Topics for sage-abuse discussion

1 message

Matthias Koeppe <mkoeppe@math.ucdavis.edu>   Sun, Feb 25, 2024 at 12:09 PM
To: David Roe <roed.math@gmail.com>
Cc: sage-abuse <sage-abuse@googlegroups.com>, Volker Braun <vbraun.name@gmail.com>

Hi David,
Thanks a lot for the response in the sage-devel thread "Disputed Pull
Requests / Role Sage-Abuse and the Code of Conduct"
https://groups.google.com/g/sage-devel/c/XON6NTJa33o/m/DjBzmbonAQAJ

Per your suggestion, I'm sharing my comments/suggestions for the
upcoming discussion within the committee (cc'd). I'm also cc'ing
Volker.

1. I'd suggest to explicitly discuss and settle any doubts whether the
sage-abuse committee has a mandate. As I shared with you (David) by
email on Feb 6: "I don't think I made the point that the sage-abuse
committee does not have a mandate. (I assume you are referring to
https://groups.google.com/g/sage-devel/c/XON6NTJa33o/m/RP_oFsfPBQAJ).
– Perhaps in the immediate aftermath of the narrow 2014 vote, the
mandate of the committee and legitimacy of enforcement activities re
CoC may have been in doubt, and committee members may have preferred
to tread lightly. But there would not have been a place for much of
such doubt now, 9+ years later. For example, there was not a hint of
controversy when I put the CoC right on the front page
(https://github.com/sagemath/sage/issues/33565) in 2022. – To the
contrary: The words of the CoC clearly put the sage-abuse committee in
charge of watching over the CoC. And it is exactly because the
committee is clearly put in charge that I have been deferring to the
committee to address the obvious abuses by Tobias throughout the
entirety of this long crisis, instead of using my status as project
maintainer to fix it."

2. I'd suggest to create / adopt an enforcement manual. It will help
enormously, as the procedure will not have to be figured out on a
case-by-case basis. The manual can either be part of
CODE_OF_CONDUCT.md or a separate public document. See some suggested
edits, links to good examples, and limited discussion in
https://github.com/sagemath/sage/pull/37054,
https://github.com/sagemath/sage/pull/36844, and previous emails that
I sent over the past few months. Spelling out details (both in the
code of conduct and in the enforcement manual) with examples will help
everyone: In the complicated field of human relations / resources,
even some well-meaning actions can turn out to be harmful.

3. I'd suggest to discuss the thesis that the Sage community has
already been severely damaged by toxicity, not just by the recent
excesses but already over a much longer term, and that we need active
long-term steps to rebuild a healthy, inclusive community (see my post
https://groups.google.com/g/sage-devel/c/OeN8o14s6Jc for an attempt,
but there is much more to say). Possible symptoms: (1) The lack of
visible diversity in our community. (2) The silence when harmful
conduct happens. (3) The disengagement from any matters of community,
governance, leadership.

4. I'd suggest to discuss an appointment procedure for the sage-abuse
committee, and also possible appointment procedures for other project

roles, including the Maintainers role and the Triage team. (In
https://github.com/sagemath/sage/wiki/NumFOCUS#project-governance, I
started to make a list of the things that only Maintainers can do;
many are currently not happening.)

Matthias
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