137. How can the community take action to end the current crisis of trust?
138. A call for emergency moderation/tools on the sites that most need it
139. Does the company want to enforce CoC irrespective of the backlash it received?
140. Can we post an answer and refuse to respond to comments or do edits?
141. ⚑ How many moderators will quit the site if there is not a satisfactory resolution to the current issue with Monica?
142. What is Stack Exchange going to do to prevent further weaponization of the Code of Conduct?
143. Should neopronoun be encouraged to use in Stack Exchange?
144. ⚑ Would opponents of compelled speech accept this policy instead
145. Can we disappear from this site, or will there be a policy update preventing SE employees from talking about us to the media?
146. Changing the Code of Conduct to be more inclusive
147. Could you tell me what was rude about my answer and how I can avoid making the same mistake in future?
148. ⚑ https://meta.stackexchange.com/q/335989 (**screenshots** one, two)
149. ⚑ https://meta.stackexchange.com/q/335991
150. ⚑ https://meta.stackexchange.com/q/335993
151. Users need to be able to remove themselves and all their data from the site
152. Neopronouns or trolling?
153. An evidence based appeal for gender neutrality in the Code of Conduct
154. How can we put pressure on Stack Exchange Inc. without damaging the community?
155. Fewer Words, not More!
156. Is SE still safe for queer/trans folks?
157. To stay or to quit: a conflicted user's guide

158. How to disentangle the CoC discussion from the Monica issue?
159. What other policies does Stack Exchange need?
160. ☛ What processes exist to issue formal warnings or remove moderators?
161. ☛ What is the process for reinstating a moderator?
162. ☛ Feedback post: Moderator review and reinstatement processes ▼▼▼ (73k views)
    - Monica Cellio's response ★★★★★★
163. Is there any concerted action that could be taken to ensure that Monica not be forgotten in the discussion about the new policies?
164. Neopronouns: please be lenient with users who are not native English speakers
165. Can we please stop tweeting questions for HNQs from sites with reduced moderation?
166. Under new processes, Monica's removal should complete the Conduct Review, not request Reinstatement
167. Is it time for Stack Exchange, Inc and the community to legally separate amicably?
168. ⚑ Can you generally say that the purpose of the SE network is to try to find or achieve the truth?
169. https://meta.stackexchange.com/q/336288
170. Could all of the "confusion" around pronouns have been avoided if instead it was deliberate misgendering that was targeted?
171. Is there a reason why calls for the MRRP post being [featured] are being ignored?
172. How severe is the problem of hate sites since the new CoC?
173. Have there been any statements from the CEO in relation to the current crisis of confidence?
174. What if I misgendered someone in a past comment that still persists?
175. Should Stack Exchange slow down visitors following links from sources that are causing problems?
176. Mouse over hint for pronoun
177. Why was Robert Harvey suspended? ★
178. Is Stack Exchange in the later part of the methodology cycle?
179. Does the policy that suspension details aren't released publicly still apply even if the user says they are OK with them being released?
180. ☛ What does the Code of Conduct say about pronouns? (12k views)
181. ☛ Post for clarifications on the updated pronouns FAQ ▼ (55k views)
182. Why was the previous Code of Conduct FAQ (and all answers) removed? ★
183. Looking for stats related to possibly coordinated comments flagging
184. ⚑ The far right using SE (and particularly Meta) as a recruitment ground
185. Where is the most recent version of the Code of Conduct?
186. ⚑ https://meta.stackexchange.com/q/336437
187. How can we move forward if SE will not admit to wrongdoing for legal reasons?
188. Let's use Town Hall chats to bridge the gap between company and community
189. What exactly is the difference between the old and the new FAQ?
190. "Boilerplate" mod messages are "impersonal" and leave users "confused"

191. Feedback post: CM review and reinstatement processes
192. Why was my profile edited to remove my dissenting stance on pronoun usage?
193. Stack Overflow is doing me ongoing harm; it's time to fix it! ★★★★★★★ **(54k views)**
194. Is it acceptable to discuss the validity of the preferred pronoun policy, and where can I do so?
195. Why was this flag on alleged Code of Conduct violations declined?
196. What can we do, as a community, to help make MSE a friendlier place again?
197. Where will you draw the line?
198. Was Monica's firing intended to "disrupt the status quo"?
199. Since SE is US based, is the new CoC compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?
200. What, if anything, can SE do to resolve the ongoing conflict in a timely way?
201. ⚑ https://meta.stackexchange.com/q/336646
202. Why haven't the statements to the Register been retracted? ★
203. Is Stack Exchange interested to learn from another similar case at GitLab?
204. ⚑ https://meta.stackexchange.com/q/336668
205. Will we hear from the Director of Public Q&A regarding current events?
206. Is the reputation system still valid on Meta?
207. Document pronoun policy debate exclusion from scope
208. To reach out: on Monica, the Lavender community, and the future of the Stack Exchange network ★★
209. Does the community consider the "coerced speech" complaint largely resolved?
210. What would be good "call to action" elements for "Reinstate Monica" profiles?

The list continues at Part Two.

Academia

1. The code of conduct has been changed
2. How many users state preferred pronouns on Academia?
3. A request for SE employees and CMs

Astronomy

- Regarding moderating the new Code of Conduct

Christianity

1. Brothers, I must go… ★ (29k views)
2. We Are NOT Resigning … Yet
3. Dear Stack Exchange - a letter

4. Does the extraordinary response to the "Brothers, I must go…" post reflect an underlying anti-trans sentiment at Christianity.SE?

Code Golf

- Should we consider planning a move off StackExchange?

Code Review

1. Mat's back, blame the monkey
2. That's it for now

Cross Validated

1. Moderator resignation
2. FYI: A second apology from SE has been posted
3. I am suspending my activity as a moderator
4. Why are Cross Validated users using the avatar "Reinstate Monica"?

English Language Learners

1. When the Chips Are Down
2. I am resigning as moderator

English Language & Usage

1. ⚑ Seeking clarification on the use of “They/Them/Their” as a personal gender pronoun
2. Have we lost some moderators as a result of recent events?
3. Do we have any information on what the "preferred pronouns" are?
4. Support for Monica Cellio

Interpersonal Skills

- Pronouns, New CoC, and good practices editing answers

Law

- Legality of creating a SE replica using SE's content

MathOverflow

- How much is MathOverflow exposed to recent events on StackExchange?

Mi Yodeya

- Stack Overflow Inc., sinat chinam, and the goat for Azazel ★★ (84k views)

Politics

- Is there a push to use gender-neutral language and gender pronouns when given in the United States?

Skeptics

1. I'm resigning as a moderator
2. Are neo-Nazis calling for the murder and torture of Stack Exchange members?

Spanish Language

1. Translation Golf XLVIII — We're sorry to see you go
2. Sobre el nuevo Código de Conducta y otros eventos recientes de la red
3. How should we address people in Spanish in a gender-neutral way on our site?

Stack Overflow

1. What's up with the breakdown in communication between Stack Overflow and the community? ★
2. Why are a lot of users (including moderators) upset about where SO is going?
3. I'm resigning as a moderator from all Stack Exchange sites 5x★ (62k views)
4. A serious request for answers from SO
5. Why I Resigned as a Moderator ★★
6. Would a note about preferred pronouns qualify the same way as a "thank you"? ★
7. How do LGBTQ+ people, who don't want to out themselves on their primary account, provide feedback since you need 50 rep to post on meta?
8. I'm resigning as a Stack Overflow community elected moderator 9x★ (83k views)
9. Alex's back, so I'm leaving and taking my money with me ★ and related Q119 (changed the title several times)
10. What could Stack Exchange Inc do to make moderators who've recently resigned want to stay?
11. ⚑ I'm back and active on the site and applied to be reinstated as a moderator on SO
12. I'm deleting my profile

13. Yet another "step down as moderator" post ★★★★

Stack Overflow in Portuguese

1. Moderadores renunciando em massa na rede Stack Exchange
2. Como o novo Código de Conduta (CoC) afeta o SOpt?

Stack Overflow in Russian

1. Уход модераторов сети Stack Exchange
2. Добровольная отставка модератора PashaPash
3. Местоимения. Пока не про нас, но есть вопросы

Stack Overflow in Spanish

- Echando mods y relicencia forzada, ¿está todavía Stack Exchange interesada en cooperar con la comunidad?

The Workplace

1. Resigning as moderator from Workplace.SE
2. Deciding to take a break
3. Resigning as Moderator from TWP
4. No more active ♦ moderators. How should we keep the site in order?
5. Calm down, nothing to see here
6. A big thank you to our mods
7. What does the return of the mods mean?
8. Forward, to the future
9. Back to basics: Assume good intentions and Be nice
10. Updates to the Code of Conduct
11. Is the term “guys” a violation of the CoC?
12. Encourage question/answers to be gender-neutral

Worldbuilding

1. Thoughts from Worldbuilding Stack Exchange moderators on the dismissal of Monica Cellio
2. How to give a rationality-inducing drug to an entire software company?
3. Thoughts on the proposed CoC?

