

-- Speaker 1 00:00:19 Welcome everybody to episode nine of the WP mainline podcast for Friday, August 27th, 2021. I'm your host, Jeff Chandler joined up by my conductor in charge Malcolm Perotti Malcolm. How's it going, man? How's your week. It's been a rough one, you know, but, uh, I agree. We're all allowed those. They don't all have to be great. They don't have to be good. I, I it's so funny. Right? Cause my initial response is a Canadian Institute of that. Oh, it's been fine. It's been fine. Um, and not make a big deal out of it, but yeah, you can't bad weeks and good weeks. Right. So yeah, this, this, this week was rough. I, I, I was reading WordPress stuff in, you know, with me, I can actually write posts, but it's in my head, but getting from head to keyboard, you know, that's, that's difficult a lot of the times, which, uh, which it shouldn't be, but I didn't get a chance to publish a lot of things this week on, uh, on WP mainline.

Speaker 1 00:01:17 I did, however I did, uh, wake up one day to see 15 spam messages in my Akismet queue. And I'm like, what happened? Uh, you know, it might, it might like famous now. And what happened was I was, uh, one of my articles was linked to, by just entail. I can WP Tavern and I forgot how many websites, republish, WP Tavern content in full. And I actually got pinged back. So I'm like 15, 16, 70 different sites, you know that, uh, this flawed it repost. I forgot about that. Don't worry. Don't worry. You'll get the Tavern effect. You'll get back to that point with a main line and then everyone else will be complaining about the same thing. So, oh man, know what that'd be a nice problem to have. And I mean, we're ending the week on a, on a good note. This is gonna be a great show today.

Speaker 1 00:02:03 I'm super super man. I can't even speak. I'm so stoked. So how about that? Yes, indeed. Uh, we got, uh, not only do we have an awesome guest, but we have an awesome surprise at the end of the show. I can't wait. Uh, there is one headlight before we get to our guests to just one headline I wanted to bring up because I think it's somewhat important if, uh, you've been waiting, waiting with bated breath on what's going to happen with the classic editor plugin. Uh, well you no longer have to wait. We found out that the classic editor plugin is going to be officially supported by the wordpress.org development team through the rest of this year. And through 2022. Um, I was just checking out some of the stats it's, it's actively installed on more than 5 million websites and as an overwhelmingly positive five star rating, which does not surprise me because most of those reviews were no within a year or two of when the official switch to the blackout of there happened WordPress.

Speaker 1 00:03:04 A lot of people were like, no, I'm not ready. Can't do it. Or something's broken or, or they're working on a client site and they just absolutely need to have the classic editor. And so a lot of people were thankful that it was, you know, debted existed, that it was there. That was an officially sanctioned thing. And that's where I think a lot of those five-star reviews have come from, but what the post doesn't mention is that, uh, so this WordPress press five point it was released in 2018. I think that's when the switch happened for a classic, the classic editor turning into what we now know is the black editor. So it's been about three years. Um, there's still, I mean over 5 million active sites and who knows the myriad of reasons why people are using the plugin, whether it's a client side or that to just, they hate blocks or something doesn't work in Gutenberg, but it works just fine in the classic.

Speaker 1 00:03:55 You know, it doesn't matter, but what the post doesn't mention is that, or one support will add. And I think that's, I think we're getting to that point now where we're going to have to see some sort of end of life transition occur, not before the transition happened to Gutenberg. I remember there's a call to action and some of the earlier versions of WordPress that said, Hey, we're working on this new editor, check this out. This is how you can use it. I think it was a plugin at the time, or maybe it was just a link. You could, you could click. I can't remember, but there was a call out and there is some, a few versions at least a few months ahead of time where people could check it out. And I think we have to see something like that ha

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-- ppened with the classic editor plugin to just maybe try and get people thinking of possibly trying to black editor today.

Speaker 1 00:04:41 Just if just haven't tried it for a while or transitioning back to the, uh, to the black editor because WordPress is going, I mean, it's all in it. There's no way about it. It's going all blocks. Everything's going to be a black full site, editing blocks, widgets or blocks. Everything's going to be black. So I think, I think at some point just by sticking with the classic editor, you're really placing yourself behind the eight ball at, you know, for a while. But even if support for the plug-in goes away, the WordPress team says, okay, that's it, we're done. We're not, we're no longer going to maintain this or officially updated. It will exist. Somebody will fork it. A group of people will forget. It will be maintained one way or another. It will live on. As someone mentioned on Twitter, it will be around for 10 years.

Speaker 1 00:05:25 After support is ended, the classic editor is, is never, never going to go away completely. And by the way, there's also classic press. If you hate blacks, if you hate the way WordPress is going, if you don't want to go the way of the blocky kind of Minecraft world, we're presses traversing into, there's always classic press, which if you visit their website right down the bottom, it says no blocks. You know that they actually say no blacks. It's like a big advertisement for classic press. So there you go. That's, that's the update on there. And, uh, I know, I know Malcolm, you look super impressed, super excited that it's going to stick around for another year. Are you using the classic editor in any client sites? No. We've convinced them all to switch over at this point. There's no client sites left that are using the classic editor.

Speaker 1 00:06:12 And I mean, even if they wanted to, I would aggressively dissuade them of that. I think that the big advantage of moving away from the classic editor is that you start to get them involved in complaining about the things that need to be fixed in Gutenberg. And then those fixes hopefully happen a little faster than they would have otherwise hiding, hiding the issues with Gutenberg from clients does not fix issues with Gutenberg. So let's, let's get everyone using it. Let's get everyone suffering. Let's get everyone putting in bug reports and let's get this switch happening, like with a better cleaner working interface sooner rather than later, I don't think extending the lifespan of this is, is really truly helping anyone. And speaking of the editor in, in some of those fixes, remember when I mentioned, uh, my issues with combining paragraph blocks into a Colt black or, or different kinds of blacks into a quote?

Speaker 1 00:07:02 Well, I found out somebody, uh, an in McCarthy, I hope I pronounced your last name correctly. I hope I got that right, but she's actually worked for developer relations from automatic. I was like very surprised to see that she had used my contact form. She contacted me and said, Hey, thank you for writing about these issues. And she actually sent me links to you, some things on getting hub and it was a pull request and an issue. And it turns out that for the last about two years, a quote blocks don't support nested blocks. So that's why I can't take a paragraph block and list block and transform them all into one quote block. And there's also some funky things and how citations work. And they've been thinking about maybe turning citations into its own block. Uh, but it looks like they're close on the finally figuring out a solution, but it turns out all this time, uh, Nesta blocks, cool blacks, don't support Nesta blocks.

