Sustainable Futures:
Funding the Web Ecosystem

Stephanie Stimac | Igalia Web Platform PM
Imagine...
Imagine...

An ecosystem that provides a massive wealth generating resource
“He who controls spice, controls the universe.”
“He who controls spice the browser, controls the universe.”
Information Age: 1970-present
Information Age: 1970-present
Internet Age: 1990-present
Browsers are critical infrastructure
Browsers are critical infrastructure (and complex)
Over 5 Billion Internet Users
67% of the global population
PROBLEMS WITH THE SYSTEM
1. It pays for browsers, not engines
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2. Smaller browsers don’t get a cut of the deal (unclear processes)
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3. Ad and search revenue does not all go back into web infrastructure
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4. Legal & regulatory pressure
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2. Smaller browsers don’t get a cut of the deal (unclear processes)
3. Ad and search revenue does not all go back into web infrastructure
4. Legal & regulatory pressure
5. Owned by corporations
INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS: WORST CASE SCENARIO EDITION...

WHAT HAPPENS IF THOSE CORPORATIONS DISAPPEAR?
Browsers based on Chromium

Arc
Amazon Silk
Avast
Brave
Comodo Dragon
Dooble
DuckDuckGo
Epic
Falkon
Maxthon
Microsoft Edge
Naver Whale
Opera
Otter
Puffin
qutebrowser
Sleipnir
SRWare Iron
Supermium
UC Browser
Vivaldi
INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS: WORST CASE SCENARIO EDITION...

WHAT HAPPENS IF THOSE CORPORATIONS DISAPPEAR?
But it’s Open Source?
Open Source Is at a Crossroads

The cracks are beginning to show in this global ecosystem, as many projects lack the basic funding to sustain the software that literally runs the world.

May 7th, 2024 10:00am by Bill Doerrfeld

The Digital Economy Runs on Open Source. Here's How to Protect It.

by Hila Lifshitz-Assaf and Frank Nagle

September 02, 2021

Image via Pixabay.
Year # commit

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https://chrome-commit-tracker.arthursonzogni.com/
Open Source needs sustainable funding
The Web Ecosystem needs sustainable funding
How do we fix this?
It Won’t Be Easy
Disclaimer:
This isn’t going to be solved today or tomorrow...
Disclaimer:

This isn’t going to be solved today or tomorrow…or even next week
The Goal

Start the conversations, start exploring solutions
Start to fix things before the system collapses
doomer:
doomer:

“[a term] which arose primarily on the Internet to describe people who are extremely pessimistic or fatalistic about global problems...”
Money
Money

How do we get it or how do we encourage it?
1. Donation-based systems (voluntary/cultured-based)
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2. Incentives (e.g. tax-breaks for donations or donated work)
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3. Retroactive public goods funding
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2. Incentives (e.g. tax-breaks for donations or donated work)

3. Retroactive public goods funding

4. Forms of levy or taxation (e.g. fixing existing search/browser system)
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2. Incentives (e.g. tax-breaks for donations or donated work)

3. Retroactive public goods funding

4. Forms of levy or taxation (e.g. fixing existing search/browser system)

5. And more!
The Web Levy

Can we make a compulsory system?

MAKE A CALL FOR DONATIONS THEY CAN'T REFUSE
A levy system needs to be mandatory
Options:

1. Regulation says so
Options:

1. Regulation says so

2. Get all engines to require it in licensing
Options:

1. Regulation says so

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3. Use browser choice screens for leverage
Governance

• A power structure that’s credible (so people feel comfortable donating)

• Accountable

• Gives power back to the wider web community

• There’s tons of experienced individuals that can make this happen.
Allocation
Allocation

1. Small funds for each workstream
Allocation

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2. One big fund, driven by votes
Allocation

1. Small funds for each workstream
2. One big fund, driven by votes
3. Data-driven funding
Allocation

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4. Use impact evaluators, hypercerts, etc
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3. Data-driven funding
4. Use impact evaluators, hypercerts, etc
5. ...
Resources to continue the conversation

1. Funding the Web Ecosystem: https://github.com/w3c/breakouts-day-2024/issues/20
3. Governance of Ad Requests by a Union of Diverse Actors (GARUDA)
   https://darobin.github.io/garuda/

Thank you!