Writing

1. Taking a personal leave of absence
2. “Dear Stack Exchange, I am very disappointed in you” - How to construct a strong opening line in a letter?
3. What are we supposed to do now about discipline issues?
4. Why are so many users deleting/having their accounts deleted?
5. A personal hiatus
6. How can we on this site put pressure on SO/SE to carry out Monica's requests?
7. In response to recent events: A hiatus and a possible solution?
8. Has there been a noticable downturn in the quality of questions on Writing SE?

shareimprove this answer
edited Dec 12 at 21:56
community wiki

148 revs, 25 users 42%
Victor Stafusa

- 5
  I'd personally rather see links to moderators' announcements in the question, as they are now: focusing on which moderator, which site and what type of action the moderator is taking. The post titles are really beside the point for that, in my opinion, and in some cases require (or benefit from) a bit of site-specific context (Martin Tournoij's being one such example). – a CVn Oct 4 at 19:12
- @Mari-LouA If you're interested in archiving I can make some screenshots for you – Magisch Oct 12 at 21:02
- @Mari-LouA sorry. I thought you were editing those into the answer. I still have the latest 2 links: i.stack.imgur.com/7D9oI.png i.stack.imgur.com/yzn7Y.png – Magisch Oct 21 at 14:09
- 3
  @Mari-LouA Using `1.` makes SE autonumber it. Further, this hitted the 30000 chars limit so I started to use these sorts of tricks to reduce the size of the answer. – Victor Stafusa Oct 23 at 12:20
- @Mari-LouA Yes. Soon we will have to do that. – Victor Stafusa Oct 24 at 16:06
- 5
  Changing the URLs to use "q" instead of "question" saves like 2,000 characters so I went ahead and made the change. Regex FTW! – Laurel Oct 24 at 21:55
- @Laurel Thanks. :) – Victor Stafusa Oct 24 at 22:27
- There are a number of deleted questions now, so I’d be interested in seeing their original titles rather than just a URL with an unhelpful question ID. – hftf Oct 25 at 19:53
- @hftf Sure. But most of times, we need to rely on users with >10K rep for providing most of them. – Victor Stafusa Oct 25 at 19:57

- Hm, I tried Googling the URL itself, but the index/cache seems to be scrubbed soon after a 404. Only a few deleted questions seem to be saved on archive.org or archive.is. But I did notice that the slug is still contained in the URL that the shorter URL (.../q/id) redirects to! – hftf Oct 26 at 2:05
- @Mari-LouA Calm. I'm also for the down triangle. – Victor Stafusa Oct 26 at 19:07
- @iBug I think that the down triangle is better to represent downvotes because it is the symbol in the downvote button. The ✘ would be more appropriate for something like deletion, but the black flag has a better visual impact than that. – Victor Stafusa Oct 26 at 19:09
- 2

For visitors: adding dates to each question would mess the simplicity of the list. Each question is in chronological order, starting from the oldest to the most recent, dated October 28. Some time ago, a user added some questions but missed a few, and inadvertently created a few duplicates. It was at this point, I decided to create a Part Two list of my own, something I could easily keep my eye one. – Mari-Lou A Nov 7 at 20:45

- @Mari-LouA I am really very short on time in the last days due to real-life stuff, and updating this is a time-consuming task for me. When I get enough free time, I'll go back to give this a look. – Victor Stafusa Nov 8 at 2:23

- 5
  Revised comment: What Victor created here is nothing short of a masterpiece, I have complimented and thanked him several times over, although I cleaned up the comments from time to time. Victor appears to be no longer updating it, I occasionally update the stats . To editors: Please respect the formatting and the simplicity of the original. Please update the stats, when you can, and continue adding the sister-meta posts – Mari-Lou A Nov 17 at 11:22

add a comment

167

I have been thinking of posting my thoughts and feelings for a long time, but I have never done so because I didn't want to hurt people. But since there are a lot of active users are opening up and posting their story, I feel I have put in mine.

> Is Stack Exchange Inc still interested in cooperating with the community? What is the vision for this relationship?

No. I don't feel it does. In my opinion it all started with the 'being more welcome to new users'. That started a sentiment of blaming the long-active users for downvoting, closing and deleting bad questions. *You are elitist, you unwelcoming, you are a bad person.* Instead of respecting the long-established rules on quality control, suddenly we were the 'bad guy'.

Since then, the company made a lot of decisions that undermine the very principles it all started with. We value quality over quantity. The community is leading. A flourishing community will lead to a flourishing company. We talk and listen. Decisions being made are discussed before implemented. The company is an active part of the community. We work together, not against each other.

The last year it feel as if the community and the company have separated. Major, high impact changes are not discussed, they are just announced. If questions are asked, not a single answer or comment from a decision-making position is given. The company has abandoned their very core. And I feel sorry for all that.

I am not as active any more as I once was. It feels like nothing we ask, suggest or do will have any effect.

A last note to the new CEO: please fix this before it is too late. If it isn't too late already...

shareimprove this answer
answered Sep 30 at 11:12

Patrick Hofman
86.5k1818 gold badges127127 silver badges315315 bronze badges

- 46
  The company has never been able to solve the issue with people who get bored of the gamification and just want to answer great questions. They have been sweeping the issue under the carpet for years, now a new broom is sweeping clean... Veteran users are not wanted or welcome any more, meta veterans especially so. They are a tiny proportion of the people who use the sites but take up a disproportionate amount of time because they have been encouraged to believe (incorrectly) they are important because of SO's highfalutin words about community. – user619714 Sep 30 at 11:37
- 7
  There is one text from 1980-s, linking to it was allowed in early SO days, but banned later. It turned out it was the self-induced prophecy: "Community standards do not maintain themselves: They're maintained by people actively applying them, visibly, in public. Don't whine that all criticism should have been conveyed via private e-mail: That's not how it works. Nor is it useful to insist you've been personally insulted when someone comments that one of your claims was wrong, or that his views differ. Those are loser attitudes.... – Arioch 'The Oct 1 at 11:03
- 9
  .....There have been hacker forums where, out of some misguided sense of hyper-courtesy, participants are banned from posting any fault-finding with another's posts, and told “Don't say anything if you're unwilling to help the user.” The resulting departure of clueful participants to elsewhere causes them to descend into meaningless babble and become useless as technical forums.". Years ago SE made this choice, it took half decade to make it surface to mods, another half-decade to make it surface to users. "Transactional costs" of saying something had to eclipse costs of the very message. – Arioch 'The Oct 1 at 11:04
- 2
  I've been following this débâcle for a few days now, and this and Robert Harvey's post have resonated the most for me. I hope it's not inappropriate for me to say "thank you for your service to the community"! – stuartd Oct 1 at 23:02

- 6
  reminds me of slashdot - a community where users would bring sites to their knees just by being mentioned. Then it was "commercialised" and the community ignored in favour of monetisation. Look at it now. – gbjbaanb Oct 2 at 14:30

add a comment

161
Official Responses

- Sara Chipps ♦ - An Update to our Community and an Apology
- David Fullerton ♦ - An apology to our community, and next steps
- Sara Chipps ♦ - Iterating on Inclusion (blog)
- Cesar M ♦ - ~~Official FAQ on gender pronouns and Code of Conduct changes~~ (deleted, replaced with What does the Code of Conduct say about pronouns?)

