

The following is an archived version of a discussion initiated by Monica Cellio on Meta Stack Exchange. It exists for archival purposes, in case the GoFundMe page is removed or altered. The aim of this archive is to preserve the content, not to provide functionality or retain the original appearance. Some links have been removed to avoid confusion.

The original of this page was

<https://meta.stackexchange.com/questions/336526/stack-overflow-is-doing-me-ongoing-harm-its-time-to-fix-it>

This is based on a snapshot taken on December 22, 2019.



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## [Stack Overflow is doing me ongoing harm; it's time to fix it!](#)

Ask Question

Asked 1 month ago

Active 3 days ago

Viewed 59k times

1603

**The bounty expires in 4 days.** Answers to this question are eligible for a +200 reputation bounty.

[nvoigt](#) wants to **draw more attention** to this question.

Over the last month, Stack Overflow has violated its own policies and precedents to cause egregious and unnecessary harm to me -- to my reputation (personal and professional), to my health, and to my safety. **This harm is significant and ongoing.** It is past time for the company to correct its errors, repair what can be repaired, and move toward a spirit of working with rather than against its users and volunteers.

Whereas:

1. The company [removed me without due process or warning](#) and ignored procedures it already had in place, which [an executive admitted to](#), and did so in the midst of a discussion between me and a community manager to understand the new Code of Conduct (which was [previously unclear](#)); and
2. A representative of the company **violated longstanding privacy policies** by immediately (within seconds) announcing my firing to a large audience, denying me the standard privacy afforded to subjects of such discipline; and
3. A director, speaking for the company, **posted on various resignation announcements** ([example](#)), [clearly referring to me](#), in a way that **maligns my character and violates the Code of Conduct**; and
4. Company representatives violated common corporate practice of not commenting to the media (now [codified](#)) by **speaking with The Register to further malign my character, paint me as a bigot, and make unsubstantiated claims**; and
5. A company representative made an [official post on Meta](#) accusing me of "repeatedly violating our existing Code of Conduct and being unwilling to accept our CM's repeated requests to change that behavior", a claim that has never been substantiated, and **featured the post across the network** where it was prominent for 77 hours; and
6. Representatives of the company including executives, a director, and the Community Management team have **failed to respond to my repeated requests** to be shown these alleged violations and warnings and, more broadly, my requests for discussion to find a mutually-agreeable resolution to the situation; and
7. Company **claims of an urgent need** to act before resolving the ongoing discussion, despite my having left the Teachers' Lounge nine days earlier and otherwise behaving normally across the network, have never been substantiated; and
8. The new **reinstatement process is unacceptable in my case** because my removal did not follow the paired removal process (or any process), the reinstatement process proceeds from a presumption of a legitimate guilty finding, and I cannot appeal charges that have *never been communicated to me*; and
9. The issue I asked about has [now been confirmed to comply with the new CoC](#);

Therefore I call on Stack Overflow and its individual representatives to:

1. **Retract** all of the negative statements about me described above, publicize that retraction to all places where the original claims were made or are known to have spread, and to the best of its ability **clear my name**; and
2. **Reverse** the original decision, restoring me to my position without prejudice. The model here must be akin to declaring a mistrial, not akin to an application for early parole.

Stack Overflow is a private company and its representatives are free to treat users badly. **They can ignore #2** if they do not value fairness, respectfulness, and diversity; that is their right. However, **they must address #1**, and given the many errors that got us here, they *should* address #2.

My patience is not infinite; the company has already dragged this out for nearly a month while harm continues to accrue. It is past time for a meaningful response. I remain available to discuss the matter. Please prioritize resolving this ongoing, painful, damaging situation in the very near future.

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Responses to questions:

- This question is addressed to Stack Overflow. I posted it here because I have exhausted all known *private* communication channels available to me short of legal proceedings. I would have preferred a private conversation, which I have asked for repeatedly. I remain open to that option.
- I am willing to sign an agreement in which they address #1 (in ways to be specified) and I agree not to litigate. I had already assumed that would be part of any settlement. I assume lawyers on both sides will be involved in writing and reviewing this agreement.
- I understand that some people have felt hurt by things I said in TL. Causing hurt was never my intention. Some of those same people have hurt me in TL too. Calm, clear communication about these hurts has not always happened. We all need to work on improving the TL dynamic. I withdrew from TL to avoid further problems in both directions.
- Moderators (who do not also participate in TL) work almost exclusively with people on our own sites. When we work with company representatives it's with community managers. The community managers are not the ones who've acted badly here; I don't see why those working relationships would be damaged in the future.
- If Stack Overflow had *merely* fired me unjustly, I would have walked away by now. However, they also damaged me with their public statements and that will follow me around for years. In addition to the harm they have already caused, I fully expect this to have effects the next time I seek new employment.

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Starting points if you're looking for background: [Stack Overflow Inc., sinat chinam, and the goat for Azazel](#), [Firing mods and forced relicensing: is Stack Exchange still interested in cooperating with the community?](#).

[discussion moderators](#)

[shareimprove this question](#)

[edited Nov 4 at 5:00](#)

asked Oct 24 at 0:55



[Monica Cellio](#)

150k5656 gold badges327327 silver badges633633 bronze badges

- Comments [archived](#). – [Tinkeringbell](#)♦ Dec 9 at 19:15
- 1  
This kinda sounds like a question for law.stackexchange.com – [Nosajimiki](#) Dec 10 at 22:26
- 1  
I get an error when I try to like this – [Philip Kirkbride](#) Dec 12 at 16:01
- 1  
@PhilipKirkbride I suggest reporting it as a [tag:bug (with more details)]. I doubt people who can fix it will see your comment. – [Monica Cellio](#) Dec 12 at 16:07
- @MonicaCellio after returning to see your comment I tried again and it worked. I thought maybe likes had been disabled because I haven't had that bug before. – [Philip Kirkbride](#) Dec 12 at 16:09
- 12  
I have changed my username in response to your situation. It was once my real name, which I felt safe using. I no longer do. This is a terrible decision to make. So sad. Hang in there. – [bopapa\\_1979](#) Dec 16 at 22:02
- 4  
as of the time of this comment, this is the fifth most-upvoted question on meta – [cegfault](#) 2 days ago
- Somebody said on a question that you have been reinstated. Is that true? – [JL2210 - Support Monica](#) 20 hours ago
- 1  
@JL2210-SupportMonica not true. You can check for yourself by looking for diamonds anywhere on my [network profile](#). Currently the first five sites on that list are ones on which I served as moderator (and another farther down). – [Monica Cellio](#) 13 hours ago

[add a comment](#)

## 28 Answers

[active](#) [oldest](#) [votes](#)

537

+50

The bottom line is this. Until SE addresses this post, no amount of process, or changes to how meta works, or new CMs are going to make a whit of difference.

This argument hasn't been about the CoC; as a whole I think SE Users are happy to treat each other with respect to the best of their abilities.

Had this just been about pronouns, we might have seen a moderator resignation or two, but just like we took the lumps from the licencing change, or the ad changes, the community would have moved on, and perhaps bled a little, but would be ultimately unharmed in the long term.

The reason this is so egregious is because it highlights one thing: It doesn't matter to SE if we invest a ton of time and effort into their site. It doesn't matter to them that everyone is trying their best, flawed as humans are, to make SE the best it can be.

It turns out that the egos of paid staff trump everything.

They trump the safety and well-being of the LGBTQ community on Stack Exchange.

They trump the trust we place in SE to continue being the best site it can be.

They trump the sincere wishes of the community to make things work.

They trump the happiness and inclusion of people who feel like they are no longer respected or listened to.

They trump the **professional and personal safety and reputation** of a person who has sunk tens of thousands of hours into our community.

The fact is, someone could not handle polite but relentless disagreement, and abused their position to remove someone **without demonstrable cause**. This behavior, and the company's subsequent doubling down is teetering on destroying the community that has taken years to grow, and has demonstrably harmed Monica, whose reputation has been dragged through the mud.

**If SE does not address this, if they do not take action to make Monica whole, then the ideas SE was born from and molded under are dead, and we may as well give up on ever contributing significantly.**

---

Help Monica afford legal recourse via gofundme.

You can find this page by doing a google search for GoFundMe Monica Cellio.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Nov 14 at 21:18](#)



[VikingsOS says Reinstate Monica](#)

2,07311 gold badge1414 silver badges1717 bronze badges

answered Oct 24 at 2:39



## Reinstate Monica

6,75555 gold badges99 silver badges2020 bronze badges

- 63

This exaggerates the impact of Monica Cellio's removal from moderatorship on the COC update, and understates the vehemence with which people have opposed the use of requested pronouns and the implication that they must acknowledge other users' gender identity. There have been dozens of users posting that they don't care, don't want to care, and will actively avoid caring what pronouns they have been requested to use, with absolutely no reference to Monica Cellio. It's certainly a significant issue, but it is absolutely not the "bottom line" as far as COC update arguments go. – [Nij](#) Oct 24 at 4:51

- 93

@Nij it seems these posts have been deleted awfully quickly, which is a good thing, as I didn't see them. Just in case you're accidentally misrepresenting posts like those that protested compelled speech: The Monica incident created an expectation that the CoC will be abused to slander people as bigots, which massively amplified the pushback against the pronoun-avoidance prohibition, and against the mandatory singular they. – [Peter - Unban Robert Harvey](#) Oct 24 at 6:42

- 73

@Nij no, it doesn't. Sure, some people are up in arms about other things, but this post perfectly describes the feelings of a very large part of the community, myself and many other network moderators included. Too many people are trying to cast this as a simple case of people disliking the CoC. And that is part of it. But not all of it, not by a long shot. Dealing with Monica fairly and at least trying to correct their mistakes is essential. – [terdon - stop harming Monica](#) Oct 24 at 8:37

- 81

@Nij Again, I'm sorry but that's not my perception at all. I can flat out guarantee that that isn't the case for the moderators for one thing: the way Monica was treated is absolutely central to the issue for most of us. There are multiple angry groups here. And a very, very large one is fine with the CoC but furious about how it (the whole thing, from Monica through the heavy handed FAQ v0.1 through how SE has been acting) was handled. See [Dear Stack Exchange: a statement and a letter from your moderators](#). Please don't try to minimize this because some peo – [terdon - stop harming Monica](#) Oct 24 at 8:44

- 16

I think "*hundreds of thousands of hours*" is an exaggeration at best, and it potentially detracts from the point you're making. There's 8760 hours in a 365-day year. Ten years (including two leap years) is 87,648 hours. SE has been around for a little longer than that, but not much. There is no reasonable way *any* individual can have put even 100,000 hours into SE, and a more reasonable first-order estimate even for a highly dedicated person is probably a quarter or so of that. So tens of thousands of hours, sure, that's reasonable; plural hundreds of thousands of hours, just no. – [a CVn](#) Oct 24 at 9:09

- 40

@aCVn oh. Apparently so, yes. But not much of it: Please don't try to minimize this because some people are being very loud about pronouns. Or something to that effect. Just because some of us aren't being toxic on meta doesn't mean we aren't furious and honestly afraid about our own well being as mods, wondering when SE will decide we've crossed some invisible line and it's now time to drag our names through the mud in the press. – [terdon - stop harming Monica](#) Oct 24 at 9:19

