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COLLECTING INNOVATION TODAY

TRANSCRIPT OF A VIDEO ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEW WITH

MITCHELL BAKER

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MOZILLA FOUNDATION

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QUESTION:

01:00:55;06 I'll tell you what? I was walking around here. Tell me what goes on here. I mean, we walked in, it looked like a dorm room downstairs. But what's goin' on here?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:01:03;25 Well, the big thing that's going on is we're trying to figure out what's happening with the internet. And what's interesting, and what's useful, and what's helpful to people. And how do we both put products in front of people that embody that, and how do we help people to participate in building something useful? So that's the big picture. But the small picture is everybody staring at a computer monitor most of the time, except when we stop to talk. So some of it is people writing code. Some of it is people thinking, "How do you communicate to other people?"

01:01:33;19 Sometimes we're actual communicating with each other because we do a lot of communication online, both through instant messaging, through another similar tool, IRC. This is a constant sort of communication back and forth, through Twitter and Facebook and all the new methods. So sometimes you're actually seeing communication, although you wouldn't actually know it at the time.

QUESTION:

01:01:54;03 What's everybody talking about, though? What are they communicating? What are the messages? Is it all 'bout the browser

and the email client? Or is it bigger than that? Or?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:02:01;08 Well, it is bigger. It's about the internet. So we're talking about a couple different things. Most of it's the browser and the email client. But it's always in the context of, what's happening? What are other people doing? It turns out that this browser is the way that people access almost all of the internet. Not completely all, but most of it.

01:02:19;21 And so when you think about the browser, what you're thinking about is: What's useful? What do I like about being online? What bothers me? How do we change it? How do communications change? How does broadcasting change? How do my interactions with my friends change? Because all of those get reflected in this otherwise obscure piece of software.

01:02:37;16 So a lot of times it is very detailed. How does this pixel lay out on this screen, and why isn't it right? And then at the other end of the spectrum it's, like, what's wrong with the internet? What's right with it? And then everything in between. Plus, there's a fair amount of humor. That's what keeps it fun and helps people cope with the amount of detail and pressure that's involved in trying to ship something that's worthwhile.

QUESTION:

01:03:03;15 I mean, it looks very casual downstairs. I mean, is that culture part of how it works? Tell me a little bit about how that works.

MITCHELL BAKER:

- 01:03:10;14 I think Silicon Valley, in general, is casual. I'm not exactly sure how it started. Maybe it's that productivity can be measured so clearly by your output, especially in programming. So sort of, output is king here. So we are very casual. And you'll see it in clothes. And you'll see it in the way people sit. And mostly what we try to do is make people comfortable so they can be productive. So we're really fortunate, partly, in this industry as a whole. But partly, in the innovative sense. Partly, because Mozilla is different. That we work with an extraordinarily dedicated group of people. That's our employees and our volunteers. And so many management challenges are peripheral to us. And so our task, as managers, isn't to make sure people are producing. It's to solve problems and get out of the way.
- 01:04:03;10 And so the entire focus is on, how do you help people be more comfortable and more productive? And, of course, there are outliers, where some people aren't in the right job and you need to say goodbye to them. Or you have someone who's disruptive, employee or volunteer. But that's a small portion. So the room looks casual because that's the way people are comfortable.
- 01:04:22;28 And we have a Wii machine that people take a break. Because when you're, like, you know, in college, you develop ways of reducing stress and having fun and recharging. And you might as well have those same ways here. Because it may be casual but it's clearly understood, everyone in that room you know, if you get a phone call at 10:00 or

11:00 or midnight, you answer it. So that's kind of the tradeoff, is we make you comfortable but if something comes up where we need you, then you have to be there.

01:04:52;04 And in our setting, because we have a security and a protection aspect to what we do, I mean, we need people, you can't schedule it. So it's not something, I think, that all industries can adopt wholeheartedly. But when you have such a motivated workforce and the perception isn't as important. I mean, your perception shows up in your product. Then the real focus is what works. Yeah.

QUESTION:

01:05:21;05 Now you said it's to learn more about the internet. Is it all eventually gonna go into a browser product? Or is there some other product in the pipeline? Or is it just knowledge is eventually good and innovation expands by itself? See what I'm trying to say? I mean, what's the, sort of-- is there an end goal? Or is it just, let's discover, let's explore?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:05:36;14 There's some of both. First, people are here and people come to Mozilla because they're really interested in how do you present the internet to people. And so there's a natural curiosity and a natural drive. And there's a bunch of people here who are need new stimulus and wanna see what's happening, and are always playing with what's going on because it interests them. So there's some part of curiosity.

01:05:56;24 We need that curiosity. Right? Otherwise, if you grow stale, then

you're presenting the capabilities of the internet as it was six months ago, and not what they are today. So there's some of that. It's just what brings people here. There's some of it that's very practical. What do we relate to? Some of it's competitive. But what other things are out there that we could make better? So a lot of it is, should we do something with our current products, Firefox, Thunderbird? And part of it is, what else should we be doing? Or how should we change our product?

01:06:26;12 You know, we think of the browser as really, the mechanism that is in between a human being and the internet. And so today we used to browse. Today we do social things and share photos and create content. Who knows what we'll do tomorrow? I mean, I personally think we'll manage information.

01:06:43;27 And so it may not look or feel like a browser today, but that layer in between all the unintelligible server-side infrastructure that none of us, or very few of us, really understand in detail, plus what I get to experience is that's what really pulls us together.