News coverage of the situation:

- Dice: Longtime Stack Overflow Mods Quitting Because of Toxic Culture (Oct 17, 2019)
- The Register: "The mod firing squad: Stack Exchange embroiled in 'he said, she said, they said' row"
- The Register: Flak overflow: Barrage of criticism prompts very public Stack Overflow apology

High profile, extended discussion outside of the Stack Exchange network[1]:

- Hacker News: A large number of Stack Exchange mods resigning over new policies
- Hacker News: Monica Cellio's account of losing her moderator status on Stack Exchange
- Hacker News: Stack Overflow: An Update to Our Community and an Apology
- Hacker News: Stack Overflow Inc. Fiasco: Timeline
- Reddit (r/OutOfTheLoop): What is going on within Stack Exchange, especially Stack Overflow?
- Reddit (r/programming): A large number of Stack Exchange mods resigning over new policies
- Reddit (r/programming): Stack Exchange and Stack Overflow have moved to CC BY-SA 4.0. They probably are not allowed too and there is much salt.
- Slashdot: Stack Exchange Removes Moderator For Preferred Pronouns Policy

Also, a Change.org petition:

- Call for a formal response from Stack Exchange Inc. regarding moderator resignations. (closed/not accepting more signatures)

[1] Note that discussion is on-going in multiple sites and sub-reddits, but some of the more biased ones are not included in the list.

shareimprove this answer
edited Oct 31 at 15:05
community wiki

21 revs, 6 users 68%
rjzii

- I have seen this discussed on reddit and HN – gnat Oct 1 at 18:16
- 28
  That is a hilarious headline – Pekka supports GoFundMonica Oct 1 at 18:58
- 44
  "Pending pronoun policing piques political protest" – The Guy with The Hat Oct 1 at 19:40
- 69
  It's also not strictly true; the protests were over what happened to Monica, not over the Code of Conduct. – wizzwizz4 Oct 1 at 19:47
- 2
  @TheGuywithTheHat - Maybe *Pending pronoun policy penalties pique protests.* – aparente001 Oct 10 at 2:42
- 4
  @wizzwizz4 Yes, but it's much easier for SE to frame the people who are upset as hateful bigots, than as people who are genuinely concerned about the treatment of a highly respected individual. – MechMK1 Oct 11 at 13:07
- @MechMK1 But they're not doing so. Rampant speculation is doing that. (And they are only quashing that speculation with the CMs, manually, when it comes up, when they see it, sometimes… probably because by now they've realised they're not good at big public statements.) – wizzwizz4 Oct 11 at 17:35

add a comment

156

I guess you can add my name to the "suspended activity" list.

There's been a hell of a lot of conversation in TL in the last few days, more over an extended period than I've ever seen before in 3 years there. But still **there's no clear statement from staff on exactly what the new updates to the CoC will require**. I know that I'm willing to do at least one thing which Monica wasn't, but I don't know if I'm willing to do things that I *don't even know what they are yet*. Since heads are rolling in response to questioning of these rules which don't formally exist yet, it seems safer to do nothing at all.

The public view (without access to TL) is getting a lot of conflicting stories about what's going to be required; this, I think, is not because anyone is being dishonest, but because what CMs have told us is vague enough to be interpreted in a number of different ways.

I was off Stack Exchange on Friday evening and all of Saturday, so I only found out about these events on Sunday morning. On my site I'm usually the main mod active on weekends, so after having been out on Saturday I made sure to log in very early on Sunday morning and clear a small pile of flags. On popping into TL to ask about something, I realised that something big was going on, read up on the mod resignations, went "*whoa, WTF*", and took a step back, including from the new flags piling up on my mod site.

I'm not resigning as a moderator, but nor do I want to be a scab. I'm not acting out of *personal* support for Monica: I do think she was poorly treated, and she's always seemed to me a fair and respectful person, but I didn't know her well enough to put my head on the block beside her. I'm frightened, but not especially disappointed - I think anyone who sees SE as a "safe space" is ultimately going to be let down, and a lot of people are learning that right now.

shareimprove this answer
answered Oct 1 at 5:07

Rand al'Thor
20.1k88 gold badges4141 silver badges8787 bronze badges

- 18
  RIP SFF flag handling times. – Edlothiad Oct 1 at 7:22
- @Edlothiad Especially with one of the other active mods currently on leave. – Rand al'Thor Oct 1 at 9:06
- @Randal'Thor which other one? – Stormblessed Oct 1 at 14:50
- @Stormblessed That's down to the other moderator themselves to disclose should they wish to and not for Rand to. – TheLethalCoder Oct 1 at 14:58
- 2
  @TheLethalCoder I don’t think that’s true at all. Moderators are really important to the site, and we should know if they have semi-retired. – Stormblessed Oct 1 at 15:23

- 2

@TheLethalCoder Now you know. – Null Oct 1 at 15:24

- 8

@Stormblessed "currently on leave" =/= "semi-retired". It doesn't make someone any less of a mod if they go on vacation for a week. – Rand al'Thor Oct 1 at 15:27

- 5

It's easier to say this in one place where you're both pinged, Rand and @Null, thank you both for your efforts on SFF in keeping it clean and tidy and running effectively. We might have had our differences at times but you two have kept the site going and for that I am grateful. I hope SE will come to their senses and you will both continue to serve on as moderators before you decide to formally hand in your diamonds. – TheLethalCoder Oct 1 at 15:30

- Hi @Kylo. I always try to do just that: supporting and encouraging new users, reopening wrongly closed questions, and so on, both on my mod site and as much as I can on others. I don't feel that I fit well personally into the network moderator community, nor consider them my "buddies" above the community I moderate. – Rand al'Thor Nov 25 at 13:02
- @Kylo Patience is a virtue. I haven't been online checking my notifications in the last 40 minutes, hence why "No answer" yet. I do have a life as well as just being on SE. To answer your question, there's a difference between a new or previously unproblematic user leaving a rude comment (which might be a one-off or someone having a bad day) and a user with 5+ previous suspensions for rudeness coming back and doing exactly the same thing again (which suggests they haven't improved and are continuing in the same old patterns). – Rand al'Thor Nov 25 at 13:55

add a comment

152

I'm a moderator on Security.SE, and have been for almost 9 years - since its very first days of closed beta. **TL;DR I am suspending my mod activity on Security.SE immediately, will turn this into resigning depending on how/if/when SE fixes their s**t.**

I'm joining this thread rather late - between Sabbath and Rosh Hashana (Jewish High Holidays), I've been offline for the past few days.

As I expect Monica was - as such the chosen timing of this debacle was particularly heinous. And to be clear - I do not consider this timing to be an innocent mistake. It was either knowingly malicious, or equally oblivious to one's identity, almost similar to actually misgendering someone.

(Note that that is a mistake that Monica never did! Simply discussing the language of the CoC to find the best options, which she was emphatic about using respectfully. She never implied or indicated that she would ever knowingly misgender anyone, she is rather explicit about not doing that. Even while being viciously attacked and incredibly strawmanned, she stayed respectful at all times. As I know her to be for many years....)

I was not going to write a post, I didn't think I had anything to add...

But.

But the lack of respect throughout this fiasco was painful. Be Nice! Right?

But SE needed to do some performative actions, to show they are inclusive. Because of systemic issues they've had in the past. Fixing this is a good thing!

But it became too performative, and they got hung up on a single word - *instead of what that word represents*. Misgendering is hurtful because of the lack of respect, because of the exclusion, because of not recognizing the person for who they are - and because it continues and relies on the power imbalance of society towards those that are often persecuted. Misgendering itself can even be a form of persecution.

Using one's proper pronouns is incredibly important, as a basic sign of respect for one's humanity and common decency. But claiming that pronouns are above the need for that respect, and negate it, is unconscionable.

Respect goes both ways. If SE cannot respect the community, the moderators, and even someone like Monica? Then I can no longer respect SE.
And I cannot trust that SE will do what it takes to protect marginalized members of our community, if this is the tonedeaf response.

This is why I am suspending my activity right now. I am not resigning just yet, but I will likely do so in the near future. With half the mods of the site gone I feel I should stay around to prevent any harmful posts (I will not handle anything else, only to prevent actively harmful posts.)
SE doesn't seem to actually care. I do.

shareimprove this answer
edited Oct 5 at 19:43
answered Oct 1 at 23:45

Reinstate Monica
2,01211 gold badge1515 silver badges1515 bronze badges

- 68
  The new policy, as given in the TL and later in email, strongly implied that we must use people's preferred pronouns. I would never knowingly misgender with wrong pronouns, but that's not the issue. As a professional I, by training, write in a gender-neutral way, and other mods told me *that* is "misgendering". I asked for clarification in TL and email, thinking that couldn't possibly be what they meant -- that we would need to actually inject pronouns where we wouldn't otherwise use them. I guess that's the rule because they're claiming I'm going to violate the CoC, but they never answered. – Monica Cellio Oct 2 at 0:32
- 16
  I haven't read the policy, but I got the gist from the TL and other posts. It is the extreme focus on a single word, while saying "dunno" about everything else, that makes this look performative to me. That makes it look like they are trying to tick the inclusivity checkbox, without actually doing the hard work of finding out what matters. And while misgendering and pronouns matter, it was clearly not the focus of the discussion. The rule you state doesnt make sense, except for that checkbox. – Reinstate Monica Oct 2 at 0:52
- 11
  I never saw formal wording. I don't know if it exists; obviously I don't have access to recent TL discussions. – Monica Cellio Oct 2 at 1:05
- @MonicaCellio I didnt see formal wording either. I did see a lot of repeated claims about their reasoning (and about you). – Reinstate Monica Oct 2 at 7:09
- 12
  Given the incorrect claims they've made in public, I can only imagine it's orders of magnitude worse in TL. While that room is private, let's also remember that it's private to 600+ people, and

smearing a person in front of ex-colleagues is not professional behavior. Oh well; nothing I can do about that except hope that the moderators there -- the vast majority of whom have the integrity one would expect of someone in that role -- will either call them on it or ignore it. – Monica Cellio Oct 2 at 14:10