- 22

@terdon *"Just because some of us aren't being toxic on meta doesn't mean we aren't furious and honestly afraid about our own well being as mods, wondering when SE will decide we've crossed some invisible line and it's now time to drag our names through the mud in the press."* I wholeheartedly agree with that, and I'm trying really hard myself to stay away from making toxic or otherwise inflammatory statements. See also my [resignation announcement](#). – [a CVn](#) Oct 24 at 9:25

- 22

I wouldn't say the community has "moved on" from illegal relicensing and other problems. These have just been momentarily eclipsed by Monica's dismissal and the ensuing chaos, but I for one fully expect it to get back on the table after the current most pressing issues are resolved. It's counterproductive to suggest otherwise. – [Emil Jeřábek supports Monica](#) Oct 24 at 14:10

- 27

Except, @Nij, that the original (now-deleted) FAQ clarified that it did intend *exactly that*. In fact, there was even a FAQ question specifically asking whether, if you didn't normally use pronouns (but preferred to e.g., use names directly), you could continue to do so; the answer was to use pronouns. And... I suppose pointing out that heavy-handed encouragement is essentially the same as forcing something could count as scare quotes, though I had to look the term up. Please stop with the intentionally downplaying the situation. – [Justin Time - Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 27 at 23:09

- 34

I was bullied into admitting that, @Nij, as part of what I thought was an otherwise-constructive policy discussion. It would never have come up in "normal" conversation like we have with users on our sites and in chat. And "you must inject pronouns" very much was part of the original version shown to mods, along with the stuff about judging intent, which is exactly why I asked those questions in TL. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 28 at 20:19

- 21

@aparente001 I didn't write that sentence or anything close to it, no. I have **no problem** with recognizing non-binary genders. It's a newer idea to a lot of us including me, but I'm not one of the people challenging validity or anything like that. What I was bullied into admitting is that I personally don't use singular they -- which until recently was about unspecified gender, not anybody's specific pronoun. Tensions were elevated and some people wanted to read things uncharitably without seeking clarification. I could have phrased things better too; it was chat, not Q&A, so less formal. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 29 at 0:02

- 28

It's part of my professional training; been writing that way for decades. Clarity for a wide range of readers, including those for whom English isn't the first language, is important. I see people get tripped up by the number mismatch. *I get majorly tripped up by it and I'm a native speaker.*

– [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 29 at 0:15

- 27

"The fact is, someone could not handle polite but relentless disagreement, and abused their position to remove someone without demonstrable cause." Exactly. – [TheAsh says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 29 at 11:53

- 21

@Nij the first version, shared just with moderators, did. The first public version appeared to allow what I do, and on that basis I posted there asking for immediate reinstatement because their fears of future CoC violations were now null and void. I was pressured to take that answer down and there were then some confusing comments. Things seem clearer in the second FAQ.

– [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 29 at 15:25

- 9

Personally, although I think FAQv2 is definitely an improvement over FAQv1, I think FAQv1 wouldn't really be bad if SE hadn't *demonstrated* by its behavior concerning Monica that the policy can and will be used to punish people for exactly the behavior you're saying *isn't* disallowed. – [Kyle Strand](#) Nov 5 at 19:00

[show 25 more comments](#)

435

+50

I know you won't like this answer, but I'm writing it anyway, because this is what you would get over at the workplace:

**You need to get a lawyer involved.**

I'm *not* saying you need to sue them. I know you don't want to and I agree that that would not be the road to get reinstated. I'm saying you need a real life person with a law degree and letterhead to prove it, having a real life conversation with a company representative. Not a CM. Not a director of public something. A person responsible for the legal side of their actions.

Again, I'm not saying you should *threaten* them. But a lawyer reaching out to find a solution, even if they write the exact same words you have used here, is way more effective than you writing a post. Because it comes with the realization that this is *real*. Not an avatar. Not an email. It's a real life paper and real life consequences.

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Since lawyers cost money and talk is cheap, feel free to actually take action and help fund it. You can find this page by doing a google search for GoFundMe Monica Cellio.

[shareimprove this answer](#)



[edited Nov 14 at 22:21](#)



[VikingoS says Reinstate Monica](#)

2,07311 gold badge1414 silver badges1717 bronze badges  
answered Oct 24 at 11:08



[nvoigt](#)

11.8k77 gold badges2424 silver badges3737 bronze badges

- 120  
Absolutely this. Consult a lawyer. – [StephenG](#) Oct 24 at 12:34
- 62  
If and when lawyers have to get involved to resolve community management issues between volunteers and platform providers, that platform and community are dead walking. – [Raphael](#) Oct 25 at 8:52
- 14  
@Raphael - True, as we're finding out. She should get a lawyer. – [Ask About Monica](#) Oct 25 at 15:43
- 11  
Not that I disagree, but... lawyers are bloody expensive. A volunteer shouldn't have to spend potentially significant sums of money just to have their voice heard by the people they've been giving their time to – [bertieb](#) Oct 25 at 18:03
- 14  
@bertieb I think we went about 4 weeks beyond what **should** happen. – [nvoigt](#) Oct 26 at 6:33
- 2  
@nvoigt Agree 100% again! It's just adding another layer of sh... poo onto the... poop cake if solving this means forking out thousands of \$localcurrency. Having an adult conversation shouldn't - there's that *should* word again - mean lawyering up – [bertieb](#) Oct 27 at 16:47
- Given the likelihood that this is defamation *per se*, Monica might be able to get legal representation on a no-win-no-fee basis. – [Monty Wild](#) Oct 29 at 23:42
- 3  
@MontyWild That would incentivize the lawyer to aggressively (threaten to) sue SE, which I think Monica wishes to avoid. – [Inactive - Objecting Extremism](#) Nov 1 at 14:53
- I think hiring a lawyer is the wrong approach. People sometimes erroneously think that lawyers (civil at least) is about getting justice. That's rarely what happens. Civil lawyers are about one thing, and that's money. You can certainly sue them... and then several years later, after everyone has long forgotten about this it gets a day in court? Don't waste your energy on the justice system. Suing SE isn't going to change SE. – [Steve Sether](#) Nov 21 at 0:31
- 1  
@SteveSether So just lie down and take it? – [faintsignal](#) Nov 21 at 0:54
- 1

@faintsignal I didn't say that. It isn't black and white, or all or nothing, lawyer or do nothing. Likely trying to put pressure on SE through moderator actions is a far better approach if you want change. SE has a bazillion dollars and a large amount of time to just throw at this. When confronted with an enemy, don't fight them where they're strong, fight them where they're weak. Generally corporations are very strong with regard to legal fights. – [Steve Sether](#) Nov 21 at 1:01

- 6

Lawyers do more than sue people; they write letters. And they know how to write them the right way, and how to avoid mistakes that weaken a case. That's what the OP is proposing.

Unfortunately, these aren't the kind of lawyers that work on contingency, so Monica does need money. Fortunately, the GoFundMe seems to be producing that. – [Toby Bartels](#) Dec 9 at 16:47

add a comment

212

Sometimes, no matter what the intentions are - sometimes the end results get out of hand.

In the past few weeks - I've heard folks talk about how it was good the status quo was challenged and... it all went sour.

I honestly think we need to go back to the *core* of community moderation and start talking like adults.

This feels like literally the *last* chance to set things right - and actually come to something akin to an understanding.

At this point the damage done *to* the community, and to Monica's professional standing, feel like they outweigh the short- and long-term good that was intended. Lots of folks *pulled together* sure, but good people have less spoons than bad ones sometimes. MSE is a *less nice place* right now.

I've heard lots of arguments that Monica *shouldn't* be reinstated or she shouldn't come back. I don't think process was followed in removing her. Putting her back in place seems like the right thing to do, as would someone she trusts talking to her.

We *clearly* are going to have another [TL](#) blow up over this either way. I'm not entirely sure they stopped. It might be worth planning for this.

People need to stop yelling and start talking. I'm no genius but we all have blind spots. If you have a *specific* personal issue with Monica - maybe let her know? If you have a problem with that and need an intermediary, I'd be happy to help.

And honestly, I think everyone is aware that talking to the press was a mistake. The Register hates companies more than people and would be *salivating* at a retraction. You have a legal team to work out all that liability stuff. We all make mistakes. This is one that might ruin someone's life.

I think Jeff might have actually called Monica straight and handled it, but it was a smaller world then.

Right now, folks are putting out small fires and larger ones. It might be worth removing a source of the heat.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 25 at 20:33](#)



[Peter Mortensen](#)

6,32844 gold badges2929 silver badges5353 bronze badges

answered Oct 24 at 2:23



[Journeyman Geek](#)♦

75k2323 gold badges130130 silver badges296296 bronze badges

- 128

I wasn't planning to go back to TL. I've been bullied too many times there. Until that changes, too toxic for me. I want all the pain and damage to stop. I don't understand why the company has consistently refused to work with me to resolve this. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 24 at 2:27

- 71

As an observer (and friend of Monica's, who deeply cares for the mess she's in as a result of all this), I frankly don't trust SE enough to believe a conversation on the Stack Exchange platform would remain private. I strongly encourage discord for this if the intent is for it to be private.

– [enderland](#) Oct 24 at 4:16

- 3

@enderland I personally think SE right now, private or not, carries too much baggage for all parties, so I agree with discord. The intent for this is just to be a conversation. Two people talking, without meta bearing down upon us and things flying thick and fast. Monica and I are both people. It's time for a calm conversation that recognizes that shared humanity and good will. – [heather](#) Oct 24 at 4:23

- 2

Sorry, but what does TL mean? Google says "timeline", but if it's something one doesn't want to go back to, it must be a website or something, right? – [Alex](#) Oct 24 at 8:30

- 13

Teacher's Lounge. The not so secret secret mod chatroom – [Journeyman Geek](#)♦ Oct 24 at 8:43

- 1

"This feels like literally the last chance to set things right - and actually come to something akin to an understanding." Everyone, not only the users but also the company, has hopefully cooled down in the time since the incident occurred and maybe we could now kind of talk about what went wrong. I actually think the company could come up with a few more real apologies regarding the treatment of Monica. If only to end this whole episode on a more graceful note.

– [Trilarion](#) Oct 24 at 8:58

- 3

You posted “folks are putting out small fires and larger ones”. That strikes me as a somewhat odd thing to say; maybe I’m missing the point. Or did you mean to say “folks are putting out small fires and **setting** larger ones”? – [Scott](#) Oct 24 at 20:22

- 9

Yelling is necessary when talking falls upon deaf ears. – [jhpratt GOFUNDME RELICENSING](#)  
Oct 24 at 23:55

- 3

@jhpratt Or to have reasonable yet loud voices. I'm pretty sure I've burnt through some of the stock of good will I might have with some in the company and even the community, but at the very least Its doubtful I would be written off as a troublemaker ;) – [Journeyman Geek♦](#) Oct 24 at 23:59

- 7

@MonicaCellio - because that is what progressives **do**. It's been their modus operandi for far far longer than you can imagine but ramped up significantly last 10 or 15 years. I wonder, did you protest when Mozilla fired the man basically responsible for Mozilla's success, Brendan Eich? Or did you cheer in the same car as the person who slandered you now? – [DVK](#) Oct 25 at 22:42

- 4

Yeah, I meant Jeff Atwood when I said Jeff – [Journeyman Geek♦](#) Oct 25 at 22:46

- 2

@DVK I didn't follow it and had (have) no opinion. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 27 at 0:40

- 2

Imo it was getting better. It is currently what I would consider near rock bottom. – [Journeyman Geek♦](#) Oct 28 at 23:23

- 2

By “removing a source of the heat“ did you mean the Director of Public Q&A? – [MiFreidgeim SO-stop being evil](#) Oct 30 at 12:20

- 10

When Niemoller's poem has now been declared offensive, I doubt that any sincere desire to speak honestly and openly is left. Disagreement is censored, and asking questions gets someone suspended, grievances are left unaddressed, so what is left but rage? – [Richard says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 30 at 20:21

[show 9 more comments](#)

180

The company has shown every indication so far that it's willing to hold tight, wait for the storm to blow over, and (if it comes to it) deal with any litigation with all the resources a multi-million-dollar business has available to it [which means: drag it out for years till the plaintiff's money runs out, then seek costs, which will bankrupt her]. Thus, no justice to Monica.

