

If there's such a consensus on the bad parts of JavaScript, why doesn't it get fixed?

8 Answers



Sean Grogg, Web Application Developer, Synergis, at Google

21.4k Views • Upvoted by Adrien Lucas Ecoffet

Sean is a Most Viewed Writer in JavaScript (programming language).

Two terrible words: *backwards compatibility*.



The reader is encouraged to imagine how **that** went over.

ECMAScript 4, anyone?

About 4-5 framework popularity lifetimes ago (2007, if you must know) there was a proposal for ES4 (the fourth edition of JavaScript) that was in the works and projected for implementation in 2008. It was going to be one of the most extensive updates to JavaScript that had happened in *almost a decade*. It was a bold vision that was intended to do more than fix some of the problems with ES3 - it was going to **review the fundamentals of the language**. We're talking Classes, Modules, and even opt-in Types.

However, many of the features seemed to require too extensive a change to the underlying language that was running the internet. A pissing match started between JavaScript's creator and a Platform Architect for Internet Explorer -- the proposal for ES4 would "break the web". Internet Explorer was still touting a massive market share in the browser world and didn't want to "move fast and break everyone's websites overnight" game. For shame. The ES4 spec itself was abandoned and instead a spec for 3.1 was drafted - which would eventually become ES5.

Happy Ending

That being said, not all was lost. Many of the features of ES4 became part of "Harmony" which would eventually serve as a guiding light for today's ES6 specification - most of which is currently available through transpilers like Babel. Meanwhile, other aspects that may require too much tooling (specifically Static Typing) is available through compilers like TypeScript.

While it is unlikely we will be able to surgically remove the "ugly parts" from the language any time soon, we have reached the point where we are at least able to enjoy a far richer JavaScript ecosystem than we have before - and it continues to get increasingly better and more accessible as time marches forward.



Author felt morally obligated to include this image despite routine overuse.

Like my answer? Follow me! Have a question? Ask away in the comments!

Sign up for Quora

Continue with Google

Continue with Facebook

By continuing, I agree that I am at least 13 years old and have read and agree to the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.