- 23
  @MonicaCellio - For two days now I have been shaking my head as I've read and reread this Sara Chipps quote: "We take our CoC very seriously. It was created to foster a community of kindness, collaboration, and mutual respect." That seems ironic, given that (a) you have embodied those ideals as much as anyone I've come across on the Stack Exchange, and (b) the way they handled this debacle was decidedly unkind, not collaborative, and disrespectful. – J.R. means 'Just Reinstate' Oct 2 at 14:51

- 10
  To paraphrase what you wrote on another topic: The code of pronoun conduct is not about inclusiveness. It is not a real instrument for respect. AviD's law of pronoun compliance: pronoun compliance reduces the risk of the penalties of non-compliance. – Gilles 'SO- stop being evil' Oct 2 at 21:26
- lol @Gilles . I'm not sure I completely agree with "my" law here, I do think it is an important part of conduct (and all those people affected by it are saying so) - but as in this case it can be misused to have the opposite effect from the intended respect. – Reinstate Monica Oct 3 at 6:37

add a comment

132
Update 10/10:

I am resigning today:

- I disagree with forcing people to use pronouns as requested in the CoC/FAQ. One thing is asking people to be nice, another having to force them to talk in a specific way. There is never only one side to things.
- I've seen no goodwill in cooperating with Monica, in fact, I've seen her treated once more with contempt.

Since I feel I can't trust SE, I have no interest in helping here anymore, so remove my diamond.

Adieu.

I'm a moderator on Skeptics, and I'm suspending my activity as a moderator, too.

Like Mad Scientist, I also have lost my confidence in Stack Exchange and see very little hope for a significant improvement of their relationship with us, the community and the mods.

As Mad Scientist said:

> The last statement from SE is pretty much doubling down on their mistakes. I find it extremely disappointing how SE essentially engineered a shitstorm, and the persons at the center of it have to bear the consequences. They pretty much threw a well-regarded moderator under the bus, and they also drag other involved users into this, who are exactly the vulnerable persons they claim to protect with this.

For now, I'll be on hiatus and I will keep my diamond in the faint hope this is an incentive for SE to do the right thing and rebuild their relationship with us: I see no point in burning bridges at this point in time.

shareimprove this answer
edited Oct 17 at 11:16

gnat
1
answered Oct 3 at 20:43

Sklivvz
32k1010 gold badges8787 silver badges150150 bronze badges

- 9
  I hang around skeptics more than anywhere else. Wanted to say that I'm proud of you and all of you other mods that are taking a principled stand. – Ask About Monica Oct 10 at 21:00
- 1
  @Sklivvz Thanks for your efforts making Skeptics an interesting place. That $1B question asking for positive evidence for an extraordinary claim -- at a site that usually knocks down pseudoscience by Carl Sagan's/Laplace's principle and Occam's razor.. and the meta complaint from dissent-whacking seems strangely foreboding. – Paul Oct 12 at 23:30
- I'm puzzled; are you remaining an employee of SE? Okay with me either way, but I hadn't realized at first that you were an employee in the first place. – Wildcard Oct 14 at 21:59
- 3
  @Wildcard I left SE in 2017... – Sklivvz Oct 15 at 1:15
- If SE is going to insist that we all change our use of pronouns according to some non-standard rule for the sake of the LGBT community I will instantly resign. What a lot of nonsense.
  – PeterJ Nov 15 at 13:38

add a comment

130

We can support the Lavender community of Stack Exchange *and* protest SE's treatment of Monica.

As a queer cis woman and SE moderator, I support the policy (which SE has stated they will add to the CoC) of using the pronouns that an individual requests. I also feel that SE has handled this situation extremely badly. They can fix it but they need to take decisive action.

For more details, please see the post from Writing.SE moderators.

shareimprove this answer
edited Oct 1 at 21:32
answered Oct 1 at 21:26

Cyn says make Monica whole
4,02744 gold badges88 silver badges2222 bronze badges

- 17
  Thank you for this. It is a very important distinction to make. We can object to *how* things were done and still enthusiastically support the final objective. – terdon - stop harming Monica Oct 1 at 23:02
- 84
  Just for the record, I have *no problems* with a policy of "when using pronouns, use the preferred ones". Sara seemed to be calling for something much stronger, which would be confusing and super-hard to assess. But I never got an answer on that. – Monica Cellio Oct 2 at 3:31
- 6
  Based on what I'm seeing around the Stack, I don't think this is praxis for most users. While some are upset about Monica, most appear to be extremely aggressive about trans issues. This issue would not be nearly as virulent if trans people were not involved, because many people would more willingly accept a basic need for respect. I am happy you differentiate personally, though. – user206222 Oct 2 at 9:13
- 5

I respect your opinion, but can't agree much, SE should be leading by example, asking for `Be nice` shit and then act with MonicaCellio way they acted is 100% wrong (I don't know her, but people like her and that's enough to know she is a great girl and did her moderation better then the most) ... why go implement even bigger complication, pronouns crap, when community and SE are divided like never before? Can't agree on building something further when foundations are week ... they should fix everything before they move on, SE and community ain't ready for it ... – Veljko89 Oct 2 at 10:58

- 9

@Aza You are absolutely right that there are a lot of people around SE who are looking at this as "political correctness" run amok, or forcing people what to say, or even that they should be allowed to use the pronouns they think suit someone best. It's frankly disgusting. I want to be very clear that my only protest is in how SE treated Monica (and how they're non-following-up). All 4 Writing mods agree strongly, and that includes Monica. No, her proposed implementation of pronoun use was not okay, and

I've told her that outright, but she supports the policy and the letter I wrote. (more) – Cyn says make Monica whole Oct 2 at 14:39

- 18

Someone who supports trans people and non-binary people but who isn't on board with every pronoun choice deserves a chance to listen and learn. I honestly don't understand why Monica was made an example of when there are people out there overtly spouting anti-trans things. I am cis and am not going to pretend I know the visceral feeling of transphobia, but I will tell you I felt safe and supported as a queer woman in a mostly straight male space in the 3 stacks I was active in where Monica was a mod. And moreso when I became a mod myself. I don't feel safe anymore. Do you? – Cyn says make Monica whole Oct 2 at 14:44

- 12

@Veljko89 The pronoun issue isn't "crap" (it's basic human dignity). Monica's termination and the firestorm over that came *after* the new pronoun policy was announced in moderator-only space. – Cyn says make Monica whole Oct 2 at 14:47

- 7

@Cyn I get what you mean, I think. But if anything has undermined my sense of safety, it's that I can no longer pretend my friends from Stack are as universally accepting as I'd hoped. Safety is illusory; I'm sorry this is true, but I'm not sorry to have learned it on the Stack so abruptly. – user206222 Oct 2 at 15:39

- 8

@Cyn As for Monica... I don't think it's as cut-and-dry as a lot of people want it to be. I have more feelings than 600 characters can express, but... The framework in which her summary dismissal was an Abhorrent Thing is a little naïve; it might not have been the correct move, but the depth and form of the Stack's anger tells me people aren't really listening to the broader context, or don't care to (not necessarily what you're doing, here). That's not a good sign, and it has nothing to do with Monica. I have to be careful about what I express in public, so I may cap my thoughts here for now. – user206222 Oct 2 at 15:45

- 7

@Aza Yeah that sucks. I honestly don't believe SE cares about your safety or mine or anyone else's (maybe in a no physical violence sense but not online here). I don't believe they thought going after Monica as the low hanging fruit would fix things, but I do think they thought they could fool some people into thinking they cared. You're right about the broader context. If you ever want, I am willing to speak with you more privately. – Cyn says make Monica whole Oct 2 at 15:49

- 5

@Adamant see my footnote here please. My understanding of the policy is: gender-neutral language if you don't know, and specific pronouns if you do know (with gender-neutral language being forbidden). – Monica Cellio Oct 2 at 20:03

- 33

Knowingly using wrong pronouns is abusive. I don't disagree with that at all! – Monica Cellio Oct 2 at 20:04

- 41

We were told: you must use people's pronouns. I asked: when using pronouns, right? E.g. if I'm talking about Adamant or the OP or this answer (link), I'm not using any pronouns and that's how many of us communicate now. I also talked (in a post I can no longer refer to, so from memory) about other ways I, as a professional writer, routinely avoid singular gender. I do this for clarity and style, because writing well is a core part of my identity and sometimes singular "they" is harder to understand. To avoid singling out people who use "they", I said it's no problem to avoid he/she too. – Monica Cellio Oct 2 at 20:17

- 31

It is downright insanity that referring to someone *by their name* is now considered "misgendering". – Hugo Zink Oct 3 at 8:45

- 4

@NathanHinchey Monica clarified here: judaism.meta.stackexchange.com/questions/5193/… Quote: "I completely agree that it is rude to call people what they don't want to be called; knowingly misgendering someone is not ok (...) I pointed out that as a professional writer I, by training, write in a gender-neutral way specifically to avoid gender landmines, and sought clarification that this would continue to be ok. To my surprise, other moderators in the room said that not using (third-person singular) pronouns at all is misgendering" – Hugo Zink Oct 8 at 14:18

-

show **15** more comments

130

Update: I resigned, see under the horizontal line

I'm a moderator on stats SE.

