

-- Speaker 1 00:00:19 Welcome everybody to episode eight of the WP mainline podcast for Thursday, August 19th, 2021. I am your host, Jeff Chandler joined by John James. I love you to go.

Speaker 2 00:00:30 Hi. I love you too. Oh, hi, everyone. Starting to show

Speaker 1 00:00:33 Off with a bit of positivity, cause we're going to dive right into the negativity.

Speaker 2 00:00:39 Well, that's it. Everyone have a good day. Thanks for listening. And we'll see you next week. Oh yeah.

Speaker 1 00:00:44 Well, I mean we could, we could wrap it up like a nice, a nice type burrito. We could wrap this up right now and probably still be filling

Speaker 2 00:00:53 I'm hungry. Now we should wrap it up. Wrap it up. Wow. No,

Speaker 1 00:00:57 No, no. I am hungry though, as well. Anyways, welcome everybody. We've got a lot to talk about this week. Uh, let's start off with, uh, an interesting story that has made the rounds. Now there's a lot to get into not a different aspects. I've been thinking about revolving around this story, but, uh, it turns out that a fellow by the name of Joe Youngblood posted on Twitter, that we're press was claiming, but well, he, he, he says in his tweet that we're press is now claiming that the WordPress foundation has demanded that developers stop allowing WP to be used in plugging names. And in his tweet, he published a screenshot from context he had with the plug-in review team. And in that screenshot, it says, we know, and yet they reached out. They meaning the WordPress foundation and asked us to for now prohibit the use of WP in the plugin, that name.

Speaker 1 00:01:56 And then it says, we are sorry, but we were directly asked to block this. So here we are. So without additional context and Joe Youngblood went on Twitter and it basically looked as though somebody at the foundation, or even Matt Holloway can self requested to the plugin review team to add WP to the list of prohibited terms. And when submitting, when Joe Young book submitted his plugin, which used WP, he received a rejection email that said it violated a trademark. So now you start piecing together. And there's a little bit of a lack of context here, but basically when he went on Twitter, it, it, it looked like Matt mow leg of the WordPress foundation was exercising their rights to block a trademark. They did not own, which was WP. And we've known since 2010. If you visit the WordPress foundation website under trademark policy, it clearly states that the use of WP is fine in your name, product company.

Speaker 1 00:03:00 Why have you, WP is fine. It's not a trademark term. In fact, the trademarks not even owned by anything, dealing with WordPress, but there is a trademarks of WP that's owned by, by various companies. Now about three months ago, the change was made to the trademark checkers. It was automatic when a plugin is submitted to the WordPress plugin directory, there is a list of, uh, company names and certain abbreviations that are checked, uh, that are known trademarks. And if, uh, your plugin is caught, use the one of those, you know, unknowingly or knowingly, it will be automatically rejected or at least held for manual review by the team. And so with just this information that was available at the time, and there was a, it was sort of a track ticket, but there wasn't really much info to go on. So what I did was I went, I thought that it would be the right thing to do.

Speaker 1 00:03:58 I went into the wordpress.org slack channel for the plugin review team. And I asked, I said, Hey, is WP now at band term because it's trademarked. And I gave it, I gave it some time, went to bed. I woke up the next day Epstein, who is one of the major plugin reviewers on the plugin review team. She responded to me, basically explained why that term is there and what's going on. It turns out that in the end with what this all turns out to be is a Siri, the way that a WordPress plugin review system systems and email communications and things are set up is that, uh, you can receive an email telling them, informing you that you're plugging in with rejected for a certain thing when really it, it, it everything's causing confusion right now. And John here actually chimed in, in the meta channel, which maybe that's the channel I should've went to.

Speaker 1 00:05:01 I thought plug-in review channel was the right channel, but you went to the meta channel and --

-- you actually requested for additional context as to what was going on here, because, you know, from basically on the surface, you know, Joe Young blood had a point and it, it did look as though that, uh, WordPress foundation or even Matt himself was exercising their rights to block WP as if they own the trademark to it, which they don't and was not the case. So kind of, kind of inform us what, what you brought up in the channel and maybe give us your take on the technical side of this, which, you know, looking at this whole thing, it's kind of like a perfect storm of yikes.

Speaker 2 00:05:48 It is a perfect storm of Unix. And I, I found out about this from a retweet from Brad Williams, uh, who I did follow cause I following Joe Youngblood. So I, I read it and it was funny because I, I had, I absolutely had to check myself also because

Speaker 1 00:06:07 Mr. WP user advertiser plugin profile.

Speaker 2 00:06:11 No. Well, no. So here's what happened is I read, I read bread's tweet, uh, which was not anything, uh, really in my opinion, that was like designed to spread any foot or anything, but it was, I read his tweet, I read Joe's tweet. And I was like, that is effing BS. Like that, there's no way that, that, like, there's no way that that is what's going on here. And so then I did some digging and I, I looked at, you know, all the medicos or the majority of the meta code that runs wordpress.org is public and is available for anyone to look at. So I went digging and, uh, and found the ticket and found the related code. It changes that, uh, introduced the block on the WP prefix. And I was like, oh no, this is real. Like, this is actually like what happened here?

Speaker 2 00:07:06 And so the, the ticket, uh, didn't really have a lot of information on it. And so then I was that's when I checked myself and was like, okay, like, there is a lot here that we are, we are filling in a lot of blanks. Like there is one email from a person who we don't know that isn't really saying anything about it being, uh, automatics trademark or the foundation's trademark. It's just saying that for now, uh, it was blocked and we were asked to block it, doesn't say by whom, uh, it just says someone, right.

Speaker 1 00:07:43 And then on top of all this, it happened about about three months ago, three months ago was when I saw that. So the change, so what does that mean? So what do people bring up that things are hidden and things happen behind closed doors, and now we've got some mishaps going on here.

