The care and maintenance of the cosmos hub and her community

Distributed first to Ethan Buchman, Jack Zampolin, Sam Hart, All notional labs team members, and any advisor I see fit.

Of the top committers on the cosmos hub I'm literally the only one who hasn't been paid for their work by the ICF or ignite. For a brief time I was paid by ignite but not really for work on the hub. Of course it wasn't called ignite then, and I didn't make jokes about the burning company. But I just kind of figured that it would be best to get this off my chest in a longer form manner so that I didn't just come off as a rageaholic, and to include the relevant screenshots so that I cannot be framed as one, either.

I'm concerned.

I'm concerned in part that this letter could simply be framed as a ragefest, by Billy, the current maintainer of the cosmos hub.

He's already done this, but in private, where he insists on conversing. Not once, either. Many times.

I don't like to do things that way. In fact it's my personal policy to make things as public as possible on Twitter, regardless of the fact that that causes blowback in the form of being called dramatic: who cares? At least people know what's going on.

No one knows what's going on with Gaia, not even me. But I really should know what's going on with Gaia, because I contribute to all of the components of her software. I also contribute to the hub herself. Yes I'm going to continue referring to the hub as female, unless of course her name was changed from Gaia to something else that wasn't gendered.

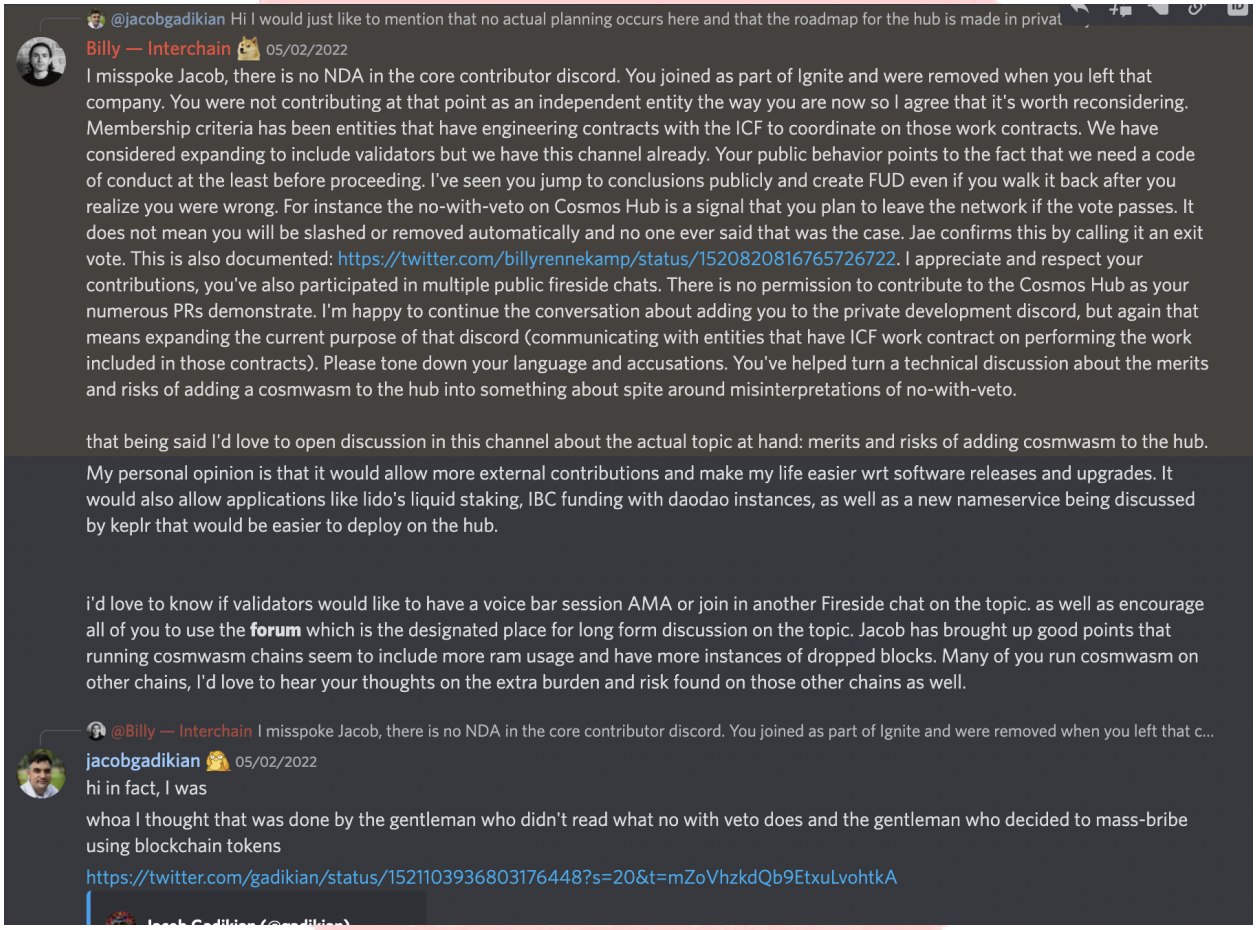
Will that result in a sudden inability to contribute code in the cosmos ecosystem? Should I go anon to have a point of view?

