**Transcription of** [**Stack Overflow Live Q&A on Youtube**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-3J7G_XX0s)

**February 26, 2025**

**Speakers**

* **Prashanth Chandrasekar, CEO**
* **Philippe Beaudette, VP Community**
* **Jody Bailey, CPTO**

**Philippe**

Hello, and welcome to this Community AMA for the Stack Overflow and Stack Exchange Network communities. I’m Philippe Beaudette, VP-Community here, and I’m joined today by our CEO, Prashanth Chandrasekar and Jody Bailey, our newly minted Chief Product and Technology Officer. Jody has been the CTO for almost three years, but recently added the Product organization to his portfolio as well.

For more than 16 years, the internet has relied on Stack Overflow and the Stack Exchange Network - these resources that you helped build - for accurate and trusted advice on all manner of topics, from traditional software engineering to music theory to cooking, and they’ve done it in multiple languages. It’s an instantly available, always-on resource for finding the answer to the hard question that you’ve stumbled on and just can’t crack. And that resource didn’t just happen - it took millions of hours of work from dedicated folks around the globe, all dedicated to the idea of sharing what they know for free reuse. The internet owes you - each of you - a massive debt.

Over the last couple of years, we’ve seen a need for an expansion in what Stack Overflow does, and what value we provide to the world. With the rise of LLMs, who desperately need accurate data, our role has morphed somewhat. And who knows what’s coming at us next?

Our format for today:

First, Prashanth has a short presentation to show you that talks about what we believe one future for Stack Overflow could look like. We’re going to open the Q&A during this presentation, as well, so you can submit questions there (please use the Q&A feature, not just the chat box) as we go. After Prashanth finishes up, we’ll move into answering questions. We’ve had a huge number of questions submitted through our online form and our posts onsite, so we’ll be using a mix of those and the live questions submitted here today. Please use the Q&A feature found on the lower right side of your screen as we go after finishing up we'll move. Where we have several similar questions, we’ll be picking one, and we already have far more questions than we could get through reasonably, so we’re going to attempt to cover as many of them as we possibly can.

And so, let's get started. Prashanth?

**Prashanth**

\*Pauses for the echo//tech issue\*

**Philippe**

Okay, let's try this again. I'm going to back up slightly here and say that in our presentation today, Prashanth is going to take us through what we believe one future for Stack Overflow could look like and we'll open the Q&A during this presentation as well so you can submit questions there and then after Prashanth finishes up we'll move into answering questions um so we are going to get through as many questions as we possibly can and we'll get started, Prashanth?

**Prashanth**

Okay great looking forward to seeing the slides come up here … and so let's go to slide one - welcome again everybody thank you for taking the time.

I appreciate you spending some time with us today; it's always a pleasure to talk to our community members. We wanted to try something new in this format, directly doing a video AMA with you; so we're excited about this and and you know looking forward to your input and your feedback. So, right out of the gate I will say we live in obviously very very interesting times in the context of AI and a whole bunch of other things that are happening in the world and in the middle of all that I want to start on a somewhat of a lighter note by saying we are all about being on team human (points to his t shirt) and as you you can probably notice both on the screen as well as you know the T-shirt I'm wearing this is something that we created about a year ago, I should say and all in the spirit of really sort of you know it's an Ode to all of you. it's really the fact that you know we're all about serving developers and technologists. That's who we obsess about on a daily basis; on adding value and so this is standard issue t-shirt and, you know, one that, you know, is a Stack Overflow kind of memorabilia; so I'm sure we can get that to you if you're interested, so feel free to reach out and we can get you one.

With that, let's move to the next slide:

I'm also going to assume that the slides are moving on, on the livestream so given everything I just sort of mentioned - you know there when you think about AI there's a lot of positives and negatives as we sort of think about you know what this movement's all about so when I go out and talk to developers and community members you know there's a lot of there's a lot of feedback on what is what is you know AI in the context of humans and you know how do we all sort of manage this and AI generally speaking the negatives are there's obviously the internet has been somewhat changed and it is you know it's been taken over in a big way through content generation that is actually not very good so you know as some folks would say there's a lot of AI content slop that's being created it's just not you know it's not high quality it's it's you know high in hallucinations and it just it almost seems somewhat homogeneous in terms of you know the content that's being generated so it's actually really a sad moment on that front and so that's on one dimension you know we we've got a lot of negatives as you as we've seen but at the same time AI has a lot of potential and it has some amazing you know potential to be honest and really sort of be controlled especially if we could take the good of what it actually um you know professes to do and you know potentially can do in the future this could be amazing especially if technologist and developers like you can leverage it as a tool to be to do even more amazing things so a lot of what we think about is this notion of bringing humans and AI together via our community to make sure that we serve you in this s of you know this change that's happening whether we like it or not and you know that's unfortunately it is here to stay and so AI I mean so in that context how do we serve you given that certainty is really what we think about a lot so hopefully folks can see my see the slides.

So what we have been doing over the past several months and quarters is that we've been talking to our founders, I spent a lot of time with both Jeff and Joel; and you know Joel and I've been talking to for literally every month for you know for five years on a regular basis and it has been an amazing guide as we've sort of navigated through some of these some of these sort of changes in the ecosystem. More recently I've re-engaged with Jeff Atwood who's also been a huge supporter of what we're doing and you know the general you know if you think back in the day Joel used to talk about the fact that Google search was the user interface of Stack Overflow people went to a Google search results and then landed on the Stack Overflow answer and that is you know what it used to be has has been for over 15 years and now what has happened is that we have seen a change where people you know don't go to Google search only they seem to go to Google search but they also go to other gen AI tools like the ones that you're seeing on the screen so you know the Chat GPTs or whether that is GitHub co-pilot or or any of the other the tools like Slack or Microsoft teams and Jira and all these other places that you spend time on you know so so the point point is that the user interface has changed the previous user behavior seems to change all of you have told us by the way even in the developer survey that 70% of you are very interested in using AI tools only 40% of you trust what's coming out of these things and so we want to be wherever you are in order to serve you so if you're spending time through Google to do that that's what we did back in the day now we want to be where you are which is all all these AI tools so we will we've been working hard to do that by integrating into all these tools so that we can surface Stack Overflow content at the right place right time as you are engaging in these tools and that also not only for you to be able to access the content but also if you're unable to get the answers to your question through those tools to be able to actually ask your questions through those tools and actually place them on Stack Overflow so us as a human community can answer them can create new knowledge the people that do respond to those things get recognized for their expertise and with this new knowledge that's being created of course can be used for future AI models Etc so the world goes around in a very sort of in a complete sense and there's a symbiotic relationship so that's really what we've been thinking about what we call by the way knowledge is a service that's what that's about and if you go to the next slide it shows you the notion that we are now we've got multiple partnerships that we have established with many of the AI Labs with the cloud hyperscalers some of these we made public like Google Cloud and Open AI and GitHub and also several more that we've done behind the scenes that are not public only because you know we just have not announc them publicly and we're in process of doing many more of these as companies reach out to us after they’ve discovered originally by the way pre 2022 they obviously leveraged a lot of the data on the open internet and discovered the value of the amazing corpus of information that we have that all of you created and and more more recently after 2022 we have you know some of them reach out to us and we reach out we reached out to some of them to say let's formally establish a mechanism where they can license the data and also for us to be able to integrate into their tools so that we can be useful so this has been a really um an important moment as we help them with things like pre-training their LLM models for things like drag and indexing a whole bunch of other use cases that are to actually address those other issues the hallucination issue the the AI slop issue that was talking about all in the in the in the spirit of serving you the user as you engage in these tools.