Speaker 2 00:07:59 Right? And so I went in the Neta channel, which I was easily plugging reviews may have probably been better, but I went, I went in Metta cause I knew that Mika, uh, had opened the ticket and had, uh, had made the code change. Uh, and so, uh, looking back, I mean, I, I wasn't upset, but if I, Michael responded to be very, very politely and very nicely, and we had a good conversation about it, but I was like, what in the world is this ticket issue? Like trying to be like friendly and jovial, but also like, what is this? Like, I don't know what I'm looking at here then, because, uh, Meeker's ticket basically said like had some conversations about some, some trademark and clarification that we want to add. And so, uh, we're going to do it. And there was like, no, sorry. So I asked like, what, where, like, I think she, she had asked like, what would make this more clear? And so, in my opinion, um, like who, the, the things that would have been nice to have seen, or that I were, who asked for it, and what was the problems? What were the problems that, uh, everyone is hoping to address? Like, is it literally just WP can't be used or is it, is there more to this? And like,

Speaker 1 00:09:20 There is more to it

Speaker 2 00:09:22 To a more, was there was a ton more to it. And so, um, that was one of those, one of those situations where like, um, I've done it all the time and I think I've tweeted and joked about it where like, uh, when you're moving fast and you're trying to solve problems and you have, um, you have the trust and the empowerment to make an issue, to commit to things, to close these issues, to resolve them. Um, it's sort of feels like the, the meme or Barack Obama is like awarding himself on that all where I feel like I can just, I can solve this problem and I'm trusted to solve this problem. And so I'm just going to, and so it's, it's, it's very, it's --

-- very easy to not think about like the future version of someone else that finds this work that you did.

Speaker 2 00:10:19 And I do this to myself probably more often than I'd like to admit and re like code repos in places that don't have a ton of users or a lot of interaction where I've just a little bit vague about an issue. I'm a little bit vague with my commit message. And I move on to the thing. And if you look at WordPress core commit messages from the early days, there were no tickets. Sometimes there was, there were no really they're very vague commit messages. It was not unusual for that to happen. And, uh, like I would say less active or less mature code bases or repositories. And so I'm not faulting Mika for any, any of the things that she did, but the conversation was essentially, uh, filling in the gaps to say that there, um, the plugin review team has, uh, for a very long time, but a lot more recently, uh, than, uh, I don't want to say inundated, but like they have a lot more people are applying for plugins that, uh, will use a prefix, uh, as what would basically be like a, like a slug attack, right. To say, instead of using WordPress, we'll just use WP, but then eventually we will go back and we will rename it to WordPress. Or instead of using WooCommerce, we will start with w O because w O is restricted. And so we'll work around it with w O and then we will later rename our thing to WooCommerce

Speaker 1 00:11:55 It's okay. Because the problem is that the train mark checks happen on the initial plugin submission, but nothing is checked after the fact. So what was happening was plugging authors, like you just said, would you use WP? And then at some point later, they'd switch it to WordPress. Boom. Now you've got a trademark violation, but, uh, but the check is not automated and it goes unseen until you get a, uh, uh, uh, communication from probably the WordPress foundation. Whoever's exercising the rights on the trademark saying, this is not okay. You got to check this. And it seems to be happening so frequently that they've now had to make this change to add WP as a prefix.

Speaker 2 00:12:36 Yup. And so there were, there were just, uh, more and more individuals that were, that were, that were, but the way

Speaker 1 00:12:42 It all, but the way it all comes across and how it's set up with the communication and the lack of context at the time, it looked like WP was magically. Now a trademark term that the foundation was exercising their rights on which w which was

Speaker 2 00:12:56 Not the case. Well, it's funny, right. Is, uh, and this is, this is where, like the, there are, there are two words that I have that I think of a lot, like every day, and it is speculation, excuse me, speculation and conjecture. And so it's funny how quick that the human brain mine included is to start filling in gaps and like, just that's

Speaker 1 00:13:28 Dangerous, man. It's fair. I'll tell you one thing in the WordPress community, it's dangerous to allow people to speculate when you don't have the context there and you fill in the blanks on your own, you get into a lot of

Speaker 2 00:13:40 Trouble. I was, I was guilty of it when I saw, when I saw bread's tweet, I told you, man, I was like, what is, what is this? And like, instantly, it was like, there's like, that can't be the case. Like, it just, it doesn't. And if it is like, what it w there's gotta be more to this, but based

Speaker 1 00:14:00 On, can you read any information that was available at the time, it leaned towards what you were probably thinking?

Speaker 2 00:14:08 Well, if you look at, and this is one of those, it bugs me, right? Like, uh, again, not trying to be critical or negative, but like Joe's original tweet just has, it doesn't show the thread of in his, in his Gmail. It just shows one part of it. It's like, it's like the, it's like the most incriminating message of what, of a thread that we do not know how we got to that one point. So it says, we know then they reached out to us or they reached out and asked us to for now prohibit the use, uh, in the plugins repo. And so you already said that earlier, and so we're sorry, but we were directly asked to block this. So here we are sad face like it. We don't know how we got there. We don't know what the, what, who, what we, that we're talking about here.

Speaker 2 00:14:58 This is a lot, we don't know, but it is, uh, it --

-- doesn't look good, but it doesn't, uh, we don't know why we, and it doesn't necessarily, uh, it doesn't look bad. It just is. It's a big deal that didn't have at that lacked a lot of, uh, background elect a lot of the reasons why. And so, uh, in the conversation I had in the Metta channel with meet with Nica, she had outlined what the problem was that they, uh, w what they were hoping to solve with the tools that they had available to them at the time. And it was, it just made sense for them to block the BP, uh, so that the N w O and a few others, or a few others that were in there that got added. And so, uh, because it, it helped, uh, mitigate the number of folks that would, uh, go in after the fact that head off it headed off folks that the past, right.