I put a post on the Cosmos hub forum. Yes, it talked about delegations, because I didn't go and pull out the conversations that were had in private, where the maintainer of the Cosmos hub has said repeatedly that my behavior warranted the use of a code of conduct. Okay, so let's look at a code of conduct:

https://github.com/cosmos/ibc-go/blob/main/CODE_OF_CONDUCT.md

First of all I very well may have violated this code of conduct, no one really knows because it's plainly vague but let's walk through a few points where it could. So I have like these eggplants on my Twitter profile, those are of course in honor of Ahmet, a follower of mine who used to have a profile picture that maybe I was just a little bit too prude to handle. So he adopted a profile picture from a gay cartoonist. I didn't know this till yesterday because I looked him up

because he mentioned the GitLab factor... But I don't know maybe those eggplants are offensive to someone I work with. That's because I work with hundreds of people around the world, some of whose names and identities I know others I don't know. And honestly since I think you'd have a pretty hard time finding an instance of me exhibiting the types of behavior that Billy Rennekamp accused me of, well I wouldn't worry. Except now I do worry.



Cosmos explorer powered by Cosmostation, Supports Cosmos, Kava, Iris, Starname. Kava Explorer. Iris explorer. Starname explorer.

jacobgadikian 05/02/2022
and don't think you should lead the hub.

Why?

Everyone knows open source contributors get nuked for CoC violations.

You want to retaliate my veto and pointing out your usage of non-canoncial standards-- there are 2 things that are canonical in my view:

1) code
2) the chain's prior governance choices

Billy — Interchain 05/02/2022
which included that language and also was a vote to use the forum to prepare governance proposals
which is what i did and found the template with that language
i think it's obvious that there's not consensus on what no-with-veto does and we should make sure everyone is on the same page
i am just following the governance instrucitons as they currently stand

> @Billy — Interchain i think it's obvious that there's not consensus on what no-with-veto does and we should make sure everyone is on the same page

jacobgadikian 05/02/2022
well, I'm not really sure tghe proper source of those
But billy you're here, good!
Please tell me more about my behavior wrt need for a CoC
and how I derailed prop 69

What you are actually trying to do is manipulate my public position with threats

Billy — Interchain 05/02/2022
AFAIU, no-with-veto signals you are so against a proposal you are willing to leave the network. That's why it is at 1/3. It means that 1/3 of the network is willing to stop operating on the network itself—fork the network and run two separate networks. If users are voting to fork the network over cosmwasm it is a very different proposal type than rather choosing not to use that feature on the same network.