If you think that's unacceptable, then Monica's post offers us the opportunity to discuss – quickly, but very transparently – what kinds of actions her supporters might consider taking to put further pressure on the company.

Diamond mods and community members have already shown leadership with actions such as resignations, leaves of absence or withdrawal of labour. Some have also changed their name and/or avatar and/or added a statement of support in their profile. Many of us have posted questions or

answers that draw attention to the injustice Monica has experienced. A record number of us have cast their votes in support of these posts.

## It's time to escalate

Now is the time to step up the campaign. If you haven't already, consider personally undertaking any of the above actions you feel safe in doing. Perhaps it's time to take a stand, and do one of these actions even if you *don't* feel entirely safe – remember, there are many **many** Stack community members who will stand by you and support you.

And going forward, what's our next move (or set of moves)? If the company believes it can weather the storm, ***what fair, legitimate and legal actions can we take to demonstrate to the company that our user community is more powerful than they think?*** If the company values its revenue streams and corporate reputation, what actions might persuade the company to rethink its current strategy?

Perhaps we might like to post some detailed suggestions as follow-up answers to Monica's post.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 25 at 7:21](#)

answered Oct 24 at 2:26



[Chappo Says Reinstate Monica](#)

1,87033 gold badges99 silver badges1818 bronze badges

- 27

[Love the user name](#) – [Reinstate Monica - Goodbye SE](#) Oct 24 at 6:55

- 2

"Thanks Monica" might still be open. – [ccorn](#) Oct 24 at 7:03

- 13

[I love your username too!](#) – [Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 24 at 8:18

- 24

Perhaps it is time to start reaching out to tech oriented news agencies as well. – [Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 24 at 9:28

- 39

@ReinstateMonica\_Previous\_Comment I would recommend checking with Monica first before proactively inviting the news to cover this. It might not be in her best interest to have more news stories with her name in them. Clearly, they're free to cover this story if they find it and are interested, but if your goal is to help her, I suggest thinking carefully about whether inviting them does so. (I'm sincerely agnostic on this point, myself.) – [Isaac Moses](#) Oct 24 at 13:55

- 2

@terdon - I *am* thinking about changing my avatar, though. :) – [anongoodnurse](#) Oct 24 at 16:31

- 5

I've added Reinstate Monica to my profile some days ago, and have also halted all moderator activities. ([There is even a userscript which hides moderator abilities](#)) – [Grumpy says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 24 at 17:06

- 9

Escalate, yeah? Does anybody have a twitter account handy? – [LangLangC](#) Oct 25 at 7:34

- 9

Just spreading the news to outside of the walled garden here. That worked to bring down IPS from HNQ. The newly sprouting culture of fear uncertainty and punishment here has me now so much in its grip that posting an answer to be deleted is much too distressing. I don't want to make a scene and I learned from that that I should not speak, and surely not speak up, but better leave the room. It hurts people if I am heard, having the wrong identity, so I keep chilling on the effects and silence myself into unwelcome exclusion. Forlorn hope could win but my hands burn with blistering flags. – [LangLangC](#) Oct 25 at 8:29

- 3

@LangLangC I hear a lot of pain there. My view: any action we take should impact the *company's decision-makers* (who are barely even aware of our little garden and the squeaks coming from it) but should avoid further damage to Monica's reputation. A campaign of whining tweets won't work. But what about *targeted tweets* to Stack advertisers, or to purchasers of SO's high-end IT services? If you're gonna fight a giant, you better know where you can hurt them... – [Chappo Says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 25 at 8:42

- 14

@ReinstateMonica "and what exactly are you proposing twitter should be used for?", it's an old meme that if you talk about SE issues on meta, they will get ignored, but if just one person tweets about an SE issue, it gets dealt with, within an hour or two. – [Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 25 at 8:50

- 8

V for Vendetta! – [Srid says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 25 at 16:28

- 4

"It's time to escalate". IANAL, but I was wondering if a user could require to take down all his own content posted under CC3.0 because he doesn't want to comply with CC4.0. Either this or force SE to put a label on his older posts that they are CC3.0. I'm an high rep user of EE.SE (top 100) and I think almost all my content is under CC3.0. If many top users required that it would be a nice headache for SE: you either lose lots of content or put in place a system to handle multiple licenses. – [Lorenzo Donati supports Monica](#) Oct 28 at 22:56

- 2

@LorenzoDonatisupportsMonica: You can [require SE to take down all of your CC3.0 content](#). – [rockwalrus-stop harming Monica](#) Nov 4 at 22:32

- 2

@rockwalrus-stoppharmingMonica Thank you for the pointer! – [Lorenzo Donati supports Monica](#) Nov 5 at 5:04

[show 7 more comments](#)

I also use my real name on this site. If what happened to Monica happened to me, I would be just as appalled and frustrated.

SE has to address this rather than simply ignore it.

I also throw my wholehearted support behind Monica in her effort to get as much of this situation repaired as possible.

A few practical suggestions:

- If a GoFundMe page is set up to help deal with the personal expenses that have been and will be faced, I will happily contribute to that.
- If there is a petition created in her support, I will happily sign that.
- If there is some other forum where I can express my public support, I will participate there too.

Monica has started a GoFundMe page. I hope you join me in supporting her there.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Nov 15 at 2:09](#)

answered Oct 24 at 16:13



[Jason Bassford Supports Monica](#)

6,41655 gold badges1616 silver badges2929 bronze badges

- 9

@MonicaCellio Truly, Monica, set up a GoFundMe page. What's taking so long? I just searched for Monica Cellio and found 4 pages that aren't you! – [Amadeus-Reinstate-Monica](#) Oct 24 at 22:36

- 25

@Amadeus GoFundMe page. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 29 at 1:15

- 3

@MonicaCellio Supported. All the best. :) – [Jason Bassford Supports Monica](#) Oct 29 at 1:41

- 8

@JasonBassfordSupportsMonica thank you!! – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 29 at 1:46

- @MonicaCellio Greetings, I was thinking it would be better if you put this fund raising link in a prominent place where everyone would see it. – [Aquarius\\_Girl](#) Oct 29 at 2:30

- 1

@Aquarius\_Girl It might not be wise to post it prominently ... – [Jason Bassford Supports Monica](#) Oct 29 at 2:32

- 3

@MonicaCellio: Supported. Good luck. – [Crowman](#) Oct 29 at 3:31

- 8  
@MonicaCellio: I'm in. Give 'Em Hell, soldier. – [Amadeus-Reinstate-Monica](#) Oct 29 at 10:51
- My card was declined :( @MonicaCellio paypal? – [fr\\_andres SupportsMonicaCellio](#) Oct 29 at 14:22
- 2  
@fr\_andres bummer! Yes I have paypal; how can I transmit the info to you privately? If you're on Twitter, can you DM me there? – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 29 at 15:39
- @MonicaCellio I'm about to DM you on Twitter too, if it's ok. I have PayPal but don't have any credit cards. My profile pic there is colored eggs. – [laur34 - protesting](#) Oct 29 at 17:39
- 1  
Sure thing! Twitter DMs are welcome; they're open for a reason. :-)) – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 29 at 17:43
- 2  
@MonicaCellio finally card accepted! I'm glad to contribute. You have all my moral support – [fr\\_andres SupportsMonicaCellio](#) Nov 20 at 11:31
- 1  
Thanks for the help @fr\_andresSupportsMonicaCellio! Sorry about all the hassles you ran into with the card. – [Monica Cellio](#) Nov 20 at 15:28

add a comment

159

+50

## Junior and senior SE employees need to attend a 101 class in human decency.

It's not a joke. Forget about being *more inclusive and welcoming*, these have proven to be empty words. If executives and/or directors cannot communicate meaningfully in private with someone the calibre of Monica, there is something seriously wrong with their internal policy.

One month on, the gravity of the situation continues to prolong and worsen.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 29 at 10:55](#)

answered Oct 29 at 10:50



[Mari-Lou A](#)

16k99 gold badges3434 silver badges7272 bronze badges

- 11  
I lost hope. Ball is going to court. They are still deaf ? :( – [Shree](#) Oct 29 at 11:04
- 9



@Shree maybe we could club together and buy them hearing aids? (joke) – [Mari-Lou A](#) Oct 29 at 11:09

- 13

It does appear like the staff are children playing at being adults, drunk on power without understanding responsibility, and we've all been subjected to some live-action rendition of *Lord of the Flies* – [James](#) Oct 31 at 15:49

- @Mari-LouA - You have now 153 upvotes but only 1 point - how it is possible? I don't get it – [Kamil Kielczewski](#) Dec 13 at 22:23

add a comment

151

+100

I am wholeheartedly yet heavy-heartedly supporting your GoFundMe appeal<sup>1</sup> for legal funds.

Wholeheartedly, as I commented there with my initial donation toward your first goal (copyedited, formatted, and hyperlinked here):

I have known Monica since Mi Yodeya launched into the Stack Exchange network, and [she started](#) contributing her knowledge and curiosity to the community. When we held our [first mod elections](#), I endorsed her as an "example of how to behave courteously, respectfully, and productively in an online community," and she has continued to set such an example over many years as a moderator on Mi Yodeya and elsewhere across the Stack Exchange network.

I trust Monica with my money, and so has Stack Exchange. When we needed money to publish "[Days of Awe - Mi Yodeya?](#)", Monica [set up](#) a fundraising page much like this one to handle donations from the community, which earned us matching funds from Stack Exchange. At every step of the project, Monica displayed due care and more for acquitting the trust that all of us had put in her to handle our money honestly and transparently.

Heavy-heartedly, because it is so stupid, wasteful, and destructive that we're at this stage of conflict. We're all here on Stack Exchange because we like to use words to help other people. Here, though, Stack Exchange has used words to hurt you, you've pleaded with them to use more words to help reverse the damage, and they have responded with

*silence.*

Stack Exchange isn't refusing to help. They are not dignifying your plea with any response at all, not even an honest "No." Their silence on this issue is so all-consuming that I think it's even preventing them from *seriously considering* your plea. More than once, I have seen Stack Exchange staff respond to discussion of this post and specifically to calls for them to fix the damage to your name, by essentially changing the subject.

This silent treatment by Stack Exchange toward a long-standing community member and volunteer whom they've harmed strikes me as a classic form of abusive behavior. Whatever confidential corporate risk-management concerns are behind this behavior may explain it, but they cannot excuse it.

I know that Stack Exchange staff is made up of many exceptionally good, caring people. I know that these good people are tremendously frustrated by this whole situation, as we all are.