Speaker 2 00:15:57 Like they would, they would try to get this plugin and it would just say no. And it was the system that they had at the time, uh, to help them, uh, moderate the number of plugins coming in that way. And so I was like, okay, well, that makes total sense. Like, there probably are other approaches here. There may be other things that other people could do. Are there ways to solve this problem, but like, okay, so let's put some attention towards solving this problem better, or a different way. And like, that's ultimately what the repress project is all about. So what open source software is all about? Right? So, uh, the one thing that we don't do, which is hard, especially in the world today is to just like ask politely, like, what is going on? Like just asks, like, there's no reason to be, there might be sometimes reason to be upset, but most of the time with stuff like this, um, I think a conversation should happen. I would say

Speaker 1 00:17:05 On that point, I will say that this change went into effect about three months ago. There have been plugins that have been submitted since then using the WP prefix, but Mika, and, but Mika explained that they've worked with those plugin authors and were able to, uh, work with them and explain to them why, what was going on and why it happens. It just so happens that Joe Youngblood was very upset and decided to go on Twitter and said, Hey, this is, this is what's going on. And this is what I've learned. And, uh, you know, he, could've just as easily contacted the WordPress foundation through their contact form. He could have sent an email to plugins review team. He could have went on slack and, and he could have did all the things that happened after the fact to get us to the point where Mika laid out a more detailed explanation in the track ticket, and which was later on in the day when all this news was happening. And then when you read her track ticket or the detailed explanation, you go, oh, okay, there's the blanks that were missing. And this makes sense. And, oh, look, it looks like it was just a total misunderstanding, and this is just a systems and processes issue. And that really haven't anything to do with black and WP or WP being a trademark.

Speaker 2 00:18:23 Right. But all, and also I will add, um, on, on my, my, my next I'll, I'll warn our listeners that the next three minutes are going to be me very deep, a very deep John thought here. I'm glad that you warned us. Right. So skip forward like three minutes, if you have to speed say it. Right. I think that it is a very human problem, again, that like us as like pack animals and creatures that we trust one another, like in a, by design that like, when someone that you're talking to like tells you that this is the way that it is, that it is not a normal reaction to, to say, okay, thank you. And then go look for your own information. Like from the source. I just think that like, we're all grown up to like trust adults and trust our teachers and questioning them as bad and wrong.

Speaker 2 00:19:31 And you get in trouble for it. And that, like, if you're the independent and you're the lone Wolf that you're probably going to die in the forest, and that you're going to bring the Hawks and the bears over to the pack and everyone's going to die. Like, I think that is just not normal in the world. When someone tells you, like, I'm sorry, this is, this is how it is. Or I'm sorry, we're, we're out of French fries or I'm sorry, whatever that, like, you trust that that's the case, like everywhere that you go all the time and not just authority, but like your friends, if your friends tell you something, you trust that what the --

-- y're telling you is correct. The folks listening to us, listen to us because they trust us. And so we have an obligation and a responsibility to like, report, uh, what we know like in an unbiased way, and like, as unbiased as we possibly can.

Speaker 2 00:20:21 And so like, if we violate that trust, if people, uh, if we're wrong and we don't redact it or correct it, then we're like, we're doing everyone a disservice, we're doing a bad job. And so I think that, like, I don't fault Joe for trusting the response that he got from the, the plugin reviewer. Uh, and I don't fault folks that retweeted it or liked it or that reply to it. Uh, but for some reason, my like dumb squishy brain has to question it like, I am skeptical that this is the truth. And I, and I want to dig deeper and figure out what's going on and identify what it is that we can do to rectify the situation like that is just how my squishy human brain is wired. The majority of the time. And that, like, for me, it gets me in trouble.

Speaker 2 00:21:14 And I understand, I understand that. And I take the, uh, ownership over the trouble that it gets me in, but it is not because I don't believe other people it's because I, I like the reality of this. Didn't, it's like my spidey sense tingles and says, like, this guy, this cannot be the whole story here. And because we're, because I know how to ask the question. And because I know the, the team, and I feel like I know the folks involved, uh, that it was just an easy ask. Like, let's, let's drill deeper. Like, let's figure out what's going on here and find a way to like, to make this right. And so, like, it just, I don't think that anyone behaved abnormally, but gosh, does it feel like we should be doing better? Not just at like, giving everyone the benefit of the doubt, cause that's also sort of how you get scammed and taken advantage of, but that one, like when something seems like out almost outlandishly wrong, that it probably is, or that there is a reason that it had to be this way temporarily. Uh, and then, uh, you know, you'll figure out and work around it and, and fix the problem and move on. No,

Speaker 1 00:22:31 Initially I was intrigued by this because I said, well, wait a minute, if they're doing this on a plugin directory, what stops them from, you know, how far are they willing to take this? Because there have been, there's been examples before were, uh, Matt or were preset. Org has been able to use their influence to control outside forces to a point. And I'm like, well, are they going to extend this to websites? You know, WWP mainline now at risk is WP this now at risk, even though the trademark policy says, no, everything's fine. And it has been fine and you're allowed to do this. So it turns out that, you know, it's, it's not really the case. You know, one of the unfortunate things about this, the fallout is that because of what happened on Twitter and the conversations around that, and what happened on Facebook, on hacker news, on the sub Reddit, that what, because of the blanks that we were in through the speculation that was going on that, uh, Matt mulloway, again, even the foundation took a bad rabbit, you know, there were people saying, oh, look what Matt's doing.