~~I'm suspending my moderation activity while I consider my position~~ (Edit: superseded). I don't need to go over the events; they're well discussed, but I should at least be clear if brief (I'd say a bit more but other things are about to intervene and I won't be able to be online for a while).

The handling of the situation was deplorable and ill-considered and the response since has been far worse.

If things continue as they are right now, I doubt that I will see remaining as a moderator as tenable.

Hopefully I can return soon to clarify further. As soon as I can, I will also be explaining my position on stats' meta but I didn't want to wait any longer.

I've resigned.

I was holding off hoping for a really substantive response, but it's quite clear that this is not happening.

I don't feel secure as a mod. I don't feel like I can made moderation decisions with any sense of confidence. I don't feel like I can ask a potentially controversial question of a Stack Exchange employee safely, nor query the implications of proposed or impending policies. I don't feel like any

kind of dispute can be trusted to be handled even-handedly. The relationship is much too one-sided. I don't feel like I can operate as I think a moderator needs to in order to perform as required.

I feel like my community support and trust me and my fellow moderators on my site but that's clearly not sufficient. I don't have the impression that Stack Exchange have any trust in me or that they will offer me any kind of support or credit in any kind of dispute. I don't trust that there will be properly structured dispute resolution if we have some disagreement.

While I believe that Stack Exchange as a company will act in a way that they think is fair (in particular that a large proportion of the CMs that have been around a long time would try to act in a fair way), I don't believe that the company can reliably act in a way that I can be confident is actually fair.

The relationship is all one-way; we supply valuable services to SE, unpaid. They can toss us out like they could an employee - but more easily than they could an employee, without notice, without warning, and without recourse, and with no proper avenue for fixing things if a suitable procedure isn't properly followed.

There needs to be some greater security for us if we're providing ongoing effort that supplies value for no recompense and it needs to be crystal clear to us how any process that provides a level of security is going to be fair to us. That is, if we're on the same end of a disagreement, how can we be confident we will come out feeling like there was some reasonable level of fair dealing?

I did have some level of trust that SE could do these things but not any longer, not from what I see in the apology - and I don't think the things that concern me even seem to have been understood when others have raised issues that worry me.

If SE feel they do or will have such a procedure, I'll believe it too -- when I *see it applied with Monica*. [Edit to be clear: That is, if she were first reinstated and *then* some clearly fair removal process were followed; after which -- if she were removed -- a reinstatement process could then be applied for.]

I read "we won't relitigate this" but this is NOT litigation, it's dispute resolution, and you've shown us how that goes.

I hear "we shouldn't have shipped on a Friday". Monica is not a bug in a software product, she's a person.

This *is* your test case - when stuff goes down, whatever it was, this is how you show us what we will get -- with a case you seem to think is tough.

I don't see any proper indication I would get anything better. I'd be convinced I might get something better if Monica got something better.

shareimprove this answer
edited Nov 7 at 2:59
answered Oct 2 at 6:44

Glen_b
3,20711 gold badge1414 silver badges2222 bronze badges

- 33
  Monica is not a bug in a software product, she's a person. Thank you. – ColleenV parted ways Oct 15 at 10:45
- @ColleenV I'd be interested on what get you back from your break, no obligation to answer of course, "I don't want to speak about it" is perfectly valid, I'm just curious :) – Tensibai Oct 15 at 12:21
- 5
  @Tensibai I took some time to get less angry. I didn't feel I could do my moderator duties well in that state of mind. I'm working on a draft of my resignation letter but I'm still reflecting on what would be the best course of action for me. I couldn't care less about SE's future as a business. I do care about ELL but all things end and I'm sure they'll manage w/o me. I'm thinking about setting up a Discord server for SE's dispossessed to stay in contact if they want, but don't know if there's enough interest or whether I'm up for coordinating all that's needed to make it not a troll farm. – ColleenV parted ways Oct 15 at 15:23
- @ColleenV I understand, thanks for answering. All this mess is so sad. – Tensibai Oct 15 at 19:49

add a comment

125

Finally, I resigned. On November 15 I wrote to the mod team:

> It's been a complete pleasure to be part of this. Seeing SE from inside has given me quite a lot of learnings that will last forever.
> At the same time, I feel moderators have been left unprotected during the recent events and I don't think things are getting any better. I suspended my activity for some weeks to see if some changes would come to correct the feeling, but I don't see them.

As of December 2, my resignation is effective. I notified the Spanish.SE community in This is it! Gracias por todo. Renuncio al cargo de moderador (fedorqui) in Spanish.

I am also recording myself as "inactive" as a moderator on Spanish.SE. Count me in the "suspended activity" list.

I do feel things are not being handled right and agree with what Gilles explained in his resignation notice:

> I have witnessed a disagreement between moderators where both sides made some good points. Both sides deserved and requested respect. One side was aware that their behavior could hurt even though no malice was intended and tried to go out of their way in order not to be hurtful. The other side demanded to have things their way, and did not care who they were hurting on the process. In this particular dispute, there was clearly a victim and aggressors. The victim has now written up her side of the story.

> Stack Exchange intervened, did not try to calm spirits, came firmly on the uncompromising side, and fired the victim in a very hurtful manner. This is not an environment I feel safe in, and certainly not an environment I can or will help foster.

shareimprove this answer
edited Dec 16 at 19:03

ColleenV parted ways
3,9911717 silver badges3636 bronze badges
answered Oct 1 at 6:22

fedorqui says Reinstate Monica
7,68722 gold badges2323 silver badges5353 bronze badges

- 3
  thank you fedorqui for your contribution. – user657339 Dec 4 at 13:30

add a comment

115

Unlike the past, SO has changed a lot. It feels like they're focusing on how to earn more $$$ than anything else. This isn't the site where I signed up six years ago. I never seen this as a site. I saw this as a community of professional as well as newbies, learnt a lot, and got a chance to interact with many people around the world.

Two years ago, I spent nearly 11-12 hours on this site everyday for more than 5-6 months. I helped a lot of people and got help many times. **SO is monetizing all of my content by putting ads there, but I didn't care. I kept answering posts that showed some research effort.** They need money to operate. Internet points are nothing, and they can't feed me. But the *Thank you* from a person who I helped can make my day. I made a lot of friends here and some said, they feel like family.

Moderators are unpaid volunteers who spend their valuable time for nothing but the benefits of this company. While the employees are getting paid for working eight hours per day, *some moderators* spent even more time than them and is active on this site even on weekends. Without their hard efforts, SO will be like any other site.

Considering all happenings in last week and its follow up incidents, I decided not to contribute here until things got resolved. I don't believe unfiring Monica alone can fix things. But the greedy employees should be handled properly and the moderators should feel safe in the future too.

shareimprove this answer
edited Sep 30 at 14:53

Peter Mortensen
6,32844 gold badges2929 silver badges5353 bronze badges

answered Sep 30 at 12:50

Optimus Prime
7,67822 gold badges1818 silver badges3535 bronze badges
add a comment

114

Community contradicts profitability. There is a lot of sense in this question from two years ago:

How much is a Stack Exchange reputation point worth, roughly, to the company?

By far the largest proportion of the brand's value is in the work done by the licence givers. The deal is basically that *the licence givers work for the company* in return for *being allowed, for as long as the company allows them, to use the tools they need to work for the company with* - an experience that many licence givers enjoy, because they feel they are doing work which has merit and because they feel a sense of camaraderie with other licence givers (also known as community).

Now several hundred people have invested emotionally here to an enormous degree...except that "invested" is completely the wrong word, because they have worked for the company for free, creating most of its value and receiving no payment or promise of payment or income but an occasional T-shirt with an advertisement on it.

Basically the licence givers, whatever their legal rights may have been, or may still be, to grant licences to parties other than the company, or to use their work commercially in other places, have generally speaking mostly not been interested in that kind of thing, and that's not the reason why they have contributed. What they have been interested in is the *use-value* of their work: their sense of achievement and also the usefulness of their work to others, its quality. The company, however, has only ever been interested in its *exchange-value*.