When good people are stuck in a conflict, especially good, caring people who are expert communicators, the obvious thing to do is to *talk to each other*. That's what you've been asking for for weeks. But again, some sort of corporate risk-management strategy is dictating that no such human interaction with you is permitted.

So here you are, raising money for legal fees. Here's Stack Exchange, muzzling their best communicators, piling hurt upon hurt to you and the community, and doubtless stocking up their own legal arsenal. And here's hundreds of the rest of us, sad and angry on a daily basis as we watch a company we've loved hurt you and bury its own heart.

So, my heart is heavy as I contribute to your fund, because it is stupid, wasteful, and destructive that this is what has to happen for Stack Exchange to do the basic decent thing and address the harm they've done to you.

Maybe with the intermediation of lawyers, maybe by some miracle without, may Stack Exchange talk to you again, and may you find a way to work together to repair what can be repaired. May we all return *together* to the noble business of helping people around the world share helpful words.

---

1. I had a link to the GoFundMe appeal here, but Stack Exchange [edited it out](#), per "[Why is SE removing links and community ads about legal issues?](#)".

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Nov 14 at 21:30](#)

answered Nov 1 at 5:41



[Isaac Moses](#)

8,47333 gold badges2323 silver badges4545 bronze badges

- 23

This post seems to be written from heart. I have already read it 3 times and can feel the emotions. – [Aquarius Girl](#) Nov 1 at 11:10

- 25

Amein! May we be granted an opening, a conversation, leading to a resolution. The current state is unnecessarily hurtful to all of us. – [Monica Cellio](#) Nov 1 at 14:20

- 8

*This silent treatment by Stack Exchange toward a long-standing community member and volunteer whom they've harmed strikes me as a classic form of abusive behavior. Yeah, they're [gaslighting the entire community](#) at this point.* – [EJoshuaS - Reinstate Monica](#) Nov 5 at 21:56

- 4

You may, it appears, include a link to a search, e.g., [GoFundMe Search](#) – [De Novo supports GoFundMonica](#) Nov 14 at 21:39

- 4

I normally appreciate there's only upvote/downvote, no complexity (like the arbitrarily reductive podcast "evil genius"), but I really want the facebook HEART upvote here. :) <3  
– [April --Un-Slander Monica--](#) Nov 15 at 16:25

add a comment

121

Anyone who is as offended as I am about the abuse Monica has endured at the hands of SE, Please consider a contribution to her GoFundMe page.

You can find this page by doing [a Google search](#) for:

GoFundMe Monica Cellio

Thanks.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Nov 14 at 21:25](#)



[msh210](#)

5,44233 gold badges2121 silver badges4040 bronze badges

answered Oct 29 at 4:26



[anongoodnurse](#)

4,61044 gold badges1515 silver badges2626 bronze badges

- +1, but it seems unlikely any platform wants to host donations for litigations against it.  
– [Leopold says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 29 at 4:33
- 11  
@LeopoldsaysReinstateMonica - Worth a shot. More than worth a shot. – [anongoodnurse](#) Oct 29 at 4:37
- 1  
Is that class-action? – [LangLangC](#) Oct 29 at 11:00
- 31  
@LeopoldsaysReinstateMonica - My bet is on there being a post called "Why was 'Why was 'why was the answer linking to GoFundMe deleted?' deleted?' deleted?' within 48 hours. – [Fil-let's GoFundMonica](#) Oct 29 at 11:00
- 7  
@LangLangC you can't class-action the defamation of a single person – [Stop Harming Monica](#) Oct 29 at 17:47
- 1  
@CesarM any reason why you're removing the link to the GoFundMe page of every single answer that has it? – [Cássio Renan](#) Nov 14 at 18:49
- 5

@CássioRenan [Yes \(as long as you don't need an honest reason\).](#) – [Chris says Reinstate Monica](#)  
Nov 14 at 18:52

- 6

I rolled back the edit because I think the link adds clarity. – [StrongBad](#) Nov 14 at 19:50

- 7

@Mari-LouA I am aware of that, but the edit does not improve the post for anyone but SE's legal department and makes it less clear for everyone. If some people want the link and others don't, then we have a content dispute that would need to be resolved with discussion and not "legal says so". – [StrongBad](#) Nov 14 at 20:03

- 4

@StrongBad Good luck with that. – [Lightness Races with Monica](#) Nov 15 at 2:19

add a comment

115

### **In my fantasies...**

- Monica is reinstated on every site where she was recently a moderator.
- All the moderators who left or took a leave over this are also given the chance to return.
- SE institutes moderator training like they've been talking about doing and includes gender/pronoun issues (this is important).

And I get to go back to pouring my heart and soul into writing questions and answers and contributing to the community that has been an important part of my life for the last year. Both on Writing, where I'm a moderator, and on many other sites that I am a part of.

### **And then I wake up.**

Reinstating Monica is vital but it's not enough. Stack Exchange the corporation can't treat her like a wrongdoer who has learned the error of her ways and is allowed back into the fold.

Because they have caused damage. Damage to her reputation. Damage to her real life persona (she uses her real name as her user name and anyone can track her down because of that and information in her profiles). How far that will go, I don't know. But the sooner it gets stopped, the better.

At first the only damage was to her status here on SE, when it could have been easily fixed. But that all changed when SE staff spoke to the media. Instead of fixing it then, they doubled down. They made more public statements about Monica's supposed wrongdoing, here on SE (in publicly accessible posts) and alluded to it on Twitter.

Until they fix this, none of the rest of this is going to work. They want her to apply to be reinstated and they've hinted that it will happen (no guarantees though...maybe they have other plans). But they are glossing over the damage.

**I want it to be that easy. I want Monica to apply for reinstatement, get it, and everything goes back to normal. But this is a fantasy.**

The longer this goes on, the harder it will be to fix. But it's still fixable! It has to come from the upper levels of SE. They have admitted mistakes in how they handled Monica's situation, but they need to go a few steps further. Make a sincere effort to repair her reputation and right the wrongs they've created. Then, and only then, will reinstatement mean anything.

I still love this community and it pains me to have lost it. I know I'm not the only one. I pray that SE will do what's right.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 25 at 20:50](#)



[Peter Mortensen](#)

6,32844 gold badges2929 silver badges5353 bronze badges

answered Oct 24 at 3:47



[Cyn says make Monica whole](#)

4,02744 gold badges88 silver badges2222 bronze badges

- 4

How do they repair the damage? Because I want that too. How do they erase the hurt without opening themselves to legal liabilities? That's the million-dollar question. – user384163 Oct 24 at 4:04

- 8

@AGirlHasNoName It's a very good question. And one I'm not qualified to answer. A public statement regretting the Register article and anything they've publicly said using Monica's name would be an excellent start though. They can't erase the hurt. Hurt is hurt. This is about public reputation. – [Cyn says make Monica whole](#) Oct 24 at 4:14

- 1

I agree. For wiser minds than I. – user384163 Oct 24 at 4:15

- 79

@Cyn: No, "regretting" the Register article would not be helpful. Just like all the responses so far, that smacks of "we're sorry we got caught but we're not sorry we did it". A full correction of every attack levied in public is necessary. – [Ben Voigt](#) Oct 24 at 4:24

- 2

@BenVoigt That's a good example of why I'm not qualified to answer AGirl's question. Hopefully their lawyers will tell them how to right this wrong and guide them to making it happen (yes, I'm still fantasizing). – [Cyn says make Monica whole](#) Oct 24 at 4:27

- 7

*"Until they fix this, none of the rest of this is going to work. They want her to apply to be reinstated and they've hinted that it will happen (no guarantees though...maybe they have other plans)." - I didn't seen anything like that she might be reinstated coming from anyone in SE's staff. What I saw is very much the opposite, that since "the register" chapter of this fiasco, everyone in staff is avoiding to mention*

anything about her as a taboo, and when having no choice other than doing that, they do it in the most minimal way possible. – [Victor Stafusa](#) Oct 24 at 4:32

- @VictorStafusa There are staff statements in the comments of various posts. They can't be searched for but some of the Meta posts link to them here and there. Even this question has a few such links. – [Cyn says make Monica whole](#) Oct 24 at 4:38
- 1

@Cyn I really didn't see anything that remotely applies in a positive and concrete way to Monica's case. The best that I saw was either so broad and vague that could be applied to almost anyone or things that would likely be a result of a too much optimistic misinterpretation and wishful thinking. And of course, I'd also seen things that look like as big fat lies from SE. Given the tone she used in this very question, I really doubt that there seems to be anything optimistic here. For me, it looks like that the best that SE is trying to do is to just be more careful, not be any better. – [Victor Stafusa](#) Oct 24 at 4:52

- 11  
@AGirlHasNoName "How do they erase the hurt without opening themselves to legal liabilities?". The legal liabilities do not matter! If SE want to fix this situation, and restore community trust, they need to fix this mess. The legal liabilities do not trump the damage they've done. – [Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 24 at 8:24
- 9  
@AGirlHasNoName "How do they erase the hurt without opening themselves to legal liabilities?" They don't. They've crossed a line--more than one, really--and incurred legal liability which must be paid. Right now the best course of action would be to *minimize* said liability rather than continuing to evade it, which will just make the problem bigger and bigger until it eventually catches up with them. – [Mason Wheeler](#) Oct 25 at 17:44

add a comment

95

+100

If there was a mensch in senior management at SO Inc, they would already have done two things:

- Reinstated Monica based on at least the appearance that the company's actions were not the way they think matters should have been handled.
- Issued a public apology stating that what had been publically released were personal opinions that don't represent the thoughts of the company, and may have been based on a misunderstanding. And that Monica is held in the highest esteem by the company, as evidenced by her reinstatement.

Instead, senior management appears to be listening to the advice of the corporate lawyers. Their standard playbook includes some basic operating strategy:

- Never admit anything, your position is that you've done nothing wrong.
- Don't deal with anything you don't have to. Most people don't have the energy or money to fight a corporation and its resources. They make a little noise and then go away. Just wait them out.

- Don't do anything to make life easier for an opponent. Don't respond to communications or have human interaction. It makes the opposition burn out and give up that much sooner.
- Once you've screwed somebody, don't let them back in the door. The baggage will always be there, and you will need to deal with it again later.
- If the person does not give up and go away, and they get a lawyer, they've passed the first test of demonstrating that they're serious. That's when any resolution process starts, not before.

Bottom line, there will be no action from SOI until Monica's lawyer contacts SOI's lawyers.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 29 at 8:04



[fixer1234](#)

5,06711 gold badge1717 silver badges2626 bronze badges

- 22

Sadly you're probably right. But at least now Monica's lawyers have some solid backing – [user56reinstatemonica8](#) Oct 29 at 10:06

- 5

So they're just going to keep gaslighting us until this all blows over? – [EJoshuaS - Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 31 at 4:30

- 8

@EJoshuaS-ReinstateMonica: yes – [jmoreno](#) Nov 5 at 21:48

add a comment

81

I scrolled to the bottom of this post, hoping to see an official SO response, offering a positive closure to this. But there is none, nothing, nada. **And that's pathetic.**

Not only did they have to take your job away over reasons that as far as I can tell are mostly/completely made up, they had to humiliate you (very publicly, I might add) on top of it. **In no way is this acceptable.** I don't care if you burned down SO HQ and told the CEO to you-know-what. That sort of treatment is *unacceptable*. You're a human being and as such entitled to some basic respect.