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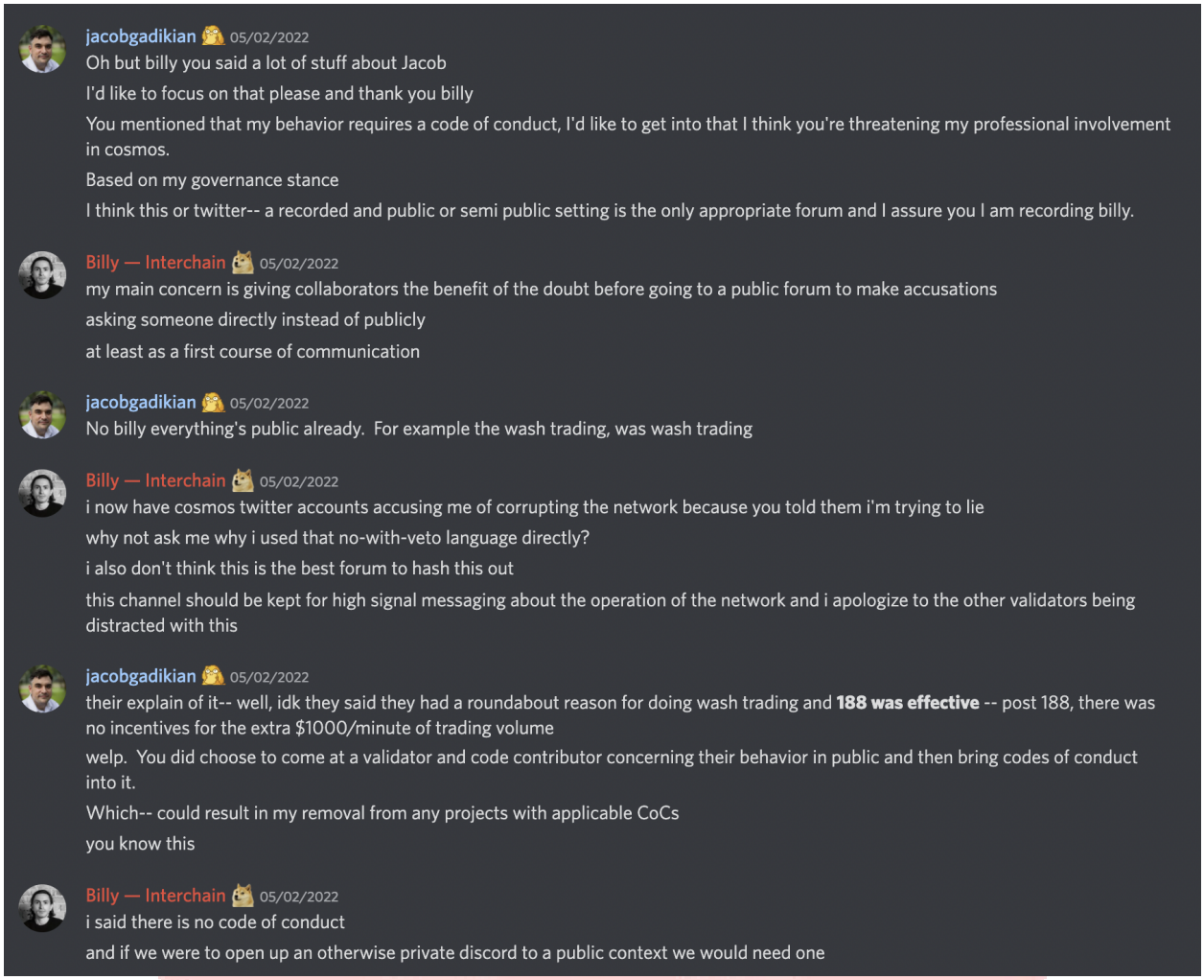

https://forum.cosmos.network/t/proposal-draft-gaia-v8-rho-upgrade/6570/4

So you see in that Cosmos hub forum post above, I anthropomorphized the cosmos hub and I believe that I did that in a highly politically successful fashion. We use analogies in politics. But I don't know, does that put me outside of the IBC code of conduct? In what places in my life does that code of conduct applying? Furthermore, was I wrong to include the following note, in my pull request?

https://gist.github.com/faddat/b91dc9815ef9040b80ff688231572aaa

As a programmer, infrastructure operator, entrepreneur, politician, and yes I'm all of these things, where do these codes of conduct apply? And who determines their validity? Who enforces them? Is it Billy? Honestly if so, I'm out. Please tell me if that's the case. I'll continue to run our Cosmos Hub Validator, but I couldn't in good conscience continue to contribute software and then this would call into question "Notional does right by delegators."

https://github.com/cosmos/gaia/pull/1512

When I confronted Billy to cite specific evidence that I violated a code of conduct, he presented absolutely nothing. He said that my volume of messaging over prop 69, was too high and personally directed. And by the way that was in front of every single cosmos hub validator. So you see what we have is an ICF employee, well they're really casting down on the unpaid guy and I mean really casting down. Like hey you know let's leave that first thing aside. A gentleman appointed by the Interchain Foundation took a fatal stab at my career, my ability to feed my family, and sustain notional labs , and you know what I cast it aside. Because people do that all the time. So how is it for a second that I'm supposed to feel that there isn't a loaded deck? And once again, forget the delegations although of course the reality is yes that builds distrust.

