

2016 Dancecard

I've been thinking about this for a while and have decided to formalize my decision that I will not be attending or speaking at any conferences or events this year (2016). A lot of factors have gone into this decision and it wasn't easy for me, but for now I think it is for the best. As much as I enjoy giving talks, writing talks and submitting to CFPs isn't easy work. I don't reuse my talks, so each time I come up with a new topic. However, for the past two years I've been doing more than writing my conference talks. I have also been having to have conversations with conference and community organizers about instituting CoCs (Code of Conduct) for their events. This is honestly draining work, I (and a number of other people in the iOS community) have been holding the same conversations year after year (sometimes for the same event!). To be perfectly honest I am really tired of being the one that has to draft and edit these things for people that have a 50% chance of actually enforcing the policy when it really matters.

In the last year I've drastically cut back on the number of commitments I agree to, so that it better lines up with the amount of work I can actually do without letting things slip. Some of these commitments are unseen by most people, so I figured I'd share what commitments I plan to honor in the coming year as well as some of the reasons my withdrawal from the conference scene for the time being.

Things I am committing to:

- Continue to assist the CocoaPods team with build system integration and support
- Continue to act as a maintainer for Oni on OS X (yes, really)
- Continue writing the OS X Internals book (no, you still don't get to ask about this)
- Continue to assist and give advice to members of the community to support the creation of new and better develop tooling
- Continue to file radars and work with people to resolve issues with Apple's software
- Continue to be a visible trans person in tech (I don't think this will ever change)

Things that might happen but aren't a commitment:

- Blog posts (I'm sorry but the blog posts will not be as consistent. I am doing a lot of writing about other things and I don't have the time anymore)
- Supporting my existing open source projects (critical issues will be addressed when I have time)

Things I will not commit to:

- Conferences and community events (I still plan on attending CocoaHeads and NSCoder events in Boston)

- Assisting with new projects
- Contracting/freelance work on the side
- Working for free

On Semi-Recent Events

Being a marginalized person in tech and a regular conference speaker is really rough. It requires a lot of energy to get on the level of everyone else around you that fits into the stereotypical “middle-class white dude” tech speaker. People don’t take you seriously and will drastically underestimate what you know or can offer that could be useful to them. It requires more energy to arrive at the same place, then you also need energy to face the harassment and exclusionary behavior that will inevitably manifest at events. On top of this, you will probably be the only one to bring up that the event’s Code of Conduct doesn’t cover enough or not even exist. Now, before you have even committed to the event you are being drafted into educating someone how to write an inclusive CoC and why this is important to have at an event. More and more of your time is being taken up to do things that aren’t your job and the organizer isn’t going to pay you to do either. Drafting an appropriate Code of Conduct is difficult and requires contextual awareness of the conference, the attendees, intersectionality, and how to write proper inclusive language.

I enjoy traveling, but it isn’t easy for me. It is hard on anyone but unless you’re also trans, you don’t understand how stressful this is. All your paperwork can be in perfect order and you will still be detained, harassed, and publically humiliated. Right now I cannot travel internationally even if I wanted to because my passport does not have the correct information in it. This limits my speaking opportunities to being within the United States. Even then I am still likely to be detained because of an assumed misrepresentation of who I am on my ID vs how I present. I would like to keep these sorts of events to an absolute minimum for the benefit of my personal health.

I’ve stopped feeling safe attending or speaking at conferences. Some of you might not be aware of this, but I have had to write a Code of Conduct for every conference I’ve spoken at in the last 2 years. In addition to that, I’ve help draft and write a Code of Conduct for events I’ve not attended as well by advocating events be more inclusive and approachable to newcomers. After 2 years of doing this I am done with it, because it doesn’t seem to be having the desired effect. After an extremely lackluster experience with the organizers of AltConf 2015, and a couple of cases of receiving harassment from people while attending AltConf and events during WWDC, I was ready to call it quits. I didn’t do any speaking engagements for the rest of the 2015 after AltConf. In the fall some information came to my attention that made me re-assess a lot of the interactions I’ve had over resistance to implementing a Code of Conduct for events. Some of the experiences lined up and given the vocal iOS community isn’t that large it wasn’t hard to draw the conclusion that there are people that are being protected from being held accountable to a Code of Conduct. I appologize if this sounds vague to

some, but this isn't my information to share freely. This isn't a judgement of anyone or any event, beyond the fact that it is about my own safety.

The community as a whole still has a lot of toxicity issues to work out of itself. I've tried to assist with moving away from those and unfortunately my experience has been a vocal minority still holding a majority sway over continuing negative and hurtful attitudes. A year and a half ago I wrote about an incident where a few of the MartianCraft developers deliberately shitting on the CocoaPods open source project as a joke. I find it extremely hard to be motivated to submit talks when people that are party to those sorts of actions as "acceptable" continually get invited to speak and set the tone of developer conferences in this community.

For these, and additional personal reasons, I am stepping away from the conference scene for at least the next year. Maybe when things start to get better I will come back to it, but for now it doesn't seem like a place I can safely and postively contribute.

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