If I had to guess, whatever you were discussing irritated a higher-up and your firing was more of a way to get revenge/shut you up than for any legitimate reason. Honestly, comparing your posts on SE in general and the CoC, I'm not seeing any clear violations.

I've encountered you before on these sites, Monica. You're one of my favorite moderators. You're fair, reasonable, and recognize people posting as human. You've even stepped in when another moderator seemed to be after my blood. I, for one, certainly hope you get reinstated. And regarding the legal matters, I'd highly recommend looking into your options. If SO continues to handle it the same way, this could get nasty for you.

And to SO: Please, for God's sake, take the appropriate action here. She did nothing wrong, and your actions were not that of a ethical, well behaved business. I'm in college right now for business administration (freshman year), and everything I've learned thus far indicates you handled this all wrong. You didn't ensure you had adequate reason, and **you didn't keep it private**. You've made a mistake, big deal. If handled in a fair, ethical, and logical manner, this could all be in the past soon. If you keep handling it poorly, people won't forget this, and some won't forgive. I for one won't.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 26 at 12:51](#)



[Peter Mortensen](#)

6,32844 gold badges2929 silver badges5353 bronze badges

answered Oct 26 at 2:25



[linuxandria](#)

1,48533 silver badges1212 bronze badges

- 1

I suspect that whomever offers SO/SE legal advice advised them not to respond to this forum post, given how the OP was presented. – [KorvinStarmast](#) Nov 6 at 17:42

add a comment

74

I'm not a lawyer, but it seems like any admission of SE inflicting real harm on you - whether it be a personal apology, summary reinstatement, or retraction of public statements - would expose them to civil litigation. Even if you don't want to sue, no corporate lawyer worth their retainer is going to let SE open themselves up to such a liability.

You probably need a lawyer. Even if you're not looking for money, if your list consists of bright lines for you (and I think you're justified in that), you'll likely need a settlement that puts that in writing before the legal knots involved can be untied.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 24 at 10:10](#)

answered Oct 24 at 9:43



[Daniel F](#)

67433 silver badges66 bronze badges

- 58

This is probably true... but listening exclusively to the corporate lawyer may turn out to be a costly mistake for SO at this point, given that the entire business model is based on trust and



(usually very well-paid) people giving slices of their time away for free. – [Pekka supports GoFundMonica](#) Oct 24 at 9:47

- 4

See also [How can we move forward if SE will not admit to wrongdoing for legal reasons?](#). – [Raedwald](#) Oct 24 at 9:56

- 4

@Pekka that's a business decision, not a legal one. Legally, there's a clear exception to be thrown. The question is whether SE management wants to handle that exception or make the user (Monica) handle it. In this case, since the exception seems to have made it through to release, I'm trying to give some advice on how to handle it as a user. – [Daniel F](#) Oct 24 at 10:20

- 4

Aand I think I just used up all my metaphors for today. – [Daniel F](#) Oct 24 at 10:20

- 4

I'm sure there are ways to do this to satisfy both sides. And Monica has edited her post to add: "I am willing to sign an agreement in which they address #1 (in ways to be specified) and I agree not to litigate. I had already assumed that would be part of any settlement. I assume lawyers on both sides will be involved in writing and reviewing this agreement." – [Cyn says make Monica whole](#) Oct 24 at 14:45

- 3

@Pekka They wouldn't be the first company to ride a lawyer's advice into the ditch. Lawyers will protect you against a certain type of trouble, but can lead you into more existentially serious harm. – [Ask About Monica](#) Oct 24 at 16:27

- 6

I believe Monica has already indicated a willingness to forego a lawsuit if her demands are met, which would alleviate the prospect of legal liability for SE issuing a public apology for the handling of her particular case, etc. There is nothing stopping them from doing that. Admitting it happened once is not an admission of doing it to anyone else. – [Amadeus-Reinstate-Monica](#) Oct 24 at 22:26

- Huh, now I'm wondering if the forced relicensing was a deliberately planted killer switch. It's clearly super-illegal but nobody actually *opposes* it, so if people like SO nothing happens, but if SO misbehaves people can sue them and ensure they lose big. – [Leopold says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 25 at 4:14

- 1

If that corporate lawyer is worth their retainer, they'll know they have an upcoming civil case they're going to lose, and would advise their client to mitigate the harm to Ciello as much as possible (even without admitting it outright). This hasn't happened. – [einpoklum - reinstate Monica](#) Oct 25 at 18:03

- 1

@einpoklum "an upcoming civil case they're going to lose" - but only if it went to a final judgement. What makes you think an uncaring multi-million-dollar company wouldn't drag it out for years, until Monica's lawsuit collapses for lack of money? Civil lawsuits are generally

decided not by the weighing of arguments but by the depth of the litigants' pockets. – [Chappo Says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 26 at 6:15

- @ReinstateMonica: Why would the case cost that much money (other than lawyer overbilling)? – [einpoklum - reinstate Monica](#) Oct 26 at 8:54
- 1  
The party with deep pockets draws things out with endless processes (over several *years*) that the other party needs legal representation for. If they finally lose, they appeal and use the same approach. If that fails, they appeal to a higher court, etc. See also [McLibel](#) for how a big corporation can approach libel lawsuits - somewhat different scenario, but the big picture is how you can drag things out (in that case, ten years!). – [Chappo Says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 26 at 21:36

add a comment

66

+50

I don't know why the decision was made to remove Monica as a moderator, as to me it just seems to be "He said, she said" at this point, so I can't say if it was fair or not.

*However* it is a fact that what SO (the company) did has actively harmed Monica's reputation, both professionally and personally. SO took a private matter and immediately went public with it, both on meta and to external press. **That is not how you treat people**, and makes me ashamed to think I'm part of a community led by a company that doesn't value individual humans.

Now we all make mistakes. I believe there are only very few people that have not lashed out, or done something in an emotional surge that they later regretted. **And that is fine**. We are humans, and humans act on impulses and emotions. What makes the difference is how you follow up on your mistakes, and how you learn from them. This is the part SO (the company) has failed on.

What SO should do is retract the public statements made, apologize, and seek to restore the damage done to your reputation. And then clear up any misunderstandings with you *in private*.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 24 at 10:48



[Remy](#)

1,99933 silver badges1616 bronze badges

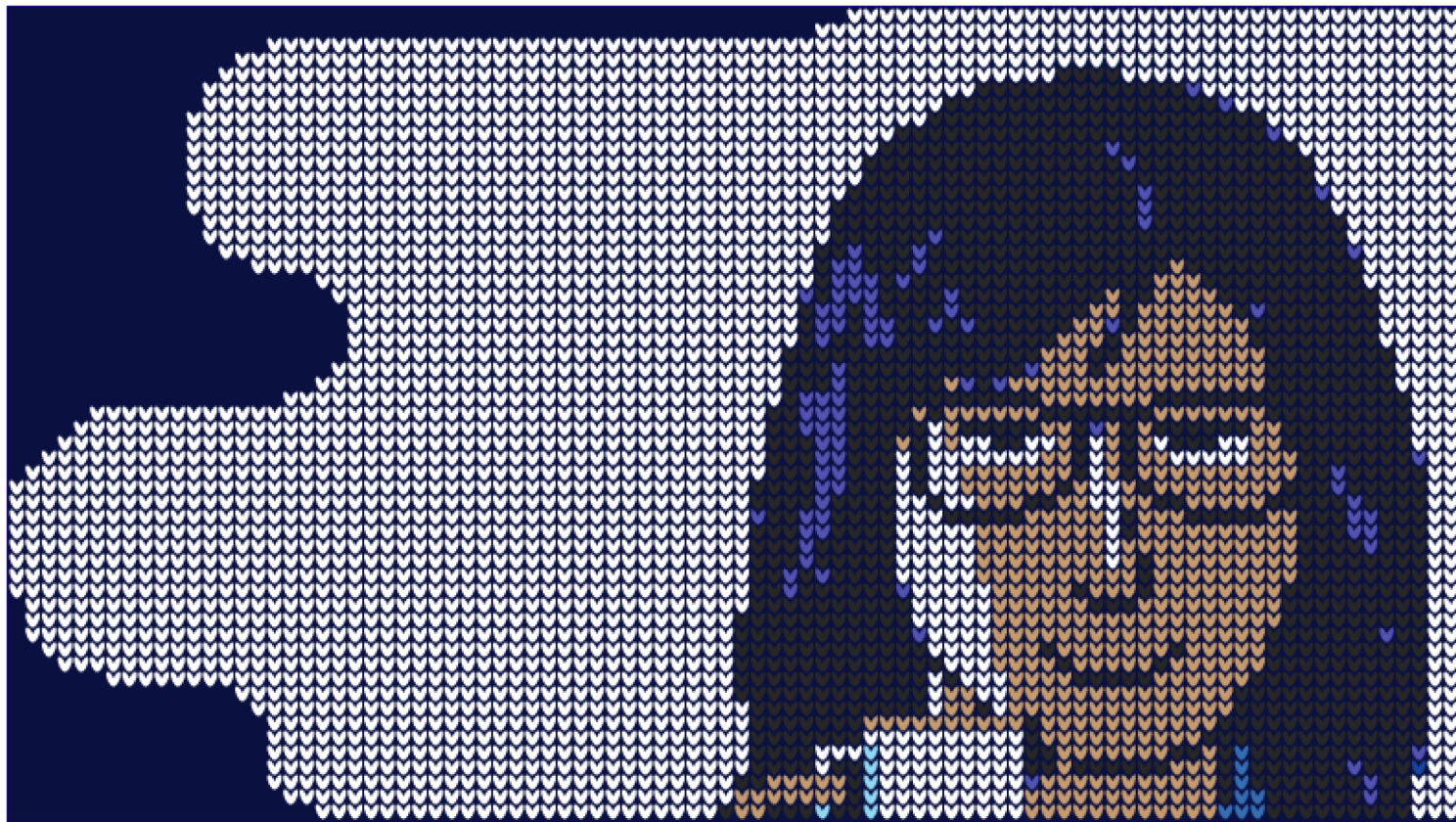
- 4  
Hehe, the choice of bolded statements looks a bit strange when your eye is drawn to them before reading the full text ;P – [Lightness Races with Monica](#) Oct 26 at 13:39
- @LightnessRacesinOrbit Oh wow, had not noticed that! I guess it works as a nice eye catcher though? – [Remy](#) Oct 26 at 13:43
- It's pretty good! – [Lightness Races with Monica](#) Oct 26 at 13:44

add a comment

66

+25

Some folks showed support by posting question, answers, or just writing about their feelings. Some just silently supported you. One (badly ^^) knitted this :) Keep being strong and fight for your own sake at the moment, hopefully, things will get better, sooner or later...



[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Nov 20 at 15:20](#)

answered Nov 15 at 17:59



[OldPadawan](#)

1,58444 silver badges1616 bronze badges

[add a comment](#)

61

**This is the way SE works**

I went through a situation a few years ago - *utterly trivial by comparison to this* - where the way it was handled made a few hard truths obvious.

SE is not interested in people generating good content. SE is not interested in people being good actors for communities. SE **is** interested in the numbers. The billionth question, the x-millionth user, the number of hits per day, that is all that SE is interested in.