Speaker 1 00:23:42 This guy's an a-hole and all this other look what come on, how can you do this? WP is the community's term. This is, this is our word. We should be able to use this. What are you doing? What, what a cheap move. But, you know, Matt probably has absolutely nothing to do with this, correct. From what we found out. And there are people on there that are just that and Facebook and who have read this, that just know the headlines, just know the stories, they haven't dug into the track ticket. They haven't dug into what's going on in as far as they know a mask, just stomping around using his power again, to, to, to limit things or limit the use of WP. When it's know, it's not the case at us. I mean, I, I feel, I feel for Matt and the foundation that, that, that when things like this happen, that, you know, something totally out of your control and you got people with negative connotation to it that, you know, it turns out it's not negative

Speaker 2 00:24:38 At all. It is, um, you know, it like not too long ago, people would've just called these people haters and would have written them off. But like the world today, everyone's sort of, we're all real quick to join some force ag --

-- ainst some other things. And like, yeah, like how, like, and I, I know how that happens because it, like, I, uh, it happens to me too. And I it's like a muscle that I have to say like, no, no, don't, don't put the fish fork down a little bit and try and reconsider like people, you, you used to get a lot of negative criticism about the way you ran the old stuff and the comments and the interactions, but that was, uh, you had reasons for that. And they were valid reasons. And it was, uh, that I get, uh, criticism all the time for speaking my mind and, and, and being, uh, being outspoken and trying to stand up for what I think is right.

Speaker 2 00:25:38 And trying to defend the folks that I think maybe, uh, are getting treated unfairly. And, uh, and that's just, uh, how it goes. It's part of sticking your neck out. It's part of making decisions and trying to get stuff done is going to be some of that negative criticism. But boy, do I wish that we would just all stop, uh, jumping to huge conclusions without any, or enough of the data like across the board on everything and not, not just WordPress, but definitely WordPress. Like this was, uh, a mountain out of a mole hill, like clearly. Uh, and now there are folks in the track ticket. Now there's lots of good discussion. Uh, Dion's got a, got a plan. I had like loosely outlined some plans in the meadow, like, like some initial thoughts, uh, in a meadow select channel of ways that this could get mitigated and improved and Deon's going to do it. We can all work together,

Speaker 1 00:26:41 Sing some kumbaya. Now, are we going to all go together on track and solve the problem? Well, and

Speaker 2 00:26:45 I have a bunch of plugins. This is like you said, with a, it's not just, I mean, WP mainline, obviously, but, uh, Sandhills has WP simple pay. I have WP user profiles and user avatars. I have a bunch of plugins that I prefixed with WP, uh, because back in the day, that was around the time when we had moved all of the buddy press plugins out of their own repos, uh, and into the, the main WordPress plugin for pository. And same with BB press BB press used to have its own plugin repository, but it didn't make sense for it to anymore. When BB press got turned into a plugin, just prefix all of your BB press plugins with BBP, just prefix your buddy, press plugins with BP, prefix, your WordPress plugins with WP. Like it sounds redundant, but it just, it, to me, it made total sense to namespace plugins for things like that.

Speaker 2 00:27:33 Like a WooCommerce plugin, if I didn't know any butter, I would think of prefixing it with WC? Like why not, or paid memberships pro PNP, like, are there are all these, it just, why not prefixed sugar calendar SC. We do it all the time. And so, uh, it, it seems totally innocent and, uh, natural and normal, uh, as a, as a thing, you'd want it to like even, uh, the 32nd tangent. Uh, but it, it reminds me of like in our neighborhood, uh, there's someone who's building a house, their house is almost done. They're about to close on their house and their builder brought in like one final dumpster that they're going to use for like all the random cleanup stuff. And so you pay as a homeowner, you pay for each of these dumpsters that get hauled off to the dump with all these building materials.

Speaker 2 00:28:24 Uh, and sometimes you pay by volume or weight, and if there's a TV or somebody, something in there, then you have to pay something different because they have to sort it and manage it differently. And so she had noticed that her dumpster had become like full of things that had nothing to do with her house. Like someone came and dropped a bunch of stuff off in her dumpster that was not hers. And I, and I had, and she wasn't mad about it. She had just noticed it and said like, Hey, you know, like, uh, if you guys are using the dumpster, just let me know. It's fine. But, uh, I didn't know that folks were going to use it. And I think that there's like something going on there. But my point is that, like, when people see an, a dumpster that is open, like it's actually, and someone uses it, if someone puts a book like it's, I, I think that their mentality is genuinely like I'm going to put my garbage where the garbage goes.

Speaker 2 00:29:16 It's not thinking like by have no other place to put it. So I'm just going to dump it here, or like, I'm not paying for my own garbage pickup. So I'm just going --

-- to use this other person to make them pay for it. Like, I don't think that that is the thought process. I think genuinely people don't want to litter. They, they don't want to, they don't have a way to get rid of this big garbage that they have. They see an open dumpster that does not have a lid on it that doesn't say don't put garbage in me. And they think like, oh, this is great as a solution to my problem. And I'm doing the right thing. And so they do it, they put their garbage in the right place. And so people, prefixing their plugins with WP people, pudding for WordPress or WordPress dash or whatever in their plugin name. I think these are mostly not intentional trademark violations. They are not people saying this is the official WordPress plugin for, for this thing. It's just people like naively. But the trying to be clear that like, this is a WordPress plugin that does something specifically, uh, in a WordPress kind of way. Well,

Speaker 1 00:30:22 After they build the solution to where they could do trademark checks, after the plugging is submitted to the directory, they'll probably be able to remove the WP prefix restriction. And it won't be an issue anymore. My thought process when I see an open dumpster is to light it on fire point to it and say, WP drama.

Speaker 2 00:30:44 Yeah. Somebody did that where we live. So they didn't yell WP drama, but did like a dumpster on fire, like crazy. Uh, that's very funny. That was pretty fun.

Speaker 1 00:30:54 As an aside to all of this, imagine spending 20 to 30 minutes a mountain out of a molehill, you know, that's, that's us, that's the story. But as a bit of an aside, there's many asides, but one aside I wanted to cover was Francesca Morano. I hope I'm pronouncing your name correctly. She is, uh, she's a WordPress core team lead at Yoast. And she wrote a tweet saying, quote, I read core team. And I go, who are they talking about? The reps, the lead developers, the committers people with so many patches. So it was one of the team representatives. I go and look at my DMS, I've gotten on. Uh, um, then she goes on to talk about, um, sort of the, the, the various ways of communication and whatnot, you know, and I responded, this has been a problem for years that I've noticed from, from, from others.

