

-- Speaker 1 00:00:19 Welcome everybody to episode 11 of WP mainline for Thursday, September 9th, 2021. I'm your host, Jeff Chandler. Join my by my favorite Canadian Malcolm Peralta, Malcolm, sir. How are you doing this week? I'm doing well. I'm your favorite Canadian share? Why not? I appreciate that. How are you doing? I'm doing fine. Hey, wait, that's your line? I mean, that's, that's your word? I'm doing okay. Here we are on a Thursday afternoon. It, um, we have a brief reprieve from late summer heat and, uh, it looks like follow the clouds look like fall. I don't know about you, but fall has this distinct kind of look outside. It has its distinct look. It has the smelling of the leaves and everything, and we got the cooler going over the lake. I'm hoping that later on today, I can get up to the lake shore and try and see my first water spot.

Speaker 1 00:01:09 I've never seen a water spot even though I live by the lake. Um, so it'd be really cool to finally get one of those on camera. Hmm. Sounds like a good way to spend your time. Not too bad. Blustery breezy, windy cold fall. Yeah. Sounds great. Right. Sounds like pumpkin spice latte weather. Oh my, but I don't, but I don't treat pumpkin spice lattes. My wife does. I don't, uh, any who we're going to have an awesome guest on today. It's going to be an epic show for stay tuned. But first a WordPress 5.8 0.1 has been released this a minor release squash is 60 bucks and patches three security vulnerabilities. Uh, the three security issues that were addressed where it cross site scripting vulnerability in the black editor, uh, data exposure vulnerability in the rest API. And then there were some fixes that were implemented by updating the low dash library to, uh, to the newest version.

Speaker 1 00:02:06 So they're just implementing security patches from an upstream provider. Uh, and there's also a note that, uh, Evan <inaudible> and Steve Henty, uh, received appraise for responsibly reporting security vulnerabilities that were reported during the WordPress five point beta testing period. Uh, so they were fixed prior to release. So I don't even know if we even knew about that until this post, but uh, thank you to everybody who practices responsible disclosure in terms of security vulnerabilities with WordPress and this release through there's 60 bug fixes. But two notable bug fixes that I noticed is that, uh, when WordPress five point was released, uh, folks noticed that in the bundle themes notably 20 10, 20 11, 20 12, the black patterns, that PHP file was calling for the style sheet directory instead of the template directory URL, which was causing issues with child themes that has been addressed. So child themes who want to take advantage of block patterns with those themes should be able to do so without any issues.

Speaker 1 00:03:12 And the other one, which I think is, is a pretty big change for a lot of people, is that the number of items that are displayed at once and the media library has been increased from 40 to 80. So if, uh, one of the main components of criticism and feedback I saw afterwards was 5.8 was released, was adding the media library, the infinite scroll sort of disappeared. And it was all in the changes were all in, uh, to try and increase the user experience. And it wasn't as accessible as it could be. So now, uh, at that point you could load a 40 images, but if you wanted to see a lot of images, you would have to click the load button a little more button, a number of times. So what they did is they found a middle ground and they've increased the number from 40 to 80.

Speaker 1 00:03:59 So we'll have to see how that works out, but I think that should decrease the amount of times you end up having to click the load more button. I, I never really have to see that many items on a WordPress media library page, but, uh, we'll, we'll have to see how that works, but the nice thing I didn't even have to worry about, I don't even worry about, I don't even push the update button on my work percent anymore, unless it's a major version. I ended up getting an email later on. It says your site has been upgraded to WordPress 5.8 0.1. I'm like, oh, sweet. You know, I didn't even have to do it. Yeah. I think that is one of the cool things about this whole thing. And they back and forth to these security fixes for WordPress five dot four all the way up through five dot eight.

Speaker 1 00:04:40 And so that meant a --

-- couple of sites that I had on five.seven, still waiting for the 0.1 release of five dot eight automatically got the security fixed before I even had a chance to upgrade to five.eight.one. So, um, I'm very happy with their ability to back port a lot of these fixes. I think that's a, it's a really great feature that the community continues to put effort towards. Um, and I don't know of many other pieces of software that, um, back forth security patches to so many previous version releases. Yeah. And I don't know when they made the change, but I'm glad they don't back port the patches back all the way to when automatic updates was at WordPress three point something. I know they used to backport them all the way back to WordPress three. And they finally changed that because, I mean, it was just ridiculous.

Speaker 1 00:05:23 It got to a point where, you know, we have, we need to, we need to get real here and cut this off at some point, for sure. Just a couple of major versions back. And uh, Hey, so there's something new going on over there at gravity forums. Yeah. So I'm, I'm super pumped about this. Um, it's funny. It kind of ties into, uh, your mention of Steve Henty. Uh, he works for rocket genius. He's one of the developers at rocket genius. So both of our stories in a way have rocket genius mentions in them and that interesting. Um, and this one is that a rocket genius and slash gravity is launching their own YouTube channel. And it's not tutorials on gravity forums, which, I mean, I would have assumed it was going to be, um, but it's actually going to be a WordPress lifestyle, YouTube channel called input.