Unless you are overtly contributing to pushing those numbers up, SE really doesn't give a flying one about you. You could be generating great answers on a specialised topic, but you're way down the priority list compared to someone else who might be creating 10 times the quantity but 10% the quality, and if an issue arises you **will** be made aware of that in no uncertain terms.

It's a signal/noise thing, and SE is more interested in noise than in signal.

**In your situation it's time to cut and run.** There is no satisfactory outcome from this for you. Even if you were reinstated, would you ever feel safe on SE again? Would you always be watching your back? Would you always have the nagging worry that a CoC would be weaponized against you in an attempt to justify what was done here?

**Cut your losses. Get out.**

But take consolation from this. Although damage was done to you, it doesn't take a huge amount of scratching beyond the surface to uncover the whole shitstorm, and you're **not** the one who comes out of it looking like an idiot.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 26 at 9:28



[Maximus Minimus](#)

2,3021414 silver badges1313 bronze badges

- 4

Very wise words. One should not confuse these sites with Academia, where real progress gets appreciated (at least ideally), or nonprofit organizations. Rather, this site wants us to add posts that get many views, regardless of how innovative they are. – [Schrödinger's cat](#) Oct 26 at 19:02

- 6

I hope it's not just about the numbers. Because what SE did and is doing to Monica is causing many posts on site Metas and the main Meta to skyrocket in views and engagement. I'm hoping those aren't the optics they want. – [Cyn says make Monica whole](#) Oct 26 at 20:05

- 3

"Unless you are overtly contributing to pushing those numbers up, SE really doesn't give a flying one about you." Small correction: It's unless you are overtly agreeing with the methods *they've* decided on for pushing those numbers up. Even when you have a good argument that it's going to backfire, and even when it does. Standard long before the currently mishandled situation. – [Matthew Read](#) Oct 29 at 21:39

- It's obviously not just about the numbers. It's also about [breaking the rules](#) and then bragging about how the platform is such a cool place. – [yhyrcanus](#) Oct 31 at 14:33
- Surely Maximus Monicas? :) – [Robert Grant](#) Nov 14 at 22:25

- 1

Minimus Maximus Monicus? Maybecus. – [Maximus Minimus](#) Nov 14 at 23:30

[add a comment](#)

59

It makes me really sad to see how you are treated. And it doesn't help to realize that "fixing the Monica situation" is of such low (zero?!) priority to Stack Exchange Inc.!

Maybe the point now is really to update profiles: so that every new user who comes in gets a chance to see something will turn him/her/\* curious.

People were able to cover "large parts" of facebook with French colors for example, some time back.

Seriously: we can talk here on MSE and MSO and *Mwhatever* all day long. The majority of the users ... aren't here.

So let's get the message **out** to them. Be creative!

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Nov 1 at 17:40](#)

[answered Oct 25 at 11:20](#)



[GhostCat says Reinstate Monica](#)

16.1k77 gold badges5757 silver badges104104 bronze badges

- 3

Tip: change your logo and [your user name](#). Join the ever growing group! – [Reinstate Monica - Goodbye SE](#) Oct 26 at 10:16

- 36

If disagree with uniform user names. Doing that actually makes it harder to see who actually participated in that initiative. I prefer my own approach here! – [GhostCat says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 26 at 10:52

[add a comment](#)

46

Not only have they treated you horribly, they responded by [repeatedly gaslighting](#) both you and the community as a whole.

Personally, I will not consider this situation resolved until SE takes concrete steps to make amends to you, regardless of how much they try to gaslight me into thinking otherwise.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[answered Oct 28 at 22:29](#)



[EJoshuaS - Reinstate Monica](#)



2,03899 silver badges1818 bronze badges  
add a comment

42

Monica, I would have written this in a comment to your question if I had the rep, but I just joined this community so that I could express my deepest regret, sorrow and condolences for what is happening to you.

I don't know you, nor have I ever come across any SE material that you are/were directly or indirectly involved with before 30 minutes ago. Yet reading about your story has literally brought tears to my eyes :'(

It makes me seriously reconsider being a part of the SE community, and that is a crying shame. And all over some stupid PC bull that is being taken far too seriously IMHO.

Political correctness in general has become an absolute minefield these days. You can't say or even *think* anything freely anymore, for fear that someone will take it too seriously.

I am not by any means a bigot; I totally agree with the core of the CoC issue at play here (people being identified in the way/s that they want to be), but for you to be treated in this way is far worse than any comments that you have allegedly made (especially since *you didn't actually make them!*).

Anyway, I wish you the best of luck with your endeavours. If I had the money I would donate to your GoFundMe page, but I am also curious why a no-win-no-fee lawyer is unable to help you, as others have suggested. In Australia at least, you can take matters like this to court without paying a cent (or a penny in your case :P) until you lose. And I don't think that you would.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 31 at 13:09



[Kenny83](#)

49111 silver badge77 bronze badges

- 9

Technically not an answer, but I can't make myself flag such an honest thing, written so well. Cheers. – [Shadow The Burning Wizard](#) Oct 31 at 13:16

- 2

LOL thanks mate :-)) I knew it might be flagged as not being a proper answer, but felt that I had to write it anyway. Cheers! – [Kenny83](#) Oct 31 at 13:19

- 5

Well until it does and gets deleted, you can now join chat. Monica is pingable in [Tavern](#) so you can also thank her in there where it won't get flagged. :-)) – [Shadow The Burning Wizard](#) Oct 31 at 13:21

- 12

Thanks very much for these words! I agree; the core idea of the CoC change is sound, but the way they've handled all this has done damage to lots of people, including those they were trying

to help. Knowingly misgendering someone is rude; I hope everybody agrees on that! I've never done that. Avoiding gender entirely and avoiding those landmines should be an acceptable path, especially as gender is rarely even relevant in Q&A. (And it's rare to talk about individuals, too.) – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 31 at 16:10

- 1

@MonicaCellio Exactly! I don't understand why some feel as though "they/them" is rude; it's what I always use **in order to avoid causing offence**, if I feel as though I **have** to mention gender for grammatical reasons, but don't know the gender of the person or their preferred pronoun. But apparently, **those** words cause offence too! Perhaps you could teach me a few things about grammar and how you avoid this minefield in your writing, since you seem to be a seasoned professional :-)

And BTW, you are most welcome! – [Kenny83](#) Oct 31 at 16:17

- 7

No-win-no-fee lawyers tend to focus on other areas, as best I can tell. I felt that getting the relevant expertise was more important. As soon as I can break down the costs publicly I will, but there are matters of timing and (temporary) privacy in play. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 31 at 20:05

- Fair enough Monica, that makes total sense. Best of luck with the GoFundMe campaign and the case! – [Kenny83](#) Nov 1 at 2:13

- For us culturally challenged: "*The United States one-cent coin (symbol: ¢), often called the penny, is a unit of currency equaling one one-hundredth of a United States dollar.*" – [Peter Mortensen](#) Nov 1 at 17:55

add a comment

35

As other answers already stated, SE are not giving any sign of goodwill towards the community in order to resolve this issue, and it is past time for us to do something about it...

The thing is... We, the community, have *all* the power here... SE was built upon questions and answers that we have been providing for free.

This was (and can continue being) the best Q&A site available on the Internet, but if SE doesn't appreciate and respect the community that made it great, I say we give away our time to them no more.

Since this whole thing started, and moderators started resigning I don't ask any questions and don't give any answers on non-meta sites...

I'm just a drop in the ocean. I barely know how to speak English properly and just started answering some questions on Stack Overflow in gratitude for the many useful answers I found there since I was in college... But if all of us who care about whats happening, stop providing the answers that keep the site alive, SE will be forced to do something, or go bankrupt while Stack Overflow fades away...

[shareimprove this answer](#)  
[edited Nov 6 at 17:01](#)



[ColleenV parted ways](#)

3,9911717 silver badges3636 bronze badges

answered Nov 5 at 12:58



[justAnotherUser...](#)

47733 silver badges44 bronze badges

- 18

The (relatively) small number of moderators laying down their arms in protest is what weirds me out the most. Most don't seem to be willing to do much beyond co-signing a strongly worded letter (which was a good initiative, don't get me wrong, but what do you do when it's ignored?) – [Pekka supports GoFundMonica](#) Nov 5 at 13:10

- 7

I am also not answering or asking questions. I've also stopped flagging, which will cause a backlog of problems if more of us stop. And I've changed my user name. [There are now 119 of us with Reinstate Monica in our name. Will you join us?](#) – [Reinstate Monica - Goodbye SE](#) Nov 5 at 14:47

- 2

I think this all goes beyond Monica... Reinstating her should be just the beginning, but i will join you... edit: ohh i can't... just changed my username this mourning (used to be my real name)

– [justAnotherUser...](#) Nov 5 at 16:40

- 3

@PekkasupportsGoFundMonica, the last time I counted, 88 out of about 670 moderator positions had gone inactive or resigned, for just over 13%. Additionally, that leaves eight sites with just one active moderator, and two with none active. – [Mark](#) Nov 5 at 21:26

- 7

Boycotting SE won't do a thing. Even if they banned every single user and deleted everyone's accounts right now, it won't hurt them one bit. The repo of Q/As has already been made and that's where the ad revenue is. The trickle of new content is negligible. Long story short, SE *doesn't need* its users anymore. So if your goal is to get retribution, reducing your contributions to zero by means of a boycott is pointless because (to the company), they are already at zero. – [Mysticial](#) Nov 6 at 17:53

- 2

i disagree @Mysticial ... the biggest site by far in SE is stack overflow... which mostly about software development... and software development technologies evolves very quickly... the big repo of Q&A can become obsolete sooner than later... – [justAnotherUser...](#) Nov 6 at 19:33

- 2

@justAnotherUser... Not as quickly as you think it does. Otherwise SO would be filled with new and amazing questions everyday. But it isn't. It's all help-vampire duplicate crap now. Every time I search for something, I land on a well-answered many-years-old SO question - not some new stuff.

– [Mysticial](#) Nov 6 at 19:46

- 4



That's exactly the issue at hand... while SE embrace the "welcoming and inclusive" mantra, it becomes more comfortable for the "do my homework" kind of user and, at the same time, hostile towards the "elitists" who want to find good answers for good questions... – [justAnotherUser...](#) Nov 6 at 20:42

- 2

@ReinstateMonica, wow, it's cool how much it has grown. [I'm ReinstateMonica #3](#), I think it's fantastic how many people have adopted it in their username! :-D Personally, I've become a little bit more active across the network, to try to make my username more visible. It's resulted in some people asking about my username, and where they can read up on the situation. I'm just trying to help spread the message in my own small way. – [Reinstate Monica](#) Nov 7 at 11:43

- 2

Thanks for sharing @ReinstateMonica #3. From #1 ;) – [Reinstate Monica - Goodbye SE](#) Nov 7 at 11:46

add a comment

33

I feel for you and what you are going through. It must be terrible after years of pouring your heart and time into many SE sites.

Looking at the situation from the SE angle, I would imagine that, by now, they realize they have made a terrible mistake, that the ongoing noise is not doing them good (it is only a matter of time until more articles and case studies appear on the crisis) and must be looking at ways to resolve this. **At the same time, I would imagine they are worried of future litigation and that their Legal counsel is controlling much of their actions.**

As such, I believe **you should be more explicit about your legal conditions for a return to normal.** For instance, **would you be willing to sign an agreement committing you to no future litigation** if they accepted your two requests? If yes, I think saying so might make it easier for SE to come to an agreement with you. (It would also make their non-action even more unreasonable and constitute an even stronger basis for you in the future).