Next slide is generally if you think about the trends underway right now there's everything from what I just mentioned so companies like the labs and the cloud providers begin have begun to think about the fact that they have to establish a new business model PR previously you know you went to a Google Search and you know that sent traffic your way so then you could monetize that through something like advertising the entire business model of the internet is is changing literally in front of our eyes right search and the open internet has become a it's a real threat to the open internet because of the the the rise of AI and so there needs to be a new model that supports content creators that supports companies like ours so that this can really progress in a way that the world can sort of keep moving forward where people produce new original content that's high quality it's curated people take a lot of pain to do that and then that can be used in all the user interfaces like GenAI and others in the future so accuracy super important as we've already talked about you know and we can talk about specifically with Stack our role there the fact that companies have a very very low tolerance for risk because you think about if you're working for a big bank and you're trying to you know build an application many of you may be at banks imagine the the the risk if you're you know introducing something that is of low quality or something that's hallucinating inside you know your company that's that's not easy to deal with especially with high regulatory environments and so on so companies have high expectations and ultimately what's also happening is there's a massive war underway between the various AI labs and and and companies so you know everything from Deep Seek to grok 3 to you know Cloud 3.7 you know you name it and this week you know I'm sure there'll be some other announcement so all that's underway but what's underlying all of that is really really high quality data which you know in addition to chips and you know Cloud compute as well as of course LLMs data is obviously a very very large ingredient of that equation so we have a an opportunity to play at Stack a very very strategic role in this AI world again whether we like it or not it's here but the question for us is how do we play in the space how do we be relevant how do we be useful to all of you in given this reality that's under way so all that is you know giving you a little bit of a broader purview.

Some things that are on my mind and on our team's mind, our leadership team's mind and now going into the next slide if please proceed, is the notion of a three-lane Highway. So I'll explain this. So currently you know for the first 15 years of the company we've had a single lane of Q&A which has been absolutely amazing thanks to all of you as Philipe said that you've created this phenomenal what is basically the Library of Congress for software programming I mean it's absolutely pristine it's accurate it's the canonical answer to a question it is the reference the authoritative reference for any question that people have had for over 15 years and it continues to serve that purpose and I think there's something very precious about a lot of trade-offs were made to make sure that was highly accurate Etc so it is very everybody needs to know that it's very important to us not to pollute that in a way and we've tried you know we've tested it around the edges with some of our experiments to to to come to this realization really and a lot of your feedback I think has been hey this Q&A piece there a reason why all those trade-offs were made so more recently what we've been thinking about is maybe we should just leave that as is because that is there is a mission and purpose for that lane which is you know slower in nature but for a reason because quality means you know take your time to make sure it's curated it's accurate it's you know pure, peer reviewed and so on and but maybe we should open up two other lanes a medium lane where you're faster maybe not as high quality but it's a lot more instant why because we've heard users you you have told us that you want more instant answers perhaps it's the world that we live in where you know people want instantaneous things and delayed gratification seems to be more of a a distant memory sometimes and then even more so with chat you know which is people want you know instant access to experts on the platform and so on and this also will be obviously much lower quality but you know a lot faster in terms of engaging

So these three lanes the the first one of course is our you know our core the additional lanes what we want to do is to be able to test those Concepts with with your input and many of those finally enough already exist to degree so discussions is a feature we actually tested last year in fact the original Stack exchanges as Jeff Atwood and Joel have told me some of the Stack exchanges were actually split a little bit where you had things like English language and English Stack exchange and the the mission and purpose of both of those were slightly different the rule sets were slightly different the the stringent nature of the rules weremwere changed to accommodate these other users that want to have more of a conversation versus you know kind of canonical answer to a question and e thing with chat it actually exists on our site but it's buried deep deep down in in the site and we want to be able to elevate that so all of you can engage more real time with experts so net net we want to test these keeping this quality versus speed trade off in mind but we also want to make sure that we do not change the core Q&A pristine high quality nature that all of you have spent your blood sweat and tears investing into over the past 15 years so to visualize this a little bit more today this is what if you go to the next slide today we have this canonical Q&A Library which is you know very very high quality and it is it is you know the knowledge base is sort of how we are recognized you know if you think about even though we say community the reality about Stack overlow for the first 10 15 years was actually we're a lot more of a

knowledge based than we were a community and this is reflected just in the form factor of what we've established a lot of people came together implicitly as a community to create this amazing Q&A platform and this create this knowledge base but it is not necessarily communal in that people are not necessarily engaging in all the ways that they want to so if you go to the next Slide the future includes you know many more form factors that in addition to creating a very high quality knowledge base and keeping Q&A at the heart what we want to explore is to add more community features if you will where you're able to do those things on those other lanes that I described faster medium speed and faster speed lanes where were able to engage with the experts because a lot of the all of you are here to help each other and that's really ultimately the motivator of why people came together and to also help you with your careers because you know there's a tremendous amount of change happening about software development jobs company looking to change their workforces your company that you work at you're probably making looking to make changes so all that we want to play a part in so at a minimum in addition of knowledge we want to play in the community space as well as in the career area to serve you in this sort of multi-dimensional way.

If you go to the next slide we are at Stack or a very mission-driven company I mean I can tell you for a fact that everybody in the company is here for that reason to serve our developer Community our technologist Community you're at the heart of a lot of what we think about literally on a meeting by meeting basis on a daily basis and that mission has to be funded it has to you know be supported for investment and the platform that has been created needs to be invested in on a constant basis so you know we're not a nonprofit or we're not a sort of a philanthropy sort of the product of the philanthropy it's more we are a ultimately we have products that we have built over time initially the advertising business and more recently even when I came on in 2019 the goal was to build more Enterprise Centric products and so there's an early experiment with the Stack Overflow for Teams which is the private version of Stacker that companies used now it's used by hundreds of hundreds of companies and Enterprises around the world and the idea was to make sure that that product we continue to add value again to you in the context of your company and most recently we've added knowledge Solutions also known as the API products where we do these Partnerships but also companies have shown interest in leveraging the data set from the public platform to do things like Rag and indexing as they build things like their AI agents inside their company so these products ultimately exist to support our mission and ultimately you know it's important for us to be able to do that on a sustainable basis and very very pleased that you know we have got this Diversified portfolio of products over the past several years that has now allowed us to now come back and reinvest in the community in in a very meaningful way

so next slide I would say but all of this when we say about building the future just so you know we want to do it with you you as the community we cant do it on our own we can't do it in a vacuum just because a few of us have ideas it has to be in concert with you and you know we sometimes people assume that we only have a single place where we get input you know we we have a lot of input from community members you know we meet meet with meet to them in real life when I'm out and about meeting with for example customers or if I'm at a conference or customers especially in our teams business community members come up all the time about their experience with us we obviously have a meta Community some of our most engaged power users are there so amazing group of people that care deeply about the future of the site and the time that they've spent and you know really really appreciate their work and their their their sort of heart in the matter and also things like our surveys we send it out 50,000 100,000 people that's how we found out that 70% of you want to leverage AI tools and only 40% of you trust it as an example and we listen and we read all those things very deeply or even our our product really we have an excellent product design and research organization under Jody Bailey or CPTO and you know that group is always very very vocal about making sure that they get input from Community users before we build something and so that we're data-driven in approach even if I come up with some idea they're very quick to say hey we should go test this with our community let's go and ask a thousand people in the community before we go and build something so I really appreciate that that's another place where we do we have folks in product and research and design and then finally of course our community management team who do a lot of the daily engagement with you which is an amazing team that we have that work really hard to engage with you daily to listen to you to translate that folks like Philippe and his team I'm constantly in touch with Philippe to hear about people's reactions I'm reading literally you know all your input from various places including on meta and you know in the future I'm very happy to say we'd love to hire more of you into that team we've done it in the past we've got members of the community in our community management team but as we open up more roles we'd love to see you nominate somebody let's say from the Meta Community or the broader Community to join our community management team because again we are looking for perspectives so that we can build the future with you not just for you and that's that's something that is very important to us

Next slide just to sort of wrap up i' would say as an example of this i say that you know more recently this is actually happened even before I joined the company in 2019 the homepage was changed to sort of this marketing page that showed things like data job listings Etc and that was the purpose back then and more recently we heard a lot of input saying hey the blog. homepage should just be the question so I want to go straight to that and be able to answer these the open questions that are out there on the site and so we made that change you know not too long ago in you know looks like it received very well by all of you so that's one example of many that to show you that you know we're very interested in making changes that make a difference to you and add value to your lives and that's why we're here to serve you foundationally otherwise we wouldn't be here.