Speaker 1 00:07:57 And that's the big reason why I haven't been able to do certain things that I think I should be able to. Meanwhile, I just go in the classic editor, rep, Colt tags around stuff, and boom, you know, it's all, it's all there, but it basically blocks. There's so many moving parts and everything is so much more complicated and under the hood and out with blocks, that's what I learned, but it's been worked on. So that's good news, uh, faster. So with that said, I want to introduce our guest today. His name is Scott Kingsley clerk. And you may have heard of him from such things as the pads plugin and way back in the day, the, uh, geez, what the field fields, API project, that God, he loves so much, bu --

-- t just couldn't get him into core darn. But, uh, Scott, thank you very much for being on the show, man. I haven't talked to on the air since 2018, when me and John were talking to you. In fact, the, uh, the name of that episode was long lived the field's API. Oh no, but, uh, that's neither here nor there. Hey man, how's it going?

Speaker 2 00:09:13 It's good. It's um, it's really good right now. Everything is going well. Um, all of the projects I'm working on seem to be doing well, uh, work is great. Um, I'm now at the paid memberships pro plugin team. I know who those people are. I'm a product manager for the first time. I kind of like switched over into like kind of a managerial role. Um, but I'm also like still doing heavy dev. So it's kind of like a fusion and it's a, it's a great team, real small. I liked that kind of small, fast and loose kind of, um, environment, um, and lots of stuff I could bring to the table. So it's, it's a, it's a great place for me

Speaker 1 00:09:49 And pay memberships, bro. You know, they've been around for 10 years.

Speaker 2 00:09:52 Yeah. Uh, not as long as pods though.

Speaker 1 00:09:56 Speaking of pads, what's going on on that front?

Speaker 2 00:09:58 Um, everything's great. Actually, we are so close. I can taste it. We're almost to a release candidate for pods 2.8. It's been like five years in the making. Like it's just been so much effort. And a lot of it has been surrounding switching over to react. We relaunched a bunch of our interfaces with react and, and a lot of the stuff underlying within Gutenberg can now be utilized in pods in some ways. And we have blocks. Now you can build blocks with pods, uh, through code and, and we have our own pods blocks that are really extensive, lots of functionality available and all that, but it's, it's a lot of really cool stuff.

Speaker 1 00:10:37 So as a developer, working through pods and try, and you're going through this transition from Gutenberg and JavaScript, react with pods. I mean, how has that experience been? Like there's been a conversation as of late than the WordPress community, about barriers to entry and things being much more difficult for developers to get into with WordPress and contributing to Gutenberg, especially through the JavaScript aspects of it. What's your experience been like on that front so far?

Speaker 2 00:11:02 Um, so if, if coming from the PHP side of things, uh, if you just look at the pure, uh, how can I just do this real fast kind of approach, uh, as a plugin developer, you just look for the action or look for the filter and adjust and, oh, I'm just going to put some UI here and I'm all done a day is over, uh, that's not the case anymore. If you're looking at the Gutenberg editor, the block editor itself, the code, and you're trying to manipulate some UI screens and add some other things. If, if you're not rendering your piece already in the place that they're asking you to render it, it's pretty difficult. Uh, it's not very easy to kind of just find the right place and output some HTML anymore. It's much more evolved. You've got to have build processes and you've got to have lots of Java script stuff. And, and, but that's what kind of drove me in pods to build a PHP based API for all of the blocks stuff that we've done. So it's kind of a fusion of, of some of the different aspects of things where you can build a lot of things more easily. Cause I just didn't want to build them all the time, all over all of our code, like for five different blocks we're building, I don't have to have each one.

Speaker 2 00:12:17 I don't want that. So I went and built the other stuff and I partnered with, uh, Zach Roth Hauser and, um, he's been just awesome helping me do a bunch of really cool react stuff.

Speaker 1 00:12:28 W what kind of, what kind of cool features or implementations have you been able to implement in pads because of all this stuff involving Java script and blocks that maybe you couldn't do or couldn't surface as easily it's before?

Speaker 2 00:12:43 Yeah. Um, so I guess I could have released a few features in pods before going through and doing the re react, um, work. But, um, I think the main thing is, is really longevity. So if I didn't do this now, if I didn't do the react work now to support what we wanted to do, doing all of the rest of this stuff would be just playing like catch up with like ACF or types or whome --

-- ver and trying to do what they're doing, but in a kind of a reckless way. We're. And I say reckless, because one, it doesn't fit into the interfaces. Well, like in Gutenberg and all that such, uh, just rendering things with just basic plain JavaScript is not the same as it rendering it with react. Some of the stuff you get with react really does lend itself to better interfaces and better, um, experiences when you're developing with it, uh, testable stuff too.

Speaker 2 00:13:36 And, and all those things are playing a part for it. But I think for the most part, the stuff that we get out of this is really thinking about the Ford, like the future of pods, where are we going next? And so the next part is now that we've rebuilt our interfaces and our fields with react. Now we can have repeatable fields much more easily because now just add a couple of things. And now it's repeatable. It's so re doing all this groundwork is necessary to bring pods to the next level. And after repeatable fields, you got loop fields and such, and you can do much more really cool things with when you have the basis of everything on a solid foundation, like, like the react we were.

Speaker 1 00:14:20 So before we get into the crux of why we have you on the show, um, what what's your general take or consensus on the future of WordPress that direction is traveling, what that's taken react. And we got full site editing, coming, everything, just going the way of the block. I mean, it's, it's either black or nothing, but, but what's your, what's your, what's your taking the direction that WordPress has heading? Um, are you excited or, I mean, I

Speaker 2 00:14:50 Am, I, I am a, multi-dimensional being, uh, with many different, um,

Speaker 1 00:14:58 Man, you're like my <inaudible>,

Speaker 2 00:15:01 Um, I think that WordPress is actually on track for where it needs to be going right now. Right, right. At this moment. Um, I think getting here was really kind of pulling a lot of those band-aids off, ripping them off and just getting to the point where we can be here, where we are. All right. Now, um,

Speaker 1 00:15:21 Some of those site doesn't prevent you from

Speaker 2 00:15:24 Using other, uh, page builders out there. So like you just purely not liking Gutenberg doesn't mean you can't use WordPress. You can use other page builders on your stuff. Like there's all the things you can still do if you want classic. When I look at it, it's, it's now it's so far dated that it doesn't matter if you don't have block interfaces, you can have, like, you can have those meta boxes still in there. Like you can still have some of these interfaces if you really want them to be separate from the content area. These things are all possible, but now your content area is leveled up. So you can do some more formatting things. And those are cool, but you don't have to like dive into the crazy blocks. You don't have to have all these really cool page builders installed if you don't want those experiences.