Speaker 1 00:06:09 And, uh, I'm actually kind of looking forward to seeing how this goes. Uh, they they're, they're, they're a big company now. I, I can't even imagine how many people are on their team. They're not very good at exposing those kinds of things. But when I watched the trailer for it and saw the faces of the founders, Carl, Alex, and Kevin, I was just so stoked. And I was like, oh my goodness, it's gonna be so great. And they're working on interviews and discussions with different founders and staff, and I'm just, I'm stoked. I'm excited. I can't wait until it comes out. Yeah, it makes sense. To me, it says input is hosted by James Duro. A veteran of the WordPress community has traveled the world on behalf of Invado connecting with WordPress users, theme, employee and creators before joining rocket genius incorporated in 2020. And it says that input was a recognition that the WordPress academy is more than just core plugins and themes.

Speaker 1 00:06:59 It's about people with incredible stories, doing amazing things, across many different industries, hopefully along the way, we'll discover new ways to solve problems and create opportunities with WordPress. Uh, and that's a quote by jeans. And I think if it's anything, like I remember back in the day and vAuto had these videos like, uh, seller spotlights and those, they were really cool because he got an in-depth look into the lives and the work ethic and how these people were making, you know, make that achieve that million dollar seller status on Envato. And some of those videos are really cool. So if that is anything to go by, uh, this new podcast, if they're starting a YouTube channel is going to be really cool and it's probably going to be video based. So that's, that's, uh, that's going to be really cool as well to actually, uh, put some faces behind the names.

Speaker 1 00:07:50 Yeah. You don't get to see the founders of gravity forms very often. You don't get to see the founders of a lot of these companies very often. So it will be for sure. Nice to see some, yeah, by the way, uh, refugees, ink makers of gravity forms, they were founded in 2007, so 14 years. And they're still going strong. Yeah. Strong is still pumping out updates. Yep. And how do I know? Because I use gravity forums and there used to be a time when you were really, you actually worked for a raggy genius for a while. There I did. Yeah. For about two years. Oh, gee listeners will remember that, man. Those were the days. Huh? Uh, let's see. So that's about it. There's some other WordPress news, but we'll probably get into that next week. Uh, how about we move on to our guest? Our guest is awesome. She is, she is awesome. As a person. Her name is Andrea Middleton. And I would say that she is a community advocate and so forth for automatic, but sh --

-- e's not going to be working for automatic anymore. She is moving after 10 years and she is taking on a community role at Reddit's. Andrea, thank you very much for being on the show. It's like a, I don't know, it's kind of like our last two raw.

Speaker 2 00:09:11 Thank you for having me, Jeff and Malcolm. Um, yeah. Jeff, I think your show was the first, uh, pod best I've ever been on back in the day. Yeah,

Speaker 1 00:09:22 Yeah, yeah. This isn't your first time on the show, but I had you on a two or three times on, on the WordPress, a weekly show effect one of those times, um, you know, we're just sitting back having some laughs talking about WordPress and I think you were sipping on some wine.

Speaker 2 00:09:36 I was having a delicious sparkling wine and yes, I agree. It is my favorite kind. So yeah. Good stuff. I, it is noon where I am right now. So I am, I'm not sure at this time, but soon enough, soon enough,

Speaker 1 00:09:55 That'd be fun. I mean, in your position, you spent 10 years in the WordPress space as a paid contributor and worked on a lot of different facets. But before we get into all of that, I want to get your take on the response that your tweet has received. I'm very curious. Some you wrote this tweet and quote says, thanks for a great 10 years, a WordPress next month. I'm stepping away from protruding the WordPress and joining the community team at Reddit. I'll miss you be good. Now it has 290 likes, 22 retweets, a lot of quote tweets, and a lot of people responding to this news. And I think you've just a perfect featured image for your, for your blog posts, because it just looks like you're giving us all off one last big hug. Like you just you're hugging us and saying, I'm gonna miss you all. And I think it was just the perfect feature damage, but how based on the responses that you've received from everybody, how, how, how have you taken it? How, how have you emotionally responded to that?

Speaker 2 00:10:53 You know, it's been really, uh, it's been really touching and really humbling to hear from so many people that I had an impact on their lives, like impact is what drives me, um, supporting people and unlocking their potential and helping them find their way is what gets me out of bed in the morning. And so like knowing, hearing from so many people that like talking to me or working with me or something that I did like helped them find their way or, or grow in some way, um, in WordPress or elsewhere, uh, it's been pretty, it's been a little overwhelming, but in a good way, like it's just kind of given me the chance to reflect and really feel grateful, um, for the opportunity to have touched so many lives over such a long period of time. And, and, uh, yeah, it's, it's great. It's great to hear the nice things about you, Jeff. I highly recommend it. So yeah, it's been really great.

Speaker 1 00:12:14 I mean, I mean, one of the responses you received was from, uh, uh, Tova DeRosa and he says, quote, the WordPress community wouldn't be anything like what it is today without all of your hard work, dedication, and willingness to make hard decisions. And without that community, I wouldn't be the person I am today. Thank you so much. You dear wonderful person, you end quote by toe for it. No, you're responding to it. I was going to make you cry, but you just received such an outpouring of support and well-wishes and uh, I mean, Hey, let's face it. You, you, you made an incredible impact on a lot of people in 10 years.

Speaker 2 00:12:50 I, you know, I sure did try. Um, it looks like I accomplished some of what I wanted to do, which was also feels great, you know, like I like numbers. So decade feels like a good amount of time, um, to like spend on something and then shift to a new, exciting challenge and like, um, but yeah, like it, it does. And I always felt like, yeah, I did some stuff that I really wanted to do. And I set some stuff up that I really wanted to see set up. And, uh, but to hear from other people that like, they, they felt it, my thought too feels, feels great.