Speaker 1 00:31:49 I'm maybe I've been guilty of it a few times where people, when you say core team, usually it's usually an individual who has an opinion or said something and somebody conflates their opinion of what they said or their statements with that's what the entire team thinks. So that's what the entire team feels. And I get it, it's, it's unfair to the team to have one person's opinions or actions represent that of the entire team. So I just wanted to kind of put that out there. Um, you know, I used to get quotes. I used to ask on the petitions, you know, through DMS or whatever, try and get their opinions on things. I used to be able to do that, but now I have to go through like, press it automatic that calm or something opinions have to get filtered. Uh, so no more direct interactions that direct quotes from right from petitions. But, uh, if you just, for people out there, if, if someone, if someone's like from the plugin review team communicates with you, that's, that's that individual, it's not the entire review team making that statement. It's that individual, same thing with reps, same thing with core committers

Speaker 2 00:33:10 Agree. But I also, and I know, you know, this too, that like their role is to represent the team, right? So, so it, it, it is the, it is one person's interpretation of the role that they are playing at that time is, was, is sort of more complicated than that, where like, uh, like you as a, uh, a homeowner are going to have, and say things you as a husband are going to have opinions and say things as a podcast, uh, the host as a website, as a WordPress user, like you have all these hats that you wear. Uh, and so this is just one person's interpretation of the, where they're at at the time. And so it's a combination of both things. And so that's where, like, we all do need to be cognizant of the, of the job that we have, or the role that we're in at the time and do our best to represent the teams that we are a part of, uh, all of the time, because we never know when someone is reading what you say and thinking, well, the only, like, I can't believe that Jeff, the podcast host would say all --

-- these bad things about peanut butter cookies or whatever, right?

Speaker 2 00:34:33 Like, I don't know, like, it just, you can't be, someone is going to read what you say, and they're going to think, or look at you differently because they're, they're looking at you for, through a lens, uh, that is impossible for you to see back at them with, so it is both, it's not just, uh, that it's not just one person that's that person's got a job to do, and they need to, they also do. They need to need to do it as good as they can. Like, I guess, um, like w I don't, I don't know that this is even like, it's not advice. It's not, it is more encouragement to say that, like, in the case of the WP prefix and the conversation that folks are having about it, that, like the only thing they can do is explain that it's blocked. They don't necessarily have all the facts either. And because they weren't made necessarily super public, then it didn't, it wasn't even part of the protocol, the policy of the team to explain to folks, here's why it's blocked, because exposing the reasons why it's blocked only helps the people that you're trying to prevent from abusing the system, abuse the system better. So you can't even reveal the two people why it's blocked. Uh, and so

Speaker 1 00:36:00 I didn't even know that first, I knew that there was trademark checks on the initial, uh, plugin submission, but I didn't know it was such a problem. And I didn't even know that you were able to develop as were able to change things after the fact so that they could violate the trademark. This was all news. And this was all learned from how this all transpired.

Speaker 2 00:36:21 Well, and that's why I think like, um, you know, with Matt Mullenweg and the audience that he has and the influence that he has, um, it's, I mean, it becomes really important that the things that he says are almost always meaningful and positive, because the second that something can be misinterpreted to be negative. This is what happens. The reaction from the community is just a tornado of, uh, negativity.

Speaker 1 00:36:55 So when people after just pouncing and waiting for Matt to make a decision that's wrong or obsessed to community or something,

Speaker 2 00:37:05 And then, and, and like, we forget, it's easy to forget. And like, I'll be the first person to admit that, like, in, in any given day, I definitely get more wrong than I get. Right. Like I make more mistakes than I get something right. The first time. And so, um, like the number of things that I tweet, what, by the time that I have gotten to the point where I'm tweeting something, I'm either, like not thinking clearly, like upset or being stupid about something, or it's something that's like, so silly and stupid that I feel like can't be misinterpreted that I'm like making a joke or doing something that I think makes me laugh that, uh, and it is it totally, it totally happens all the time. So I really, I try to think of like, well, like what our buddy press and BB press teasers going to think about this dumb thing that I'm saying, or like, what are Sandhills customers thinking if they know that, like, this is how my brain works. Like, how are they going to think less of the company or the product sort of projects, because I'm just a normal ish person being silly on the internet sometimes. And like, would we, would there be more value in Johnny

Speaker 1 00:38:25 Been putting a muzzle and shut shutting up

Speaker 2 00:38:27 More often than not, right. Like prop probably the answer is yes. But, um, but how, I don't know.

Speaker 1 00:38:38 Yeah. Let's let's all right. Let's move on from this mountain Mount WPI,

Speaker 2 00:38:45 Shout out.

Speaker 1 00:38:46 Indeed. Indeed. She is. So you've been nominated to speak at WordCamp us, congratulations. Guess what I am today. So big deal. Now there's no guarantee that your eye will be picked to present. Um, I've kind of already put my, actually somebody, somebody emailed me and said, Hey, what's your email address? Because I'm going to nominate you. And I said, no, no, no, save it for somebody else. You know, I don't don't need to be nominated, but thank you very much for thinking of me. And you put the question out there on Twitter. You said, if you had to hear me and see me on your screen for about 48 minutes, how would you want that to go? And there was people that were chiming in, but I wan --

-- ted to get you taken this idea, super good responses by Joshua, Josh dribble. And he says, I want to hear the insight, his perspective, you are a part of core, had been for a long, long time, but you're also on the outside working at a shop building plugins. How are, if there are the competing interest of all stakeholders, stakeholders balanced in terms of rulemaking enforcement and whatnot, does the end user always win in every outcome? Is that even the goal? And he's gotten quite a few likes on that. And it sounds like a pretty good idea to me. And I wanted to, since I'm on the show, I can abuse my privilege and ask you, what do you think of his idea?