Speaker 2 00:16:08 Um, so I, I think in some ways I I'm really glad we went the route we went. Um, in other ways I think the approach maybe was wrong for bringing the PHP developers along for the ride. I think that was kind of a couple of missteps that lost opportunities, uh, that they could have probably had someone specifically look at it from the PHP side of things and say, um, yeah, let's, let's try to make this easier for people to transition, uh, abstracting some of the stuff that they've got within Gutenberg's block API core, that, that requires so much copying pasting of big, enormous chunks, just to add something that should be adding a field to the screen. It's like just so much stuff that you realize. There's a reason why there is someone who has already built five, 10 different block APIs that abstract the API already.

Speaker 2 00:17:04 Uh, so, uh, it's just a simple of, of that approach, um, where these people are kind of filling those gaps and, uh, at the scene on the, on the scene side of things, like if you think about it from the other side of like, do I really like, or were presses? Uh, I wish it could've done more beyond just the block editor. I think my passion project working on the fields API work was really trying to get PO, uh, get WordPress to embrace the needs of all the plugins that are building on WordPress. We all need the ability to add settings. We all need the ab --

-- ility to add these fields to the screen for meta boxes and add custom fields to different places and all different things to the customizer and just the field's API would have unified everything into one place, which then you could have built the blocks API, right on top of and leveraged because then adoption for the blocks API would have been so much easier because everyone was already using this, this unified fields API for all the other screens. So I think there was a lost opportunity there. I just wish that more people had been on board and more, um, more so embraced, um, what we were trying to get at there. Uh, just didn't have really any people that were passionate about it beyond me and a couple people that were trying to push it in there.

Speaker 1 00:18:26 Yeah. Do you ever, you ever sit there and think to yourself, man, you could have been this way. It could have been easier, but I tried. It's

Speaker 2 00:18:33 Not my fault. I did as much as I could. And

Speaker 1 00:18:37 You're out there, you're writing posts. You were, you were campaigning. You, you know, like running for office, but for the field's API, I covered it. I, I saw what you were doing there just, but I guess it just, it was close. Didn't get enough core buy-in or something, or maybe bad timing. No,

Speaker 2 00:18:54 They talk about, they're not really being a core team, like, like inside group where they're having all these meetings and in private it's, it's there, right? They're not, there's not really that kind of thing. But at the same time, getting the people who make those decisions to bring something like this, into the fold and saying, I'm, this is important in getting them on the same side as you, as you, when they're building something like the rest API or, or the block editor, um, is really difficult because those things are humongous things on their own. You couldn't do the block editor without the rest API and, and so on and so on. But like, I just wish that it would have been one of those things. Like let's let this be another pillar for our success is going to look like. So today we could have been living in a much more stylish WordPress house that would have had really cool foundation.

Speaker 1 00:19:44 Nice. Do you see any other weaknesses in kind of the administration panel for WordPress or like the WordPress project as it exists today? Like what are some other areas of WordPress where you're like, man, another CMS could like really like PR like Trump, WordPress fair, everything in the backend of WordPress requiring a stupid refresh. Oh my goodness. I'm asking Scott a question.

Speaker 2 00:20:10 Um, so I think WordPress core team folks are embracing the blocks API more thoroughly. So we may end up seeing more of the underlying code, maybe not blocks themselves, but like the, like here's how you build a form, that stuff maybe be powered by the react blocks API to underlying things of defining all that stuff. And it's going to present the same issue. They kind of really still need to abstract further, um, to be able to, I just want to throw up a bunch of fields and list, or I just want to add some fields to my block. I just want a couple of fields to show up and send to my service side render, or I just want to like do these couple of things. I don't want to have to build all of the, um, the tooling or, or embed all these different, um, inputs and then try to render it like a normal form.

Speaker 2 00:20:59 Like if you think about the old widgets, when you look at the widgets themselves and the forms they used to have, that's kind of where we're at right now with, with the block editor, um, you still have to render your form into your block inspection settings in the sidebar, and you still have to render all these different things and, and you have to process your saves and you have to handle, what are you going to render on the front end? And all these things are, are very much not abstract. Well, so, uh, I mean, they're abstracted to the point. You can use them dynamically, but you still have to tell it every single part. Like you have to write the music, even though it's going to play the instrument for you, you still have to write all of it. And so if it was abstracted better, you can just say, oh, I want a really nice crescendo here. Um, can you just add that here? I, you D you do crescendos over here and this other part of WordPress. Can you just do that for me h --

-- ere? And so if you could just abstract those things better, you'd have even more adoption and more people utilize. It can allow them people to override it. And then that solves all the other issues of what if we don't want people to have to only do this one way they can do it other ways too. No,

Speaker 1 00:22:03 That was the wrong answer. The right answer is media library. Um, thanks for trying though. I appreciate it. Then BD, a good old media library. That's sad. So that's always there. That's too easy. I know. I know. Um, all right. So back on August 12th, Mark Wilkinson tweeted, he says, quote, I am really beginning to wonder whether having a free plugin in the WordPress plugin repository is actually a good thing or not. The number of people who expect unlimited support for nothing is unsustainable. And because there is something free they don't want to pay for and quote. And in one of the earlier episodes of this show, I pretty much verbatim described the tweets that you would put in that thread. And I said, you know, why not just have the man come on the show? And then he can just read his own tweets on the year to talk about this, but I like the conversation you're having and your new scrubbing, you know, you you've maintained. You have, I don't know how many plugins do you have on the directory, but it's probably quite a few. And I wanted to get your take on, uh, let's start off with maintaining all the multiple plugins. Um, you know, how, how, how feasible has that been for you? How difficult or easy has it been to maintain all those various plugins?