So thank you again, hopefully that was illuminating. And now we can go into Q&A, so that we can get into each of the questions. Alright, back to you Philippe.

# Philippe

Thank you Prashanth I'm going to start with a couple of questions that came in from chat while you were talking. The first one, let's throw this one to you Prashanth. We were asked, you were the antidote to The Experts exchange paywall, are you considering a paywall of your own?

# Prashanth

No, the answer pretty quickly is that absolutely not. I mean because you know we are very much a Believer the open internet I just want to be very clear about that. The internet is closed for different reasons because of the evolution of the web as it relates to GenAI. As I was describing, people have now gone from search to leverage these AI tools that have sucked up the internet. Not good or bad, that's just what's happened. And as a result of that we've had to sort of adapt.

We still want to be 100% committed to making sure the community, all of you, have 100% open access to content, by the way, you generate. So it would be really rich for me to say you don't have access to the stuff that you actually put your own effort into, that doesn't make any sense. So absolutely for you to have 100% access as a community member. At the same time, we want to be able to work with these companies that are leveraging this content, by the way for what purpose? To make sure we can invest it back into this platform and community to serve you, so that this company can be sustainable for the long run and can exist for decades. And so that's the idea, to be open to all of you, and to be let's say gated to companies that want to leverage this market for commercial needs.

# Philippe

Jody, the next one is for you. Prashanth mentioned both chat and Discussions. Discussions has some problems right now and chat is wildly outdated. Are we putting money there to invest in that?

# Jody

That is our current plan. We're looking at different modes of interacting, different content types, those are the two most obvious. We have platforms that exist and we are planning on investing in a solution. You know one of the things that's really important to me is that we partner with the community and meta to understand what the constraints and risks are and that we address them to actually deliver great solutions, right. I know that Discussions we put out there largely as an experiment. It's half baked I think, would be maybe generous.

If we want to have real Discussions we’ve either got to fix it or find another solution. Right? And my commitment is to deliver good solutions. They may not be perfect out of the gate but we are investing. I think there is a question later about the level of investment, just as a reflection of the commitment. I know Prashanth talked about having different you know ways that we make money in the organization and one of them being you know our SaaS product. You know, based on what's going on in the industry and our commitment to the community, we've actually shifted a significant portion of our product and engineering resources to the community, from other areas in the company. So we've got a pretty sizable investment across the product and engineering organization. We've probably got you know roughly 60 product engineering people that are focused on you know these two things as well as a few other things that we're exploring.

# Philippe

Great, thank you. To those of you who are watching I'm aware that we're still having audio issues, I

apologize. We'll do the best we can to muddle through it. The next question was to me, which was how can we get a shirt like Prashanths? And so if you're interested in one, if you send us an email to community-support@stackoverflow.com we will get you on the list, we'll see what we can do there. Next Prashanth, this one is to you.

There's an inherent tension between a community that's striving to create a well curated body of knowledge and a business that has to prioritize engagement metrics. For example, a user would feel that reading an existing Q&A post, getting the information they needed, and closing out of the site as a success. Whereas Stack Exchange as a business uses that lack of engagement as a problem to solve. What do you think is the best way to balance these two conflicting goals? This question was submitted from an Anonymous user through our form.

# Prashanth

Got it. I think it's an excellent question. So I think in the past you know, the mission of the site was centered around you know coming together to create this exceptionally high quality knowledge base, and to engage with each other to make that happen. This core, this is talked through also through the kind of multiple lanes, Q&A specifically, that will never change. I think it's an excellent and accurate knowledge base that can be used by everyone, community or AI models, or you know, to solve problems ultimately together.

And our KaaS or Knowledge as a Service vision of integrating all these tools is centered around that very concept. But we've also seen over the past decade that as the world's information gets documented, and more recently when all that information is being used to train these AI chat bots, the utility and value of the site has changed, you know or it is changing. It has caused us to think about other ways in which we can be useful to the community, beyond that original sort of single lane sort of mission. And one of our hypotheses, as I talked about, is creating these additional lanes, that you know create on an authentic basis but perhaps less formal, less structured, less strict of a place to engage.

And by the way, the reason we're doing it is because we've heard feedback from a lot of the, let's call the next generation of users, who value speed in many cases. Even though they're willing to trade off some of the accuracy instead of that, and I know that's different from the original Q&A mission. These additional lanes will have big, big markers, big lanes, separated from the original lane, to sort of make sure that's clear what they're getting themselves into in that space. So ultimately what we're trying to do is balance, you know, quality human knowledge creation and consumption of that knowledge, in the past, along with engagement. Which obviously some users seem to want from us so that they can access this more immediate guidance from people, which is not exactly the mission and purpose of Q&A.

# Philippe

For our next one, it's one that we're all three going to take, and Prashanth I'll ask you to go first. The question they're asking us is, from another anonymous person on our form, what brought you to Stack Overflow/Stack Exchange, for work or just a visit? And what makes you stay? Has what keeps you here changed over the years?

# Prashanth

Yeah I mean, you know, the biggest thing as I mentioned is around the mission right. I think this foundational mission that you know impacts millions of people around the world, it's literally a once-in-a-lifetime type of opportunity, you know. Where can you say that you get to serve that many people? And it's just you know, I think what commonly everybody in the company, I think pretty much that is a common link why we're all here.

And I was originally brought on in 2019 in addition to sort of maintaining that mission to help scale and create a more of a true business model for the company focused on the enterprise. And that was an exciting mission to be on because I could add value given my background. And that you know we had to do a lot of lot of work I mean it was hard work to make sure that you know that this team that was in place that we brought in these new ideas that you know I sort of brought some of my background there, and we made a lot of changes navigate a lot of tricky times. The covid era which was very difficult for the company, but we powered through it. You know we also the 2021 era when that got reset what is also known as the Zirp era, that also you know we work through and you know we ultimately by the way through that process because we created a business model we were purchased by our current owners, we were acquired, and it was a great outcome for our investors, for our founders, for a lot of the long term employees who spent a lot of time here doing that. So I was very pleased that we were able to do all that for you know one of the was a good outcome for the people that you know brought me on board.

And my excitement has evolved since then because now the goal is how do we reinvent Stack Overflow in the context of this fast evolving world with AI in the middle, and to embrace what is happening to be cautious about it because obviously as I mentioned it's got plenty of pitfalls, AI does. And to make sure that we harness the power of it to realize its potential to help all of you, I think that's a pretty exciting problem to work on. Not easy as you've seen there's all sorts of you know issues with it but the future is exciting as we evolve and we create, become like this destination for technologists. Beyond just the knowledge base, to be more communal to be able to help you with your careers, and you know to serve all of you in that evolution is a very exciting mission that's what keeps me here today.

**Philippe**

Jody, do you want to tell us what brought you and what keeps you here?

