How to deal with toxic people
Lessons from the trenches of Open Source Development

Gina Häußge // @foosel
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Gina Häußge

- 38 years old
- Software engineer
- Maker
- Hobby baker
- 100% Nerd
- Creator & maintainer of OctoPrint
Common bad behaviour
Wow, this bug is still open, six months later? Get off your lazy 😖 and fix it already!

Why isn’t this obscure feature implemented already that I need for my personal workflow?

How rude of you to refuse to implement something I want!
This crap has cost me a 12h print job, shame on you for ever releasing this!

WELL THANKS FOR NOTHING!

I just updated and nothing works anymore,
THIS IS THE LAST TIME I UPDATE!
Attacks

Whoever designed this steaming pile of 😈 should be shot!

Stop writing software, you 😈

LOL, you clearly SUCK as a dev!

😭 YOU!!!
Coping strategies
First: Disengage & cool down

• Don’t answer hot-headed
• Let off steam offline
  • Heavy bag
  • Jumping jacks
  • Brisk walk
  • Count to 100 and back down
• Initial stress response cycle needs to run through
• Only then respond
Remind of realities

• Open Source = no demands but **collaboration & cooperation**

• Not just code, everything helps!

• “Patches welcome” 👎
  • Exception: Bragging s.th. could be implemented in hours or “is trivial”
Remind of boundaries

• Open Source Maintainers are people and deserve respect & decency
• Make overstepping clear
• Enforce community rules (CoC)
• Refer to snarky.ca/the-social-contract-of-open-source/
Additional measures

• Don’t work on the issue (if it only affects the abuser)
• Point the abuser to the door
• Ban hammer (last resort!)
• You don’t have to accept abuse - and for the sake of the project you actually shouldn’t
How the community can help

• “This is just like it is in Open Source!” 👎

• Call out bad behaviour
  • Remind people of CoC
  • Remind people of unwelcome tone & attitude
  • Flag/report bad behaviour

• Always remember **yourself** that there is a human on the other end
Thank you for your attention!

Twitter: @foosel
Slides: octoprint.org/slides/

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