A lot of things built distrust here.

I had to get elected validator, and it was a ton of work.

We have a political system in Cosmos and it's real. And politics involves taking points of view that can be uncomfortable for other people. This is simply reality. And the stakes are frankly quite high.

Billy is a paid lead to the Cosmos hub project, engaged I believe by the ICF. He seems to have a double standard when it comes to engineering. Billy can refer to my pull requests as drive by pull requests, but if we go through the pull requests made by the cosmos hub team under his leadership, we can see a great many that have very very little context whatsoever (nearly all of them), and additionally the planning issues on the cosmos hub have no context whatsoever either. After prop 69 was defeated, the issue to put CW on the hub was not closed.

Hey look I get it we're all very busy but there's only one person accusing me of code of conduct violations and that's Billy. Also maybe another interchain foundation employee, I don't know because I don't know who works for the interchain foundation, I have absolutely no idea. This is something that I have expressed to Sam Hart. I don't know the org chart, I don't know who's in charge of stuff, I don't know who's accountable for what, and furthermore nobody does.

To somebody who works on open source software for a living, having one of these code of conduct violations can literally be career ending. Billy knows this. Billy said what he said anyway. **IT WAS INTENTIONAL OR HE IS INCOMPETENT BECAUSE HE DID NOT KNOW THIS.** Then this happened:

https://forum.cosmos.network/t/proposal-draft-gaia-v8-rho-upgrade/6570/4

And you see, look I literally have no idea who works for the ICF and who doesn't and who is in what capacity. And don't get me started on the burning company just don't. This isn't about them. So nominally speaking Gaia is an open source software project but it's fairly nominal and

the reason that it's fairly nominal is that planning isn't done in a remotely public fashion and the ICF has serious transparency issues. But please let's not take this as a slam article okay? It isn't.

I think that the current road map for the hub is incomprehensible. Here, lemme show ya:

https://github.com/cosmos/gaia/issues/1421
https://github.com/cosmos/gaia/issues/1422
https://github.com/cosmos/gaia/issues/1423
https://github.com/cosmos/gaia/issues/1424
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https://github.com/cosmos/gaia/issues/1439
https://github.com/cosmos/gaia/issues/1440
https://github.com/cosmos/gaia/issues/1441

There's not even a summary, and no, no one can tell what the plan is, and no, these aren't coherent either:

https://forum.cosmos.network/t/proposal-draft-gaia-v8-rho-upgrade/6570

- unprofessional
- distasteful
- difficult to engage with
- Tiresome

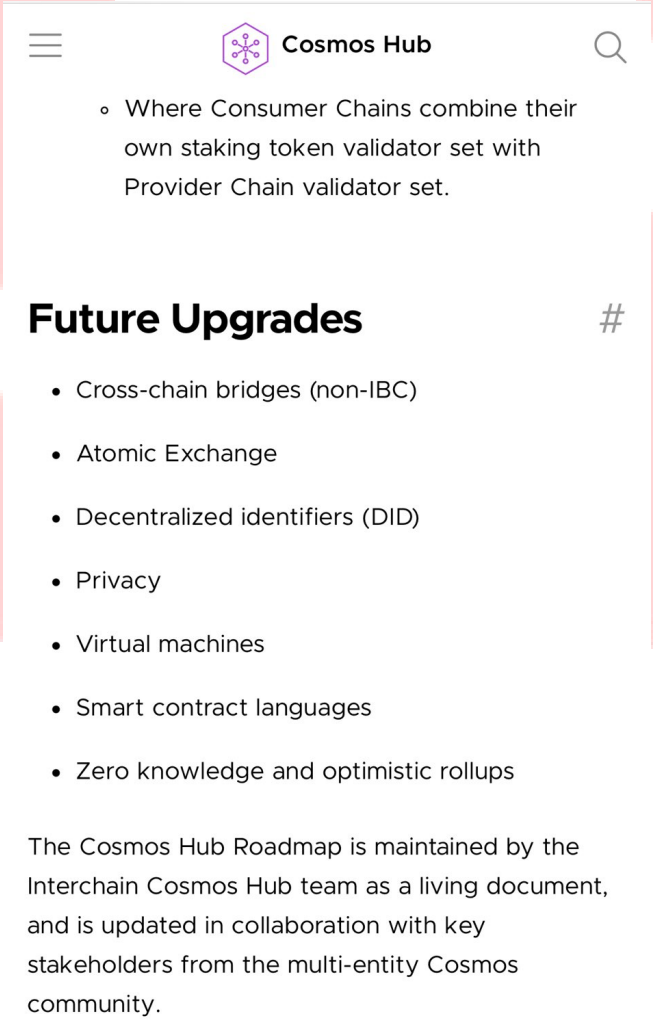
Eep, can we get any more negative adjectives in that post? Given Billy's comments, and known relations to Hypha, how am I **not** to be concerned?