Speaker 1 00:13:31 Well, let's kind of start at the beginning here. How did you, what's your WordPress origin story? How did you get involved? How did you initially get into this position?

Speaker 2 00:13:40 Well, I, um, I had been a WordPress users since I want to say about 2006. Is that right? That's right. Um, when I started a blog about wine, it's --

-- called wine scamp.com and, uh, it is still around, although I rarely blog on it. Um, but if you would like to read it, read my wine, uh, notes and, and reviews. Uh, it is still up and running. Um, and, uh, I chose WordPress because a dear friend of mine, um, Jen Milo Jane Wells at the time was, uh, had recommended it. And, uh, my husband was also like, yeah, open source is best. WordPress is so cool. Um, and I was like, okay, cool. Well, that's, that's, you know, the it's unanimous, um,

Speaker 1 00:14:37 Open source was, or what it was all about,

Speaker 2 00:14:39 Not one bit. And it seemed pretty weird to me. Like I was like, okay, sure. That's how it works. Got it. Um, and then fast forward a few years, um, and I, uh, learned of an opportunity, uh, through my friend, Jen, uh, to, uh, take a role at automatic that was focused on kind of implementing a new program that she and Matt were starting, um, to, uh, support word camp organizers, and to, um, make word camps a more consistent experience for participants, um, and, and sponsors and speakers and everybody. So, um, again, that was a real leap of faith for me. I had known gem for many years, like when we were both in our twenties and working for Greenpeace as canvassers, um, back in the nineties in Portland, just to date myself. Um, and, and she was like, no, no, no. You'll like, it, it's a lot of smart people. It's really cool work. You're well qualified for it. And I'm like, all right, well, I'll try. Um, and she taught me, um, PR everything I knew, like she spent a couple hours almost every single day for about six months with me just like downloading her brain into mine. Um, and I, uh, got started and I was the person who kind of took the outline of a program and then applied it to the existing, uh, state of the WordPress community and event organizers at the time. And that was in 2011.

Speaker 1 00:16:27 What a program that turned out to be with the global sponsorships, um, or camps, how they became, how they are, the deputies, the, the things involved, the planning. Um, what, what are some of the biggest challenges you encountered over the years, specifically with regards to event planning or event organization with the word camp, uh, situation, or even just open source and WordPress in general?

Speaker 2 00:16:57 Well, I mean, there's like personal challenges and professional challenges, right? Like, so from a professional challenge standpoint, um, the word quest that I, that, that I joined, you know, uh, or, you know, the, the community that was in 2011 was really different from what it is right now. I mean, none of it's core, but I mean, you were there Jeff

Speaker 1 00:17:26 Been there, done that and I'm, and I miss it to be honest.

Speaker 2 00:17:31 Well, you know, there are, there are certainly like it, I wouldn't say that I rarely miss it, but like it's Exactly. I was just about to say that yeah, like it was, it was, there was something that was comfortable about having a small group where you kind of felt like you knew everybody. Right. Um, and that it was an, and it was then, and it continues to be highly connective connected ecosystem of people. Um, but like, it was pretty wild, like people, uh, uh, communicated in a very brash pretty confrontational way regularly. Um, uh, certainly core was pretty wild and WordPress trader who was exceptionally wild

Speaker 2 00:18:31 Yeah. And wrote them, um, and like, yeah. And, and it was a time when, like there was it, I frequently refer to it as the wild west, you know, like there weren't really any boundaries there weren't clear expectations, clearly stated expectations. Like this is what it means to be a productive, successful, helpful contributor to WordPress's growth and success. Um, and what, one of the things that I did is I, I was kind of a pioneer in helping word pressers, understand like, why it was important for them to maybe not have full control of everything they did when representing the WordPress, uh, project and the WordPress brand, but to like learn the ways that WordPress needed them to work on its behalf. Um, and that did involve setting some limits. Um, and, uh, I don't know if you've noticed y'all, but open source people do not like being asked to change, uh, what they're doing. Um, and so a fair amount of, uh, negotiation and, uh, just going back and forth. And I won't say necessarily arguing, but definitely disagreement, um, and --

-- conflict. And yeah, there were, there were,

Speaker 1 00:19:57 Was this around the time where we were, where there was discussions going on about team reps in certain levels and titles and responsibilities, and what those entailed in terms of

Speaker 2 00:20:06 That was even before that, that was 2012. We didn't have a team rep system until like the end of 2012, early 2013. Um, yeah, I mean, this was back when people were like, well, what's the foundation anyway, and who owns WordCamp and how can you tell us what to do with the word, How dare you tell me whether or not I can use the term word camp and be an organizer or not, and stuff like that. Um, and, and, and a lot of GPL, uh, arguments too, right? Because, uh, we had that, that expectation that if you took on the role of a leader in WordPress, by organizing an event or speaking on behalf of the, of the project, as a speaker at a WordCamp or whatever, um, that your derivatives would be a hundred percent GPL. And so I ended up talking to a lot of different companies And it's tricky. It was, you know, I, I, again, I didn't understand like the GPL, wasn't something that I showed up here understanding. Right. Um, and so like being the one who invited people into WordPress by respecting license and talking to them about exactly what that meant and what that did for WordPress. Um, yeah. Those, those weren't always easy conversations. So, yeah,

Speaker 1 00:21:31 I, I know there was a, an issue at one time where speaking to the GPO where somebody, I believe, uh, had a business on Envato, uh, and there was selling themes. And because Envato, didn't give them an opportunity to license their products as 100 to 100% GPO. They couldn't sponsor even speak in a word camp. And I know that was a big issue at that point.