# Jody

Yeah like Prashanth, like you Philippe and and most of our team it really was the mission you know I've spent the the past close to 15 years working on developer education in tech-ed both at AWS as well as plural site I've worked on products for engineers prior to that and you know the idea of helping Engineers is is really you know fundamentally something I believe in and having been in the industry for a while you know it's like how could you not know Stack Overflow and how could you not be excited about the opportunity to go there and so you know I wasn't actually looking to to go to Stack Overflow but when the opportunity came up it was one that I had to had to look into and you know I joined as CTO and felt like it there was a good fit there where I could have a positive impact on some of the technology challenges and you know as you mentioned I've recently taken on the product organization which for me is really exciting you know the bringing product and engineering and design together you know to work closely with our customers and users to provide you know great Solutions is something I'm pretty passionate about.

And then you know the other thing you know that that I'm passionate about is I like solving hard things right I like doing hard things you know whether it's you know multi-day you know stage races on a mountain bike or or Technical Solutions and people Solutions and I think this is a really unique opportunity to to really kind of help reshape what Stack Overflow can be it is a I think a pivotal point in the history of Stack Overflow and I'm super excited about the opportunity to be part of that as well as you know like probably many people you know the peopleI work with here you know I feel like some of the best people in the industry are here and you know the opportunity to work with them and you know get to know the folks in meta and in the community more in the coming future are things that that keep me here and keep me really excited for me.

# Philippe

I first became aware of Stack overflow when I was working at the Wikimedia Foundation which runs Wikipedia and I obviously paid attention to user generated content sites and this was one that was brand new in the space but had a community moderation philosophy that I was I had a lot of interest in it seemed like the folks that were here weren't scared of taking on big things and I admired that sort of dedication to Quality and the challenge behind it so later on in my career when I was looking for a job I decided I wanted to actually build the stuff that I've been talking about building for so long and as a

contributor to a team so Cesar and the team here made a compelling case for me that I could help set up the trust and safety team here and then my boss hi Sarah the former director of the team announced that she was leaving and I had a decision to make. I still wanted to build cool stuff but these jobs don't come up that often and I felt sure I could be a contender for this one and I didn't know who we'd end up with as a boss if I didn't throw my hat in the ring so I did and then someone went made me a vice president and that's the origin story

But as to what keeps me here I'm focused on one thing: the people. the folks on the staff on my team and in the community and I tell every new hire at this company that these people this community they - you - take your hard won specialist knowledge that you got from years of studying experience and you just give it to the world for free for no other reason that it's just the right thing to do. you want to make life just that little bit easier for the person that comes after you and I'm consistently in awe of the people in our community for that reason but I stay because I can I feel like I can still contribute to making your lives a little easier or you know maybe just minimally tougher but for those folks that at work that I'm saying this stuff to they are the some of the smartest most driven most passionate people I've ever worked with I couldn't be more serious when I say that I've not talked to a single member of this staff that I didn't find fascinating and wouldn't love to sit and hear more about and the ones that are on my direct team the community managers are some of the most talented people working in this industry they are a close-knit team who comes to work every single day just looking for ways to make a difference and to make your lives and the lives of our users just a little bit easier to improve a process or a system or or fix a problem it's an honor for me to lead them and it's a job that I'm excited to do every single day.

Prashanth, the next one is for you, this comes from C+ one of our users and C+ asks, what mistakes do you think you've made since taking the CEO position? What would you have done differently if you had the knowledge and experience that you do now?

# Prashanth

Yeah, it's a fair question. I think as it relates there a few things come to mind. The first one is really probably would have tilted more on fixing this content creation issue much earlier, and so maybe opening up these lanes a lot sooner. Because you know the content as the world sort of creates or documents you know in the Library of Congress on Stack overflow, all the knowledge on programming, the incremental new things to be documented, you know, there's kind of a there's kind of a difference in kind of the volume that originally started out with, we start out with verses you know in the future. So we need to create new ways of engaging people as we've talked about especially the next generation of users who care for other mediums, so I wish we had explored that a lot sooner than than at this point in time when we have to you know work with a few other things, so I think the timing of that could have been much better.

Alongside that would have been investing in the public platform you know a lot more consistently over the past several years because even as we sort of focused on the Teams Enterprise business, we did that because we wanted to sort of double down resources on a thing that we said was important at the time. But at the same time you know I can't help but think you know maybe we should have allocated more to do all the things that we're talking about now you know back then a little bit more know even more balanced way.

The other probable mistake was I think over hiring in 2020/2021, and this is you know the pandemic era that you know the economic cycle was you know all in you sort of overheated mode and then it ultimately sort of all corrected itself in 2021 and so much like a lot of other companies we had to do personnel cuts, and I think that one in particular I think was very difficult for me. People who know me best including at the company know that I'm a very approachable or try aspire to be an approachable leader, so I generally know pretty much everybody in the company so when we had to do that it felt really you know gut-wrenching for me to go through that, and that was that was difficult. So that was certainly a mistake.

And and then finally I think you know doing this this sort of thing a lot more often I think you know we have not necessarily created more uniform way for me to directly speak to you I've relied on our community management team or relied on my in real life engagement with community members and I think these sort of forums always I wish we had spoken we engage more including in forums like meta you know where I know there's there's a lot of great engagement and some of our best power users exist there so I wish I

had spent more time but I've had to sort of balance a few different things and this is where it's ended up and so looking forward to the future.

# Philippe

Thank you. Colleenv on the sites asked us, Jody - what is the company doing to attract and retain experts to answer questions ?

# Jody

That's a great question to start with, and you know I think we've talked a little bit about it already. You know I mean over the years you know I feel like the the bar has just continued to raise be risen raised we've raised the bar's gotten higher as over the years in terms of you know being able to ask a good question on Stack Overflow as well as to be able to answer it and I think you know people and the way people interact has evolved over time right so you know we've talked about the possibility of different mediums different content types whether that's chat or more informal discussions you know we also want to explore you know other mediums you know things like video or other ways of helping people get started or meeting them where they are even.

Additionally you know we've done things like staging ground recently where we actually help people create better questions and you know they're connected with peers or mentors on the platform that help them create better questions which not surprisingly results in more answers and better answers so you know I think there there's a lot of things that we've got to look at you know it it's intimidating to ask a question on Stack Overflow for many people you know how do we address that how do we help people kind of graduate if you will from you know that first question asking experience to you know somebody that's more comfortable interacting on a regular basis so there's I mean pretty much everything we're focused on right now is is really around how do we attract and retain experts to answer questions.

# Philippe

Great, thank you. And from a community team perspective I think we need to get better at how we engage with them once and and as you said make that experience less daunting if we want them to come back we have to support them well while they're here so that means we've got to focus on things like welcoming and onboarding which I know your team has just started to do some work on so I'm very excited to see how that works out a question from the chat what will you do what will Stack Overflow to you when you run out of new questions and answers people just are not posting as much these days.