Speaker 2 00:23:22 Uh, it, it's, it's kinda difficult, but, okay. So if you look at it from one plugin perspective, you've got your forums and you've got the support topics in there and you can go in and, and see someone who's posted, oh, I found a bug or whatever. Okay, cool. Uh,

Speaker 1 00:23:37 I think each plugin has its own support for them, right? Yeah. Yeah. So you have

Speaker 2 00:23:41 A process and you go through that. And so if someone finds a bug, you need to go log it. Like if you're like a developer using get hub a lot, you're probably using GitHub for all your bugs and all your contributions and all that stuff. So you're got to direct them, Hey, go to my get hub, Hey, you're going to get hub for bug reporting and stuff like that. Um, and so you're, you're then tracking and get hub, and then you're going to follow that flow for that plugin. And then someone else pings you from the side on a different plugin. Now, if you have multiple plugins, you now have different support forums as well. And each of those plugins have their own support topics of various needs of bugs. And you've got to send them to their other hubs. And in all sorts of things, like if you're, if you're managing all this stuff, it's quite chaotic, especially if you have multiple popular plugins, when you get to that point where you have lots of topics coming in for multiple plugins, managing these things in two different forums, three different, four different, however many plugins you might have becomes.

Speaker 2 00:24:39 Cumbering like, you just, you can't carry all that weight and keep track of where everything is and, and keep, keep things going and, and be able to, to manage all these, uh, plugins.

Speaker 1 00:24:50 Well, yeah, basically, it's basically, if you have one, if you have multiple plugins, basically what a developer has to do is subscribe to out of the RSS feeds related to their forums, and then just monitor the firehose all the time we pick, pick and choose.

Speaker 2 00:25:04 It's very difficult. I tried to do that at some point and, uh, I got too many, I have my email. I, then I was behind on all of them. And now I'm only paying attention to the ones that seem to have crazy words like my site's down. So, uh, I think that that's, that's a challenge in, in what I'm describing is, is once you have two plugins with that kind of activity, even just one plugin with that kind of activity, and you're doing this for free, and you're doing this on the side at home at night, on the weekend or whatever. Now you're thinking about how, how do we even have time for this? How do I, how am I going to get time to finish this thing? Sure. I love building it. I love really doing this really cool stuff. But whenever I got into my plugin development, initially with WordPress, I put these things out because I built them for --

-- clients and I built them and I built it into the project and said, I'm going to build you this thing for money. And then I'm going to release the plugin for everyone else so that they can,

Speaker 1 00:26:01 A lot of plugins are developers scratching their own itch. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:26:05 So that's what I got into it for. But no, one's paying me for updates on these plugins to add more enhancements and features. So now you're in that, that kind of a challenge like, oh, I put this out. Cause I thought

Speaker 1 00:26:17 It would be. Yeah. And here and here I come along here, here I come saying, Hey, this is free. I'm using it on my site. It's very important. It doesn't work. I demand that you fix it. And I demand that you tell me when you fixed it and I want it fixed now.

Speaker 2 00:26:31 And that was three days ago. Since you did not reply to my message on Friday. Exactly. Monday, it's like, by

Speaker 1 00:26:38 The way, check your inbox. Check your text. Messages, texts. No, I'm I'm I'm out there. I'm I'm I'm the user man. He's inside your house. Don't look out your window. Oh geez. No, I haven't. I haven't gone that far.

Speaker 2 00:26:50 If you have a social presence for any of these plugins, uh, project, uh, if you have Facebook, they're going to ping you everywhere. So now you have not just the forums, but you've got your get hub, your slack, your Twitter, your Facebook, your Instagram, your, uh, Tik TOK feeds for all of the crazy things you're posting on what you're doing. Just, you got the, the fire hose is everywhere. And how are you supposed to manage all this stuff with your limited finite resource of your time and your free time

Speaker 1 00:27:19 And the finite resources that were preset or provides

Speaker 2 00:27:23 It? It does.

Speaker 1 00:27:25 Like, what are some of the biggest weaknesses that, uh, that you see as a developer, someone who manages, manages multiple plugins on that work?

Speaker 2 00:27:34 Um, well, first of all, that part, uh, managing all of the forums for all of your plugins is there's no place to go for, uh, like a forum dashboard. Like how are my plugins do?

Speaker 1 00:27:44 Yeah, I don't, I don't think developers can disable that. Actually,

Speaker 2 00:27:48 If we could just see as a plugin developer, all of our, uh, I'm not, first of all, let me preface all this by saying, I love the.org team. I love everything they're doing. I think they're doing awesome. So I'm saying all this by saying, this is how we can get better. This is where we can go. I think we can go to make things better for an experience that if we had the time and the money to invest into the.work part of this would really change things a lot. And so with that said, I think if we had a place for the plugin developers to go and they had a place that said, these are my forum topics for each plugin that are unresolved, here's my action items I need to do. I need to go through these. Okay. I have, here's my, um, uh, recent replies.

Speaker 2 00:28:29 Okay. I've got some more applies to follow up on that. I did not yet reply to. Um, there there's all sorts of things that are integrated in other forum roles, like, like for paid memberships pro and for the events calendar that I've worked with in all other plugin places, there's usually a flow, a status of a ticket is either open. Maybe it's like, it's not yet been replied to active. So I'm in process of working on it or it's waiting on my response pending. I've sent something out to them. And now I'm just waiting for them to hear about, like, to hear back whether or not they resolved it for them or not, and then resolved as like it's totally done. So there's no real flow for us to be able to use that on.org. And so it's really hard to know where all are all of these topics, especially if you're paying someone to do support, like for pods, we have paid contributors that help with support sometimes. And I, if I want to hop in on pods and I see like there's 10 topics and resolved where, what are the statuses of those? I see there's some replies I have to go into each one. And that gets really cumbersome, even higher levels when you have, you know, 50 topics coming in every day or whatever. So that's, that's really a difficult process to manage just the forms alone.

Speaker 1 00:29:40 And I wonder how much of that is tied to limitations of BB press, bec --

-- ause I think the plugin directory is still heavily reliant on or uses a BB press.

Speaker 2 00:29:50 I don't think it's a limitation to be pressed. I think it's, it's a symptom of how we're using it. Uh, I think we could add a dashboard, like, like even, like I said, paid memberships, pro we have like a special kind of unique dashboard where you kind of have like, here's me as a support representative. Here's my active stuff. Here's my, so I click here to go to a specific link that shows me all of the tickets in this status or whatever, and I can go right through and get through them all. Um, and we call them tickets, but they're really forum topics. So I don't really think it's a limitation. I think it's just a matter of someone going out and doing the work and finding a place to do it. And, um, getting people on board to buy in.