Speaker 2 00:21:57 What year was that? When was that like 13? No, that was 15. That was 2015.

Speaker 1 00:22:03 What I will say that Invitae the, uh, the thing, the theme, the theme, business section, they do give authors now the ability to sell their works as like the GPL.

Speaker 2 00:22:16 And that's, that's something that like I am super excited about as far as like the, the work that I've done here in WordPress, um, is that like, by, by being someone who, who helps us keep accountable to the things that we believe, like everybody needs to embrace the WordPress license to help WordPress grow, even when we fight, even when we disagree, like really good things come up, that even though we don't enjoy the conflict, you know? And so like that was a huge step forward in, um, when Envato agreed to allow theme and plugin authors using their, their platforms to embrace the WordPress license, the way that WordPress needed them to, like, that was a real step forward in the freedom of the user as well.

Speaker 1 00:23:15 And speaking of, of conflicts, and that's something you kind of addressed in one of the recent blog posts you published on, uh, an open source or letters to an open source, contributing any talk about, uh, uh, conflicts or criticism, you know, w what's some of the advice you would have to people who are involved in open source and when it comes to criticism?

Speaker 2 00:23:40 Well, I actually today published a whole set, uh, recommendations for people who are critic who want, who criticisms are motivated by a desire for change. Um, and I, I watch it's dead if you want it to be for you, Jeff, you can have it. Um, I wrote it for anybody who, and I think it's important to distinguish between like, people who are, who are complaining about something, because they maybe want to say, Hey, I don't like this, or, Hey, anybody else hate this too? Let's be friends. Or like, Hey, I've had a bad day. So now I hate everything. And this is just right in front of

Speaker 2 00:24:28 Me too. Like yesterday I read I've done all of those within recent memory, but like, there's a difference. I think with the folks who are saying like, Hey, this isn't good. And I think it should change. So I'm going to share with you my observations about this bad thing. Um, those are the people that I want to like, help them understand what I have observed at least in the last decade of the most effective ways to make that change possible. Um, and so, yeah, that article I published over on Andrea Middleton thought blog today, um, covers things like, um, first of all, like knowing what the goals of the organization --

-- are. So that instead of, uh, saying things like, well, this is just the right thing to do in a global organization, like WordPress, where like the right thing to do, people's sense of what the right thing to do really varies based on culture and background and goals and stuff like that.

Speaker 2 00:25:37 I recommend that people tie their recommendation to the goals of the organization, right? So instead of saying like, this is the right thing to do because of morality or ethics, talk about how this is the right thing to do, because it will help WordPress achieve its goals, um, because it will help the open source project itself get farther down the road toward where it's trying to go. Um, and that's a really effective way to help, um, clear the barriers and also tie the change that you are recommending to what the organization wants anyway. Um, so that's one of many.

Speaker 1 00:26:17 And when you wrote that, when I was reading your post about open source contributors and, and ways to look at criticism, it reminded me of all those years. I spent writing for WP Tavern and all those times where I would write about or publish an article about a feature I didn't like, or a decision that came to be that I didn't agree with. And I would share my thoughts on, maybe it should have been this way. Maybe we should do things this way, or this is broken, or I'm encountering an issue as anyone else that kind of made issue. And I would try to write my posts in a way where it was constructive feedback or constructive criticism and try and base my opinions and whatnot to where it just, wasn't just me complaining. But I will say that some of the most satisfying aspects of my work on the Tavern was when I would write a post like that and a member of the core team or somebody who was close to the project who had the ability to, to create progress, were getting in touch with me either through the comments or through a back channel.

Speaker 1 00:27:18 And it would say, Hey, I think you've got a point here. Let's see if we can't work on something. And they were, they were willing to look at that criticism and respond in a way to where we're both had a conversation. And we both started collaborating on a solution. And sometimes those solutions would get into core to benefit everyone. And it was so satisfying to go through that process. And, and by the way, one of the things I wanted to thank you for over the years is for being, you've always been like this person who is understanding, you've always listened. You've always been approachable. And I got to say, I've really appreciated that over the years.

Speaker 2 00:27:57 Thank you, Jeff. I, I really, I am so excited to hear you say and share with other people the sense of satisfaction and almost exhilaration that comes from like sharing critical feedback and seeing it make an impact.

Speaker 2 00:28:17 That's one of the things that I think is so, uh, distinctive and marvelous about open, like nobody ever, nobody goes, wakes up one day and says, ha ha, I'm going to break the internet for 42% of the people who have websites. You know, like everybody who works on WordPress is trying to make things good people. And, but like, we don't know what we don't know. Right. And with, uh, with a footprint like WordPress, like with the enormous scope of, and, and the variety of the ways people use it, it's, it's so important that we listen to the people who are using it and finding problems because like, you know, we want to build it for everyone. So we have to hear back from everyone to find out what they struggle with and what they find fantastic. And so, like, I, I, I know better than, or just as well as anyone that like constantly hearing criticism is tiring and exhausting, but, um, I, I really relish the opportunity to hear what other people think about the work, because if I don't get any reflection back, I don't have a lot of confidence that the work was good.