https://forum.cosmos.network/t/proposal-draft-gaia-v9-lambda-upgrade/6571

https://forum.cosmos.network/t/proposal-draft-gaia-v10-epsilon-upgrade/6572

It is better than the one that was published around November 2021 that listed nearly every possible blockchain feature, and then said that it was going to be put on the cosmos hub, yes it's better.

“The Omnihub”



No, there is absolutely no attempt being made at scope restriction, nor at communicating the substance and purpose of software changes to users.. Go and look at the issues on the cosmos

hub currently. There are modules described, slated to be put on the cosmos, hub I don't even know what they are.

I'm not going to claim that I know the cosmos SDK inside and out. Instead I'm simply going to let my work speak for me, there's stuff I know and there's a lot of stuff that I don't know and I'm still learning. I have had fantastic teachers in Cosmos.

The environment around the cosmos hub is not one that is conducive to learning because it's really clear (to me anyway) that it's not really an environment where I can freely express myself whether in code or with English language words, and that planning is simply inaccessible to the community.

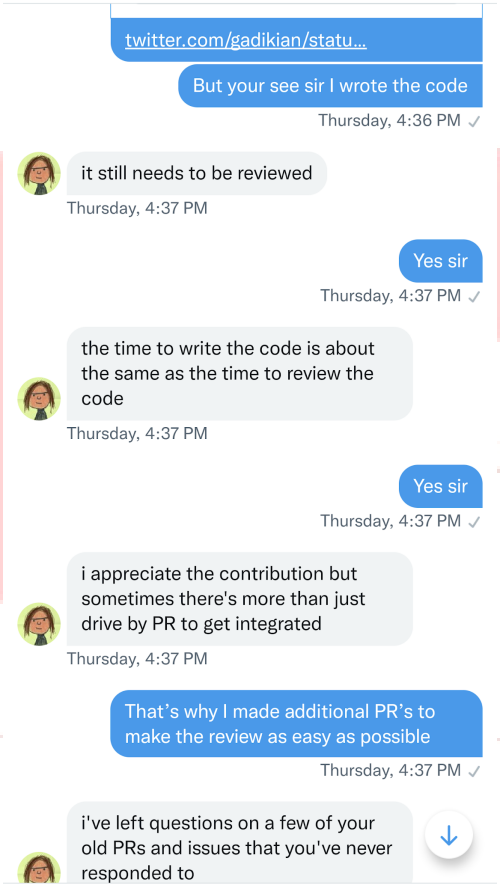
It is possible to ask someone to stop anthropomorphizing a blockchain by simply doing that.

So at this point I'm forced with a choice to either step back from a role as a code contributor on the hub, and explain that decision to Notional's delegators, in keeping with our policies on transparency, or take further uncomfortable steps that shouldn't be necessary. We didn't get here on a comfortable path. So I'm going to take the uncomfortable steps like writing this letter, because the first path doesn't actually serve our delegators effectively.

This document shouldn't be necessary. It's literally a waste of my time, and the time of everyone reviewing it, and I'm 100% certain it's not my fault that I need to write this letter.