QUESTION:

01:07:01;09 'Kay. Now here's my trick question.

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:07:02;29 Yeah?

QUESTION:

01:07:03;19 You said there was humor around here, right?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:07:05;25 Right.

QUESTION:

01:07:06;22 What's your favorite kind of music? I mean, do you have a certain kind of music you like? Or artist?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:07:14;09 Mine's probably pretty eclectic. It's probably no. That's not a good question. Find another trick question.

QUESTION:

01:07:20;02 You mean you don't wanna tell us?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:07:21;19 You know, I don't have a category. Actually...

QUESTION:

01:07:23;06 That's fine.

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:07:23;13 I could give you an artist.

QUESTION:

01:07:25;14 No, that's fine. Not everybody does. It's not really a trick question. It was just, you know, some people have related music to this sort of, creative endeavor that a lot of people are into. One person told us Mozart. And somebody else said they liked Van Morrison. So we just wondered if there was a unique commonality in the music.

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:07:41;08 You know, I'm really more drawn both to textiles and to dance than I

am to music

QUESTION:

01:07:46;07 Do you have a style of dance or something that you like?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:07:48;02 Well actually, I'm still a lover of classic ballet which draws me, to modern interpretive dance. Both modern dance in the genre of modern dance, plus today's sort of current, interpretive, tell a story, do a performance with dance. I also love gymnastics and the rhythmic gymnastics. So across the range of movement that relates to dance. I actually have a hobby of the flying trapeze, which is sort of similar. But it's all that kind of movement piece. So that and, of course, music. I've heard people describe it as, "Sound comes in through the ears and out through the feet, but the brain's never consciously aware of them." So I'm much more drawn to the movement side.

QUESTION:

01:08:36;16 Let's just sort of set the stage. You said there's a lot of people don't even know what a browser is. But take us back to roughly ten years ago, when you were working with Netscape. And how you got from there, to sort of where we are today.

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:08:48;26 Sure. Maybe I'll even start a couple years before that.

QUESTION:

01:08:51;07 That's fine.

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:08:51;25 So in 1994, 1995, Netscape released a product called the Netscape Navigator. And it was the first widely available browser for the world wide web. And for most people of that era, it was their introduction to the web. For a while, Netscape Navigator was ubiquitous. Over time Microsoft developed a product called "Internet Explorer." And they built a good product. They also had really, a lock on the distribution channel. When you buy a machine, you know, what do you get? And that was Internet Explorer. And through that and, actually, some illegal activities, right but they also built a good product. So we shouldn't take that away from them.

01:09:32;22 They ended up having 90, 95, maybe 97 percent market share. And so for those of us who understood what a browser is, and how important it is, that was a big problem. Because for a long period, the browser became invisible. It was a blue E on your desktop. You clicked on it and it was, somehow, the internet. And for many people today, that's still the case.

01:09:56;05 And so the problem with that is that the browser deteriorated in quality. Because there was no competition, and so there was no one pushing on Internet Explorer. And so the development efforts receded. And it became a poor-quality product. And so as a result of that, now again, people are beginning to know that a browser exists and to understand it. So for most people, it's still that blue E. But for

an increasing number of people, it's Mozilla Firefox, the Firefox logo.

And there are a few other browsers out there as well now.

01:10:30;18 And so what the browser actually is. It's the piece of software that lives on your machine so you, as a human being, are in control of it. And it is the mechanism through which you can talk to the rest of the internet. And it seems very mundane and very obscure, and sort of abstract and even esoteric. Like, who would care?

01:10:49;16 But it turns out it's like if you don't have a good steering wheel on your car, it's hard to drive well. And if you don't have good windshield wipers, you can't see well. And if you don't have turn signals, it's dangerous. And so in that same way, this seemingly obscure piece of software called the browser is really fundamental. And as Netscape's market share declined, it became clear there was no way to compete in a traditional method.

01:11:14;21 And so the untraditional method that Netscape chose was to take all the code for its product and make the code available to the public, free of charge and free of use restriction. And that was named "Mozilla." Mozilla was launched in 1998. And at that time it was a very radical thing for a commercial organization to do. It's more common today and open-source software is more known and accepted today. But it was pretty unusual.

01:11:41;22 In fact, might have been the first time that a commercial organization had taken a valuable asset and made it available to the public the way Netscape did with Mozilla. So Mozilla started in 1998. And the key is

that anyone, had an internet connection, now we could go get it. Not just the product that you use, but the underlying source code. It would be free of charge and we all have the right to take it and modify it and do what we want with it.

01:12:09;06 You know, if you change it, you can't call it "Firefox," 'cause that would confuse people. But you can create whatever you want with it. You can compete with us, make a wildly competitive product. You can take bits and pieces of it and use it for whatever you want. And so the rationale for doing that was thinking that would allow many people to join together and voluntarily, together, produce a work product. And then to be able to use it afterwards.

01:12:35;07 Because it turns out that although we all have the freedom to go make competitive products and use it on our own, it's much more efficient, as a development method, to work together. Sometimes it's called, "the logic of open source." And in engineer speak, which isn't always polite, it's called, "the stupid tax," meaning it looks really appealing right now to be able to take this giant asset and go off and take it behind closed doors and do what you want with it. And not really share your work back. Or not join in the general shared effort.

01:13:08;25 And a lot of people try that. But it turns out that you fall behind. And that for any one group, or even a big organization or company, to keep up with the work of a shared group is very hard. And so what happens is a lot of organizations go off and they try working on their own for a while. And they fall behind. And then they come back and

they realize, "It's much better for me to take my effort and contribute it to the shared work product, so that the general result that everyone's using has the things I want in it."