Speaker 2 00:29:53 You know, I need that criticism to, to validate, um, and, and kind of give me, it's kind of like, like radar, you know, like you need multiple, uh, points of reference so that you can get a good image of the thing that you're working on.

Speaker 1 00:30:11 Well, there used to be a time way back in the early days of WordPress, where if you needed criticism, Malcolm, he, he had a plenty of it to give. Yeah, I was, I was a bit of a curmudgeon toward press, mostly just --

-- because I wanted to make sure that, uh, the things were being thought through in a, in a wider way. And, uh, especially when it affects your livelihood, you don't want to just kinda let it go in, in random directions. You really want some, some conservative thought and effort put towards making sure it's right. So, yeah, I don't know if anything, I did ever had any real true impact on it, but I, I certainly love to, to, to talk through why I thought something was wrong or should be different. And even if I didn't have the best solution, it was always fun to do. So. One of the things that really stood out to me, uh, in your post was, uh, you said, uh, I will take a break from contributing to WordPress until the end of the calendar year, if not permanently. And that really, that word permanently really hit me hard. Like, wait, why, why permanently? Why is that something that is on the plate for you? Why do you feel like that is the direction you might head?

Speaker 2 00:31:21 Oh gosh. Well, you know, I don't know about you too, but my days are exactly 24 hours long. Um, and I have two amazing kids and a great family and, um, I, uh, work hard and I never want to promise more than I can deliver. Sometimes I do promise more than I deliver, but I try to avoid it. And so it's entirely possible that with, um, that once I make this change and settle in that I, I feel called to take my volunteer time to maybe another organization and how, and provide my support and, and apply my skills there. Um, I, I don't think I will ever stop blogging with WordPress and I will never stop loving the people that I love here. Um, but I don't know for sure whether, um, WordPress will feel like the most important place to put my time energy. Um, once I've kind of,

Speaker 1 00:32:43 No, no it's going to happen. She's going to be at a community role at Reddit. She's going to have this inclination to go on the slack. Maybe not, but more maybe the WordPress track or maybe one of the WordPress make blogs and immediately the song, let it go by frozen is going to be playing in her head. This is a weird choice. Jeff, just let it go.

Speaker 2 00:33:05 I love to let it go. Um, also there's nothing wrong with people moving on. You know, like if, if my, if, if that, if this week on Twitter has taught me anything, it has taught me that people have been learning from me. And so, like, I would argue that, um, my coming back could conceivably be more, do more harm than it would good because like, when you, when, when you have a big forest and you have a huge tree in that forest, and I will admit, like, I have been a major kind of, uh, a big tree in the forest of WordPress for a long time. But when that tree comes out, those the plants and the shrubs and the little saplings underneath, you know, they really grow like that's their chance to shine, you know? Um, and if, and I don't ever want to come back and like take away someone else's opportunity to grow the way I had the opportunity to grow and that, you know, I don't want to take away people's opportunities. Um, and certainly not the opportunities that I had and I really benefited from,

Speaker 1 00:34:31 Yeah, I can appreciate that sentiment. And I think that that's a really good, good way of looking at it. Um, and a really healthy way of looking at it. I don't think it's going to change, people's sentiments about you personally, but, uh, you know, I think everyone's still going to be clamoring for you to, you know, continue to make your impacts in whatever way you feel called to do. Um, but, uh, you know, I hope it won't necessarily be permanently that word, man, of all the words. I don't know why it just stuck out to me. Um, and of course, I mean, secondarily to that, secondarily to that, like, I mean, you've been working with the mothership, so to speak, a lot of people in the WordPress space would, would love an opportunity to work with automatic. And I'm sure they'd be equally interested to know, like, what are you going to miss most about your time there?

Speaker 2 00:35:18 Well, gosh, um, you know, when Jen was telling me I had been hired and she was kind of like, I was maybe my first week or something and she was like, all right, so some things you need to know about automatic. And one of the things that she said really stuck with me, and she's like, you know how you've been, like one of the smartest people in any company that you've ever worked in. And I wa --

-- s like, well, that's salty, but yes. Um, we didn't say salty back then. It was a different sign. I'm like, well, okay. Yes, fine. Um, yes. I have always been one of the smartest people in the room. She was like, yeah, exactly. Um, everyone at this company is that person, like one of the smartest people that have, that they've ever worked with before. Um, and I was like, okay, well that is incredibly intimidating, second guessing myself.

Speaker 2 00:36:21 But, uh, but yeah, like I got to say, it's been such a joy to work with so many incredibly smart, incredibly talented people who, um, just really show up with a whole heart who really argue and rejoice, um, with, with so much sincerity. Um, and you know, it's, it's a company that really embraces the values of open source. Um, and, and one that I think in a really positive way, like spreads those values in to other technology companies. Like I think the people who have done well in WordPress and then move on or done well at automatic and on take some of the fantastic components of open source culture that also are underpin automatic culture, um, and spread that around the, uh, kind of technology sector. And that's also really, really exciting, like transparency and accountability and like, and, and, and approaching things in a really egalitarian frame of mind, like everybody's opinion matters and they're great ideas can come from anywhere and all that stuff. It's a, it's the kind of thing that makes me really excited to be in an organization. So that feels great to me.

