What is really a PWA?

Two recent posts made me revisit PWAs, what they are and how we should proceed moving forward. Since Alex Russell and Francisc Berriman coined the term (in [Progressive Web Apps: Escaping Tabs Without Losing Our Soul](#)) I've seen a lot written about PWAs (including the course I collaborated in while at Google) and a lot of confusion as to what makes a Progressive Web Application.

From the beginning, Frances and Alex defined these as the characteristics of a PWA:

- **[Responsive](#)**: to fit any form factor
- **Connectivity independent**: Progressively-enhanced with [Service Workers](#) to let them work offline
- **App-like-interactions**: Adopt a Shell + Content application model to create appy navigations & interactions
- **Fresh**: Transparently always up-to-date thanks to the Service Worker update process
- **Safe**: Served via TLS (a Service Worker requirement) to prevent snooping
- **Discoverable**: Are identifiable as "applications" thanks to [W3C](#) [Manifests](#) and Service Worker registration scope allowing search engines to find them
- **Re-engageable**: Can access the re-engagement UIs of the OS; e.g. [Push Notifications](#)
- **[Installable to the home screen through browser-provided prompts](#)**, allowing users to "keep" apps they find most useful without the hassle of an app store
- **Linkable**: meaning they're zero-friction, zero-install, and easy to share. The social [power of URLs](#) *matters*

So we know what to build and have the technologies to do so. So why don't we.

As Paul points in his post it is not easy to do from a technical standpoint and it's not easy to convince developers, particularly those working in content-only sites that PWAs are good for them.

Links and Resources

- https://infrequently.org/2015/06/progressive-apps-escaping-tabs-without-losing-our-soul/

- https://fberriman.com/2017/06/26/naming-progressive-web-apps/
- https://alistapart.com/article/yes-that-web-project-should-be-a-pwa
- https://adactio.com/journal/13884
- https://medium.com/@amberleyjohanna/seriously-though-what-is-a-progressive-web-app-56130600a093
- https://dev.to/ben/what-the-heck-is-a-progressive-web-app-seriously-923
- https://paul.kinlan.me/pwa-progressive-web-all-the-things/