01:13:37;19 And so that's the logic of open source. It's not true 100 percent of the time, but it's true a lot. And that's why organizations like Mozilla and other open source projects are so successful. If you run a good community, and you attract people, and you make enough decisions well enough of the time, then together you go further faster than any one organization can do. And so that's what Mozilla's about, is having a goal, improvement of the internet, and a way of working that draws in people and process and technique for allowing us to work effectively together. And producing great results. So that's the first part of the history.

QUESTION:

01:14:16;12 I want you to go back and just put yourself in the picture a little. You're telling me we and they. But tell me where you were and how you got from those same steps.

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:14:30;23 I worked at Netscape almost since the beginning. Since before the release of Netscape Navigator 1.0. Before that release. So I'd been working on browsers forever. And I am actually a lawyer, by training. At Netscape, I was in charge of everything related, in the legal side, to product creation. So that's technology licensing, intellectual property, building the product, building the website, all the issues that might

relate to that.

01:15:00;09 And that was a pretty innovative space to, 'cause there was no law, right? There was no public internet, no graphical web. So everything you did had to be based on principals or values. And so that was great. I loved that. Because you couldn't, there was no need to go out and find what the decisions were before, 'cause there weren't any. So what a great place.

01:15:18;25 And that meant that anything that touched the source code for the product came to me. Didn't matter what anybody at Netscape ever wanted to do that related to the source code of product, one way or another, I had a role in it. So when Netscape released the source code, or wanted to release the source code for its browser, I was intimately involved in that. And that included figuring out how the project would run. And that's gets in an agreement among people.

01:15:48;23 How it would run. How much you trusted people. How much we would rely on the logic of open source. And how much we would try and have tighter control over what people did. So I was very involved in the beginning. And I worked, sort of, part-time on this effort for a year, for nine months, whatever. 'Cause my son was born right in there as well, so I had some leave.

01:16:10;26 And then actually, when I came back from maternity leave, I knew that I was getting bored. Because by that time, there been four years and so the law was beginning to be developed. And the business

models were beginning to be known. And so things would come up and I'd look at them and I'd say, "Oh, I know how to do that. You take this piece and you combine it with that piece." And so I'd have a general set of instructions about how to do it, and then I'd hand it off to someone else you know, in this team that worked for me, to get done.

01:16:40;10 So by that time I was losing interest. And coincidentally, that was the time that AOL acquired Netscape. So when I came back from my maternity leave, it was pretty clear I was gonna do something else. And I gave a, you know, fair amount of thought to it because there were some roles in the AOL corporate structure. But I was really interested in Mozilla. I was really interested in software development.

01:17:03;28 I mean, I was a good attorney for software development because it's all business. There's not so much legal it's not as legal as many legal roles are. And certainly in our area, it was much less so 'cause there was no law at the time. So I knew that I wanted to do something really product-specific. And something where there were no models and things would need to be made up. And a set of us converged on the idea that that would be leading or running or Mozilla.

01:17:37;27 And that came, I had the thought, Jim Barksdale, who ran who was the CEO of Netscape, had that thought. And I went to talk to the people in Mozilla, in particular, the leader there. He's here today at Mozilla. His name is Brendan Ike. And to see what he thought. And

I'd been working with them, you know, part-time anyway. And so I was known and trusted. It's hard for a lawyer to be trusted. Right? I'm very proud of that, actually. That throughout my legal career that...

QUESTION:

01:18:03;23 You've never been a Wall Street lawyer, have you?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:18:05;12 No I haven't, actually. I was a software lawyer

QUESTION:

01:18:08;23 Sorry but we had to ask.

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:18:11;02 But so I was proud of that. So they were happy to see me come. And at the time, I was the only non-technical person at Mozilla, which was true for a long time. And the only woman at Mozilla you know, that's not true. There were women at Mozilla from the very beginning. But I was the only non-technical person for a number of years at Mozilla. And so I had the role of everything that wasn't right in code like, what was our policy? How did we work? We were all, at that time, employees of Netscape. And so organizationally, it was a very stressful setting. It was not a setting that, organizationally, could last for very long. Because my goals and tasks were not the same as my managers. Right? And that's really unstable. But I understood a lot of things that the engineers didn't. And so from the very first, the person who's the technical leader, as I mentioned, Brendan Ike, he

and I have been, sort of partners in Mozilla.

01:19:08;09 He's the technical decision maker. And we always have a technical decision maker. Sometimes people think open source is chaotic. And sometimes people ask us, "Well, how can you have a high-quality product when anybody can, like, write code?" But the answer is anybody can submit code, but there's a very careful quality process before any of that code actually ends up in the shared work.

01:19:37;18 So all of those technical decisions, if you need someone, at the very end, it's Brendan. And if there's another decision related to the product at the very sorry. Another decision related to the Mozilla project, at the very end, it's me. And that's been important because we lived, for many years, with no legal organization at all. When we worked at Netscape there was no Mozilla Foundation. We were employees of Netscape. We had a virtual organization. We called it "Mozilla.org."

01:20:06;29 Some of those people also worked at Netscape and, technically, I was their manager at Netscape. But a bunch of them didn't work at Netscape. And so we created some way of working together. And, like many open source projects, it's based on reputation and leadership and who will follow you. And so for many years, we've had Brendan on the technical side, Mitchell for other things.