**I am not suggesting that you accept less than you feel due to you - but rather that you clarify your position from a legal standpoint. The idea is to provide as easy a path to normalization as possible, as far as you would accept.** Agreeing to some clear language retracting their statements without further details should be easy if they are not worried it will lead to further litigation. Reinstating a moderator that was highly recognized and appreciated - and that SE itself called to moderate meta - should be even easier in these conditions.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 25 at 20:52](#)



[Peter Mortensen](#)

6,32844 gold badges2929 silver badges5353 bronze badges

answered Oct 24 at 5:35



[mbloch](#)

1,96877 silver badges1919 bronze badges

- 3

Since they haven't responded at all to her attempts to communicate with them privately, what exactly would she gain by *publicly* declaring such a willingness? Your suggestion is out of sequence. *First* they should actually establish a line (a channel of communication), and *then* she could clarify her position. While they are stonewalling her, there is no "easy path" to normalization. – [Wildcard](#) Oct 24 at 7:10

- I hear you. I am suggesting, for consideration by Monica, that they might be stonewalling because any attempt to communicate might lead them to weakening their hand legally. By having Monica communicate publicly her legal stand, she might reduce barriers to normalizing relations – [mbloch](#) Oct 24 at 9:44

- 3

@mbloch **she** shouldn't be publicly making a public legal stand. Even this public statement via question is probably ill-advised. If she has demands, and wants them in the public space, then her **lawyer** should be making them. – [Daniel F](#) Oct 24 at 10:07

- 8

I don't think they believe removing Monica was a mistake. I think the only thing they regret is that they didn't do it in a way that avoided the community noticing what they were up to. – [ColleenV parted ways](#) Oct 24 at 13:40

- 13

I already said that in comments somewhere but that's hard to find, so I've updated my post. I've always *assumed* that remediation of the libel would be paired with an agreement not to sue for the libel, and the rest is just negotiating the details (acceptance criteria). – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 24 at 14:37

- 1

@MonicaCellio if my answer only served to have you update this into the question, then it reached its goal, and I hope this unlocks something in SE behavior. I keep rooting for you! – [mbloch](#) Oct 24 at 14:51

- 4

Thanks; I appreciate it. You're definitely right that I needed to say that more prominently, so thanks for the prompt. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 24 at 15:04

- 11

@mbloch, I've seen many people suggest that SE have probably been advised by lawyers to not admit liability, but I think this is giving SE too much credit. The assumption here is that they know they've done something wrong, but I've seen no indication of that, especially from the behaviour of certain members of staff, as displayed by their social media. Unfortunately I think it's much more likely that the zealots think that everyone else is wrong, and are happy in their little bubble. – [Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 25 at 9:13

- 16

@mbloch, my point being, people are clutching at straws to try to rationalise why SE have suddenly started acting like this. It's only natural to ask yourself, "why has this thing that I love so much, started behaving in a way that betrays me and the rest of the community?". It's natural to assume they're all still good people, and their hands are tied in some way, but the fact of the matter is that good people do not behave like this. They do not bully an individual, safe in the knowledge that they've got the weight of a large company behind them to back them up. I don't have time for bullies – [Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 25 at 9:16

•

add a comment

33

I honestly cannot believe that SE still hasn't attempted to resolve this situation. You would think that with this amount of public outrage, *somebody* would do something about it. Even if the company didn't care that it hurt its users (and it did), the situation must have a negative impact on their business, considering all the resignations and strikes and whatnot.

They have three options:

- **Admit their mistake**, clear Monica's name and reinstate her as a mod.
- **Present their proof**, let Monica appeal the charges and win, then clear her name and reinstate her as a mod.
- **Do nothing**; hide from Meta and ignore all the wreckage, pretend like nothing's wrong, lose even more moderators, and let all Stack Exchange networks collapse into chaos.

I don't understand why SE is choosing option 3 right now.

Monica, I can't imagine what you're going through right now, and I feel so sorry for you.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 31 at 8:03



[Jesse](#)

51722 silver badges77 bronze badges

- 18

They're choosing option 3 because they aren't losing more moderators. And some of the moderators who quit/went on strike have quietly come back again. The fury now seems to have died down to a few dozen malcontents mostly posting the same sort of Meta question over and over again. – [Richard](#) Oct 31 at 8:47

- 9

It's pretty ridiculous they can get away with this.. – [Jesse](#) Oct 31 at 9:29

- 1

You know what they say about fighting City Hall – [Richard](#) Oct 31 at 9:42

- 4

@Richard I don't think that's why, and I don't think, as this drags out, that SE can rely on there not being more attrition. It may be that there are moderators who retained their diamond so that they could advocate for SE to do the right thing in spaces not accessible to normal users. – [ColleenV parted ways](#) Oct 31 at 15:14

- @ColleenV - I just don't see it going anywhere from here. The legal case will prove an amusing distraction – [Richard](#) Oct 31 at 17:02
- 8  
@Richard - I really wish moderators had to occasionally stand for re-election. I respect the ones that left, I understand the ones that stayed... but the ones that declared 'Injustice! I'm leaving' and then begged for reinstatement a week later... Gad, how embarrassing. [Censoring myself so as not to give an excuse to ban me.] – [Ask About Monica](#) Oct 31 at 21:54
- @AskAboutMonica - A lot of these problems (including Monica shoving her foot into her mouth) comes from the moderators considering themselves a class apart from the riff-raff. Periodic elections would solve that, but present other problems. – [Richard](#) Oct 31 at 22:19
- 2  
@Richard what do you mean exactly? From what I see it's the SE staff that *consider themselves a class apart from the riff-raff*. I have seen both the moderators and the regular members being ignored and neglected by SE, leading to these problems. Just look at all the resignation notices and their explanations why – [Jesse](#) Nov 1 at 7:19
- 4  
@JessedebuBruijne - Moderators, in my experience, often separate themselves from the communities they're supposedly leading. And it's by design. They have their own site chatrooms and special moderator lounge where making snarky remarks about individual users isn't just tolerated, but positively encouraged. It's one of the reasons which SE are so afeared of the Teacher's Lounge transcripts becoming public, that it would show their 'be nice' system as little more than a glaze. – [Richard](#) Nov 1 at 7:47

add a comment

33

Some users have created community ads that link directly to [Monica's fundraiser](#). As described [here](#), SE's strategy has moved from waiting us out to actively suppressing financial support. To counter that strategy, I would suggest changing your community ads so that they do not directly link to the fundraiser. Some options:

- Link to [Monica's tweet](#) about the fundraiser
- Link to [@IsaacMoses's answer](#) to this question

Other options may also be effective. The benefit of using the Twitter link is that it is outside the control of SE staff. The benefit of using Isaac's answer here on metaSE is that it is harder to argue that the community ad isn't explicitly about this community.

Note: at this point, links like this: [Monica's fundraiser](#) are not being removed, as they do not directly link to the fundraiser page.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Nov 18 at 22:13](#)



[Peter Mortensen](#)

6,32844 gold badges2929 silver badges5353 bronze badges

answered Nov 14 at 22:19



[De Novo supports GoFundMonica](#)

4,76244 gold badges1818 silver badges3535 bronze badges

add a comment

29

A number of people have advised Monica to get legal counsel; I concur. Note that this does not necessarily mean **sue**, it just means get advice, and with that advice plan a way forward. A number of people have also mentioned crowd-funding and said they would contribute. Monica posted a comment above about funding, which I repeat in toto here:

**Thanks @TheAnathema. On crowdfunding, I'd like to see this happen with somebody other than me running it, for clear transparency and also because I'm kind of bad at that sort of administration. I'd also like there to be a charity fallback: any funds not needed for legal stuff (e.g. because SE decided to actually work with me) go to a charity TBD that works on behalf of the Lavender community -- I'm thinking education, support services, and the like rather than legislative advocacy so it has worldwide benefit. If anyone wants to drive that or nominate charities, please get in touch. --**

I'm not the person to organize crowdfunding, although I will certainly contribute. But I hope that someone with the expertise to do so, does, provided that Monica wants it at this time.

**Monica: do you want this kind of help now -- or later, and if later, when do you think you would be ready?**

And if the answer from Monica is **go**, how would this be organized and publicized, because SE is very unlikely to allow it to be organized and publicized here more than 5 minutes after the first post about it.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

[edited Oct 29 at 2:42](#)

answered Oct 28 at 23:33



[ab2 ReinstateMonicaNow](#)

3,84211 gold badge1010 silver badges2828 bronze badges

- 19

I've just finished putting together a draft for GoFundMe; just want to get some feedback from a few folks before spreading it. It's coming. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 28 at 23:41

- 1

@MonicaCellio Good for you. You can count on my contribution. I would also disagree with the recommendation here to find someone specializing in arbitration. Arbitration is not where you will get the best outcome, and gives you less leverage in any negotiation. I understand you opted out. Use that to your advantage. – [De Novo supports GoFundMonica](#) Oct 29 at 0:23

- 29

GoFundMe (I guess the URL didn't update when I renamed the campaign; oh well.) – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 29 at 0:53

- @De Novo I'm not a lawyer; my suggestion about arbitration could well not be right. What would you recommend? – [ab2 ReinstateMonicaNow](#) Oct 29 at 1:50

- 2

@DeNovo I didn't know I could refund. Donations can also exceed the goal. I do expect the goal to rise (and probably soon), but I'm trying not to speculate too much. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 29 at 2:23

- 1

@MonicaCellio Wow. I just found your GoFundMe page from somewhere else, and was impressed at the amount of support given to you. Had I known that there was that much support after *only 1 day*, my socks would have been blown off. – [Grumpy says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 30 at 13:53

- 3

@GrumpysaysReinstateMonica I was *stunned*, and am humbled and gratified by the outpouring of support. I expected it to take way longer to meet initial costs, let alone start working toward the next round of costs! – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 30 at 14:46

add a comment

27

It's bad enough when a company abuses information it should have kept private; it's truly appalling from one that actively encourages (or at least did in the past) its users to use their real names.

It seems very likely that their statements to the Register were a violation of privacy that even one of their own employees that was fired with cause wouldn't suffer, never mind a volunteer under much foggier circumstances. There is no excuse for SE refusing to engage in **honest, open dialogue** with Monica to resolve the issue; they have written statements that they can avoid legal action (something that should have been obvious from the start given who they're dealing with), and let's be honest... at this point, there's no possible way it could do anything to make them look *worse*.

For the rest of us, aside from offering our support, I think spreading the news around the large portions of the network that never so much as peek at Meta (the avatar and username changes are great ideas) is probably the most we can do. It's pretty likely that SE just wants the problem to go away; a steady

trickle of new users stumbling upon the scandal and coming here to read up on it and offer their opinions is a step toward keeping it alive.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 26 at 0:47



[AmaiKotori](#)

98722 silver badges77 bronze badges

[add a comment](#)

19

I guess I didn't have any idea how much actually happened. I thought it was pretty bad that they fired you in general, but the fact is, the actions that were taken afterward seem much worse.

I have doubts that both will happen, but I still hope so.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 24 at 22:20



[justcool393](#)

43788 bronze badges

[add a comment](#)

16

Monica, where are you located (physically)? I'm not asking for a full address, but I think unless otherwise specified, I assume everyone is in the mid-Atlantic region of the US.