Speaker 1 00:30:28 Do you, uh, would you support the idea of being able as a developer to disable the support forums handling that kind of thing on that org and just link people to somewhere else? Something that maybe you managing you can control? I think, I think a lot of people would, but, uh, right now the dot or repo doesn't allow

Speaker 2 00:30:48 It. I think there's a couple of ways at that first fall. We're pressed that org wants you to host your code there and it to be something you're involved with, um, if you're posting code and you don't plan on supporting it and you don't really want to use.org forums or anything else, and you're using it just purely to distribute your code, uh, they've already said an established, that's not what they want. They, you can use get hub for that. Um, it really we're pressed at Oregon is for a, uh, a series of plugins that are out there that are getting updates, uh, that are, um, secure, that are actively supported because people will look at these plugins, they'll say, oh, there's zero out of a hundred topics resolved. This plugin is not what I want to use. I should look at this one, that's got 99 topics out of a hundred resolved. Like you can tell those things when you're just browsing through plugins. So I think that, that it is important to maintain active support on the.org site. And if you can't, like I said, it's kind of like one of the things that you probably should have put it on GitHub and maybe just turned off issues or something like that. Like you can do those things on GitHub. It's just, it's not available for people to discover through WordPress plugin installer.

Speaker 2 00:32:09 But with that said, though, I do, I wanted to quickly add onto that, that doesn't resolve the issue of how do you get the people to be able to have the time to manage their support like that doesn't solve the resource time.

Speaker 1 00:32:24 How do we, how do we get the users to be grateful instead of ungrateful? That's, that's my question, you know, well, and I, and like, it's not all users, but I gotta tell you there's there, there's so many examples out there that exist right now on all these various plugins that are available for free, where users are just demanding that things be fixed, or, you know, there's this expectation that WordPress has and has, has set, set the priority that, you know, WordPress is free and a bunch of people who invest time into it, that's all done for free. WordPress has release for free bug fixes are free. So of course, if you're going to go to work at Oregon, you know, you want support for a plugin or you want to download it, that you, your expectation is it's going to be done for you for free. How do you think that, you know, have we reached a point now, how do we, or should we kind of be things that are done to, how do we change that expectation? Or is it just so set in stone that it's not even worth it?

Speaker 2 00:33:25 I think that's difficult. I think that's, that's very difficult. Um, there's many dimensions there. There's, there's the dimension of, um, the, the fact that we're press story itself is free. Like all of this stuff is on there. It's free. They, they distanced themselves from premium plugins and premium themes. A lot. There's a distinction there that, that, for some reason, these premium things are not what they want to align themselves with because they want it to be all about the free side. Uh, however, you know, automatic gets money from doing wordpress.com. They get money from doing WooCommerce and all of the plugins, extensions and stuff, and they ge --



-- t money from those things. And it's not like premium doesn't work. And it doesn't mean that premium is, is all exclusively evil. I think it's a matter of figuring out where.org aligns itself with sustainability system.

Speaker 1 00:34:24 And in this kind of this, this kind of, uh, references back to Malcolm had a good idea. He was talking about something like profit sharing. There's some,

Speaker 2 00:34:35 It's kind of tricky. I was listening to that conversation and I think it's kind of tricky because the, how do you know who deserves, whatever cut you don't know. So you have to give everyone the same amount, but then how do you know that someone's not doing zero and they're just taking up space to get their cut? Like you don't know it it's, it's one of those really tricky scenarios. Um, I think it has to be one of those kind

Speaker 1 00:34:59 Of introduce money. Now you've got a bunch of slippery slopes. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:35:03 And so, so one idea I was thinking about in those tweets was like, well, what if.org? Like, what would it look like if.org had like a, um, a way you could be a Patron subscriber kind of flake. So I want to just Patron or get hub sponsor. Like you can do these sort of things where you've got maybe like give WP, maybe they install that on, on.org and maybe they use the new PTU, uh, peer-to-peer situation that they've got the new feature that they're adding to give. Uh, that's not yet out, but, um, maybe what if they did that? And then all the things that you could opt into is like from.org or from your plugin, and say, I want to donate to the plugins I have installed, and I want to donate \$10, let them split it. Um, or whatever, or maybe I want to donate to this one, plugin \$15.

Speaker 2 00:35:54 And then these other plugins they can get, they can split a dollar, like that's fine for me, or whatever. You can decide that on your own side of things and.org can facilitate that and distribute it somehow. Like these are really challenges, challenging questions because.org remember is, is part of the foundation, right? It's the nonprofit like legit nonprofit foundation. So how do they build this stuff that supports people that gives the people the money for their own things, if they're a nonprofit. So there's lots of challenges in this whole process of how do we address this. They have to implement something outside of the organization and have.org integrate with it.

Speaker 1 00:36:40 We're just going to have to stick with freemium. That's just the way it is. Everybody just stick with your freemium models. And that's just going to, I'm just going to have to put up with your dashboard notices about going here and going here. And, and, you know, if you want to give me money, then you have to go here. I will say that, you know, the plugin pages do have a donate link. And I think the plugin author or developer does have a say as to where that donate link can point to. Because I think for instance, on pods, you click on donate and it takes you right to the, the PO pod foundation or pod support page, the pods, friends of pods. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:37:15 Our friends at pods, um, donation thing where we try to get people to recurring donate to pods monthly annually, or even one times, uh, just trying to get what we can, um, from, from people to help,

Speaker 1 00:37:29 You know, and it comes down to just trying to get people to realize that time is money and for the plugin author to handle the support burdens and just the behind the scenes managing all of that requires time. And as some point the developer is thinking to himself or herself, uh, you know, I'm spending so much time here and I'm not getting any money. Well, what am I going to do here? Boom, freemium model. You don't want to read something to the effect that, or did they get acquired or, okay. Yeah. That's, that's the next best thing we just happen a lot. In fact, uh, if you look at the popular plugins page on the WordPress plugin repository, there's not too many left on the first page of results that are, uh, available for acquisition or don't, or are not already owned by like automatic,

Speaker 2 00:38:18 Original authors. That's

Speaker 1 00:38:20 Very pods is available. Maybe, I don't know, just throwing that out there, but yeah. Wait to put me on the spot. So, so Malcolm going back to, do you have any thoughts on, um, sort of the, the profit model or profi --

-- t sharing or how we can get maybe authors to still get paid, but maybe not rely so much on the freemium model? Yeah, I think, I think Scott's idea of, I instantly, I thought of like humble bundle, right? Where you kinda, you go and you have these software bundles, um, but let's do it on like the plugin installed screen where you've already installed that you've already picked your software, so to speak, uh, your bundle and, uh, yeah. Give them an option right there to kind of, you know, slide what kind of percentages share they want to give and go ahead and give their money.