Speaker 1 00:40:05 What's up JJ, Josh?

Speaker 2 00:40:09 Uh, that was a great question. And the like, uh, uh, I thought about it, uh, quite a bit. And I got, like you said, some, some good attention. And, uh, so I don't know whether or not I would give that exact talk, but it is something I do think about a lot and I don't want to ruin what my felt my potential talk would be. But my tweets originally is like 40 minutes is a long time to not just listen to not just listen to us, go back and forth. At least there's two voices here, but for a remote talk, that is prerecorded. That could be, it could be as produced as someone wanted it to be. But like, that's a Netflix special is 40 minutes. You're watching, you're listening to, it's like a whole television show of just one person talking to the camera.

Speaker 2 00:41:04 And so what is a way to make that engaging, uh, in, uh, and one of the things that was in the, the word camp, I don't know if you saw this chef, but I'm assuming you did is, um, the there's a, there's a disclaimer, sort of a, uh, a heads-up on the word camp, uh, talks of mission, not just the theme, but it basically tried to say, or alluded to that, like talks should be like timeless, like high quality, uh, timeless talks about like these subjects and, and the, the things that are in them. And so it's not just like talking about hooks and filters or just talking about blocks and Gutenberg. Like, I think the expectation here is that we're putting together like very well thought, very good, uh, like 40 minute presentations that go deep into these topics. No pressure, man. No kidding.

Speaker 2 00:42:11 Right. So, um, Josh's tweet is awesome. It's a very good suggestion. And like in general, my thoughts and feelings on it are that like, uh, I want the user to win every time. Like that is how my Mike, my software brain works. It's like, I, I that's the only reason any of this works is that WordPress is users are users of each other's software and plugins and themes. Um, the listeners of the show, this is all for you is for everyone. We are all users and the users have to we'll then, or WordPress loses. And, uh, so that is my goal, but I don't know that it, that,

Speaker 1 00:43:09 That it is always other people's calls. Can I even listen to you for 40 straight minutes? The answer is yes. Yes, yes. Especially if you're sitting in a nice chair and you've got a cup of hot cocoa Baya, and you're sitting in front of a fireplace fireplace, those are my, those are my favorite sessions. You do all, those are

Speaker 2 00:43:28 Good ones. I haven't done one of those in a while,

Speaker 1 00:43:30 But long Johns on John.

Speaker 2 00:43:32 I appreciate that. Josh knows that, like, that is a part of the, of the line that I have chosen to walk, uh, is that like, I, I really love the, like, like we talked about earlier, like the, the core team and contributing to all of the pieces that there are that intertwine and connect, not just with WordPress, but with wordpress.org and the Bebe's and plugins and themes, and like, uh, but I also think that WordPress would definitely not be as strong on the web as it is if it was not for plugins and themes. And so, uh, they are, uh, uh, one in the same to me. And, uh, and so it is, uh, uh, I enjoy the opportunity that, uh, the community has. I think it sort of really bestowed upon me and that I've sort of tried to step into and, and occupy to represent all sides and be as diplomatic as possible. And, um, if I'm screwing up, I want to do better. So, you know, feedback is always welcomed, but, um, it's, uh, it's interesting. It's a lot,

Speaker 1 00:44:56 Oh, speaking, uh, speaking of Matt mulloway, he published a post on his site, which you could find that made --

-- at TT still one of the fair, cool domain name. He was able to get that fairly easy to find out and set a photo map, but his post titled funding buyback in hiring. And in this post, he talks about the, uh, round of primary funding that automatic went through \$288 million earlier this year in February. And he talks about how it was a very busy time because they were working on some acquisitions with, uh, parsley, higher style, L Y okay, take on domains. They won pocket casts, and they just recently made a big investment in two type for business email. And he goes on to say that, uh, more recently they they've taken an opportunity to do a \$250 million share buyback at a \$7.5 billion valuation that just closed last week.

Speaker 1 00:45:54 And he says that the buyback is primarily targeted at current and former employees. So the post goes on, he mentions a lot of, to me as business gobbledygook with the, you know, investors and shareholders and whatnot. But what I took away from this was that, uh, early automatic employees, uh, those were, who were there in the early stages, uh, have the opportunity to sell their stock back to the company and probably give themselves a bit of a bonus. Um, is that, uh, did you happen to read the post? Is it that, did I get that right? And by the way, you used to be an anonymous Titian, and I wanted to ask you, have you sold your stock or do you still have it, or are we required to sell it when you left? I think, or can you not answer any of those?

Speaker 2 00:46:43 I think I can't answer any of those. Um, you're you are correct. Uh, and Matt is been very open, I think about, uh, like this post was, was the first time that I've seen him be as open as he has been about, uh, how automatic, uh, options worked and that they were even a thing and that people had them. Cause I don't think that was ever, uh, hugely broadly advertised. Um, and so it's good to see that level of transparency, uh, in this post. Uh, the valuation is bonkers. I mean, it's great. It's amazing. It's incredible. But as a bonkers, number two, uh,

Speaker 1 00:47:30 I asked people on Twitter, said if automatic goes public, would you invest in by and large? The majority of people said, oh, hell yeah. You know, that'd be a sound investment. I didn't invest, but I don't have enough money to pay the bills. So how am I going to give automatic some of my money?

Speaker 2 00:47:44 So, I mean, that was, um, back when, uh, I mean, I don't think that this is going to break any rules, but back back when I was employed at automatic, um, there was a, uh, a, a third party, I guess, and, um, service I'll just call it a service that was called second market that I think NASDAQ actually bought. And so, um, that was where the, uh, options sort of brokering, I guess, um, what used to happen and the second market doesn't exist anymore. So I'm not even sure how

Speaker 1 00:48:26 Talking about your, your tenure at automatic? Well, w was it 2011? How long?