(disclaimer: not a lawyer. evidence: wikipedia is my main source.) I think I've read that Defamation laws in the UK are significantly harder to bring charges against than in the US.

I think that I should have changed my user-name to say *un-libel* instead of *un-slander*, based on my cursory reading of <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defamation>

If the offending material is published in some fleeting form, as by spoken words or sounds, sign language, gestures or the like, then it is slander.

In the **United States**, a person must prove that the statement was false, caused harm, and was made without adequate research into the truthfulness of the statement.  
(emphasis mine)

I think that the statements against Monica by SE meet all three criteria.

Article 17 of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states

1.No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his  
privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour

and reputation.

2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks

So location shouldn't matter *too* much: there was a wrong done to her reputation.

I do not know if the [Right to Be Forgotten](#) law may also (eventually) apply:

It has been defined as "the right to silence on past events in life that are no longer occurring."

It apparently only deletes the search results, not the underlying material, and appears to suppress ALL information about a person, which isn't ideal for reputation either.

I know SE is officially global, users are from all over, but its HQ is in NY -- so U.S. Law may apply, but possibly your own country's laws may also apply?

Sorry, just armchair-legal-theorizing here.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

answered Oct 25 at 14:12



[April --Un-Slander Monica--](#)

2,14344 silver badges1818 bronze badges

- 2

Her profile states she's in Pittsburgh, PA. Don't know if it is up to date though. – [Laf - Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 25 at 14:22

- 6

I'm in the US (Pennsylvania). SE HQ is in New York, so New York law is what applies here (and US, of course). – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 25 at 15:05

- 3

In the US, for a statement to be defamatory it has to be an objectively false statement; and statements of opinions are not defamatory. "I think <person> is a bigot" is not defamatory. That's an opinion. See also: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defamation#Other\\_defenses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defamation#Other_defenses) – [George Stocker](#) Oct 25 at 16:28

- [@MonicaCellio](#) unless your legal team thinks it is better to target TheRegister on any action. – [Ian Ringrose](#) Oct 25 at 16:43

- 16

@GeorgeStocker the non-apology post here on Meta made claims that are falsifiable. – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 25 at 17:10

- 1

@April It is claimed that Monica violated the CoC, if there is no evidence to uphold that statement, then you proceed with a suit. But the Director has repeatedly said on Yodeya and elsewhere: *When a moderator violates that [a spirit of inclusion and respect], we will always do our best to resolve it with them privately. When we can't we must take action.* – [Mari-Lou A](#) Oct 25 at 17:16

- 2



and later commented: *Responding here .... We aren't going to re-litigate the past. **We can't share more details** as they involve real people, both moderators and people that work here.* This suggests that they have some kind of documented evidence. It could also mean they are bluffing... – [Mari-Lou A](#) Oct 25 at 17:17

- 4

I suspect SO Inc also has a *duty of care* to their unpaid volunteers (moderators). – [hayd](#) Oct 25 at 17:27

- 5

Did anyone, at any point in the past, tell MC that her behaviour was under review? Were there ever any complaints reported by Contact Support of any episode of rudeness or sign of disrespect toward anyone who was or is a non-binary person? We don't know the answer to any of these questions, so we cannot advise MC, that is the job of a professional lawyer/attorney. – [Mari-Lou A](#) Oct 25 at 17:30

- 8

Sorry to pop a well-intentioned thought bubble, but I think any suggestion of Monica bringing a lawsuit against a multi-million dollar company is simply naive. The biggest crowdfunding campaign imaginable would still run out of money long before a judgement could be reached, and if costs were then awarded against the plaintiff, the result is bankruptcy. There's a huge difference between *justice* and *winning a lawsuit*. – [Chappo Says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 26 at 6:02

- 1

"unless otherwise specified, I assume everyone is in the mid-Atlantic region of the US" Why's that? – [Lightness Races with Monica](#) Oct 26 at 13:42

- 4

@ReinstateMonica Is StackOverflow Inc a "Multi-million dollar company"? [A recent blog post](#) has their "Public Q&A team" at 9 people - covering management, tech and design for stackoverflow.com and every other stackexchange Q&A site. I believe their legal department is one guy - there was a link to his profile somewhere (I think it was a deleted comment here?

[meta.stackexchange.com/questions/333678/...](#) ). Not taking on Malboro or Microsoft here.

– [user56reinstatemonica8](#) Oct 27 at 22:46

- 7

@user56reinstatemonica8 The "public Q&A" you're familiar with is a *tiny* division of their business, which is why the recent turmoil here will barely register at exec level. See [their About page](#) for their other 4 key product divisions; it says they have **250+ employees**. [This 2015 post](#) valued the company at **\$459 million**. A [recent article](#) forecasts their current year revenue at **\$80 million**. – [Chappo Says Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 28 at 0:10

- 1

@ReinstateMonica: \$80m in revenue is pretty piddling little company in the grand scheme of things, this isn't the kind of organization which can just send this type of complaint to the legal department and everyone else can stop worrying about it. But more importantly, as the principal agent of the alleged defamation, presumably Sara Chipps would be named personally in any complaint, and anyone who's been involved in these situations will know the company's lawyers absolutely will not have her back when push comes to shove, even if they initially claim they have. – [Crowman](#) Oct 30 at 0:02

- 3

@Crowman Good points. Nonetheless, \$80m p.a. is 500x the income of a high-level professional. I'm also overlooking that a company this size will have indemnity insurance, so a decision to defend or settle may not even be the company's to make. Hopefully the first thing Monica uses her crowdfunding for will be expert legal advice on what her *options* are, including likely timeframes and risks. It's a truly awful position SO/SE has put her in, but we can help their execs to see that resolving matters is in the company's best interests. – [Chappo Says](#)  
[Reinstate Monica](#) Oct 30 at 2:39

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14

You wrote:

9. The issue I asked about has [now been confirmed to comply with the new CoC](#);

However, there's a possible contradiction indicating that while general users can avoid using pronouns if they do this consistently, it may not apply to moderators. My [answer](#) gives details & asks for clarification about this. In particular, the statement of #4 says

You can often avoid using pronouns altogether. It's actually pretty rare to need third-person pronouns at all on most Stack Exchange sites. But conspicuously avoiding using pronouns for one group of people while using them normally for others is a way of refusing to recognize their identity, and that is discriminatory. ...

implying users in general can just write in such a way to avoid using pronouns at all, but then M2, for moderators, says

Using incorrect pronouns or conspicuously avoiding using pronouns is disrespectful. ... If you think you will find using pronouns as stated difficult, please try.

Not using pronouns at all is about as conspicuous as you can get, so this seems to not allow this, which appears to be contradictory to the #4 statement. I ask for clarification about this, but with no response yet, although my stated hope is that not using pronouns at all is permitted for all users, including moderators.

[share/improve this answer](#)

answered Oct 24 at 2:08



[John Omielan](#)

3,53944 gold badges1010 silver badges3030 bronze badges

- 139

"It's actually pretty rare to need third-person pronouns at all" is, quite possibly word for word, something I've been saying all along. And my standard writing doesn't "conspicuously" avoid anything; I'm not a bad writer and the clunky examples people come up with don't apply. If I

were to *actually* violate this policy then someone should have words with me about it, but presuming that I'm incapable of following it feels rather...pre-emptive. Which is how we got here in the first place. (The story about why I was fired changed along the way.) – [Monica Cellio](#) Oct 24 at 2:11

- 4

Moderators *are* pretty much regular users too. – [Journeyman Geek](#) Oct 24 at 2:12

- 2

@JourneymanGeek I agree, which is why those 2 statements appear to me to be at least somewhat contradictory, and I asked for this to be clarified. – [John Omielan](#) Oct 24 at 2:14

- @MonicaCellio I believe it's important to get this issue clarified, not only for you but for anybody else who is a moderator, or even considering being one. If I get any kind of official response to my answer in that other post, I'll update my answer here accordingly & let you you know as well. – [John Omielan](#) Oct 24 at 2:19

- 3

@JohnOmielan - Fat chance of that ever happening. Stack Exchange does not seem to want to answer that question. Their actions speak louder than the hundreds of words they have made public.

– [Ramhound](#) Oct 24 at 3:48

- 9

As long as SE refuses to inform Monica about what statement of hers contained the CoC violation, it's completely irrelevant that mods are held to a higher standard. – [Gloweye](#) Oct 24 at 7:11

- 2

Forget the rule lawyering, the CoC is fine and clear. – [user](#) Oct 24 at 9:10

- 5

@MonicaCellio Fun fact. Have you have seen the [SEDE queries on how rare are third-person pronouns over the network](#)? – [Marc.2377](#) Oct 25 at 10:26

- 1

I think moderators are considered a special case -- I think that moderators are now explicitly required to be willing, to use [neo]pronouns, whereas regular users are not required ([link](#)) – [ChrisW](#) Oct 25 at 11:36

- 

add a comment

2

Hey I'm sorry that SE was this horrible to you and I'm sorry that this situation even occurred. I honestly wish all of this had never happened as it's hurt quite a few people. I do believe you could've thought about the consequences of some of your posts a little more but I understand the frustration and hurt you must be feeling. SE is in the wrong in this situation and I hope things get resolved soon. I honestly hope this issue gets closure and that we'll soon be able to move on and end the bickering that's been running rampant recently.

I honestly think the only way to solve this is for people to show empathy for others and I guess this is me trying to show that to Monica. Sorry if it's not that good of an answer.

[shareimprove this answer](#)

edited Oct 24 at 17:16



[House- 'Reinstate Monica' -man](#)

4,54933 gold badges2020 silver badges2626 bronze badges

answered Oct 24 at 16:24



[Gwideon](#)

1,13022 silver badges1717 bronze badges

- 15

"I do believe you could've thought about the consequences of some of your posts a little more" - citation needed. I have only read that the issues that caused the dismissal were all done in a private mod-only room specifically for fleshing out contentious policies. – [tu-Reinstate Monica-dor duh](#) Oct 25 at 0:18

- 3

@tudor i wasn't talking about Monica's dismissal – [Gwideon](#) Oct 25 at 0:20

- 17

Ok, then that probably needs to be cleared up. A citation is usually a good idea when referring to "posts". – [tu-Reinstate Monica-dor duh](#) Oct 25 at 0:21

- Hindsight is 20/20 they say. – [WinEunuuchs2Unix](#) Dec 1 at 22:47

- @RichardsaysReinstateMonica I wasn't referring to her dismissal. I was referring to some of her posts after ward that had some unintended consequences for the LGBTQ+ community on this site. I understand that theses consequences where never intended and I don't blame her for them I simply wish that a little more thought had been given to the possible unintended consequences. as I said in my answer I was merely trying to show some empathy to try and help heal a bit of a divide I had seen forming. – [Gwideon](#) Dec 6 at 18:02

- @WinEunuuchs2Unix I'm just wondering what do you mean by this – [Gwideon](#) Dec 6 at 18:10

- @RichardsaysReinstateMonica i'm ending this discussion because I honestly want to move on from all of this crap. – [Gwideon](#) Dec 6 at 19:14

- @Gwideon in all honesty, we all do. I deleted my posts – [Richard says Reinstate Monica](#) Dec 6 at 19:18

- 

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