# Prashanth

yeah I think the the the point is then to create opportunities for people to engage and help each other out in multi-dimensional ways there may be that's why these additional highways are Q&A there's a very specific sort of set of constraints there as we've talked about but you know the number the amount of technology in the future or the amount of software that needs to be written I think is somewhat infinite I think in many ways if the AI thing goes right it should free up a lot of people's time at least that theoretically that's how it should work and that should create even more Innovation more companies need to get created the AI technology Stack is you know as you seen there's a there's a huge explosion of new companies that have that are working on all sorts of problems to continuously improve you know the performance for price and all the other dimensions that people think about all that is technology like it's about technology improvements a lot of the you know the software development space obviously over the years each programming language kept abstracting away some of the you know the zeros and ones as we all started out from with assembly code and that's discontinued right but I think as software gets written and AI now is is the next wave and so that'll you know there's a lot of software Rewritten there so new knowledge as learn about how best to do that how their their role as software programmers is going to change you know how do they think about prompting versus you know thinking about some of the Primitives of writing code but still understanding it very important that people don't take shortcuts because you know at some point it's going to catch up to you so all those things I think require a combination of continuous opportunities to create more knowledge and share that and you know work together to do that so there's still going to be a stream of that but at the same time there's a lot of societal change there's a lot of need for people to be able to engage with other experts say okay in this new world like what what am I supposed to do exactly what am I always hear from community members I'm a brand new graduate I don't know if I what should I actually learn actually going forward there a lot of what I learned actually is obsolete

so I think those sort of things require more of a community versus more of just like a knowledge sharing Mission and that's why we have hypothesized that opening up these additional lanes gives more people more reasons to engage and all that by the way engagement this is an online platform so that creates new knowledge a chat platform creates new exchanges on how people think about XYZ topic or a discussion creates an exchange of ideas and opinions it may not again be as high quality as Q&A but it's a discussion and it's a it is a distillation no pun intended in context of how people are thinking about certain solving certain problems as they think about their own perspective and their own their own challenges so all that is very important and useful for things like you know model training and everything else but all that includes knowledge sharing along with Community the

# Jody

the other thing I'd add just to chime in right is is we talked about trust right and you can get answers from Ai and and it's it's great for a lot of things but there I think for for a while still you know for for probably a good period of time there are still going to be those questions that are more nuanced a little more difficult and or you just aren't sure you know you can trust the answer and how do you how do you get that trust you know our experience so far is by talking to other humans by talking with folks and experts and getting expert advice and so I think that creating a platform where people can have those conversations and you know speak to another person and kind of work it out whether it's really accurate or not I think is really a

big part of the value of Stack Overflow as a whole and I think that's going to be a continued need even if it becomes more specialized and more you know detail oriented over time.

# Philippe

Thank you expanding on this just slightly another question that came in from the chat here was how will you keep High rep users on the platform when your ux team is actively throwing hurdles to those users for example the current testing of the additional comment which requires an additional click to submit a comment

# Jody

All right so the the question is how are we going to keep people here if if we continue to experiment with the UI

yeah so you know the whole point of experimenting is figuring out what works and what doesn't work right so I don't imagine that everything we do is going to suit everybody and so you know the point of the experiment is to see you know overall does it increase engagement does it make it easier for people to get started can we can we eliminate dead ends in the app in the in the platform so that you know users don't try to do something then not have the ability to do it you know is there a way for them to if they can't vote for something can they at least say thank you and do it in a way that's not disruptive to the comments Etc so you know we're going to continue to evolve you know I know our design team is passionate about creating good experiences and so nobody's trying to intentionally create roadblocks but are instead actually trying to to make it easier for more people

# Philippe

Great, so the next one I will take a stab at but if either of you want to jump in feel free and the question is what is being done about the toxicity problem on Stack Overflow High reputation users tend to disagree but the far and wide consensus among developers online is that too many of Stack overflows frequent answerers seem to have a real contempt for the less learned what is Stack Overflow doing or planning to create a more welcoming environment

you know this is anecdotally one that I hear quite a lot it's an important question and we've done a lot of work over the last couple of years to set the right environment and the right tone for people to be successful on the site principally last may we rewrote and began enforcement of a new and stronger code of conduct and our trust and safety team is constantly revisiting that for gaps or areas for improvement the very first section of that code of conduct says that we expect all users to treat each other with kindness and respect and now when we as a community fall short of that I would hope that folks could discuss and come to a resolution but if needed we have moderators and my team will intervene to ensure that that's the case now usually this enforcement comes in the form of a friendly chat pointing out expectations but we have been and do issue formal warnings or suspensions were required but when we think about Community moderation that's at the heart of Stack overflow in this whole network we're taking on small pieces of moderation work and you know even as things as simple as like up or down voting content that's a moderation task that indicates quality so modeling behavior is another part of that Community model moderation so when we're modeling the behavior that we want people to see and remembering that people of good faith can disagree that helps obviously anybody can have a bad day but my 25 years of experience in this space tells me that most people when you approach them with courtesy regret the Outburst that they had and that they're more than happy to correct and apologize

so modeling the right behavior is critical not just to resolve the situation but also to serve as an example for others but we know that new users have found it difficult and scary to ask questions so we decided they needed sort of a sheltered experience and we kicked off the staging ground which you probably know is that sheltered experience for new users the whole area encourages helpful interactions not toxicity it's architected for that from the very beginning so we've got three angles of attack on this problem right there policy behavioral and technological but we're not just like resting on our Laurels for that we're we're committed to continuing to improve the experience for users on the site and to doing so using smart well-conceived and well-designed tools

# Prashanth

yeah maybe a couple other points just mention I think is that the the the Q&A single lane that we have at the moment just the design principle think thinking back to that everything Philippe said is accurate but the original Mission of Q&A was to keep the standards super super high and I think that is the root cause a little bit of or the consequence of position I think is you know what we're seeing with some of this right where people find it difficult to actually let's say a simple question or something already been asked and the kind of the reaction is quite specific look it's already been asked as an example it's a duplicate and it's going to be closed out and that is because the trade-off was made to keep the quality very high and you know actually that's that is a very specific deliberate design decision which that's why that serves its purpose at the same time that's why we're talking about opening up lane two and lane three with things like discussions and chats so that it's a different set of rules it's actually not it should not be intimidating to ask somebody on chat or somebody in discussions if you want to have a conversation because the purpose is different it's not to create the Library of Congress on programming it is to have a discussion or to be able to Ping somebody or chat with somebody get a quick answer quick answer exactly great

# Philippe

Great so Prashanth this one is for you this is from wizz wizz on the sites and he says why is attribution optional lately the company keeps saying that attribution is non-negotiable but then you use or endorse systems that that that fundamentally cannot respect attribution so what's up with that

# Prashanth

got it thank you wizz wizz for the question that's that's an important one I think the attribution is absolutely very important we consider it as is completely vital it is a non-negotiable as we engage with Partners but it's also a matter of you know us holding them accountable when they on their road map and as they it does take some time for partners to incorporate that into their AI tools as we do these Partnerships with them and where they get licensed access to the data as an example so it's still in sort of an early infancy stage despite the fact we've struck multiple of these Partnerships they're all in the process of attributing so as an example one recent example is with Google Gemini Cloud assist that which is now attributing Stack Overflow content in the in their IDE right as you write code through that through that tool you will see the sources back to the Stack overflow Content that was was used you know originally anecdotally also I would just say that you know our head of marketing Eric Martin shared this with me earlier today is that the with open AI we now you begin to see things like sources within there and you can actually see the links again to Stack overflow if you're in and we have actually seen a nice increase in the traffic that comes to our site from from chatgpt actually and you know obviously the opposite is happening on search for all content sites because that's just a it's a different world for search but as gen AI and search trade off on you know you know getting access to users is sort of the primary screen that people spend time on to get access to information on the web we're literally seeing that happen on our site where traffic seems to be coming now from both places people are coming definitely from Google but also our search engines and people are definitely coming from now our some of our knowledge as a service integration so it was interesting to see the chat GPT traffic through this attribution point so it is a long way of saying wizz wizz it is a a work in progress and it is is happening as we keep working with each of these Partners to to hold them accountable to that requirement thank you

**Philippe**

Jody from the chat today is it technically even possible to stop AI companies from profiting off our work

# Jody

that's a that's a a great question right so we are doing a lot of work to prevent them from profiting without you know having the proper licenses in place you know to do things like the attribution the Prashanth said in my in my mind it it's kind of like a you know trying to prevent Bad actors on any site whether it's ddos attacks or whatever you know it's it's a constant race and escalation to prevent you know different organizations from scraping or or even just using our content right I mean our content is is out there whether you know we make it available or not you know people copy it it's out there when you know when we identify circumstances where organizations are clearly using our data whether they say so explicitly or not you know we approach them and and try to work out you know a licensing agreement we remind them of you know the fact that you know they need to be socially responsible and so on so so we've got a a small team that's focused on you know trying to prevent scraping right or you know inappropriate use of our data and and then try to partner with the companies that that have taken it or using it to to establish a

a more responsible use of our data so is it is it possible to prevent probably not 100% just like we can't prevent people from from copying music but but I think that we can you know and we are doing everything we can to try to minimize the the negative impact there

