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Incident documentation/20151014-MediaWiki

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Summary

A MediaWiki config change that should have been a no-op was synced and caused pages to appear with no content (and get cached) as well as Special:Random throwing exceptions.

Timeline

- 17:56: Chad asks Legoktm if he has any objections to merging [gerrit:232966](#) (written back in August). Legoktm quickly looks over it and says no objections
- 17:59: `!log demon@tin Synchronized wmf-config/CommonSettings.php`: (no message) (duration: 00m 17s)
- 18:01: First report in `#wikimedia-operations` that something is wrong. "A database query error has occurred. This may indicate a bug in the software." and "I can't see any page"
- 18:03: Legoktm checks `fatalmonitor` and sees a bunch of 303 Compilation failed: two named subpatterns have the same name at offset 263 in `/srv/mediawiki/php-1.27.0-wmf.2/includes/MagicWord.php` on line 960
- 18:03: Luke081515 reports the problem in a Phabricator task ([phab:T115505](#))
- 18:04-05: Confusion over whether `twentyafterfour` had started the train deploy (he hadn't)
- 18:06: Legoktm reverts config change in gerrit, while Chad deploys it: `!log demon@tin Synchronized wmf-config`: (no message) (duration: 00m 19s)
- 18:07: `enwiki s1` slave lag triggers alert, paging ops (unrelated)
- 18:07: People are still reporting blank pages, purging them fixes it
- ... Discussion about what pages are cached, people trying to find a test case
- 18:11: Andre spots that https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNU_General_Public_License is broken, Legoktm realizes that we need parser cache purges
- 18:14: Ori proposes using the `RejectParserCacheValue` hook to empty the cache and purge varnish
- 18:17: Legoktm determines that the outage was caused by double loading of the `Disambiguator` extension
- 19:11: Ori deploys hook to purge blank pages

Conclusions

- It's probably safer to do these mass extension changes one at a time
- We should leave some room before train deploys so we can pin-point what deploy caused issues?
- `MagicWord.php` should have thrown exceptions instead of silently failing.

Actionables

Explicit next steps to prevent this from happening again as much as possible, with Phabricator tasks linked for every step.

- Status: ■ **Done** `MagicWord.php` should check return value of `preg_*` calls instead of assuming they succeed ([bug T115514](#))

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