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Date: Thu, 2 Jun 2016 22:55:27 -0400  
From: Roger Dingledine <arma@mit.edu>  
To: tor-internal@lists.torproject.org  
Message-ID: <20160603025527.GZ49427@moriamoria.seul.org>  
Subject: [tor-internal] Jake has resigned: details and plan  
List-Id: <tor-internal.lists.torproject.org>

Hi everybody,

There will soon be a (stripped down, bland) statement for the public on our blog, but I'm providing more details here in private so you can know what's going on and so you can play a role in what comes next.

As you surely know, some people have been unhappy with Jake's behavior for various reasons, and that's been true for a good while now.

One of our goals in getting a new execdir was to get a person who would help us figure out how to handle situations like this -- get us to have a workable code of conduct, and help us handle conflicts. Shari's original plan was to develop a process that we could use for these situations: we'd put the new process in place, ask everyone to start fresh, and then follow the process moving forward. In the meantime, we have been sending concerned people to her, so she can keep track of the big picture.

Unfortunately, events have overtaken us and that plan: enough people have come to Shari with concerns about Jake that it's clear there is a pattern of complaints that cannot wait for the new process.

Jake was willing to step down from his position at Tor, to reduce the personal conflict and to make it easier for Tor to get through this. I hope this step helps us all.

That said, things are not looking good. There are quite a few people with concerns, and some of these concerns look really serious. We expect some of these people to go public in the near future. Things are probably going to get worse before they get better.

Let me take a moment to acknowledge some contradictions that make our job here harder:

- This isn't happening because of any one specific incident. In fact, you'll notice that I haven't talked about any particular incidents here. People will likely come forward sometime with descriptions of incidents or behavior. So we don't need to rush to any decisions right this moment.

It is also important to remember that few people (possibly even no people) at this point have all of the information about every incident. We're all going to have to be a little patient about that for the time being, and trust that everyone is trying to do the best with what they know.

(As a separate topic, rest assured that Tor as a company intends to take all complaints seriously, in this and all other matters. In any incident, when we determine that misconduct has occurred, we will take appropriate action.)

- Jake has been a very polarizing figure in our community. Some people here wonder why we don't make a bigger deal out of his contributions to changing the world, whereas other people here wonder why we hadn't kicked him out before. But it shouldn't be the Tor community's job to facilitate or moderate whatever comes next. Some of us are going to want to speak up with details or in support of some of the people involved, and that's fine. Shari will make sure that Tor does what it needs to do as a company, and right now our job as the Tor community is to figure out what we want Tor to be, and to make sure we get there.
- It's tempting to wonder if there's some cointelpro-style attack going on. Realistically, we likely do have the attention of governments who are well-funded to attack us. But first, this really doesn't look like a cointelpro op. The complaints come from people both inside and outside the Tor community, and I know some of them. And second, in this case it really doesn't matter. It's no excuse for not taking responsibility for our actions. Tor, and our broader freedom movement, are about communities, and about how we want to interact with each other. Let's handle this situation as an example of how we want to do it right.

So: what am I asking you to do next?

First: please, let us not turn this into a long thread on tor-internal. Those never go well. I want each of us to be learning about the situation as it develops, and talking to each other. We should refrain from making judgments without facts. A big flamewar on the list favors the loud people who care the most, and in my opinion this is not a time where group dynamics will lead us to the best outcome.

Second: we need to think about how to get through this issue as a community, and work on becoming a healthier organization. We must be supportive of each other, and think about how to make sure the Tor community is a safe and welcoming place.

How do we heal from the fracture that we've had inside Tor, so we can get back to saving the world as a single focused community?

This goal will be tougher than it sounds, since new facts will keep emerging and we shouldn't expect to be able to move on immediately. We will need to work on the immediate and the long-term in parallel: continue the process of coming to grips with these complaints, while at the same time having our eye on the bigger picture.

If we were all in one place, we could sit down and have in-person discussions. I look forward to doing some of those in Seattle.

Until then, Roger, Shari, Kate, Alison, and Georg have stepped up to be points of contact for questions, concerns, or just to help you think things through. Please reach out to whichever of them you feel

comfortable talking to. (If you would like to reach out to Jake too, please feel free.)

Third: we're still working on the community documents that we hope will represent our values and expectations -- the code of conduct, the Tor social contract, the anti-harassment policy, the membership guidelines, etc. We hope to have drafts of these available for community discussion shortly. When we discuss them, I ask you to keep "the Jake thing" in mind the appropriate amount -- not too much and not too little. We don't want to be ignoring this topic while developing our community guidelines, but also we don't want to tailor them too specifically so they overemphasize this situation.

Things are a bit confusing because of the Tor-the-company and Tor-the-community sides. Don't worry about Tor-the-company here: Shari has been doing the steps that she thinks are right for the company. If some accusation comes out publicly, Shari will put out a response as appropriate, saying in general terms that we don't support or endorse bad behaviors.

One question that we should be thinking through is how we want to handle this on the community side. I actually don't think the discussion around Jake's future in the Tor community will be that contentious. Jake has offered to resign from the community in order to help Tor heal, and it seems clear to me that we're going to take him up on it. So rather than anticipating a huge fight about Jake in particular, we should focus on where we want Tor to end up, and how we can best get there.

We will need to decide things like how much longer Jake will stay on tor-internal after his resignation, and whether we as a community want to make some sort of statement in response to the accusations, or in support of some of the people involved, or somewhere in between. Until we know more facts, I don't think this list is the right venue for that discussion. I really think we'll be better off talking one-on-one or in smaller groups as we all get up to speed on these events.

Fourth: please be smart with our media interactions. We don't want to try to stop you from talking to all of the right people, but at the same time, be mindful of public interactions. For example, please talk to Kate or Shari or somebody if you're about to join a twitterwar or put up a blog post with your opinion. If you're about to interact with the press, Kate and Shari are great people to involve first.

Fifth: if you have more stories or concerns, Shari has kept the details and identities of the current people safe, and she'll do her best to do that for you too if you want.

Thanks for your time and I'm sorry this is happening. We can get through this and make Tor what we want it to be.

We are around and happy to talk more,  
--Roger