QUESTION:

01:20:30;21 So at some point AOL lost interest in this project. Pick it up there and tell me, then you moved off on your own to start the foundation first?

Tell me a little bit about that.

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:20:42;25 Well, I was laid-off by AOL in 2001. In early September of 2001. So I participated in Mozilla, for the year after that, as a volunteer. And I continued to lead it. And so that's another organizational anomaly.

QUESTION:

01:20:59;21 Now, why would you do that if they most people get laid-off, they go look for a job. It was a belief you had in the project, or what?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:21:04;21 Yes. First, I was exhausted. Mozilla had been a long and difficult period. And in the couple years before that, not only was my son born, but both my parents died. And, you know, I was really exhausted. So I took some time off. And I was lucky to be able to do that. But I also believed in the project. And because we'd been working with browsers for so long, we knew how important it was. And I work on the project partly because of the picture, but it's also very personal. So I know that more and more of our lives will be online. And our health information will be online. And our insurance information will be online. And now our friends are online. And everything, pretty much, will be online after a while.

01:21:51;01 Well, I don't want my health and medical insurance, and my access to them and my ability to work with them, controlled by a single company. And I don't wanna have to pay, one way or another, for access to that stuff. And it's sounds a little melodramatic, but if you

have one company in those days it was Microsoft. It doesn't matter what company it is. You know, one business organization with a business plan who must make money, and must continue to make more money over time, with the only access to my online information, which is what the browser provides, that's a terrible setting.

01:22:24;05 And so I participated because I don't want to live that way. And I don't want you to live that way. And I don't want my husband or my son or my mom or my neighbor, anybody, to live that way. Because the quality of the product can be bad. You don't have control over the info I mean, this is me, right? This is my life. And so that drives many of us.

01:22:43;05 And so I participated in the project 'cause that's important to me. Also, you know, when you work in a community of people, and you have a team and you're doing something you think is important, and you're relying on each other you know, that's a very human feeling. It's very rewarding, and it's hard to leave. So you combine those things together. And I couldn't imagine not participating.

QUESTION:

01:23:06;13 Was there any sense that you were pioneering or innovating something new? Like a movement, a social, it's kind sounds like it's a little bit like the late '60s, early '70s thing comin' back.

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:23:14;24 Well, most days, we were a failure. So there was not that sense then. Mozilla started out with very high profile in 1998, 'cause Netscape had

press, right? And then we went through a period where everyone knew we were a failure. And we were the poster child for failure of open source projects for a number of years. Which I think is very important to our history, and who we are today.

01:23:38;02 And so in that era, we worked at it without a lot of press, and with most people asking, "Well, isn't this a lost cause? And who in the world is ever gonna care or want a browser?" So it was not that sense of a social movement. Maybe it was the dogged determination not to believe that we were dead in that setting. So it wasn't really until we shipped Firefox in 2004 that began to change

QUESTION:

01:24:08;16 You were a failure for six years? Am I doin' the math right?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:24:11;03 Probably more like four, '99. 'Cause Firefox had early versions before the 1.0 release. And people began to see that it was worth something by then. But for, you know, at least a good four years. Yep.

QUESTION:

01:24:25;00 But maybe I'm maybe I'm not what kept everybody goin' for four years, when you were considered...

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:24:29;25 A failure?

QUESTION:

01:24:29;26 ...a failure? Was it had to be something. Was it this, I don't wanna live like this, or?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:24:33;28 A lot of it.

QUESTION:

01:24:35;24 It's hard to believe. I mean, did everybody come in every day and say, "Hey, we gotta keep goin'

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:24:42;02 Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. So I was laid-off in 2001. A bunch of other people were still employed and paid by Netscape through 2003. And they absolutely. And there were a set of people who weren't officially a part of Mozilla, but were still paid by Netscape, AOL, to build the Netscape product. And they came in every day determined to contribute to Mozilla and make it worthwhile. And we also had thousands of volunteers in those days, who were also determined. Not the tens and hundreds of thousands that we do today. But we were a success open source project. So, yes, it was we also knew that our technology was better. Like, considerably better than IE. It's much better today than it was then.

01:25:22;10 But even then. Yes, the combination. Knowing the stuff's really important, the set of people you're working with, of the technology and you know, maybe some, I guess, sense it really needed to happen, rolled together. And many of those people, when AOL laid them off, continued as volunteers and not full-time. But continued to volunteer. And everyone who came to the foundation when we formed it took some kind of pay cut, instead of other jobs that were available.

Because we all felt we were lucky to have a job at all.

QUESTION:

01:25:56;06 Tell me a little bit how the foundation organization, why was it set up that way?

MITCHELL BAKER:

01:26:00;28 So in 2003, AOL got really tired of the browser and wanted to stop investing. They still had some number of people that they were paying to build Netscape Navigator. I don't know, seven, eight. Whatever the number was. And so they were sure they wanted not to invest. But also recognized that just shutting everything down and having Mozilla die wouldn't be good. And I don't know how they thought about that 'cause I wasn't there. Maybe it was mind share or I don't know what the reason was. But they recognized that.

01:26:34;04 And so Brendan and I had been leading this project already. And so it came to pass that AOL was agreeable to giving donating the assets to an organization that would keep it going. And by assets like, the Mozilla name, which AOL ended up owning, through Netscape. And a set of machines, which are critical. They probably weren't worth all that much, but we had no money, right? Since we were never a legal organization. Even when people would ask to donate money, we couldn't accept it. So we had zero. So everything was important. The trademark and a set of machines to be able to work on things, and \$2 million.