This was bound to happen.

(Edit: to summarise from the thread at the above link: those with 100,000 rep points here have each created value of a financial worth to the company of around 30,000 USD.)

shareimprove this answer
edited Sep 30 at 19:58
answered Sep 30 at 0:14

ool
92911 gold badge33 silver badges66 bronze badges

- 112
  They stopped sending T-shirts, mod hats, or any swag for that matter of fact. – Bhargav Rao Sep 30 at 1:10
- 2
  @BhargavRao There's no 100k swag sent anymore?? – hayd Oct 1 at 21:09

- 8
  @hayd No. The congratulations email doesn't mention the 100k swag anymore. – Bhargav Rao Oct 1 at 21:11
- 3

Say, there was more than that automated "congratulations, you got to 100k" in earlier times? Bummer, I always thought "you are showing up too late for this party"... – GhostCat says Reinstate Monica Oct 2 at 0:31

- 15

And you might not even get the 100k email. (I didn't.) – Monica Cellio Oct 2 at 3:22

- 2

@BhargavRao I put a bounty on this question:meta.stackexchange.com/q/329051/184179 since it's been a few months of "figuring it out"... – hayd Oct 2 at 21:55

-

add a comment

109

As of today, I'll record myself as inactive along with my fellow Spanish.se moderator fedorqui.

When I learned about this issue I tried to gather as much info as I could, which was challenging because many posts across the whole site were just repeating or referencing what had been said in other stacks.

I decided to write to the Community Managers (not because I think that this will be effective but because I consider it "due process") cc-ing my fellow Spanish.SE mods. I told them that the issue of Monica Cellio's dismissal led me to believe that I did not understand what the responsibilities for moderators truly have become.

I also told them please to clarify the controversy around the pronouns. The site I moderate has, by its own nature, users that are not completely fluent in English nor in Spanish, but who try to use both languages. The misuse of pronouns by users that are not fluent in one of the two languages spoken in the site, along with some irreconcilable contradictions between some of the preferred pronouns and the language(s) rules are a concern.

My goal was to let them know that we want, in good faith, to be able to make an informed opinion about these matters, so I was asking them to please clarify in regards of this controversy, so we can serve better our community.

Then we published in Meta, letting our community know that we had contacted the CMs and that we will update them as we ourselves get info. We also reminded them that it looks like we don't have all the pieces of this puzzle and to please be considerate towards others if they were to engage in any discussions about these issues.

I think that that is a good effort, in good faith, as the moderators of Spanish.SE. Now I'm recording myself as inactive as a way of saying to SE Inc that I need them to deal with this situation **forthrightly**, so I have what I need to do my job as a mod. Unless (and until) that happens, I can't, and I won't, volunteer my time as a moderator.

shareimprove this answer
edited Oct 10 at 3:16

aparente001
1
answered Oct 2 at 1:11

Diego - Reinstate Monica
74011 gold badge33 silver badges77 bronze badges

- 4
  Update: I wrote to the CMs and asked for my moderator privileges (and responsibilities) to be removed. I don't think I can follow my "people over rules" principle when moderating anymore, so it's time for me to step down as moderator. – Diego - Reinstate Monica Oct 14 at 4:21

-

add a comment

98
+100

I'm a moderator on Skeptics, and I'm suspending my activity as a moderator. This doesn't really mean much in this case, as I was pretty much determined to step down anyway even before this incident. Several previous actions by SE meant that I had lost my confidence in them, and their vision for the network. But I thought I'd give the whole thing some time, and just wait and see whether things change.

I no longer see much hope for change. The last statement from SE is pretty much doubling down on their mistakes. I find it extremely disappointing how SE essentially engineered a shitstorm, and the persons at the center of it have to bear the consequences. They pretty much threw a well-regarded moderator under the bus, and they also drag other involved users into this, who are exactly the vulnerable persons they claim to protect with this.

This isn't much of a protest, as I had pretty much decided to resign anyway. And unless some kind of miracle happens, I will step down as moderator at some point later this year.

shareimprove this answer
edited Oct 3 at 20:39
answered Oct 3 at 20:35

Mad Scientist

147k5151 gold badges267267 silver badges546546 bronze badges

- 4
  I hope for a miracle, as well. Don't even know how to express it. And unfortunately, how to reasonably justify. – Anton Menshov Oct 3 at 20:45

add a comment

95

Update as of Nov 14:

It has been about 1.5 months since I've suspended my moderation activity. Today, as of Nov 14, I return back to moderating since I feel that I am making more damage to my community rather than attracting the attention of SE or supporting Monica.

Nothing changed in my position towards the situation. However, I don't see now how that situation can be resolved without lawyers, it's been too long and every publicly available information (and the lack of it) supports this hypothesis.

Thus, instead of continuing moderation suspension, **I will simply support Monica's GoFundMe campaign**. It will be more productive. I reserve my right (whatever that means) to suspend my moderation activity again in case I feel that it is needed and helpful again.

I am a moderator at Computational Science SE.

I was patiently waiting for any official response or action for Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. I am very thankful to many community managers who were nothing but supportive in those very dark and sad times. However, I still do not see any intent from SE to react to those events in any constructive manner. Yes, I certainly make a huge distinction between the CMs and SE, the company.

I will continue waiting for those actions from SE as, for some stupid reasons, I still believe that good things can just happen, even when the infamous *corporate world* comes into play. However, while I am waiting, I will **suspend all non-urgent** moderator activity on Computational Science. I strongly considered (and consider in the near future) the resignation, but I am not there yet, mostly, because of my commitment to the community I volunteered to serve.

Where I personally stand:

- I would be happy to give all the support and respect to all users of SE. I have no problems using any pronouns; however, I tend to write using the gender-neutral language regardless. Maybe, due to the technical nature of the topics that I usually write on.
- I am extremely skeptical if firing Monica was justified.

- I am very sad and angry about **how** SE fired Monica.
- I am even more sad and angry about how SE handles this situation now.

shareimprove this answer
edited Nov 14 at 12:39
answered Oct 2 at 0:53

Anton Menshov
2,98211 gold badge99 silver badges3131 bronze badges

- 6
  @amon I will suspend moderation for the time being. The main reason is the lack of transparency from SE's side. – nicoguaro Oct 3 at 23:08
- @AntonMenShov Have you considered changing the display name or avatar to attract more attention to the campaign, since a moderator is highly visible? – vicky_molokh Nov 15 at 8:47

- 3

The decision to resume moderator duties is yours alone to make, of course, but doing so while the company has done *nothing* to fix the situation just enables them to go on as they please. At this point, personally, I do not understand anybody continuing to moderate. Mods laying down their tools in serious numbers is the one thing that could actually maybe force them to change course. – Pekka supports GoFundMonica Nov 15 at 11:33

- @vicky_molokh I did consider it; however, "reinstate Monica" is not what I am fighting for. I have so many problems with *how* she was fired, *how* SE handled and continues to handle the situation and many other recent actions. I think that SE actively harmed Monica. I think that SE actively harmed the LGBTQ community. I think that communication was terrible – and many other things. – Anton Menshov Nov 15 at 11:52
- 2
  @PekkasupportsGoFundMonica I understand that, and I could not have chosen the worse timing to resume moderation 2 hours before SE announced it would start removing GoFund direct links. I also see that my (very small) community is suffering from a lack of attention. I am serving Computational Science, not SE as a company. Now, I am not ready to just give up; however, I am very close to resigning (instead of suspending as a half-measure). – Anton Menshov Nov 15 at 11:57
- 2
  @PekkasupportsGoFundMonica I also see, that SE is unlikely to do anything outside of their "lawyers channel". As of Nov 15, it is clear to me. Thus, money and lawyers matter, unless somehow community actions will be able to cut down traffic to StackOverflow by 20-30%, which is unrealistic. – Anton Menshov Nov 15 at 11:58

add a comment

88

I will bring a point not talked in other answers.

> Is Stack Exchange Inc still interested in cooperating with the community? What is the vision for this relationship?

No, Stack Exchange has two points to solve at the minimum.

A. The handling of a situation not wanted by the site CMs is awful and chaotic. Stack Exchange needs to re-do its thinking when they act on elected moderators. They need a consensus from other moderators before unilaterally removing the moderator status from an elected moderator (unless, of course, there is a hacked account or such violation).

Some people might tell me that Monica didn't want to abide by the new CoC, but that debate brings me to point B of my post.

For reference, Stack Exchange already did abruptly change the moderator staff on the site I was a moderator on in the past, and it brought the same problem as today.

