

Managing Conflict in Open Source Communities

FOSS Backstage 2018

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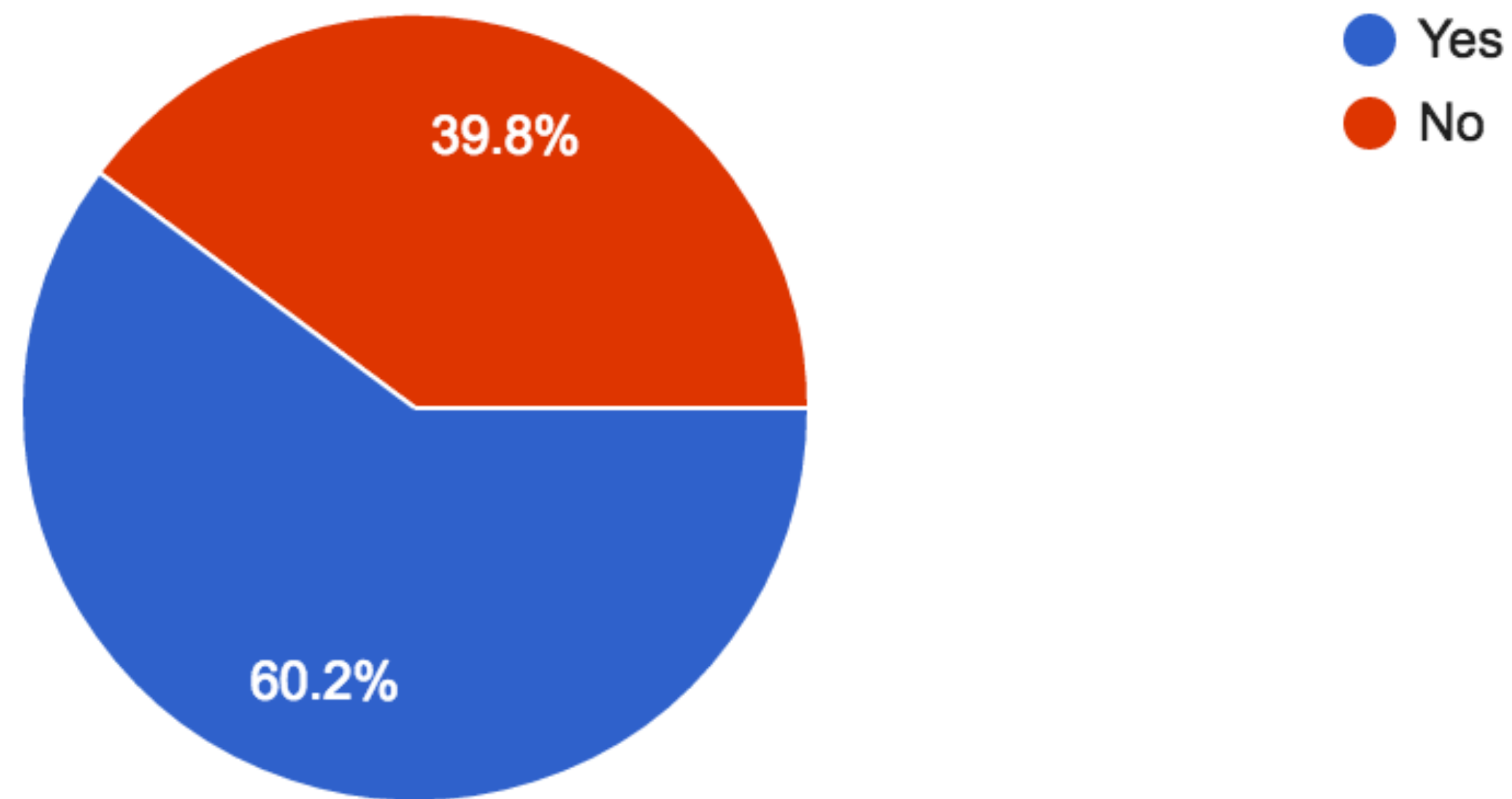
Hi, I'm From Drupal



- One of the world's largest open source projects, with over 100,000 active contributors
- Used by millions of sites ranging from personal blogs to digital platforms for the largest companies and organizations in the world

During the Drupal 8 development cycle, did you experience or observe conflict in the Drupal issue queues, IRC, etc.?

(103 responses)



Unmet Needs Often Lead To Negative Conflict

- I don't feel heard.
- I don't feel like my contributions are valued.
- My interests aren't being represented.
- I feel hurt by something someone else said or did.



How Does Negative Conflict Manifest in Open Source?



- Technical disagreements turning into personal attacks.
- Frustration with the amount of time it takes to review patches/project applications.
- People lashing out in issue queues.
- Harassment and trolling on social media and in Slack.

Consequences of Negative Conflict in Open Source

- Decline in contributor morale
- Decline in productivity
- People leaving the project
- People choosing not to join the project



Impact on Open Source Diversity

- Only 3% of open source code contributors are women
- We literally have no idea how many people of color are in open source
- Women are far more likely than men to encounter unwelcoming behavior, including stereotyping and unsolicited sexual advances
- Women are far less likely to collaborate with people they don't already know



Reducing negative conflict helps make open source more welcoming, more inclusive, and more innovative.

Open Source Codes of Conduct

- Establish standards for behavior and appropriate conduct when interacting with others.
- Help create inclusive spaces where people can feel safe and welcome to contribute.
- Make it easier for everyone to participate and share ideas in a professional and respectful way.



A code of conduct is worthless if there are no structures to support it or mechanisms to enforce it.