Speaker 1 00:39:07 And then it goes right to the authors of those plugins. So, you know, there's, there's definitely some ways that we can make that easy, fun, interesting, and effective. I still don't think it necessarily is going to compensate a lot of the devs for the amount of effort that they put into this project. Um, but I'm sure Matt would say something along the lines of that shouldn't be their primary focus anyways, but, um, we all need to eat. And I think that we need to do better about that. Uh, this is not, uh, a project where in like 30 minutes, you can spin out a popular plugin that doesn't really in sales anymore. And you kind of have to put a bit more effort in it than that. I just wonder if you look at it and you see the word liability come up and he'd just go, Nope, don't even want to get anywhere near it. I mean, come on. How many companies has automatic WordPress foundation? Like how many LLCs have they already spun up anyways? Um, this is not, this is not hard for them. They have lawyers on their teams. They know how to contact lawyers and financial people and they can, if there was the will,

Speaker 2 00:40:04 They could get it done.

Speaker 1 00:40:07 Um, may have profit share, you know, if there's profit sharing going on, I just might hire somebody to create a plugin for me. And then, you know, I'll host it on.org and make sure I'm the author and, and everyone will put the slider to zero. Oh, oh, oh. But then I'll use the slightly, like an Akismet where if you put it on zero, there's a big frowny face. Yeah. There you go. Make users feel guilty.

Speaker 2 00:40:31 It just turns angry. And the cat comes out from behind it and screeches

Speaker 1 00:40:35 Exactly. You get notifications everywhere in your admin. So also other than managing the support aspects of your plug-ins, are there any major, any other major drawbacks or negatives that you can think of that that is right for improvement for the.org experience of managing plugins

Speaker 2 00:40:56 From the plug-in point of plugin developer point of view, I guess you could look at the, uh, the maintaining it, testing it against where press and all that stuff takes work, especially when you consider the, another complication, another wrinkle here of the block experiences react and, um, all of the code that's behind the block editor, it shifts from release to release. Of course, if you're building something for WordPress 5.8, it used to be easy to port like many versions back, but now if you're building something with blocks and you're building something, react supporting anything below 5.4 is kind of difficult in some aspects, a 5.3, if you're lucky, uh, and you start to add a bunch of extra code around it just to have fallbacks and it's, it gets tricky. So it gets dicey. And it, so I think that is a thing that is pretty difficult to keep up with word press and keep up with those, those tech technologies that are getting updated.

Speaker 2 00:41:56 It's like, sure. jQuery was updated like a while back. And that was a kind of a big thing. Right. But, but before that, it hadn't really been updated to a point where it broke a bunch of stuff. It didn't. But now with block editor, we're a year into updates that have already broken a couple of times in some areas. So there's just not compatible with some of the ways you might've called them before. So there there's some trickiness to this experience that we've, we've kind of put upon ourselves and it makes it, um, really hard for developers to maintain those compatibility states, like saying I'm tested with 5.8. Sure. But do I need to go back and test 5.5 to make sure it still works there now? It's it there's a lot of involvement with, with maintaining your, your plugin.

Speaker 1 00:42:43 Is there an expectation there about, uh, keeping compatibility with previous --

-- releases or do you feel any pressure there for keeping compatibility?

Speaker 2 00:42:50 Uh, I think the old way before, like auto updates were in place, I think there was a lot more pressure, um, because you wanted to get people to continue using your plugin and you wanted to get people to see your latest features and get it in front of them. And of course they, weren't all running the latest version of WordPress and it wouldn't be for a while till they update it. So I would update a plugin easily, but I wouldn't update the WordPress installation until I was like ready to have a ton of ton of time to time to test everything else. Um, so I think that's kinda changed now and I think that's maybe good. Uh, so maybe that, that reduces the need to support way back, but it doesn't stop the fact that there are still tons of sites using 5.4 or 5.3, 5.2, et cetera.

Speaker 2 00:43:34 Um, I think that's, that's going to be a challenge to work through, whereas your bar that you're setting for yourself, your plugin and for pods, I had to decide, I think it's probably best three to four versions back to support. But beyond that, it's really difficult, especially now with block editor that you kind of just have to cut the rest loose and say, I'm sorry, it's not compatible. You can't install it. It won't let you because it says it's not compatible with your version. And so you'll see that and you'd be like, oh, I need to update. So there's some things that it kind of sets the motion that helps the process,

Speaker 1 00:44:06 No something that's kind of unrelated a little bit from this conversation. You know, I was thinking about this, uh, fired up WP mainline actually last year would have been, I've been maintaining it this year and I've got a couple of commercial plug-ins and a commercial theme. And, you know, I got to tell you a couple of plugins here, a couple commercial plug-ins here and a commercial theme there. It's like, man, we're pressed as expensive to run. And now you want me to put, possibly donate money to all these various free plugins that are available to me on.org. I don't know

Speaker 2 00:44:41 What if someone is one of those plugins built a premium or freemium version and they, they got those donations too. You know, just, just those kinds of situations where it gets even more murky there, this whole experience of like, how do we help? Don't bring donations to plug in developers. It's really hard. It's super, super hard to figure out. I really hope that it becomes a priority because that's, this is the bread and butter of WordPress. If you don't have the plugin developers and theme developers that are pushing out these free stuff, the free stuff here, then you lose out what makes WordPress that one of the most adopted widely adopted platforms and like, um, dev REL people, um, people that try to build up, um, the actual developers using their platform. I think they would see this as an opportunity that that needs to be addressed.