Speaker 1 00:37:59 So, uh, what, what, before we move on to what you're going to be doing at Reddit, uh, just kind of wanted to get your take on we've had the pandemic, we've had the lack of word camps, no more word camps, no more meetups. And what that did was kind of, uh, allowed the, uh, organization team for word camps and events to sort of do a reset and reevaluate things. And I, I found it to be kind of exciting because now maybe this opens up the doors for maybe some new types of events, or maybe we maybe event organizers don't to do things the same way they did before that, like the team I believe was actually encouraging experiments now with be smaller camps. So why now, what, what's your, what's your take on all of that and how the pandemic affected the whole word camp side of things of, of WordPress?

Speaker 2 00:38:51 Um, well, just for the record, we, we have been encouraging experiments for a long time, and I think that the, um, the pandemic kind of took away people's, uh, like it took away the easiness of just repeating the same pattern over and over again. Um, not that organizing or campus ever easy, but, um, following a preestablished format, um, can seem like the best way forward. Certainly if you are resource constrained by people or, or time or whatever,

Speaker 1 00:39:26 And by the way, there's a, there's a lot of people involved in all these different teams to put these processes in place to make it as smooth and easy as possible for potential organizers to put these events together.

Speaker 2 00:39:38 Oh, yeah. Yeah, absolutely. And, and provide mentorship and coaching and support and infrastructural support, operational support, all that stuff. Um, yeah, it has been just freaking hard. Y'all not going to work camps anymore. I mean, I, my family doesn't love me traveling as much as I used to. Um, so like, my kids were like, yay, mommy stays home forever.

Speaker 1 00:40:09 I know Malcolm here, he's just dying to go to a physical, like WordPress meetup or WordCamp something. I can't keep looking at my screen anymore. Guys. I got to do something else,

Speaker 2 00:40:19 Tell you what, like jeepers creepers. And I, like, I knew I've understood for a long time, like what in-person events do for WordPress. Um, but I never thought I would find out what having no in-person events would do to WordPress. Um, and I don't know that we've necessarily found out like the full impact of this, um, change or this, this period. Um, and I don't think we'll really understand it until it's really completely over and we have something to compare it to, but like, yeah, it's been rough. I really miss the, the things that the unblock and the conversations that help spark growth and, and new ideas and creativity and enthusiasm. Like I really miss that kind of, that, that I don't even know what to call it like that, that bump of, of,

Speaker 1 0 --

-- 0:41:23 Well, there's just some about being in person that you just can't get otherwise.

Speaker 2 00:41:27 Yeah, really a lot, you know? And so, um, so I, them, and it kind of kills me that like I am leaving before they come back. Um, and, um, I, you know, I think it's been really interesting to see, like I love how online events open the door to participation, um, globally. It's super, super exciting for me to see like people coming together, um, from all of the world in smaller groups, um, and talking through interesting WordPress problems and opportunities and stuff like that. I'm still like so excited for the potential of what, uh, learned about wordpress.org brings to work. Um, like there are so many people right now who are looking to change careers or grow in their WordPress careers, uh, shift over to a WordPress career, uh, who want to like express themselves and need, um, a canonical source of truth and training.

Speaker 2 00:42:41 And I really think that learned that wordpress.org can be that place. Um, and so like the potential, there is just astounding. I'm excited about how the pandemic kind of accelerated that. Um, and then, yeah, we're going to have to slowly but surely find our way back to in-person events. What I hope doesn't happen is I hope we don't get stuck in a <inaudible>, you know, like I hope I ha I, there will be a desire to like, redo to undo as they say, right. We'll want to like, have exactly the same kind of event so that the pandemic is wiped from our minds or something to make it, so it never happened, but that's never happened. And, uh, that's a very typical, predictable human desire and it doesn't work y'all, it just doesn't work. So what I really want us to do is leap ahead, not look backwards and,

Speaker 1 00:43:44 And embrace this as a unique opportunity to explore,

Speaker 2 00:43:48 To shift, right. And to try out some different stuff and to get back to the basic things that our in-person events do for us, connecting us and inspiring us, allowing us to contribute longer and better. And with the deeper understanding, like that's just, there's so much opportunity to do fun, new, exciting things, and to play around a little. Um, but I, I have go ahead.

Speaker 1 00:44:17 No, I was gonna, I was going to ask you how well do you think the system has worked out over the years where we start off with the grassroots efforts of meetups. So meetups in local areas, local cities, towns, what have you, and then it just, boom, translates into you. Get enough. People want to meet up. Now, you've got a word camp we're kept organized and I have a big conference. How well do you think that system has worked over the years?

Speaker 2 00:44:39 I think that's a really sustainable model. I think it's great. I think that like you can make it, uh, it, it's a pretty, uh, flexible model. Like you can have, uh, just one little once a month, um, meetup and then have a one word camp for year. You can have like a meetup with a meetup group with like multiple events series and lots of different organizers, and then maybe a bigger, more, you know, more programming packed a word camp every year. But yeah, I think it's a super solid model and I'm really, I'm really happy with it.