Drupal Community Working Group



 [@drupalcommunity](https://twitter.com/drupalcommunity)

- All-volunteer body: no staff, no resources, and no legal representation
- Primary chartered responsibilities:
 - Uphold the Drupal community Code of Conduct
 - Helping to resolve conflicts between community members
 - Maintain documentation and processes related to community health
- The CWG also:
 - Recognizes and supports community leadership
 - Provide resources, consultation and advice
 - Shares experiences and best practices with representatives from other open source projects

Compassion and Accountability



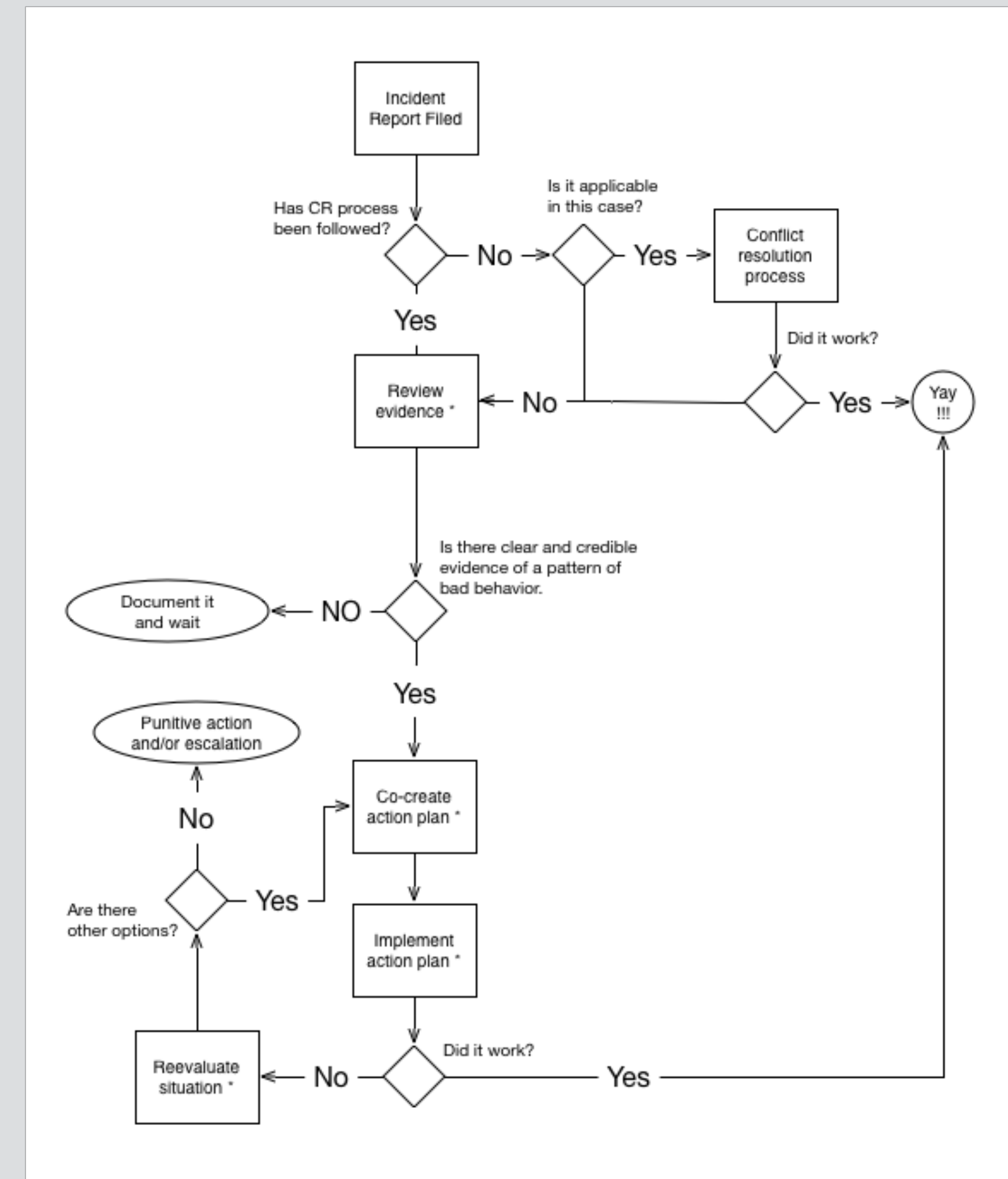
For me, forgiveness and compassion are always linked: how do we hold people accountable for wrongdoing and yet at the same time remain in touch with their humanity enough to believe in their capacity to be transformed?

–bell hooks

Process, Process, Process

After gathering information from all involved parties, discussion and review, determine appropriate next steps:

- Do nothing
- Offer suggestions for those involved to resolve the issue themselves.
- Mediation
- Permanent or temporary bans from various spaces
- Help those who are willing find ways to take responsibility for the impact of their actions and become more effective contributors



Lessons Learned

- Ensure expectations are set and managed during the conflict resolution process, and that all involved parties need to agree to accept the outcome of the process
- Escalation and appeals processes need to be well-defined and well-communicated
- Use discretion when deciding what details to share publicly.
- Working group members need to practice self-care to prevent burnout
- Always be communicating purpose, scope, and processes to the wider community

Trolling, Harassment, and Context Collapse



*Trolls set a cunning trap.
By ignoring their provocations,
you risk seeming complicit.
By responding, you amplify their
message.*

<https://is.gd/oe0Cdl>

New Challenges



- We need better tools to address harassment that occurs outside of project spaces
- We need better reporting mechanisms and procedures for handling reports of sexual harassment and/or assault
- We need better ways to recognize and address incidents across projects

Helping Everyone Succeed



- Streamline communication channels
- Improve documentation
- Expand mentorship beyond newcomers and create more opportunities for non-code mentoring
- Create opportunities to expand the base of leadership in the community

Let's Get Started!

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