B. Stack Exchange should announce a new CoC on Meta or, if private, on the Moderator Stack Overflow Team's page. Why? If you announce it without a good written Meta post to explain the WHY, a long debate will occur, which was still happening yesterday, especially if you drop the bomb inside a chatroom full of moderators (70+). That chatroom is to talk about standard cross-site issues and to give our opinions on discussions. If you announce something there without a meta post and without EXAMPLES, people like me, and I guess Monica too, will believe it is an open discussion.

In Monica's situation, it seemed an argument between her and Sara Chipps, for which Sara offered up an awful answer there;

> We understand there are some folks upset about this decision. We aren’t going to share specifics out of respect for all individuals involved but this is a site reaching millions of people and we have to do what we believe fosters a spirit of inclusion and respect. When a moderator violates that, we will always do our best to resolve it with them privately. When we can’t we must take action. This is always done based on what we believe is best for all SE users.

I rest my case there, but I still believe that it wasn't necessary to drop that bomb there. As a moderator, I never talked in the third person to a user. I always talked to the @ username.

shareimprove this answer
edited Oct 2 at 5:51

Gryphon - Reinstate Monica
2,05711 gold badge55 silver badges1414 bronze badges
answered Sep 30 at 13:45

yagmoth555 - GoFoundMe Monica
4,59022 gold badges1212 silver badges3232 bronze badges

- 2
  I just read you referenced post, and from that I get a totally different story. If the moderator in question there had replied to comments from the company instead of continuing what they were doing there wouldn't have been a problem. So for me its perfectly understandable their rights were revoked. – Luuklag Sep 30 at 14:04
- 3
  @Luuklag Check the comments, sorry I should have linked to the comments, but a lot of members were angry, as the moderator was elected to do that job, it was in his nomination text. – yagmoth555 - GoFoundMe Monica Sep 30 at 14:06
- 2

Perhaps expand "CM"? Though it is officially *community manager*, it may be confused with *community moderator* (though that does not official exist, only *moderator*). – Peter Mortensen Sep 30 at 15:19

- 53

What concerns me is that staff are making announcements in a chat room which many mods don't frequent instead of a coherent written one using the newsletter. I haven't been in that room for months because it's a Petri dish for drama. Monica's views on that particular topic are well-known, so it seems to me that she was, at worst, set up, and at best collateral damage from extremely unprofessional handling of a sensitive topic. The underlying problem that hurts all of us is SE's haphazard approach to a topic that should be treated more seriously and thoughtfully. – ColleenV parted ways Sep 30 at 15:39

-

add a comment

88
+500

PART TWO

(link to Part One)

On September 27, the Director of Public Q&A removed Monica Cellio's moderator privileges.

This post is a continuation of the Community Wiki post set up by Victor Stafusa. Only posts on Meta Stack Exchange will be listed, and I will endeavour to update it daily.

Legend
★ for every 100 upvotes (positive score)
☛ official statements
[c] closed
[d] duplicate
⚑ deleted posts
Questions with >**(2K)** views are **bolded** in parentheses.

From October 27, 2019

1. How do users escalate concerns about an abusive employee? ★ **(2k)**
2. What would be good "call to action" elements for "Reinstate Monica" profiles? **(3k)**
3. Why were multiple comments on the moderator process review post deleted?
4. What does ɴoт count as a “neopronoun”? **[d]**
5. Are other sites (besides MSE) growing inactive?
6. Why was the Weekly Day of Silence post deleted? **[d]**
7. Did Upper Management ignore the growing tension in the TL that resulted in Monica's being axed? **(2k)**
8. Let's say they reinstate Monica. What then?
9. Is the Teachers' Lounge toxic, if so why? **(3k)**
10. Rename the Teachers' Lounge **[c]**
11. ⚑ Why obsolete faq on gender pronouns was deleted? **[d]**
12. Q&A activity over the last month **[d]**
13. As a regular user, what is my incentive to continue to contribute?
14. Questions deleted by authors who happen to be moderators should show as "removed for reasons of moderation" if the author can't normally delete
15. Does SE have a disclosure form that moderators are asked to sign before beginning their volunteer work?
16. Answers/comments were not copied during migration to another site
17. Is peer-accountability permitted on meta.stackexchange?
18. Has there been an uptick in the number of users post-banned from Meta Stack Exchange contemporary to the recent drama?
19. Should we just impose a blanket ban on identity politics? **[c]**
20. How can we help Monica Cellio? ★★ **(6k)**
21. ⚑ Maybe SE is journalism
22. Is Stack Exchange in violation of New York labor law, in using volunteer moderators? ★★ **(25k)**
23. Should we be taking legal action against the network for possible breach in labour laws with moderators
24. A letter to SE Inc. - please protect our moderators **(2k)**
25. Is Monica's situation a good example of why you should opt out of forced arbitration? **[c]**
26. Does continuing to talk about Monica actually do her any good? **(3k)**
27. Does Stack Exchange have a responsibility to protect the rights of their volunteers? ★ **(2k)**
28. How best to find all my own posts where I employ pronouns?
29. How can I find posts in response to my posts that use pronouns?
30. If someone is hurt by a literary reference, should it be removed? **(2k)**
31. Appoint chat moderators exclusively responsible for moderating chat

32. How can we improve the inconsistent tagging of the questions relating to the recent uproar and associated issues?
33. ⚑ What would we like to see come out of the legal action many participants are contributing to?
34. Is It Time To Decentralize? **(2k)**
35. What is the process regarding moderator inactivity removals?
36. A tale of two postings, and what to learn from it **(2k)**
37. What can we do about systemic lies regarding Monica's situation?
38. Does some kind of middle ground exist regarding the CoC for a moderator who might need to avoid singular 'they' for personal reasons?
39. Is this an appropriate place to call for the resignation of an SO employee? ★ **(3k)**
40. Is there a list of non-moderators who have stated they suspended activities due to recent events? **[c]**
41. How can one appropriately and constructively criticize or complain about a Stack Exchange employee on Meta Stack Exchange? **(2k)**
42. Checking in with the Lavender community **(3k)**
43. How many usernames have been changed to support Monica?
44. Delete own questions with upvoted answers is not allowed **[d]**
45. Why close the question about changed user names?
46. ⚑ May I use “they” even when a user prefers another pronoun? **[d]**
47. Has stirring the pot reached the point of being counter productive?
48. Winter Bash 2019 - is it happening this year? **(2k)**
49. Warning potential new moderators? **(2k)**
50. Is there a good term/phrase to denote the "current events"? **(2k)**
51. Is the re-licensing situation perceived as much less important than Monica's defamation lawsuit? **[c]**
52. Is it ok to call a question silly?
53. Are SE staff open to dialogue and find a different solution about gender pronouns? **[d]**
54. My profile's about me randomly changed across all sites **[d]**
55. ☛ Why is SE removing links and community ads about legal issues? ★★ **(15k)**
56. How wide/narrow does SE consider activities related to Monica?
57. When is it reasonable to change the owner of a post?
58. Is Stack Exchange still planning to respond to the community's open letters? ★ **(2k)**
59. Time for SE Volunteer Labor Union?
60. When should edits removing clarifying links be reverted
61. How can we mitigate the difficulties some autistic users have with pronouns?
62. What legal risks would Stack Exchange face if it does not actively remove links to a legal fund campaign?
63. Repercussions for posting links to certain legal fund campaigns?
64. The Great Meta Tire Fire of 2019: is anybody keeping receipts? ★ **(2k)**
65. Policing gender expressions and pronouns ★ **(4k)**
66. Will the old "about me" message be affected by these recent pronoun usage rules?

67. What effect does the current crisis have on the SE network? **(2k)**
68. Why aren't moderators moderating but wait for high-rep users to do it?
69. Does Fram's ban on Wikipedia seem similar to recent events? What can Stack Exchange learn from it? ★ **(4k)**
70. ⚑ https://meta.stackexchange.com/q/338673
71. Is MSE understaffed in terms of moderators?
72. Can my answer about current events be undeleted?
73. Please unlock “Fram's ban on Wikipedia…What can Stack Exchange learn from it?” **(2k)**
74. ⚑ Reinstate Monica tag [duplicate]
75. ⚑ Are we witnessing the demise of “community”? **(2k)**
76. Will Meta Stack Exchange be removed now? **[c] (2k)**
77. What will the community's next step be now that SE has declared inactivity and silence towards the current events? **[c]**
78. Is it appropriate to create a 'Monica' Tag? **[d]**

November 27, 2019

79. Are we doing anything but spinning our wheels?
80. Is Stack Exchange staff removing GoFundMe links?
81. Is SE admitting they don't deem recent issues as important?
82. Have mods ever been a (potentially) powerful lobby?
83. Is there an organized community of moderators?
84. Has the October 2019 moderator reinstatement process actually been used?
85. Is Stack Exchange / Stack Overflow dying? **[c]**
86. ⚑ Winter Bash … does it matter to you this year?
87. ⚑ A sensible alternative to the Code of Conduct
88. Can anyone link examples where the new COC policy on gender pronouns was used?
89. ⚑ Is it against the rules to make a suggestion to change the CoC?
90. ⚑ Get rid of the pronouns FAQ
91. ⚑ What constitutes “acting in good faith”?
92. What is considered acceptable feedback? **(2k)**
93. Please don't refer to 2019 as 'a great year' ★ **(3k)**
94. Are excessively long display names for political messaging allowed on SE sites?
95. ⚑ Yet another retweet of criticism of the community…
96. Unfitting "This Is Fine" hat
97. Does the Code of Conduct apply to off-site interactions?
98. What exactly does "links to a legal fund campaign" mean?
99. What are the next steps we as a community should take? ★ **(2k)**
100. What progress has been made so far in implementing support for gender diversity in SE's foreign language sites?
101. How exactly does the moderator inactivity process interact with employment at SE and employee moderator rights?

