

## **Code of Conduct Enforcement Report Evolution 2021**

This was drafted by Brian O'Meara and Andrea Case extracting and summarizing from a more detailed report by Paula Brantner, Meeting Safety Officer.

In past meetings we have had an Evo Allies program. We instead created a more focused "conduct moderators" role for Virtual Evolution 2021 to help create a positive climate in online discussions and other activities.

### **Training of Safe Evolution Conduct Moderators**

Meeting attendees who wished to serve as Conduct Moderators (CMs) during the Evolution 2021 Virtual Meeting were asked to fill out a vetting form to determine whether there were any red flags related to their suitability for the task. Approximately 40 potential CMs volunteered and passed the initial vetting, reviewed by Paula Brantner and Sherry Marts (the former meeting safety officer who worked with Paula on the transition to the role.) Sherry conducted three 90-minute online trainings held on June 14-16, 2021, covering how to spot and intervene when harassment is observed or reported, and including breakout sessions with roleplay exercises to familiarize conduct moderators with the types of potential violations to be anticipated.

Participants were also provided with a Conduct Moderator Handbook to be used as a key resource. CMs were also invited to a private Slack channel where they could communicate about problems or ask questions, and were identified with a Conduct Moderator badge in their meeting profile. CMs were urged to sign up for multiple shifts to provide coverage at as many individual sessions as possible, with special attention to identity group mixers, and it appeared that a vast majority of the sessions had CM coverage.

Paula Brantner was available for most of the meeting; for a period when she would be traveling the past safety officer, Sherry Marts, took over the role but no incidents occurred during that period.

### **Incidents**

There were three reported incidents; slack, twitter, and other channels were monitored during and after the conference and nothing else came up.

#### **Incident #1:**

A conduct moderator was reported as conducting harassment, misconduct, and retaliation in their host institution. This person was quietly suspended from their moderator duties while this was being investigated. The safety officer contacted the reporting party, the moderator, and a third party and concluded that she could not substantiate the reports and restored the conduct moderator's role, notifying all three parties of her decision. This was not brought to the sanctioning committee.

### **Incident #2:**

Conference Platform (X-CD Technologies) staff reported to conference organizers that someone was using conference chat to share developer code to “hack” the platform to download videos. Organizers first contacted a member of the code of conduct committee and there was some discussion of the incident in the conduct moderators slack channel, but then the reports went appropriately to the safety officer as a possible violation of the code (unauthorized posting of recordings). The safety officer and a meeting organizer met with the person allegedly posting the code (in actuality, just telling people how to look at the source for a page), and they said they would not do it again. Nothing was advanced to a sanctioning committee.

### **Incident #3:**

There was an incident in a hangout room where allegedly a senior scientist made comments that could be seen as belittling, according to a person who heard about this from another person. The person most affected declined (through an intermediary) to make a report, as did all others aware of the incident, so the matter was not investigated.

### **Code of Conduct Committee’s Assessment**

Overall, the meeting appeared to have gone well. Events on the X-CD platform, “off-site” events like on Gathertown, and general discussion on social media appeared to be nearly universally constructive. It is not clear if this is due to the code of conduct, presence of conduct moderators, or general humaneness of our community, but it was good to see.

Incident 2 seemed to reflect a misunderstanding of hacking: generally viewing source code of a site is not considered hacking, though there has been a [dispute](#) about this in the US state of Missouri. There was a flurry of worry and activity with the initial report (a concern about hacking of the conference platform in real time and ways to mitigate it quickly) -- this might have been handled differently.

The conduct moderators created a separate slack channel to be able to seek advice about incidents. Though warned to avoid identifying details, in hindsight this does pose a risk given the small size of our community. In future meetings we suggest that such a channel be used for updates and general items; any real time questions should go to the safety officer directly.