Speaker 1 00:45:22 And I think people may still have it stuck in her mind that when you, when they hear word camp, they're talking about hundreds of people, it doesn't have to be hundreds of people. It can be just a hundred people, as long as it's fulfilling the needs of the local community in that area or that space. That's truly what, what work camps were at at the heart of it were really what, what they were all about. You know, it's, it's a community thing. It's a, it's a community event for the community.

Speaker 2 00:45:48 Yeah. It's, I mean, our minimum viable product for word camp was always 50 people in a room all day talking WordPress. Um, and I mean, and that, that doesn't, that doesn't mean speakers and conference, uh, microphones and table in. So, you know, that doesn't mean fancy lunches or fancy after parties or anything. That's just people getting together to talk about WordPress. Um, I mean, I will say, like, I would feel a little bit more comfortable if as we're coming back, it's like 50 people. And then in a park the day jumping WordPress or something, you know, I think there's, uh, you know, and as we navigate, you know, what is safe and when, as we --

-- start coming back in person, um, I think there's also like great opportunities for people to explore new formats and new like, uh, venues and stuff like that. Um, that also, I think could be a real spark of creativity for the community.

Speaker 2 00:46:54 Um, but I wanted to say, like, I've been thinking about this a lot ever since the pandemic started. And we we've kind of had for very good reasons, um, kind of a lull in contributor activity, which makes all the sense in the world because like parents have their kids at home, which they never did. I'm like people caring for relatives or isolated or, you know, having mental health challenges, which heaven knows. Like they're all the reasons in the world for like withdrawing from the activities that used to be a large part of your life. So I don't, I definitely don't begrudge anyone that I, I never want anyone to prioritize WordPress over their own health or the health of their families. Like that just it's the wrong thing to do. Um, that said we have had a lot of people kind of move away from the project and I hope we'll have a whole bunch of people come back to the project at some point.

Speaker 2 00:47:52 And, and I am aware that that process can be jarring because like the WordPress, you come back to, isn't going to be the same WordPress that you left. Right. Um, and not just because of WordPress, but because you have changed in that time period. Right? So like the pandemic changes you and your perspective shifts. And so things look different to you, even if they are the same, but then of course, everybody else is changing too while you're changing. Right. And so, like, what I'm hopeful of is that people, as they kind of come back and get more involved in WordPress, as things ease and, and they find like more financial security, more time, whatever, uh, kind of frees them up to participate in our huge volunteer community that they come back with an open mind, as well as an open heart. And then, you know, they may fit in a different place than what they men where they fit before. But it's such a big project. Like you can find a place that you feel good about contributing and WordPress. There are gazillions of teams to participate in and contribute to, um, and a lot of really exciting things happening,

Speaker 1 00:49:21 Ways

Speaker 2 00:49:22 That so many, yeah. That's the official number.

Speaker 1 00:49:28 Uh, so what, uh, Reddit, you know, it's a site, I've brows, the there's a sub Reddit for practically everything. Um, what

Speaker 2 00:49:44 Practically everything.

Speaker 1 00:49:45 So now you're going to be working for one of the top websites online and the internet. Uh, what, what is it about Reddit that you decided to take? W w w what kind of challenges, uh, are you hoping to get involved with over there as a member of the community team?

Speaker 2 00:50:04 Yeah, I, um, I am going to be working with the people on the community team who are, um, coordinating with the folks over, uh, creating new features at Reddit. So, and our goal is going to be to help, um, ensure that the, the community is well-represented and decisions made about features and product, um, over at Reddit. And that when, um, when new features are launched, that we help, uh, communicate the, kind of the benefits to the users and the moderators in, um, a way that like really gets across the value of the features that are coming out. Um, and, and what I understand about the Reddit community is it seem, it is, uh, very similar to the WordPress community. Um, we have, uh, people who have a strong sense of ownership who, uh, are passionate communicators, who feel strongly about, uh, what they think is right, who have a strong activist streak, um, and who love their autonomy. Um, and I got to say, I really love working with an engaged and passionate community like that. I, I love people who, for what they believe in. I thought you said,

Speaker 1 00:51:45 Oh, well, I mean, from an outsider, looking in, I look at Reddit and you see other subreddits and see all the comments, and it's just meme central over there. And I mean, oh boy, that seems like quite the challenge to get involved with the community team and try and get, try and get all those people who just post memes and quotes and stuff, all data, how boy, I, I don't, I don't know how you're going to do it, but, but you'll do it. I know you'll do it.

Speaker 2 00:5 --

-- 2:13 I don't know how to do anything either. I, I, uh, try to show up and listen hard and, uh, reflect back what I'm hearing and then, you know, help, help people communicate clearly. And, uh, find consensus.

Speaker 1 00:52:34 I mean, from, from your perspective, is Reddit more than just what we see in the comments. It's got it.

Speaker 2 00:52:41 I mean, yeah. I, you know, I honestly, I don't, I'm gonna be finding out like, I, what I know is that the people that I've talked to there and the community professionals that, um, the I'll be working with, there are some people that I have admired and followed the progress of for years. Um, so some just really top tier people, not that we don't have top tier people in WordPress, like, I, I will say it until I'm blue in the face. Like the leaders we have in WordPress are some of the best leaders out there. Um, and you know, that doesn't mean that there aren't lots other people to learn from. So I'm super excited to work with, uh, a new set of professionals who like care deeply about people. I mean, the, the mission of Reddit is making community building possible and easy. And like, that is my whole thing, you know, is, is, uh, building community. So it feels like a really good fit from working with community organizers around the world, at WordPress, to working with people, you know, who are passionate about building community online at Reddit. So,

Speaker 1 00:54:02 Well, I think I, I think I speak for a lot of people where Reddit gets an incredible asset in Andrew Middleton. They've picked up a, an awesome superhero. And if, if 10 years from now five or 10 years from now, community, or Reddit is just this awesome community of positive folks, where all you see is this positivity and everybody's working together to solve problems. I think you're going to play a large part in why that is.