Speaker 1 00:45:32 This reminds me of my days, my Joomla days, where I got so sick and tired of every time I turned around, I needed features for two months. And every time I turned around, I had to fork out money out of my, out of my wallet. I still had, I still had cash in my wallet in those days. Uh, you know, it's not so much these days, but it, it seemed like every time I needed features, which I felt like should have been baked into Juma, I had to fork over money for it. And it's like, man, I can't stand to use a platform where I got to pay for every feature I want in this. And I really hope, I don't think we're pressed. We'll get to that point. Cause there's just, there's thousands of plugins and there's multiple plugins that accomplish the same thing, maybe in a little bit different way. So I don't think that will ever happen to WordPress, but you know, it, it can get running. A WordPress site can get expensive pretty quickly.

Speaker 2 00:46:26 Yeah. I mean there's 58,000 or almost 59,000 plugins on.org right

Speaker 1 00:46:30 Now. And that's just the ones that are listed.

Speaker 2 00:46:33 Yeah. That's those are the ones that are selective that, that haven't been delisted or closed.

Speaker 1 00:46:38 Yeah. In fact, uh, if you, I think it's like three months, three to six months or something, and you'll see a little message on that org for the, for the plugin page, it says this plugin hasn't been te --

--sted for, has it been used for this long? And I think after a certain amount of time and actually they get delisted.

Speaker 2 00:46:54 Yeah. They don't really show up in the search, I think at some point. Right.

Speaker 1 00:46:58 Well, I don't know. I, I feel like we've had a conversation here. We've got some ideas. Um, in fact, I don't think I've ever seen a post on the make meadow make plugin blog, asking for ideas or suggestions from the developers on how the, how this experience could be improved, whether it's through financial support or through donation support, or just making it easier to manage your plugin through support. I don't think I've ever seen, uh, like a call request feedback. And if I have, I missed it could have been within the past few years. But, uh, so I don't know there you have it. I, I guess, uh, if you're, there's a freemium model and then there's the hope and pray that you get donations model, which, you know, doesn't work most of the time. I mean, pods is a pretty substantial plugging. It's been around for a long time. And what do you get? You get? It's like what for zero point 14% of donations or something like that? Well, we have

Speaker 2 00:47:59 Over a hundred thousand active installs and, um, we have 140, um, recurring donors, individual. Uh, and so I'm surprised you have that many, I think the vast, the majority of our people that who donate even one time or recurring like annually or monthly, I think almost all of them have used other things like ACF pro or, or types or stuff that they see the money, how much it costs. And they're like, oh, sure, I'll donate. It's worth it to me. I'm saving money. And so they see it from that side. So like really, if you don't, if you don't have competitors that that cost money, they don't see the value in your plugin. I think that's a challenge that will continuously be a problem like positively doing so well because we have premium competitors. I think that's, that's the, one of the reasons why it survived with some donations that, that people are donating because of those competitors. They see how much it does cost to have the things that they want for free.

Speaker 1 00:48:55 And then speaking of cost and money and finances, uh, what's going on with the PA pods foundation. And if people are interested in contributing or being a, uh, a friend of pods, how can they do that?

Speaker 2 00:49:08 Uh, yeah. So you go to a friend's dot pods.io, or go load up the plugin. You'll see the little banner. It says, Hey, we need some money. Um, and the friends of pods, Hey, we've loved you to have some love for you to donate to our site. That'd be great. Um, but the, the friends of pods site goes through explaining kind of what we're doing, what our ethos is, is just trying to help people build stuff. And we just need money to help maintain support, and keep features going out like the react work we did. It costs a lot of money. Uh, react is not simple. It's not easy to, um, to just have a developer go and build this one little thing, like what we did. It was like a salary almost just to have someone do some of the major work. So

Speaker 1 00:49:54 Real, real quick on that. Have you ever have you thought about maybe breaking it down into a post that explains the users and maybe the community, you know, we're free plugin at, this is how much this is, what the work that, that, that made you, perhaps in that you use this as how much it cost us.

Speaker 2 00:50:11 That's a good point. I think that would

Speaker 1 00:50:12 Be something post 2.8

Speaker 2 00:50:15 Thing where we're going to talk about like what went into it, um, and break it down into details. Like here's how much it costs and yeah, it's not pretty, but the thing is that, uh, it's still less than we, we had in sponsorships before. Like it's, it's still not costing more than, um, than it used to cost us to build a bunch of stuff. It's just now we're focused entirely on react. Um, so just this react portion of it really costs a lot. Uh, but I'll definitely write up a post about that. I think that's, that's definitely useful.

Speaker 1 00:50:46 Well, when you do pick me or I'll probably already know about it, you know, me, uh, so, and, uh, the pads foundation, is that still a thing?

Speaker 2 00:50:55 Uh, yeah, so it, it's, it's a, it's not a nonprofit, it's not like a hundred percent nonprofit. The thing is that --

-- doing that is complicated. And when I first filed for the organization, um, originally in 2012, I, uh, didn't go through with the full paperwork to make it full nonprofits. So that's kind of just like, it's kind of an, a middle ground where it's federal versus state, like in the state, they think it's nonprofit and, but it's not, it doesn't get the tax breaks. And in the federal point, they know it's not non-profit. So for tax purposes, it's just a normal, a schedule C Corp or whatever, but, um, it's tricky. So the pods foundation is around, it lives in breathes, and that's the company behind all the donations. When we get donations in, we, um, then send it out to paid contributors who were on the project.

Speaker 2 00:51:45 And then I've got the new thing that I released at the start of the year, which is pods pro by SKC dev it's completely separate. It doesn't take money from the donations, it's its own thing. So whenever you buy that, it goes towards the pro stuff and build some more pro things. You can get a discount if you're a donor to friends upon. So like we try to incentivize becoming a donor of pods itself too. So it's, it's interesting to kind of take it to the next level of beyond just a free plugin and also having separation where things are kind of separated separated to a point where they're both operating on under two different companies and two different structures and two different bank accounts and totally separate finances and all that.

Speaker 1 00:52:27 All right. So with pods pro I have you, uh, does anyone who was using pads right now? Did they know about pads pro because there's a banner in their dashboard?

Speaker 2 00:52:38 No, and I'm not really, I'm having a marketed or promoted it beyond just the few posts I've done on, on the pod site or maybe, um, on

Speaker 1 00:52:48 Twitter. I hear man dismissible, admin notices work really well for upsells.

Speaker 2 00:52:52 I'm sure they do well. Not to be, uh, uh, we're probably topical here is in pods tube. I've adjusted our donor banner to have a little bit of tax with one small link that says, oh, Hey, by the way, we have pods pro, which you might find useful. Uh, but it's, there's no like big image. It's not like you can't dismiss it, all that stuff. Uh, you can just close it when you're using pods and, and move on with your day. But

Speaker 1 00:53:16 Nope, there's no alerts throughout the backend that says, oh, you know, if you really wanted to do this, you could do it with pods pro.