Speaker 2 00:48:32 2009, 10, 11, 8, 9, 10. Somewhere around,

Speaker 1 00:48:39 More than even more than 10 years ago.

Speaker 2 00:48:43 Yup. Yup. And so if for the, for their options period, back then, uh, I, I was vested, uh, and so the like, and many of the early employees, I think, like he said here, God, um, they were, they were invited into, uh, having some options and, uh, it was, uh, boy, do I wish, uh, that everyone had more of them looking at a number like \$7.5 billion. Uh, and I think like, uh, uh, like the way that Matt put it is, uh, is very accurate. That's selling a bit of their equity holdings could have a significant impact on their lives. Like that is the, uh, hidden gem of a quote in that. Um, because in any of the other posts that Matt has mentioned about automatic and shares and equity, I don't know, or remember if he's posted what the original valuations were or how many stocks were issued or how many that he has, or that were, uh, sold off or invested in or issued to, uh, other investors.

Speaker 2 00:50:00 And, um, and so the, the, if I, if I add emphasis to this, given the valuation, then selling a bit of their equity holdings could have a significant impact on their lives, which means not selling all of them, but selling a bit of them, uh, at this number could easily, uh, could, could change focuses, uh, the trajectory of financial futures, uh, pretty, pretty significantly. So it's like a kudos --

-- to them, like hats off to all of my ex comrades and friends at automatic that have stayed and worked diligently and Ben, uh, loyal, passionate employees, um, that have stuck through this, uh, cause this, this was, I mean, one of the things that I always wanted when I worked at automatic was, uh, increased an increasing number of options because I believed that automatic was a company that had enormous potential and Matt's vision, uh, is, uh, very vivid and, uh, and very determined. And so, uh,

Speaker 1 00:51:16 You think the company will go public.

Speaker 2 00:51:19 I don't think it'll go public the way that other companies go public. But I think that, I think that it will, but I, I can't, uh, I don't, I don't think automatic is the kind of company and I don't, I guess I don't know anymore, but I don't imagine that, uh, speculating completely that, uh, our, our friends and ex boss, and that is the, is as the type of person who would go public, the way that, uh, uh, Robin hood, the company goes public or that, you know, uh, Tesla goes public or 23andme goes public or whatever, like automatic has different goals, uh, and different trajectory, uh, that does not really fit in the normal, uh, IPO world. And, uh, and so if it happens, I don't think it will happen and the way that it, uh, that, that everyone would just expect for it to happen. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:52:26 And by the way, for listeners out there, if you want to actually get a hint of what it was like working at automatic at, uh, at the time John was there, you should get the book and read a year without pants by Scott Burkin great book, great book, great book. Cause it's like a, just a sliver of time Scott documented of what it was like to work at automatic when they were just really starting to have these different teams of individuals within the company. And that was around the time when Jetpack was kind of getting off the ground as well. I believe

Speaker 2 00:52:59 That was, yeah, that was, um, was an interesting time in that book. I mean, it's not on our agenda here to talk about it, but yeah, that was a funny thing about that book is that I is that I, I was always a little, had a little bit of a chip on my shoulder for largely being omitted from that. I think it like the timing of it and where Scott was in his writing process was he was kind of done by the time that I was on his team at that point. So, um, he was, he was largely focusing more on the book than on, um, and Jetpack. And it was, it was weird. I had, I had a weird, uh, unique, uh, intersection of time with Scott. Burkin where, um, I feel like he didn't get to see the best of me. And I feel like maybe I didn't get to see the best of him, but still has a, we had a lot of good memories and good, good trips and a lot of fun go onto places doing cool stuff. But, um, I feel like we, we didn't get to hang out, uh, the right way and the, but the book was great. I have, uh, I think I have two copies of it just in case. And

Speaker 1 00:54:08 Then, and then Matt went on to finish this post by mentioning that they've significantly scaled up their ability to find and hire a great folks up until this point, there have been 300, 371 accepted offers already in 2021, but he says what the growth of woo commerce hiring ahead of payments and their enterprise business WP VIP in particular, they need to move faster to keep up with the opportunity. Uh, so he says for him and many other of the most tenured auto petitions within the company hiring is the top priority. So to that end, he's looking for someone to partner with and their top executive group, which they call bridge, I suppose, in, within the company and creative talent development, which is an executive recruiter to help craft the highest performing teams of executives for each of our businesses. And he says that they have a multi-decade opportunity ahead of them to create the best solutions for the open web platform of WordPress and WooCommerce is doing the same thing for, for commerce. So that's the one for one

Speaker 2 00:55:14 Talent development role. And since you brought it up is like kind of the coolest job. I think I've seen automatic publicly advertise that they're looking for people for, like, I read it. And I was like, that sounds like a lot of work. And it sounds like, uh, like it's like the job itself is probably extremely difficult, but like you kind of just get to live at the intersection o --

-- f all of like the top talent that had cares about working on solving these kinds of problems. And then, um, the, uh, they have automatic at the bottom of that job description. Uh, they have their about automatic section, but, and maybe this has been there for awhile, but this job posting was the first time that I had to read it, uh, where automatic as a company in their own sort of autobiography says we democratize publishing and the commerce. So anyone with a story can tell it and anyone with a product can sell it regardless of income, gender politics, language, or country. And I was like, man, is that good? That's good at rhymes. And it's like fully immersed in like WordPress culture stuff. Like man is great. So, uh, I wanted to bring that up cause it was, uh, I thought it was just incredible. Whoever wrote it super good.