NOTIONAL DELEGATORS AND SUPPORTERS SHOULD DEFINITELY BE QUESTIONING THIS AS EITHER I AM WASTING YOUR GOOD FAITH OR… :(

The cosmos hub lead threw me out in front of a hundred validators, sorry 175 validators, and used a term that I personally abhor to describe me, a distributor of fud. You see all that means in today's cryptocurrency world, is "somebody I don't like". FUD or FUDder means nothing more. And when challenged to substantiate this, and his allegations that I was violating codes of conduct, he came up with nothing more than oh your volume of tweets concerning a highly controversial governance proposal is too high. I'm sorry that doesn't fly with me.



This screenshot is referring to this pull request as a drive-by pull request without engagement. OK, he can say that, but……

The database work that Billy is talking about in the above image is like 6 months of work. If Billy was watching Cosmos, he would know this. That's just reality. The TMDb repository was scheduled to be shelved, but relayers and providers of rpc services in cosmos suffer from database performance issues mainly surrounding queries. I replied to Billy with something like have a nice vacation and indeed I hope he does have a nice vacation but it's just out of line. Completely out of line.

I do not work for Billy Rennekamp. I work for Notionals delegators. I've also got software development clients. Billy can request that I and notional no longer contribute to whichever codebase he'd like, and explain that to the community.

So now we really really really really really really need a plan for the cosmos hub. No, you can't convince me that there's a coherent plan. Yes it's all dependent on a whole bunch of software schedules. No, it doesn't need to be super hard. It only gets super hard when you add lots and lots of features to Gaia. That's when the cosmos hub gets hard to maintain and becomes useless as a template. I actually voted in favor of the gravity dex, but it was a mistake. And then, because like I said, I really am a politician, like every validator, when proposal 69 came about, I felt it necessary to justify my position in an extremely deep manner, because yes, there was

absolutely a third party trying innovative governance hacks. Please note I'm not using the term hack disparagingly here, this is simply my actual opinion about attempts to influence proposal 69 externally. But the nice part of this is that it gave me the opportunity to really think. If it wasn't Jae Kwon trying to influence governance with an airdrop, someone else absolutely would. There's lots we probably shouldn't thank Jae for. Testing gov like that?

Prop 69 was a walk in the park:
there's $10,000,000 in the cosmos hub community pool.

Honestly I'm not too certain that Billy did do due diligence before proposal 69. For example, CW enabled chains consume twice the ram. This is just a fact, please note I'm currently working on wasmd. Or, if I wasn't writing this letter, I'd be working on it. I like CW. He didn't seem aware of the resource consumption issues surrounding CosmWasm when I brought it up. So I took a couple of screenshots which I should have taken during the proposal 69 debate but didn't.

https://forum.cosmos.network/t/spot-the-cosmwasm-enabled-chain/6597

It's really easy to spot the CosmWasm enabled chain. They consume vastly more RAM. Exactly like I said. To discuss an issue and promote one side of it to the community, requires an understanding of the whole picture, and a willingness to engage.

I don't have confidence in the current leadership of the hub. This is a solvable problem and it shouldn't be taken as a slam on Billy personally, I'm sure that he works hard, but I really don't think that he understands the issues at play. Furthermore, I think that (Billy/Hub Team's) lack of understanding is manifesting as nastiness to people who contribute freely to the hub. By the way, that's exactly who you want validating the hub. That's who the ICF should be giving signal to with delegations. It's not really about money, that's nice, but the reality is that it is a signal and validation is a very competitive and political marketplace.

Validating and infrastructure provision and software development don't leave a lot of room for half-hearted accusations of violations of code of conduct that could affect one's ability to feed ones family, or continue to operate a DAO that works on countless projects in cosmos, 100% of them entirely open source.

Maybe Billy is burned out, maybe I should have just let him have a vacation, maybe other ICF people are going to say "Jacob why didn't you just send another DM" well look above look above people look above that's what happens.

I make drive-by pull requests.
I violate codes of conduct.

No I don't.

But since there's somebody in leadership in the ecosystem who is highly intent on keeping our conversations private and on broadcasting this, I have no choice. This is my career. I can't know if Billy's encouraging cosmos hub forum admins to take his point of view, but I do imagine that any reader of this letter with the appropriate context can easily understand my concerns.

So when we're wondering why the hub isn't thriving, we might want to look at how the people who contribute to the hub, for $0, are being treated by those who are paid to maintain the hub.

- **Contributing to the cosmos hub is disincentivized**
- **Engaging in governance is disincentivized**
- **Discussing the future of the Cosmos hub is disincentivized**

Translation: all of the things we do for 26 other blockchains, and our promotion of cosmos, is meaningless on the cosmos hub, because we're playing games.