# Prashanth

yeah maybe one other point to add to Jody's comments that you know there always going to be people that are responsible and then there's going to be nefarious Bad actors that basically go and try to take stuff that they're not supposed to take anyways I think that this is the moment that we are in the internet which is that actually the you know Chris di from Andre was talking about this in a podcast recently that there's an implicit sort of Covenant that previously had been established with the internet and content producers right where you again send this traffic through a search engine that you or send provide this content through to be indexed to search engines that traffic is sent through those search engines we can you know people content Prov producers can advertise and so on the comment has changed because now the AI models have leveraged all this data so the AI companies and AI labs and Cloud companies should all do the right thing by working with content producers and coming up with these licensing agreements that is a it's a very important thing because it is a it is a it needs to people need to think about it in a socially responsible way for something organically to show up there or else you know by the way there's going to be long-term implications if that doesn't happen for those AI companies right and some of this you know shows up in things even more recently you'll see in the news there are a lot of lawsuits that are floating around with you know from content producers to air companies that's one example of a reaction The Other Extreme reaction is you know if there's no content being generated by humans and you really believe machines can create all the knowledge that you need and new innovation and creative thinking then you okay then I guess we we've sort of given up and given it all to the machines and all of us can sit around and do nothing but that doesn't make sense either clearly so the question is like there's got to be just you know with our big boy or big girl pants on we've got to come up with a model that works and the way the best we figured out is to sort of work symbiotically with these companies to say look we want to help you accomplish because ultimately you're trying to serve our users you folks in the community so it's in our best interest to work with them to serve all of you so why don't we come up with a way that helps you because we realize what you're trying to accomplish and at the e time helps our users so the best we've come up with is our knowledge Solutions program which allows us to license this our content out to these companies they pay us be able to invest back in the community these features and do what what we've been talking about throughout this call

**Philippe** great so a followup to that that came in is how can we the community that built this Corpus of knowledge trust that these attributions and SaaS tools you're partnering with are accurate or even valid if we can't see our access the tools

# Jody

I'm not sure that I've got a a straightforward answer to that right I mean at the end of the day you know when we license and partner with these these organizations you know contractually they're obligated to do the attribution and you know to be in alignment with you know our copyright regulations it's pretty difficult to enforce it's pretty difficult to guarantee I think that we're seeing the different organizations starting to make progress there you know one because they're trying to be socially responsible two I think you know fundamentally you know they recognize a lack of trust and that attribution provides more trust you know so I think that that it's mutually beneficial for them to do that from a strict technological perspective obviously it's it's a pretty it's pretty challenging for us to enforce it

**Philippe** thank you so another question from journeyman geek which I think this is a great question this one is aimed at you Prashanth in October 2023 the company decided to Pivot towards Ai and perhaps not coincidentally we had staff cutbacks from the perspective on the ground we've had a few attempts at deeply unpopular features and nothing that really feels successful what would you consider to be the criteria for the AI experiments to be considered a failure and on the other hand what would you would what would you consider to have made all this worth it

# Prashanth

got it no thank you journey man geek I've enjoyed your engagement in meta and I've seen you know a lot lot of thoughtful comments in there over the over the many years so thank you again for your thoughtful question

I think if you think about the context if you go back this a little bit in 2023 the company had like these two big enormous challenges right the first one was the rise of gen and chat gpt's launch in November of 2022 that had sort of an immediate impact on our traffic since it was back then a you know direct substitution to what we you know what we stood for and what we did for for users and the second big issue that we were facing is sort of the sign significant economic headwind that was in the post pandemic era in at the end of 2021 and you know customers were pulling back on spending on SAAS software on advertising on you know spending on job boards Etc so our staff cutbacks we had unfortunately had to do them to correct this over hiring issue that we had I explained previously relative to this demand sort of slowdown and as I mentioned previously very very brutal for us to go do that and you know not you know definitely not one of my happiest moments of the company given you know all the people that we affected there now

we also had to respond to those AI heads so I you know I personally whether it's correct or incorrect we set a goal at the company to say okay look this is a real it's a real sort of shift that's happening at the end of 2022 that this is like a few months after that so we set a goal to say we're going to come up with our own AI response what is our response to AI and let's do it within a very short period of time you know let's really have a tiger team that focus on this so we organize you know 10% of the company Etc and we set this goal of announcing our AI strategy and implementation six months out or so at the WeAre developers conference in Germany and the general goal was not to leverage AI for just AI sake just to be very clear but was it to the whole point was to leverage it in a way that number one solved user and customer problems and number two it would Delight you in ways that you didn't sort of expect so both those were in our minds and we tested these AI features that we built we built several that integrated into things like IDE into into Visual Studio code into slack into Microsoft teams and we did this both on the public platform as well as on Stacko for teams our private Enterprise product and net net what we saw was that the on the public platform where they were there were actually you know the search and summarization features were actually relatively well received but several other features theoretically you know solve customer problems but like surfacing content in in their workflow like through those tools I mentioned or being able to ingest content from external places but not everything was you know was was you know well received like you know people said okay they like this and they didn't like it so we basically retired in response to your feedback the team decided to retire the public platform AI functionality because it just wasn't I suppose a big enough problem to solve for you folks it wasn't you know meaningful enough and so we listened to your feedback and that's what we did and it was a right decision and we started focusing on other workflow items you know for example what are some other problems that people care about so for example the question asking experience was something that people have talked about a lot given the new user experience that we described that both Philippe and Jody have talked about and so we've now integrated of course AI assistance in the stage ground area for users and now even Beyond staging ground we're testing that so all questions are getting sort of an AI assistant and that's been relatively well received by many of you so especially the newer users seem to like the fact that they can place have this sort of safe sandbox to be able to craft a question that doesn't have you know human input and then they can present their best put their best foot forward

so that's one example of us of of doing something that is pivoting kind of our focus and then e thing with the answer experience you know we want to also be able to say how do we test AI in that context is that useful when people are writing answers you know people are getting used to getting prompts on how to you know even let's say you write your email in Google and Gmail you know you're getting fed you know sentences as you're completing sentences so should you be able to do that that's a question for us we want to be able to see would you find that valuable so we're constantly going to test and you know make make this site you know solve your big problems basically and and it really sort of help you know get unstuck you know any of your sort of workflow items you know to be able to ask questions get recognized find jobs and so on and if AI happens to be the answer to that solution great if not we're not sort of married to the concept necessarily right so we are we're not going to shoehorn AI where it's not needed we use it wherever it makes sense and especially if you find it to be valuable that's the most important thing yeah I

# Jody

I might chime in there too that you know we we do make mistakes not that that I need to tell anybody that right so we've recently run an experiment of answers with AI right where we were using AI to provide an answer with the idea that people could edit it to provide an answer and the the resounding feedback was that that doesn't work for for our question answering population that it's more work to edit an answer than it is to get help with an answer so you we've run the experiment I think it's still running just to get feedback but but we clearly you know the approach there for a number of reasons is not the right approach and so you know we're not going to force that we're not going to shoe horn as you said we'll go back to the drawing board and and try to figure out you know how can we help with the the answering process and does AI play a role in it and if so what is that role

**Philippe** so great a followup that came in you answered a question about experiments but missed the big missed the big picture why do you perform experiments that are negatively received even if serious issues get pointed out by the community