01:27:19;13 We figured that we needed at least ten people, working full-time, to

keep this alive, at a minimum. So that \$2 million sounds like a giant amount of money, but when you're talking about ten people and we all, at that time, were here in Silicon Valley, which is an expensive place to be. Be we needed that exact set of ten people. You couldn't in fact, I think it's one of history's interesting facts. That it's hard to imagine another set of ten people who could've been the scaffolding for what we did.

01:27:47;27 Because one person had a giant job. And there was no overlap, right, in what we did. We had one person to build the Firefox application that people know. One person to build the Thunderbird application. One person to get the content from the machines in the back and display it. You know, one person to be able to lay it out on the page. One person to do our IT. One person to work on quality. You know, one person to do technology. So without the right set of ten people, it would've been very hard.

01:28:19;09 And everyone who we asked to come join us turned down every other offer available and came. Because of this combination of things. Also, there is something wonderful about working in the open source area. It is hard for people to understand sometimes, till you get in the middle of it. But it's a setting where you work in the open, which is scary at first.

01:28:44;01 But you get the responses that you've earned. And so you know, many people work in settings where they either don't like their job, or they have a manager they don't get along with. Or they feel like, "I

could do more if my job was broader. Or I could do more if my colleagues and my manager if we could change the job description." Or their decisions are wrong or, "I wanna try something different." All of that is possible in our world.

01:29:09;02 And so it can be very rewarding in a way that, if you're really lucky, your job is rewarding. Like, I feel my job is that rewarding. But for many people, their job doesn't provide all of those things. And you're either trapped or something unrelated to you what you think, your skills and your abilities are, is in your way.

01:29:27;26 And so we offer a setting where that's not the case. And where if you make a mistake sometimes people will be sharp in their emails, but if you do something well or exciting, people are effusive and very responsive. And there were enough people in the world who understood that they didn't in those days it was all Microsoft, right? They did not want Internet Explorer as their only way of accessing, or even a way of accessing, the internet. They wanted something else. That they were very interested in what we're doing.

01:29:58;25 And that's extraordinarily rewarding on a human level. And so we were able to form the Mozilla Foundation in 2003. That's a non-profit, 501-C3, tax-exempt organization. That's because we've always been about public benefit. And so that made sense to AOL, that they would be making a donation to a non-profit. And it made sense to us that that reflects the public benefit nature of what we're doing.

QUESTION:

02:00:33;22 Ok tell me about this when some people were still working in Netscape but were helping Mozilla. It's like they're supporting a competitive product. What was that historically, going on there?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:00:44;27 Mozilla was always the basis for Netscape. So, the employees at Netscape AOL would work, they would contribute their efforts to Mozilla. And those of us working officially for Mozilla would combine that with the efforts from others. And then, Netscape would take that combination back, and add some things on it to make the product they released. So, in that era, Netscape was quite closely tied to a website called, netscape.com. And maybe AOL changed the name afterwards. So, they would release a product based on Mozilla technology, that AOL thought was good for its business.

02:01:21;28 So, they supported AOL, because that's where the underlying technology development happened. So, I was laid off in 2001, but a range of other people who were working on the technology development were still employed at Netscape. Increasingly, people working on Mozilla were not employed by Netscape. There were more and more of us who were either volunteers, or employed someplace else.

02:01:42;22 And that continued until 2003, when AOL decided to stop investing in the browser completely. And as I say, I don't know all the rationale, but maybe they decided to stop shipping a browser at all. Something.

And so, they gave us some seed money, and the assets, and we got started. And that was a scary period. I mean, it was exciting. We'd wanted this for many years. But it was also scary personally, in that, as I said you know, \$2 million sounds like a lot of money, but with an absolute minimum of ten people, and the need really for more, and being in Silicon Valley; there's not a lot of future with just, just \$2 million.

02:02:23;28 But I don't really like to fundraise. And we're a non-profit. And so, the idea that I was responsible now for finding, or raising, or finding a financial model that would support these ten people and the project, was daunting. Of all the things that I would voluntarily choose to do, that's not one of them, right.

QUESTION:

02:02:43;04 So you were one of the ten. Your job was you said, somebody did this? Tell me what exactly you, of the ten, your job was to run the whole thing?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:02:49;20 Yes, yes.

QUESTION:

02:02:50;18 Well how did you manage to get that enviable position?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:02:54;01 Well, I'd been doing it. I'd been the general manager of the Mozilla project since 1999. My title in that role was Chief Lizard Wrangler. Still probably my favorite title. So, I had been the manager in terms

of policy, and process, and how do we do things, and how do we interact with organizations. And the final decision maker for non-technical questions when necessary.

02:03:19;24 One of the keys is not to make it necessary very often. Which is different than many commercial organizations that have a CEO who's very clearly the decision-maker on everything. Right. So, I forgot the question right there.

QUESTION:

02:03:35;14 You were just expanding on which of the ten you were.

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:03:37;11 Oh, that's right, that's right.

QUESTION:

02:03:38;00 And then, how the foundation started to take off, and morph into these, then the corporation started to...

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:03:45;13 So, my role was to run it. Not the technology and not specifically to ship the product, but to make everything else happen. And so, when you have an organization, there's a bunch of organizational things that need to happen. And my background as a lawyer was useful there. I mean, I personally read and negotiated every bit of the founding documents with AOL alone. Right, because I happened to have the skills, and of the ten of us, I was the only one who had any skills in that realm. So, I did all of that.

