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Request to suspend the Thunderbird Council

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Jörg Knobloch

Aug 21, 2020, 12:12:18 AM

to mozilla-g...@lists.mozilla.org, Mark Surman, Brian Behlendorf

Dear Mozilla Governance,

I request to suspend the Thunderbird Council for the following reasons:

The current Council was elected for one year. It took office in April of 2019. The term has therefore expired.

The current Council appears not to be following proper process when processing CPG violation claims. In particular, I consider an e-mail I received entitled "CPG Enforcement Action for Thunderbird" illegitimate and I interpret it as an attempt to expel and silence one of their own members based on the claim of a CPG violation just in time for the upcoming next Thunderbird Council elections.

To my knowledge as a councillor for many years, special Thunderbird CPG rules or an enforcement committee do not exist and therefore CPG claims need to be processed under the Mozilla CPG rules. By-laws for Thunderbird equally do not exist.

I include the e-mail I received below. I don't want to go into details here, but just as an example, "Assuming ill intent" as a CPG violation is a little far fetched (and an unprovable accusation). The e-mail goes further in trying to ban interaction with (quote): "community members, paid contributors, and Thunderbird Council members". Such "conditions" do not even apply to convicted criminals, let alone after a judgement where the accused received no warning, no trial, and where judge and prosecutor were all the same entity. The Thunderbird Council has even affected the suspension of my Bugzilla account, so as a Thunderbird Module Peer, I won't be able to comment on bugs or submit/review patches (that includes Firefox bugs).

Thank you for your time to read these paragraphs.

With kind regards, Jörg Knobloch.

From: CPG Violations <viola...@thunderbird.net>

Subject: CPG Enforcement Action for Thunderbird

Dear Jörg,

We are writing today in order to address your participation in the Thunderbird community.

This email is to let you know that the Thunderbird Council has experienced and received reports that you violated Mozilla's Community Participation Guidelines <<https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/about/governance/policies/participation/>> ("CPG"), which Thunderbird has adopted. These alleged violations took place via email, on bugzilla and other systems. Some examples that are alleged to have violated the CPG are:

* Be Respectful / Be Direct but Professional

o Assuming ill intent. When roadblocks are in the way of what you'd like to achieve, you tend to focus on your solution. In a number of conversations you have been disrespectful towards others who are equally looking to reach a conclusion, or offering to help you along the way. The CPG requires you to be open to different possibilities and to being wrong.

o Passive aggressive communication. When having critical conversations you lean towards passive aggressive remarks. These can be hurtful towards those who you are directing them against, and don't contribute to a healthy style of conversation. The CPG requires you to be respectful in all interactions and communications.

o Using facts to excuse disrespectful language. In a number of conversations where you have been called out for communicating disrespectfully, you counter by stating what you said is a fact. While in many cases it is truly a fact, the way in which you convey these facts has not been appropriate. The CPG requires that if someone says they have been harmed through your words or actions, listen carefully, apologize sincerely, and correct the behavior going forward.

o Using your position to make demands. You've had a few interactions with the community and council in the past where you've made demands for something to change, and used your position in the community as a pressure point to have them met. This was mainly connected to the threat of putting critical tasks at rest until the demands are adhered to. The CPG requires you to demonstrate an understanding of different perspectives, not using all means necessary to win your argument.

* Be Inclusive

o Use of derogatory language. There have been a few situations where you have used derogatory language to call out mistakes, for example related to grammatical mistakes others have made. As a community member we need you to be respectful of different backgrounds and communicate professionally. The CPG requires you to be inclusive of everyone in an interaction, respecting and facilitating people's participation, for example when there are non-native speakers involved.

* Personal Attacks

o You've demonstrated a number of times that when you disagree with someone you will go to lengths to discredit them, find and bring up unrelated issues that would demean or insult them. Oftentimes this leads to personal attacks that are not acceptable. The CPG requires discussions to be conducted respectfully and professionally, remaining focused on the issue at hand.

* Lead by Example

o As a council member, you are in a special role within the community that requires professional conduct more than usual. When engaging with community members, users, paid Thunderbird contributors, your actions set an example on what behavior is tolerated within the community. The example you are setting by violating the CPG is having a negative effect on the community. The CPG requires you to lead by example. Your actions influence others to behave and respond in ways that are valuable and appropriate for our organizational outcomes.

These are some examples among many of what has long been a pattern of behavior on your part that is no longer welcome or acceptable within the Thunderbird project.