**Jody** you know it's it's that's a tricky one right because you know what part of the community you know how do we balance you know feedback from from the community with data you know every experiment isn't going to to be well-received you know our intention is to try things even if even if it's not obvious to everybody or maybe it's obvious to a sub set of folks that said you know as we experiment and as we learn if it doesn't provide the value then you know our commitment is that that will remove it now is everybody going to love everything we deliver obviously not right I mean there's no way to no way to do that you know our intention is to create a better user experience overall we've got a lot of different types of users different personas you know and and you know as we target different personas it may be better for one group of people than it is for another so is there room for us to improve in terms of of listening and and taking the feedback absolutely I'm not going to say that we've been perfect there but I'm also not going to say that everything we're going to do is is going to be loved by everybody great thank you

# Philippe

Next Question, developers use their Stack Overflow reputation to help get jobs this past year that ranking feature was removed from most devs have thoughts about bringing it back

**Prashanth**

which particular feature, I'm sorry repeat that

**Philippe**

reputation ranking you could use that to show your relative ranking in um in within different tags

**Prashanth**

oh I see and this is in the context of careers just so I understand

**Philippe**

yes for helping to get jobs

# Prashanth

Yeah I think if it's related to the old job board then I think that's kind of that's a different. Philippe just correct me if I'm wrong here, just I'm tracking with you but if it relates to the old job board then that's a you kind of a different assessment like currently we have a a much bigger partnership with indeed where we you know we heard from a lot of you saying that hey you missed the job board you really think it could be useful to you as you progress in your careers so very recently about a year ago we worked with our partner indeed to reintroduce that because we we no longer are in the kind of in the job list business the way we were back in the day but we are very much you know looking to help you find jobs and at the e time help companies find developers on our website if they're looking for role so I think as we call employer branding in our company so that is the the first early let's call it return of the job board on our website with you know let's call it somewhat limited functionality with all the things that we could potentially do with it it's an experiment much like other things and we're we're going to see how that is received by you folks we received a lot of feedback from you saying you missed this and missed that and the original XYZ feature was really good and so we're taking all that into account as we think about you know those the the additional functionality that I mentioned the community and and the communal as well as the the career oriented pieces so we will take all that into account as we as we think about the next iteration of our careers functionality on the site to make sure that we link a lot of these it makes a lot of sense to to link people's reputations to getting great jobs to be able to unlock certain jobs based on your expertise on the site there's so many potential options there for us to explore I think it's quite exciting for us to even think about the possibilities so I think please keep your ideas coming so that we can when we build it we can take that into account

# Philippe

Great thank you the next question comes from a user with an absolutely unpronounceable name asks: that since the rise of large language models the number of new questions asked on Stack overflows dropped from about 6,000 per day in February 2023 to just about 2,000 in February 2025 given that shift are there any strategies that Stack Overflow is considering to encourage users to interact with real people rather than relying solely on LLMs and if the trend continues with fewer questions being asked what do you see as the future of Stack Overflow.

# Jody

Yeah I I feel like we've kind of talked about this a few times already you know the you know the three-lane highway that that Prashanth mentioned right providing different ways for humans and people and primarily technologists when we talk about Stack Overflow for them to interact you know trying to identify different mediums meeting people where they are you know trying to help keep engineers in flow all of these things are are areas that we're exploring in order to you know create a space for people to interact more you know we talked at the very top you know pant talked about bringing humans and Technology Ai and humans together in community right and so that's a big part of our mission is how do we actually get people talking to one another in order to get better Solutions better answers etc so we've got a number of things that we're focused on and you know we're going to be continuing to work through those as we go.

# Philippe

Thank you. Another one, Prashanth, speaks to business model a little bit. So this comes from an anonymous user on the private form. They said much of the community worries that the business model for the public network is not sustainable. That it's impossible to make the model sustainable without negatively impacting the community. Do you worry about that? And if not, what would you say to the folks who are fearful that there's a fundamental incompatibility between the needs of the community and creating a profitable business?

# Prashanth

Interesting, it's a good question. I think it's what I talked about previously, right you know, to be able to sustain the platform you need some sort of a funding source to be able to do that. There are many models out there, if you look at some companies like Wikimedia they approach it differently. We approach it by having products that we sell to companies, that by the way, ultimately the purpose of those products is not only to realize our mission but also to serve you, which is our mission by the way. So these products are actually directed to you, to help you collaborate and share knowledge inside your companies, in an Enterprise SaaS as an example, or for you to leverage Stack Overflow content in your AI agents in your company, or to be able to apply for jobs and companies you care for, so they again they're all the spirit of serving you.

But if you go back in time the foundation has always been this public platform, you know, which obviously cost money, like I said. And the original business model was ads and talent job listings which obviously lean heavily on the public platform to succeed. In 2018 and 2019, I joined right after that in late 2019, in that time period you know the company added this Enterprise product which was called Stack overflow for teams, and it was independent of the public platform. And so ultimately to address this kind of user and customer need to share knowledge inside companies Stack Overflow for teams was born.

And in 2023, about a year ago or so, we added the next set of enterprise products focused on of course our data and API business as we just talked about. And so that you know companies can leverage this content engine for again their AI pre-training needs and agenting needs and all those sort of things we've already described. So all this is to say we've tried to create many independent and diversified business models to leverage ultimately the strengths of the company, to create the sustainable future for us, to be relevant both in our role and ultimately to support the investments we need to make this platform really useful for you. Also important note we're not a one trick pony, and that's important you know we're highly diversified. And we're not exposed to, you know, by just like one product that's exposed to an economically volatile environment. Thankfully we have multiple products, and so from a sustainability standpoint I think you know our products. I'm quite pleased with the fact that we've been able to do that to make sure that there's, you know, plenty of ways in which the company can sustain financially. And also can obviously invest and reinvest back in the community to realize our mission.

# Philippe

Another one that touches on the same thing sort of more pointedly. We're asked, will you facilitate the restructuring of Stack exchange moving to a not for-profit with the community-led board?

# Prashanth

Oh that's a very specific question. I'm not sure we would need to do that, is sort of the answer to that question, given what I just described. Because that I think assumes that there's some sort of a disconnect between what we're trying to do. Ultimately it's all in service of the users. All the things, free products, which is the public community which all of you help create, and our paid products, the enterprise products. Some companies have chosen to be 100% nonprofits, and that's not us. We want to basically have a business model around a community and a knowledge base, ultimately again in service of you. We think that works for this particular company versus being sort of a nonprofit.

# Philippe

Thank you. The next one I'll take a stab at because I haven't answered any in a while. It says, how would you describe the relationship between Stack Overflow and the most deeply engaged users of the public platform over the past couple of years? Such as those who consistently try to engage with the company on meta? Is it what you want it to be? What do you want it to be, and what do you think it will take to concretely get that relationship there?

So this falls into my team's line of work somewhat, and I would say that I would describe it as it's got some rough spots for sure but we've got a lot of really positive collaboration as well. I've been a part of a number of sessions where we've openly and very frankly discussed lessons that we've learned so that we can do knowledge transfer, and avoid repeating mistakes from the past wherever we can. We've also got a number of initiatives either running or being planned that examine things like where we communicate how we set our expectations and how we convey things like the deprecation of a feature or tests that are intended to provide valuable data that we need, but which may not be really popular with some parts of the user base.

And so, it's worth pointing out that in some of those things we're making changes that frankly are pointed to the new contributors that are joining us. We're doing some necessary reboots of processes and tools and the ways of communication that we have, because we believe that with strong growth we have an opportunity to improve on those things. So some things that might not be built for a power user can seem like a waste of time or can impact community trust, but that's because the feature isn't meant for you it's meant for somebody else. Over time of course we want those newer users to become the power users.