QUESTION:

02:04:16;18 Along with ...?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:04:16;24 Yeah.

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:04:22;21 And also, I have had for many years, the voice of Mozilla, the public spokesperson. So, today we have more and more. But still, on a number of issues I'm at least the determiner of the final message, and often the person delivering it. So, that role of managing it or running it, also included public spokesperson, and interaction with other organizations. Which we've tried to do a great deal.

02:04:53;24 'Cause the browser exists amid lots of other technology pieces. And so, making them work together has an organizational piece. So, that's always sort of been my role. When we formed the foundation we did not yet have Firefox. We didn't have Firefox for another 15 months. So, it was under development, but it wasn't shipping, it wasn't anywhere near a product that a consumer could use. So, we shipped the old product that we developed before for awhile. It was technically good, but not the right product.

02:05:28;26 And so, I set out, you know found the board, and started thinking about, how do we support ourselves? How do we generate additional funds? We were very fortunate that both IBM and Sun recognized the importance of having a browser. And so, they made a contribution or a pledge of \$150,000 a year. Which I figured, roughly, you know, you

could support X people with that, right.

02:05:54;26 And Mitch Kapor, who's the founder of Lotus was very helpful. He did the same and later on, we talked to some other organizations who did the same thing. And we looked at fundraising, we looked at a whole range of things. And so, in that phase, my role was general manager some funding stuff, some decision making things about our product, and our efforts. Because sometimes products are technical and non-technical combined. And so, Brendon and I would put our heads together, and you know, we would make a decision.

02:06:23;21 There were many of those in the early days. Everything from finding an office space, to you know, equipment, and all of those things. So, we continued like that for awhile. And it takes a lot of effort to find enough money to support even ten people. And many businesses never find that much money.

02:06:43;15 So, we worked at that for awhile. And then, as Firefox began to get further, we began to get more and more attention. And so, then there began to be more discussions with other organizations, more discussions with the press, and more thinking about, what does the product look like. So, we made a big shift about nine months after the foundation was formed. So, in early 2004, as Firefox was beginning to come close to being done. And that's a shift that said, really, we're a technology organization, and we know how to talk to technology-centric people, and engineers, and developers.

02:07:25;03 And we've already built in our old product, a product for those people.

But we want Firefox to be good for the average maybe not average; the general consumer, and for the citizens of the world, right.

Consumers and citizens. And so, that means we have to change our nature pretty fundamentally, and make sure that we're talking to consumers, not to other developers.

02:07:46;22 And that means you have to build a really polished product. Which seems obvious today, it seems screamingly obvious. But it's a wrenching change for an open source organization that's been built on developers, and talking to developers. And many open source projects don't make that change, and don't want to. I mean there's nothing that says you have to. But we decided that we wanted to.

02:08:08;04 And so, making that change was very painful. Even things like how polished are the icons, how much complexity do you display, what does the start page look like when you first see it, do we do any marketing? You know, what does it look like? How do we have a marketing function that's honest, and that has no spin?

02:08:31;17 Right, because as that open source organization built on volunteers who believe in what you're doing, and you can't have spin that they don't agree with. So, those things seem obvious now, but they hadn't really been done before. And so, sorting them out, and dealing with the different views, and some things were very contentious. That ultimately was my role to sort out.

QUESTION:

02:08:53;24 Can you give me an example of something that was...

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:08:55;23 Sure.

QUESTION:

02:08:55;25 I mean, something you haven't talked about before? I mean, this is the big historical interview.

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:08:58;25 Something I haven't talked about before?

QUESTION:

02:09:00;16 Or something maybe...

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:09:01;24 Well, the start page.

QUESTION:

02:09:10;15 So, speaking of being contentious, right. The start page was big... contentious..

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:09:13;15 The start page.

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:09:14;29 It certainly was. It certainly was. If you look back at our old products, or even Firefox under development, well, I'm sorry. Let me back up and describe what the start page is. So, if you go get, well say, Firefox, for the first time; when it first opens up you'll see a bit of information about Firefox and Mozilla.

02:09:33;17 We call that the first run page, 'cause it's what you see the first time you run the product. After that, if you close it and open it again, you

get a default start page. 'Cause that's what opens when you start the browser. And today, what most people who use Firefox will notice, is it's got some information about Mozilla, and it's got a Google search functionality in it. And I have to confess, I'm not sure what different users of Internet Explorer will see. So, I can't describe it for them across platforms and so on. I mean, across versions. So, in our old product, the start page was very technical. So, it had a link to the bug tracking system.

02:10:14;05 And it had a link to where you check out source code. And it had a link to various other very technical tools, that to the general consumer made no sense at all. But to our early core community, were the tools you use every day. And so, the discussion to get rid of that, and have something that wasn't so useful for the developers, but would be more useful for a consumer, was contentious.

02:10:38;26 And then, the discussion of what would be on that page was very contentious. With some people feeling, I want a lot of information, often called a porthole, that has, you know, 20 different links on it. Or, I want news, and I want golf, and I want weather. So, one set of people who wanted the old developer page, one set who wanted lots of information on it, and a set of people who felt, we need something really simple. Consumer focused, but something useful to everyone.

02:11:13;15 So, not simple as in dumb. Not at all. But simple as in, useful, and hopefully elegant in design. So, when you look at the start page today, it probably doesn't look so elegant, because you know, we've

been using it for a few years. But four years ago, it was. And so, that was very contentious. And it's not alone a technical issue, it's not how do you implement the page. It's what's on it.