Speaker 1 00:56:49 Well, I was, I was going to mention that the one constant for automatic over these God knows how many years is hiring. They're always hiring, hiring more and more and more and more. They need more people. And now with 300 people this year, that would probably well on their way to 2000 employees. And when you were there, there was less than a hundred. I think there was less than seven

Speaker 2 00:57:10 Or was less than 70

Speaker 1 00:57:12 Some around the fifties, I believe,

Speaker 2 00:57:14 I think so. 50, 53 or four or five.

Speaker 1 00:57:18 Yeah. Yeah. So there you have it. So, uh, automatic hiring by the way, if anybody out there needs a job work for a coal company.

Speaker 2 00:57:26 Okay. Speaking of segues, who else is hiring Jeff? A big orange heart.

Speaker 1 00:57:31 Oh yes, yes. A big orange shirt. Well, they're kind of hiring to kind of looking for people to, uh, the big orange heart foundation and currently seeking artists and writers for a new project they're working on. That's aimed at creating in meditation and coloring book and, oh, sorry. I had a cough there. Actually. I couldn't use the cough button and an article published in 2020, the Cleveland clinic listed three ways in which adult coloring can relax your brain. Um, and I thought that was a great article because not only have I personally have seen the effects of what coloring can do to calm someone down with anxiety, but I learned that, uh, that word searches, I actually use word searches to. And what I learned that the reason why word searches and coloring works is that it takes your mind and focuses it on that simple activity.

Speaker 1 00:58:28 Doesn't require a lot of brain power. And by doing that and losing self-awareness, it allows you to calm down and lowers your anxiety. And I'm like, oh man, this is like the first time I realized why word searches work working? Why when I'm going through a troubling time, then I try and act the, in my mind with like, I'll load up a YouTube video that I like, or I'll start doing some word search on my phone. And what happens is that as my mind focuses on those tasks or on the YouTube video, my body will naturally return back to like a normal state of being instead of being self-aware of like my heart rate and all that other stuff, which could trigger the anxiety to get worse. So this book that they're working on, it's a, it's a coloring meditation book where you can write, if you write articles about, uh, you know, relax, relaxation, peace, they're looking for, for those, that's going to be an eight by five or 8.5 by 11 inch book, meditations or essay should be 300 words or less.

Speaker 1 00:59:33 I was thinking that it'd be cool if somebody donated, it's not going to be WordPress specific, but what, uh, outlines of poos would be like perfect for this start coloring in some lot, boos the deadline for final submissions is September 15th, 2021. If you're of course, links to this will be in the show notes, but you can also check out big orange, heart.org to find out more information. That's just an awesome organization by the way, by, by Dan, maybe a bunch of other folks. And, uh, they also put together WordPress live, which was a very cool event that recently took place. So the last thing I wanted to bring up as running a bit long in the tooth here, but I don't think anybody cares. I think people just love could listen to us drone on for years about WordPress stuff or maybe not WordPress stuff. Uh, but I wanted to mention, I spent some time the other day, and now you can find and subscrib --

-- e to the WP mainland podcast on apple podcast, Amazon music, Stitcher, Google podcasts, pocket cast, overcast. And I think that's it. There might be a few others. So if oh, Spotify, you can also find it on Spotify. If that's your, uh, that's where you like to listen to audio. So I fixed the distribution channels for the show and you'll be able to find it there. And listen subscribe on your favorite app or whatnot.

Speaker 2 01:01:04 How was that process of doing all that and setting all that up?

Speaker 1 01:01:09 Some of them was easy. Some of them, some of them I had to have it, actually, most of them, I already had an account with because of WP weekly. So yeah, so that was, that was good. But yeah, you know, most of them, most of the presses, it was pretty easy cast dose that I use, uh, the service I used, uh, the host, the WPP online podcast actually have two buttons or two ways to, you can subscribe or submit to Amazon music and Spotify. And that made the process super easy for those two services. But for everything else, I had to do like a button or put in my feed. I had to find it. And then, you know, it takes a while for it to get approved or I would have to create an account for a content creator network and some of these sites, but I did it, I worked through it all. I did it for you all out there. The listeners know

Speaker 2 01:02:00 We do have the best listeners they deserve.

Speaker 1 01:02:02 Absolutely. So that does it for me. And that does it for I'm so glad we got to go. No, that first story we talked about really in the show, that's the reason why I enjoy having a podcast like this to kind of go over things in depth and to talk about it. Cause I think words just don't do it. Justice responding to people on Twitter and in her Twitter threads about it just doesn't do it justice, but being able to, to say what's on my mind and, and explain my perspective and where I'm coming from and why things were written the way they were written in and the situation and whatnot. I think it's, it's so nice to be able to talk about it instead of write about it.

Speaker 2 01:02:39 And I want to, I'll shout out to Mika again and, uh, and Francesca and JJ, Josh, uh, for, for letting letting us, uh, hopefully there, their ears are ringing a little bit for letting us, uh, highlight their, uh, their roles in the community and talk about some of the stuff that they brought up. Then, uh, I agree. It's good to talk about these kinds of things and get it all out there.

Speaker 1 01:03:03 So that's going to do it for this episode of the WP mainline podcast. You can find show notes for this episode and all other episodes on WP mainline that can just click the podcast link. And if you want click the subscribe link and then like go through the process and give me some money. That's my, that's my call to action. There's no, there's no X on this. You can't close this out. I'm in your ears. Give me your money, but no, I'd really appreciate it. If you enjoy this content and like what I do on WP mainline, I'd very much appreciate it. If you subscribed to the site, that would be awesome. Jen, where can people keep tabs on you and your eventual know whenever you get around to it, battling Gutenberg and publishing a post on your site,

Speaker 2 01:03:51 Bentley J J j.blog or, uh, and, or, uh, get hub and Twitter at J J J.

Speaker 1 01:04:01 Awesome. So everybody that's going to do it right. We're going to wrap it up. Everybody have a safe, enjoyable weekend and we'll talk to you again next week so long everybody.

Speaker 2 01:04:11 Bye

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