So some of the changes that we've been implementing, and that will be implemented, are disruptive change. So by their very nature some folks aren't going to like them. Honestly if we don't make some sort of disruptive change though we could continue to see the number of questions drop. So yeah we test out some things that aren't real popular. Some of them we keep, some of them we don't. We change some things that some folks maybe wish we hadn't and all of these can lead to tension. And trust me when I say that I do not relish that tension nobody on either side of it enjoys it. But I do believe that as we get better at explaining the why behind why we do things, community members will come to believe in our good intent, and that we can gradually regain some trust from those who lost it. And we can get better at delivering features that will meet needs, even when the need isn't totally appreciated yet. And I believe that that will, you know, grow confidence in the company as a good steward for the network. But it is trust that and support that it's one you know inch by inch and foot by foot.

# Prashanth

Yeah maybe Philippe, in addition to your point, I perhaps would add that sometimes I describe what we're doing as a little bit like we're governing sort of this democratic country of about 100 million people. You know, it is quite complex, and then ultimately we have to listen to do that successfully. You have to listen to people. But if you listen to people from various perspectives, not just a certain group of people etc. Especially, you know, the diversity that we have on the website, right? The power users and then the newer users etc, ultimately in the spirit of serving the whole. And so I think that's I think the complexity of what we are doing, is like you know, serving a very large community and so that's easier said than done.

# Philippe

Thank you Prashanth I'll give it back to you. Why don't you ever participate on meta, or the rest of the network, like the founders did in order to be able to get feedback from the community directly?

**Prashanth**

got it who asked this by the way that that

# Philippe

We actually got that asked by a number of people beginning with Starship but we got similar questions from Curious Danny, journeyman geek, wizzwizz4, Bobble

# Prashanth

Okay right, it's a popular question. I recognize some of those names, Starship, thank you also for your very thoughtful questions and answers throughout the years. I've enjoyed reading them on meta.

So just so you know, I may not be very active on meta but I read everything. In fact I will often tell my team that this is one of the things that I do late at night right before going to sleep, which I'm not sure that's a good idea in retrospect, but it's but it is definitely something that I do. I read pretty much all things about the company, anybody that knows me knows I'm fairly detail oriented that way.

And the general sort of point here is that I actually love engaging with our community, and I do it quite regularly. And I do it, let's say number one, in real life. I'm constantly talking to community members everywhere I am in person. Number two, community members who are working at companies that we are working with, I often engage with them as we talk about obviously not only our public Stack Overflow but also Enterprise Products. And I often, by the way, share a lot of what I hear in these sort of areas with the company, and I write an email every week on Fridays to the whole company. And I've been doing it you know for five and a half years, and I've been at the company without missing a beat and oftentimes I will say this is what I heard from users this week, right. And you know it's up to us to do something about that.

And so just so you know that I absolutely love engaging with all of you and I think but more broadly speaking I think my job has you know multiple dimensions as a CEO. I think it's different than being a founder of the company that started, or founders, that started this platform, with that sole mission. For me it's like talking to customers because we have a business, obviously talking to the community, we have talking to partners now in the context of these AI topics, it's talking to employees to make sure they understand that we're changing our direction in this new world, talking to investors. So it's you know it's a

balancing act ultimately in terms of like the time that I allocate towards being, let's say, specifically on the meta platform. And I also, by the way, rely on as I mentioned previously, an excellent team with Philippe leading it, and his community management team that spend a lot of time doing that on a minute-by-minute basis, so then I'm in constant touch with Philippe all the time to to understand you know what's happening what's not happening and for us to make decisions off that. So you know they've got my trust, my ear constantly, and a lot of my support. And I don't want to come across a sort of overly micromanaging or distrusting their efforts by just being in the details like you know 24/7 in their work.

So I joined the company October 1st 2019, I literally walked into also a fairly like you know very complex community situation, there was a very negative situation that was underway, and it was a very tricky time. Also I think for me to sort of engage at that moment, and I think it sort of set me back actually personally, just reflecting on it and being able to just be having this sort of conversation with every community member through even meta. And you know I didn't want to jump in without fully understanding the nature of what was going on, and how things worked etc. So I chose instead to basically let my team sort of you know at that time to manage that and I sort of focus on the other aspects of you know what I mentioned around running the company and so on. But I probably could have and should have probably engaged more fully when things did calm down after that original introduction, if you will, and I'll just sort of reiterate that even though I may not be very active on meta I'm constantly reading all your comments there and I'm constantly obviously like talking to all of you in you know in all these other places that I described that we engage with community members.

# Philippe

We actually got a followup to that one too that I think is great, from weird glyphs and sayse and a couple others, who asked why now? Why are you doing an AMA now when you haven't done it before, especially when there was a lot of strife in the community? And are you going to continue doing it periodically?

# Prashanth

Yeah, it's a really I think it's a it's a great point I think that this is a very as Jody mentioned previously it's it's a it's a particular moment in time where this is an inflection point for not only Stack Overflow but for the entire software development programming coding sort of space in community, right. So our goal is to engage with all of you to build the future of what Stack should be together with you as I mentioned already. And you know we want to be even more transparent about our thinking. That's part of the reason why we wanted to do this in this particular moment in time, and also we want you to be involved in building that future with us as we talked about. So this is like my way of you know explicitly stating that, to all of you, to say please engage please work with our team engage with the feedback engage with the mechanisms we've provided you know whether it's in research or surveys or through meta or anything else, or even joining our community management team, to make sure that we can build it the way we all feel very happy about to add value for the future.

And then finally I would say why are we, I think there's a question around why even do this through like streaming versus meta, and why do this now? I think our user base, as we've talked about, is much larger than just in meta. Meta's got an amazing group of highly active like power users very involved, and not everybody that I've talked to engages there, and I think that there's notions like how do we make sure that we get input from multiple places and this is one attempt to do that, to say this is welcome to everybody. Meta of course, and of course beyond meta, and we want to just be able to welcome everybody to provide their input and to make sure that you know we sort of engaged in a very authentic way. So yeah, we hope to do this periodically, depending on your feedback. If you think this is useful, you know we'll be happy to do it.

# Philippe

Great, thank you. We have about four minutes left and so I thought maybe it would be a great chance for us to just do a couple of words of wrap up here. And I want to start by saying to folks thank you for showing up, we've had several hundred of you here and I hope we were able to get to some or most of the questions, I know there are a lot more questions that I saw fly by chat we didn't get to. I'm sorry, but as Prashanth said we hope to do something sort of like this on a regular basis, and we hope he'll come back and join us again for that. Prashanth , any final words from you?

# Prashanth

No I I just think, you know I just have to say, thank you all. I think this is you know I just can't reiterate how much, how incredibly special this company and Community is. And you know I just can't thank you enough for taking the time, and how much thought that went into creating this amazing knowledge base and Community, which is obviously you know what we're aspiring to augment even more. But it could not have happened without your hard work, I mean I just want you all to know that we don't take that for granted. The fact that all of you spent that much time and effort and care to do this, and create this amazing asset, that is literally one of the premier assets in the entire world, on the internet. I think it's all credit to you, so thank you. And I really sort of hope that you folks will engage with us as we build the next version of Stack Overflow, so I'm excited to engage all of you to do that.

**Philippe**

Jody Bailey you get the last word.

# Jody

Haha look at that. Like both of you, you know I want to say thank you. The thing that I want to say is that one, I really am excited about the new role and the opportunity. I feel like there is a big opportunity to build and develop more trust between the organization and community, and that I recognize that you know it takes more than just words, right, it takes action and continued action. And you know my commitment is to do that. It doesn't mean that you know the things that my team and I deliver are always going to be what people want, but you know, the commitment is that we will communicate that we'll continue to make things better, and that you know I'll make myself as accessible as possible. So, thank you everybody and you know I'm looking forward to partnering going forward.

**End of AMA**