02:11:37;11 How do we present ourselves? And so, we spent a lot of time over that. And we finally decided the only thing that we could think of that we thought everybody was likely to want was search. And that's why we have the start page we do. Now, later on it turned out that that's valuable, and it generates a lot of revenue to us. So, it looks like we picked that because we were trying to make money. Right? But in fact, we picked it because we had some people who'd say, "You know, my 17 year old son does not want to see what you're gonna put on that start page. I can guarantee you that he's not gonna want to see anything you're gonna put on that start page."

02:12:11;08 And after we had those heated discussions for a long time, we finally realized, search. Maybe there'll be something else in the future, but search is obvious. And that has been born out to be correct. So, those, when you look at it, don't seem like they should be hard decisions. And that was all before the business arrangement.

02:12:29;21 So, after we thought about search, then there's a long discussion with Google and Yahoo! about the business arrangement. And I am responsible for that, too. I mean, somebody else did a bunch of the work. But actually, getting an agreement has always been mine. Because we spent six months talking to Yahoo!, and six months talking to Google about what is Mozilla, and how we're different, and how can

we integrate into or how can we have a relationship with you?

02:12:57;28

Because we, as Mozilla, can't agree to many classic business terms.

And so, we did spend I mean, many, many, many hours you know, coming to that arrangement. Which was necessary for us to be a non-profit, and to have a mission and then, to have a system that generated revenue, but didn't control us. So.

QUESTION:

02:13:17;11

Okay, at some point the foundation is started. This profit corporation is gonna start as well, right?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:13:23;07

Right.

QUESTION:

02:13:24;05

But is there a nexus between those two?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:13:26;26

Sure.

QUESTION:

02:13:27;07

I don't want to skip ahead, but are we almost there?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:13:28;19

No yeah, that's a good thing. The Mozilla Foundation was founded in mid 2003. We released Firefox in November of 2005. And it was clear quickly that Firefox was a success, was gonna be a success. The adoption was high, the interest was high, and many of the other things that we had hoped for it were high. So, we hoped not just for market share, or because we're not about market share and revenue. What

we had hoped was to spur innovation, not just by us, but by the entire industry. And it turns out, for reasons we could talk about, if you want, but that happened.

02:14:09;15 So, Firefox became successful, and we began to see all sorts of things happen. And that Mozilla was at the center of, sort of, an ecosystem, or at least a group of people, a group of companies, as well, trying to work on the internet. And so, we found a couple things. We found that being a non-profit in that setting was very complex.

02:14:28;19 That the other organizations didn't know how to interact with us. We found that the non-profit rules don't anticipate someone like us. That's living and competing in a marketplace for the public benefit. And so, there were many things that we just weren't sure how to do them. Could we do them? Could you not do them? If you do them, what are the constraints on them? And they're not clear, right? There's no clear law because we're new enough. And so, we were constantly in this gray area. And some of them let me think back to some of them are like could you authorize a book publisher to put the logo on a book they're writing about your product?

02:15:17;05 Now, maybe that's clear today. But when I first looked at it in 2003, 2004, we didn't know a clear answer. Right, because that logo's a public asset. Right, Mozilla Foundation, all its assets are dedicated to the public. It's a public asset. How much private benefit? I mean, it was just it's a very difficult kind of setting to understand.

02:15:36;05 And I found that I was spending more and more time trying to figure

out what does non-profit law say about the way that internet software companies interact with each other? And there was no answer. So, that's an overhead that's hard. And at the same time, we also began to generate pretty significant revenue out of our search arrangements in the product. And so, we thought, you know, the easiest thing here is to make a taxable subsidiary.

02:16:06;24 Our goal is not to make non-profit law. I mean, maybe we'll end up doing that, or needing to do that, or it will come to us. But that's not our primary goal. Our primary goal is to build the internet we want to live in. And so, we decided that it would be certainly easier, although expensive, right, to make taxable subsidiary and to pay taxes, like everyone else.

02:16:30;15 So that the revenue that's generated out of our search arrangements is not tax-exempt. We pay taxes. But that organization is totally owned by the non-profit. So that, everything we do is still dedicated to the public benefit. All the assets are still dedicated to the public benefit. There are not stock options. You know, there's none of the things that you expect in a normal taxable entity. But it also allows us to and even more importantly, to interact with business organizations in a way they expect.

02:17:01;00 There's still a lot of things that we won't do, because that's not us. And so, very often, when you have an arrangement, especially if it involves revenue, money you know, there's a lot of conditions and response in return. So, normally you would expect if you're

generating a lot of revenue out of a product, that the person sending that revenue has some control over the product.

02:17:22;04 And we say, no, can't do it. And it doesn't matter how much you talk to me, or how much you threaten me, we just can't do it. And the reason is, we have this community that is critical to building the product. Right. And that community, if we alienate that community by building the wrong product, or not the product we believe we should, because you tell us to; we're dead. And so, there's enough places where that comes up, where we say, you know, we can't operate the way you want us to. That it still takes some explaining, but at least we've removed the level of, and, oh, by the way, we don't actually know how to do it.

QUESTION:

02:18:04;07 Okay, and so, at this point, you're like, running both of this, the Foundation and the subsidiary?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:18:09;29 Not.