Speaker 2 00:53:23 Yeah. There's no upsells at all. Uh, I tried to avoid that in pods because I don't want it to be, it's not a freemium model, you know, it's not, um, uh, one of those things where you had to pay to get this feature, um, it's more so if you donate to the plugin, you maintain the plugin and it's health long-term. And if you buy pods, bro, you get these other features that are totally separate from pods that don't really belong in pods itself. They're their own like really cool things.

Speaker 1 00:53:51 And I think the people who have, um, donated to pods and even those who purchased prods pro those people probably have a great idea as to what pods is all about. And they're probably really well versed in, uh, you know, to the point where they're investing in your product or investing in what you're, what you're doing, because they believe in the product and they believe in pods and what it's, what it's capable of doing. I think you got those customers that, you know, that they really know who you are, who your company is, what the plugin does, what it's capable of. And there, it's more of like an investment to the whole process.

Speaker 2 00:54:30 Yeah, I think, I think that's true. Uh, a lot of the people that bought pots pro have been friends of pots before. Uh, and we actually got lots of new friends because of pods pro launch. We started seeing some new friends start and then I'd see another email come through, like, okay, they bought pots pro. Uh, and so that that's really cool. That's what I want to see. I want to see more other people like seeing the FA the side of pods pro not being about the money, but being about how do we build something that can help friends of friends, of pods and the whole donation program continue to work and be a benefit, uh, available to you, uh, just by giving you a discount on pots pro

Speaker 1 00:55:08 No, if a few more people, --

-- if, if listeners, if you're listening, I hope you are listening, but if you visit WP mainline.com, click the subscribe link at the top, click on one of the membership levels, send me some money. I'll try to become a front of pods with your money. No, help me help pots. This

Speaker 2 00:55:28 Is funny because I'm, I'm actually a w mainline supporter as well. Uh, but not through friends of odds. It's just through myself. So I will give you money so that, that you can then give money to friends of pods that then I can not make, because I don't make a single dollar off of friends of pods or anything like that. Like, I don't pay myself. I'm not a paid contributor. I'm a free, totally volunteer contributor. Yeah. I'm pushing money around, but I wish it could be all mine, but it's not. I have to pay some really cool people to do some awesome things. Cause I have a full-time job. Pod is not my full-time job. I just do this because

Speaker 1 00:56:03 Yeah. But being a friend of pads, that sounds like a cool title. Sounds like something that sounds like something I'd want to do. Uh, so before we wrap it up here and we get to the surprise and I'm, I'm getting, I'm getting excited here. Uh, Malcolm, any, any last questions or you want to wrap it up here with Scott?

Speaker 2 00:56:25 I'm

Speaker 1 00:56:26 Sure. What kind of pizza do you love? And are you a pineapple on pizza kind of guy or no, man,

Speaker 2 00:56:33 You got all political. All of a sudden, I thought this was like, not that kind of like podcast. Uh, yeah. I love it. If you go to Scott's dot P I Z a, you will see my cheese pizza fan site. It's just a picture of cheese pizza. That's all it is. But, uh, I, one day wish I could open up that's my dream, uh, to open up a pizza Rita that just serves all sorts of different types of cheese pizza. That'd be really cool.

Speaker 1 00:57:02 Why, why are you going to be talking about pizza at this time of day? You're you're lucky I had lunch before the show, but I actually I'm actually not. And a map that was unscheduled by the way. But I, I, I know a guy who that's all he eats is cheese pizza. And if you get any other typing on a pizza, he thinks it's blasphemy me. I'd love topics. I gotta have my veggies on my pizza. And as far, as far as I'm concerned, ham and pineapple go great together and a pizza. And I actually want to try and authentic Hawaiian pizza, spam and pineapple because they do that in Hawaiian. It's actually pretty good.

Speaker 2 00:57:36 Uh, no comment

Speaker 1 00:57:38 Here either. Nope. Hey, guess what? Guess what? I don't need any comments from you too. All right. So, so with that said, Scott has a, uh, you know, this is probably going to be a tradition and this is, this is a really cool thing that he's, uh, following. Actually he didn't volunteer. I voluntold him to do this, but he's got a ukulele and I love the sound of this thing. And we're going to close out the show. You can find the show notes for this episode on WP mainline, you know, the drill folks. I don't need to tell you, but we're going to close out the show with a song from Scott, Kingsley, Clark and his ukulele and Scott, whenever you want, uh, take over the show.

Speaker 2 00:58:17 All right. And I guess so, uh, so I just try to figure out what can I do a song of that is train related. Uh, and I thought of a couple of different ones. I, I wrote a song a while back called main, and it's talking about kind of riding a train and, um, I, but I also like really like this one song and I, I was playing around with it and I changed some lyrics and it's topical to this podcast. So I was like, maybe I should just do that. So I think a will, it's a penny on the train track by Ben Kweller,

Speaker 3 00:58:58 I'm just a penny on the train, track God away from it.

Speaker 2 00:59:03 That's done. Uh, hopefully we can cut this part out. I don't know.

Speaker 3 00:59:12 Um, just depending on the train track, Wayne for my judgment day, come on.org, help plug in devs before we get flattened away. And I wait yeah. Way in gray little snippet there. I thought it'd be cool. Oh man.

Speaker 1 00:59:42 Actually, you know, I glad I was muted cause I was laughing. I was Greek lyrics. Okay. Do you put that together and come on, man. I don't edit the show. We're going to leave it in there. Oh no. Well that's

Speaker 2 00:59:53 Fine. That, that goes perfe --

-- ctly on brand for me because, um, my music it's on, um, soft charisma.com and uh, it, my John rhe is called error folk and it's all about leaving imperfections into things. So that works great. Uh, I'm a big fan of Daniel Johnston and those types of artists who just, just kind of let it out. And if you like it now,

Speaker 1 01:00:18 You can be a big fan of Jeff fro. Cause I just, I believe everything in here for the most part. Let's do it. Alright man. Hey, thanks a lot, everybody for listening to the show, we're going to wrap it up here. Malcolm. Thank you for being here. And uh, we'll talk to you again next week, everybody so long.

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