Speaker 2 00:54:28 So Jeff, I will, uh, record this and remember it, my darkest days thinking, I don't know how to do anything anymore.

Speaker 1 00:54:40 I mean, you say that, but you've been in WordPress for 10 years, but not knowing what you're going to do or how to do anything anymore. That's probably going to be one of the most exciting things you're looking forward to is just a whole new opportunity to learn.

Speaker 2 00:54:52 Yeah. I love learning. I really love learning. And that's one of the things that I've loved about WordPress for so long is like that there is something new for me to learn every day. Um, and that's what I'm excited about in this new challenge as well is a whole new library of things to learn. Um, I can't wait to crack open some books,

Speaker 1 00:55:16 No Malcolm, any, anything you want to add here before we wrap it up? I mean, I'm kind of bummed that she's not joining the anti evil operations group, but other than that, no.

Speaker 2 00:55:28 What is their jobs for it? Could you share it Melbourne?

Speaker 1 00:55:32 It actually is one of the business groups that read it. And when I was reading through the different business groups that they had, it just made me laugh so hard to see that they actually had an anti evil operations group

Speaker 2 00:55:41 That, uh, that says it all that it's really exciting. Maybe I can get transferred.

Speaker 1 00:55:49 Uh, awesome. Awesome. So, Andrea, I want to thank you so much for being on the show and for giving us this opportunity to personally say our goodbyes as you walk to new experiences and, uh, hopefully you'll be able to share what you're learning on your blog. I think we'd all be interested to, uh, to try and go with you along on your journey through, through the land of Reddit. And, um, at some point, you know, when work camps come back, you've got to do us all a favor. And if there's one in your neighborhood, you've got to make a cameo. I mean, why not? I mean,

Speaker 2 00:56:25 I am likely to come, uh, just to, just to close the chapter for if nothing else or to open a new one, but yeah, I have my series on advice to open source contributors is not over, I've got at least one more possibly two or three more articles coming out, so stay tuned. And, uh, yeah, I'm really, really cherishing, uh, posting on my blog again. Um, turns out, uh, writing on WordPress is a real joy. So that's

Speaker 1 00:57:00 You, uh, are you embracing the black editor? Are you having a good time with it?

Speaker 2 00:57:05 --

-- You know, I found only recently. I never really understood why. Uh, so many people were enthusiastic about the little move this block up or down in the, uh, in the post, uh, feature. Um, but you know what I'm using battle this week. So, uh, yeah, I even the, the features that I was kind of like, I don't think people are using those, I'm fighting, I'm losing more and more.

Speaker 1 00:57:36 Yeah. Awesome. I mean, I've had my, I had my issues with, with Gutenberg and I've written about them and I've criticized them, but then, but you know what automatic now, and I don't know how long they've they've had this, but they have these people now they're called developer relations people. And they've actually been reaching out to me anytime I write negatively or criticize Gutenberg or an automatic product or something, somebody from the developer relations group contacts me and says, Hey, I saw your posts. Um, here's what we're working on. Here's some GitHub tricks or tickets. And we'd like to, you know, if there's any questions you have, you know, keep in touch and I'm like, Hmm. Yeah, that's pretty neat.

Speaker 2 00:58:16 I aye. That developer relations team I predict is going to have a spectacular, positive impact on helping core. Um, it's, it's a bi-directional advocacy team, right? Like, so it helps Corp speak to all the people who are using WordPress and developing with WordPress. And it helps, uh, the extenders and the users, uh, get, um, more direct feedback loop to core. And I think it's going to be absolutely pivotal.

Speaker 1 00:58:49 Well, it's already working cause they contact me and I'm like, oh, okay. And then, then I wrote a note. Another post said, this is what, you know, they're working on. Somebody contacted me and boom collaboration. Just, just, just like you said, sweet. I care bears moment, Andrea. Thank you very much. We wish you the best of luck. I think everyone in the WordPress world wishes you the best of luck. Congratulations on the new opportunity and the, I can't wait to see what the future holds in store for you.

Speaker 2 00:59:20 I'm excited to find out

Speaker 1 00:59:21 Myself, so I'll keep you all posted. Uh, so, um, you can find the show notes for this episode and every other episode on WP, mainline.com, just click the podcast link and everything will be right there. You can follow me on Twitter at WP mainline or my personal account at Jeff Rowe, J E F F R zero, where you can see me post pictures of me standing in the middle of the street, uh, during sunset like a buffoon, but actually turned out to be a nice picture. So I don't know, it turned out okay. And, uh, Malcolm work in people will follow you at and uh, over there on press Titan, right? Yeah. So primarily I put a T dang it primarily over at press seitán. Uh, also helping out at Canberra creative and, uh, you can find me on Twitter at find purpose. Excellent. So that's going to do it for this show. Everybody have a safe and enjoyable weekend and we'll talk to you again next week. So long everybody

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