102. How to find all recent posts and comments by SE staff?
103. Has anyone tried approaching any of the investors to improve community-company communication?
104. ⚑ Who created the Monica Reinstatement symbol?

N.B Please supply links to any questions correlated to the CoC, its FAQ, the dispute over the removal of Monica Cellio's six diamonds, her podcast, and the subsequent removal of the **GoFundMe** links to the campaign that I may have missed, in the comments below. As soon as I can, they will be added onto the list. Thanks.

shareimprove this answer
edited 6 hours ago
answered Oct 30 at 9:14

Mari-Lou A
16k99 gold badges3434 silver badges7272 bronze badges

- 1
  That's great to have so many discussions. But does one relatively small (e.g.1 page) post exists, that describes the whole conflict to a new reader (user of one of SE sites or external to SE) without need to read dozen of other links? – MiFreidgeim SO-stop being evil Nov 20 at 20:24
- 3
  @MiFreidgeim Yes, there's a post that gives an overall summary of the events: Summing up the main issues (The Story So Far) It's Q35 in **PART ONE**. – Mari-Lou A Nov 23 at 10:53

add a comment

85
I take a very different view of the situation than has been expressed in the other answers. In my opinion, this should not be a discussion about the handling of Monica specifically, but rather how SE employees through their incompetence, have once again failed to provide users and moderators with the tools and support to foster an inclusive community. As Aza said clearly and forcibly in their Resignation Notice the Stack Exchange community has a major problem with inclusiveness. LGBT+, women, and minority users and moderators have been talking about this for a long time and SE employees have done little to proactively and effectively address these issues.

While a number of users have rushed to the defense of Monica and chastised SE for their handling of the situation, what has been lost is that we are not an inclusive and welcoming community and no one is standing up for those excluded and frequently attacked by users.

So I ask the SE team: where is the support that users and moderators need to foster an inclusive community?

shareimprove this answer
edited Sep 30 at 14:01

Henders
76344 silver badges1111 bronze badges
answered Sep 30 at 13:21

StrongBad
4,70111 gold badge1616 silver badges3030 bronze badges

- 10
  Can you outline, please, the types of support you feel are needed? The areas where you feel frustrated by a lack of support, both as a user, and as a moderator? I'm not sure what you're alluding to here. Thanks. – aparente001 Oct 13 at 14:23
- 1
  Re "no one is standing up": I'm standing up. Nobody who can contribute interesting questions or answers or comments on any SE site should be excluded. – Peter - Reinstate Monica Oct 25 at 18:15
- @Peter-ReinstateMonica yet even your user name focuses on Monica. Why not become peter-welcome LGBT or peter-apologize SE? – StrongBad Oct 27 at 0:13
- 6
  I have not witnessed or been made aware of anything as specific and apparently outrageous by SE's staff as Monica's ouster. I would take a determined stance against any exclusion or unjust discrimination. I changed my user name to support Monica, obviously, hoping to be part of a movement. – Peter - Reinstate Monica Oct 27 at 6:09

add a comment

78

I've been holding off action to read over everything, mull things over, and I have decided to suspend my moderator activities on both Scifi and Outdoors in protest of Stack Exchange, Inc.'s actions. I've been gathering my thoughts on the situation and will post a larger, (hopefully) more powerful dissertation on the situation as soon as I finish.

I do not take this action lightly, as I know it leaves both my sites with only the least active of the active moderators, but I think that is necessary to prompt action, or at least a reasonable response, from SE.

shareimprove this answer
edited Oct 2 at 18:00
answered Oct 2 at 17:57

Kevin
9,78322 gold badges3434 silver badges6161 bronze badges

- Kevin, thank you for being such a great mod at TGO! I don't want you to go, and I hope you'll be back, but I fully support you! Whether you've been personally hurt or are standing in solidarity with those who have, I give you the utmost respect! You're an exemplary mod at TGO. (I'm sure SciFi too, but I've never been there.) I've never seen you write a negative word on the site, or in meta. You prevent us from seeing things that would offend. You always come quickly if I ping you in chat. I feel honored to be active at a site you mod. Thank you! – Sue Saddest Farewell TGO GL Oct 4 at 2:35
- @Sue thank you for the kind words. Your flags always bring a smile to my face, I will miss them. – Kevin Oct 4 at 18:01

add a comment

78

I'm a mod on Academia.SE. After reading the official SE response, I'm going to temporarily suspend my mod activities as well. The disrespect being shown to a well-respected volunteer simply trying to understand what is going on, combined with the terrible handling of the actual firing, combined with the non-apology apology, are a bit over the top.

I encourage The Powers That Be™ to reconsider all their actions here, and think deeply about the types of behavior they want to encourage in their community.

EDIT 11/26: In response to SE's recent efforts to fix some of the problems highlighted here, I have resumed moderation activities. I posted more detail on my thoughts on Academia Meta.

shareimprove this answer
edited Nov 26 at 14:58
answered Oct 4 at 15:29

eykanal
4,33522 gold badges1616 silver badges3030 bronze badges
add a comment

77

I have suspended my activity on Web Applications and Chemistry.

I really, genuinely, wanted more time and more facts to make a decision about this, but An Update to our Community and an Apology convinced me that facts are going to be hard to come by and largely distorted by a PR ploy.

shareimprove this answer
answered Oct 3 at 21:43

jonsca

16.2k66 gold badges4040 silver badges7878 bronze badges
add a comment
1 2 next

You must log in to answer this question.

The bounty expires in 7 days. Answers to this question are eligible for a +100 reputation bounty. FrankerZ wants to **draw more attention** to this question.

Highly active question. Earn 10 reputation in order to answer this question. The reputation requirement helps protect this question from spam and non-answer activity.

Not the answer you're looking for? Browse other questions tagged discussion support moderators community .

Visit chat

Linked

31
Has Stack Exchange made anything approaching a clear or detailed statement on the current crisis?
1754
Could we please be a bit nicer to new users?
789
The Many Memes of Meta
1603
Stack Overflow is doing me ongoing harm; it's time to fix it!
223
Why are the Code of Conduct changes received so negatively, and what can / could have been done to change that?
223
Why is SE removing links and community ads about legal issues?
626
Monica's situation continues unresolved. Is SE hoping the problem just goes away?
133
The “loop” has arrived. What does the community think about it?
-381
An apology to our community, and next steps
35
Winter Bash 2019 Knitting
see more linked questions…

Related

789
The Many Memes of Meta
744
Recent feature changes to Stack Exchange
751
What are the badges I can earn on each site, and what are the exact criteria for earning each badge?
2751
A Terms of Service update restricting companies that scrape your profile information without your permission
818
Net Neutrality and Stack Overflow / Stack Exchange
626
Monica's situation continues unresolved. Is SE hoping the problem just goes away?
1603
Stack Overflow is doing me ongoing harm; it's time to fix it!
439
To reach out: on Monica, the Lavender community, and the future of the Stack Exchange network
279
How can we help Monica Cellio?

Hot Network Questions

- Why can't the public vote to impeach a president?
- Can any portion of an american state declare independence from its state and create a new state?
- How close is a pilot allowed to get to a runway without landing clearance?
- Commas in \cases - typographic standards?
- How do airlines compute weight allowances for carry-on bags?

more hot questions

Question feed

- Stack Overflow Business
- Developer Jobs
- About
- Press
- Legal
- Privacy Policy

Stack Exchange Network

- Technology
- Life / Arts
- Culture / Recreation
- Science
- Other

- Blog
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

site design / logo © 2019 Stack Exchange Inc; user contributions licensed under cc by-sa 4.0 with attribution required. rev 2019.12.20.35703

Meta Stack Exchange works best with JavaScript enabled