This isn't about money or delegations, though I mean – c'mon that's not too bright either…

On the Cosmos Hub (only) the team running the chain accused me of violating codes of conduct, and those codes of conduct clearly state that the penalty for violating them is banishment from the projects.

What's a contributoooor to do?

The treatment of third party developers on the cosmos hub (Gaia) is an issue and it harms developer onboarding and retention, and these are very serious issues. We do not need one Notional, we're going to need a thousand notional Notionals, and polkachus, and blockpanes, and joeabbeys, and larry's, imperators, dsrvs, and we really don't need a single known user of coinbase cloud.

Notional isn't the be all end all or or the end goal, we're going to need lots of organizations bringing diverse skillsets to the table in order to make the hub – and cosmos work. And validators are going to need to be able to speak their minds without fear of reprisal.

Thus, the behavior by the hub team is a serious strategic weakness to the hub.

In fact it's stuff like this that makes a network successful in my opinion. In fact I think that the current hyper politicization is a fatal risk to the valuation of the atom token.

Uh-oh now I'm going to say something that is maybe uh-oh politically incorrect or something:

https://youtu.be/Vhh_GeBPOhs

Coked out Steve Ballmer is right he always was right and he continues to be right and we all know it.

To the extent that we deny this, we will cease to be relevant.

To the extent that we embrace this, we will thrive. No, not the drugs, just the enthusiasm please.

So right now this is an internal letter except to a couple of advisors, and really like if I were to make it external, I would like to sing a way happier song, where we are actively embracing open source software development in Cosmos. But right now it's my unfortunate duty as a validator of the cosmos hub working for my delegators to maximize the value of the atom, to tell you that we are failing.

-Jacob Gadikian
Notional Labs

PS: I will continue to make edits to this and I'm really trying to get to solutions but I always arrive at coked out Steve Ballmer. Seriously, that's the solution and it's a cultural change. (skip the drugs keep the enthusiasm)

PPS: Gosh are the volume of my words too offensive? I seem to have written a few thousand here. Sadly, Billy's not the only one with issues there:

But you're personalizing it Jacob that's mean I'm an individual in an org.

Hi I'm Jacob and if Notional's nodes stop signing blocks, it's my fault. If I ship a bug, it's my fault. Worse still, if I get folks triggered in whichever way and that causes economic or temporal harm to networks we validate or our delegators, it's my fault.

Did I mention that it gets terribly personal when you start threatening folks you know full well make a living in the cosmos ecosystem?

And dumb. Really, incredibly, shockingly dumb.

PPS: I'll publish this if no response. It's been shipped to the right people for review. Or **have some conviction and ban me from contribution to cosmos for code of conduct violations**, and please let Billy Rennekamp announce it– publicly this time.

The only way that writing this– and your reading it isn't an enormous waste of time and resources that could have been spent doing anything else – is to implement some really simple reforms:

- Leadership probably shouldn't announce CoC violations in front of 175 industrial coopetitors and then back out. **If I'm unsafe, I'm unsafe, right? Get me gone then.**

- Planning for the Cosmos hub should be done in PUBLIC
    - Security sensitive discussions can and should be held in private just like on 100% of cosmos chains

- The Interchain Foundation, including the Cosmos Hub team, needs to focus on the next thousand developers and development organizations

- If the Interchain Foundation or their representatives would like to refer to pull requests as "drive by pull requests" in a diminutive manner, the very least they can do, is do so on github directly, so that the community knows how this kind of work is treated by the Interchain Foundation and their representatives on the cosmos hub team, and nature can heal

- "Jacob don't you have other stuff to be doing?"
    - Yeah what the hell's that matter if I can't contribute to the cosmos sdk?
    - Or ibc go?
    - Or I go anon to code?
        - pish

NOTIONAL

This wasn’t obvious?

Oh right, private conversations, people feel emboldened like that, not always good.

Goodnight

Billy is welcome to **publicly** announce his thoughts on my conduct, and my code.

Firmament is a decent moniker, something solid for us to build on for a decade or five.

I said I was cool with revelations quoting crazy, and didn’t say I was cool with name-rug-pulls, and I never will be.

please do not be confused