Not only do these actions devalue the work of the team, but they are driving away new contributors, send the wrong message to observers about what is and isn't acceptable in our community, and in some cases even make it difficult to determine exactly what the real issues are and how

to resolve them.

While we're grateful for the amount of time and effort you've put into Thunderbird, no single contributor's participation outweighs the importance of civility and professionalism among our contributors, as developers and as a community.

The CPG reports were reviewed, and an investigation was conducted by the Thunderbird Council, with support from Mozilla HR and Community Management. The Thunderbird Council has determined that a material portion of the violations were substantiated to our satisfaction following the Thunderbird CPG investigative process.

The decision was made to issue a 3 months mandatory ban from participation in Thunderbird communities from August 20th to November 20th, 2020. This means:

- * All accounts deactivated during this time.
- * No interaction with any of the people involved. This includes
 - o No interactions with Thunderbird community members, paid contributors, and Thunderbird Council members.
 - o No interactions in any official Thunderbird channels, as well as external or unofficial channels like social media (Twitter, Facebook, Telegram).
- * No attendance at Thunderbird events during this period (virtual or physical)
- * All community leadership roles suspended.
- * Mandatory CPG onboarding process after this period.

This pause will allow you to reflect on what your next steps are and consider how you wish to contribute to Thunderbird going forward. We trust that you will comply with the conditions of the pause, but the pause may be extended or made permanent in accordance with the consequence ladder if you do not.

After November 20th if you would like to be active in the community again, you will be required to attend a Community Participation Guidelines onboarding. We will let you know at the onboarding which tools and community events you will receive access to immediately, and which you may be asked to not participate in for a longer period.

If you have any questions, or would like to schedule a 1:1 regarding the scope of this decision, please reply to this email.

Enforcement of our CPG is something Thunderbird takes very seriously. All community members are held accountable to the standard set forth in

the CPG. As a community leader your behavior also sets the standard for others and signals what is, and is not, acceptable in our community. We hope this is an opportunity for you to evaluate your role within the community, with positive goals for the future.

Your next step is to indicate that you have received this email, and to let us know if you would like to schedule a 1:1 call. We will be in touch in November to begin the reinstatement & onboarding process.

Signed, the Thunderbird Council



Jörg Knobloch

Sep 2, 2020, 8:39:06 AM

to mozilla-g...@lists.mozilla.org

Dear Mozilla Governance,

a while has gone by since my initial post[0]. Since there was no reaction, I am wondering whether this is the appropriate place to discuss this matter. It raises the question how Thunderbird governance is "embedded" into Mozilla governance. On this subject, a former Thunderbird Council chairman, Kent James, once wrote[1] (quote): "There needs to be some mechanism for a rogue council to be replaced, but that can be done by the parent organization in the rare cases that it is an issue (Mozilla for us, Apache for their subprojects)."

Here a summary where I think the Thunderbird Council operated outside the rules, some of which it set itself:

- 1) Council term already expired earlier this year.
- 2) According to published guidelines, the Council is not processing any CPG reports. To my knowledge after 4.5 years on the Thunderbird Council, "CPG Violations <viola...@thunderbird.net>" has not existed until very recently and no guidelines exist for the Council to process such reports.
- 3) Even if the Council were authorized to prosecute CPG infringements in the Thunderbird Community, it's questionable whether it would have the power to exclude Mozilla contributors from Mozilla systems like Bugzilla.
- 4) When dealing with alleged CPG infringements, the Council is, in this case, witness, prosecutor and judge all at the same time.
- 5) The Thunderbird Council has a so-called Code of Conduct. It calls for

four unanimous votes[2] to exclude a member. This was not followed.

6) The Council even went so far as to strip Thunderbird module peer-ship[3] which seems unprecedented.

Thank you for your time,

Jörg Knobloch.

[0] <https://groups.google.com/g/mozilla.governance/c/RQHR3eFAYZ8>

[1] <https://mail.mozilla.org/pipermail/tb-planning/2015-November/004161.html>

[2] If an issue is determined to be irreconcilable, the council may cast a vote to speak out a warning to the offending council member. The vote follows the normal voting process including a second of motion, but must be conducted under participation of all council members aside from the offending council member. The voting result must be unanimous, with a council of 7, 6 members must vote YES. Council members that have gathered 3 warnings are subject to an additional exit vote, where the council will vote on either suspending council activity for a set time frame, or excluding the member from further council work.

[3]

<https://wiki.mozilla.org/index.php?title=Modules%2FThunderbird&type=revision&diff=1230238&oldid=1228813>