QUESTION:

02:18:10;18 Sort of?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:18:11;24 So, what we did is we formed a taxable subsidiary in 2005. And I left daily operations of the Foundation and moved to the subsidiary. Because once again, you want to keep separate management. It's important in making sure that you have a non-profit that's real and

true, and is following its mission. And that the management of a taxable subsidiary is separate. So, I moved to the subsidiary on a day to day basis. And we hired an executive director for the Foundation. And I made that choice because I thought the hardest issues would live in the subsidiary. The ones that were more likely to be, how do we build a product that is successful in the marketplace, but is built as a public benefit with a large volunteer community?

02:19:08;11 That those issues were gonna be where the product was built. And that the need to remain Mozilla, and be able to articulate our values, and even make hard product and business decisions would show up mostly in the subsidiary. So, that was one reason. I think that's true.

02:19:27;08 The second reason is, that I'm really drawn to the product. Right. I'm not drawn to it in the way many of the people here are. I'm not an engineer, and I'm not drawn to the details of some of the technical implementations. But I am drawn to what the product does for people. And so, I think, that the ideal setting is that I'm here in the product, and that we have another executive director leading the other set of Foundation activities. So, I'm on the board of both. I'm the only person on the board of both, again, to keep them independent. But day to day operations and activities are in the subsidiary.

QUESTION:

02:20:12;21 And that sort of gets us up to date?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:20:13;13 Yep.

QUESTION:

02:20:27;05 A lot of people we've talked to, they do something that motivated what they believe in, or the way they work. And sometimes historical figures. Has anybody historically, that you think of, offered you any motivation in what you do? Drives you a little bit?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:20:41;09 Not historically. You know, I don't compare myself, good or bad, I guess, historically. I guess...

QUESTION:

02:20:48;20 What about other people?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:20:50;07 In general?

QUESTION:

02:20:51;15 In general.

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:20:53;12 You know, when I think about it, I think the person who's made the biggest difference was probably my dad. And also, the relationship between my mom and dad. Where, I grew up as an only child. So, I did a lot of translating between them. And of course, they were both people I loved. And so what I learned from that; I didn't know it at the time, but I see it now. Was that, how to actually internalize two different perspectives, maybe three, if I count my own. And understand where the miscommunications are, and how to find a path in between them. Because I did a lot of that for my parents. And

that's a very useful skill.

02:21:36;20 And it's not something you put on a résumé, it's not something you sort of learn in school. But when you look at Mozilla, which has many different people, and many different perspectives, and somehow we find a way to work together, and understand what people are saying, and in conflict, to understand, ah, this is what's really bothering them. And you know what, however angry we are, if you look at it closely enough, there's some either they're right.

02:21:59;12 Or, if you start from their point of view, they're absolutely right. You know, we start from a different point of view, but if we're gonna try and find some way to work together, we have to merge in here. And that's been a useful skill. And plus, I think, going one's own way. To answer your other question, I don't think I've ever really had a role model. And I've never really had a clear view of, oh, I want to be that.

02:22:25;18 I've never been able to point to anything and say, "Oh, that's what I want to be." It's always some, "Oh, let's go explore. Let's see where we end up." And I think the comfort level in not having an end goal, and being comfortable enough that I'm on a path that I'm gonna be happy with, and so on, probably comes from my folks.

QUESTION:

02:22:45;18 Were you real studious? I mean, a lot of only children are like ...

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:22:47;23 I was.

QUESTION:

02:22:48;29 My mother was an only child. She said, "I was always by myself," but she's smart as a whip, obviously. Tell me a little bit about that. Maybe you're self-inspiring?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:22:59;02 Well, could be. Yes, I did the schoolwork that was requested. I just did it. So, I'm not sure I actually understood for a lot of my life that you didn't just do it. And so, yes, I was a good student. Sometimes I think I'd like to go back to school. And sometimes I think, oh, that might be hard.

02:23:25;12 Right, because I did just what I was asked to do. And I spent the time to get it done. Of course now, I'm much more used to figuring out what I want to do, and what parts I think are critical and have to be done. And what parts can be done, or left to drop, or done less completely. So, I'm not sure if I'd be a good student again. But I was in my era.

QUESTION:

02:23:45;20 Do you remember, was there a time, obviously, from what you've told us, you've got this belief in helping people, making the world better at that runs... Was there a moment, like in college or something, that there's a lot of people, they come of age at some point. They say, "You know what I really want to do? I want to go out and change the world or help the world." Was there a moment like that, a "eureka" moment?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:24:07;13 I think not in those terms. I did get bitten by the internet bug. That's true. I you know, I had malaria at one point. Which is in your blood, and you can't do anything about it. And that's how I feel about this being drawn to the internet. It's just in there. It doesn't, no amount of will, will make you stop shaking when you're in the middle of one these malaria things.

02:24:31;22 There's just nothing you can do about it. And so, it's kind of that sense. And so, I don't think I looked up and said, "No, I'm gonna dedicate my life to doing good." But I did look up and realize, "Wow, this is really an interesting thing." It can be so extraordinarily positive, and it can be so incredibly negative, right.

02:24:50;18 The power of the internet to be a dark force, and to control us, and manipulate us. And for someone else to have all the information about us, to know more about us than we know about ourselves, and for us to be ignorant about the ways that we're manipulated, both in monetary terms, and in personal and civic terms is so great. That when you're right on the balance like that, I see...

QUESTION:

02:25:16;25 Yeah, and so, it was the ultimate Big Brother in the wrong hands?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:25:19;08 Could be. Absolutely. I don't know if it's the ultimate, but it's the ultimate of what we've seen so far. And so, at the same time, you can see today how great it can be. How often do I look up and say, "Wow,

you know, the web is so great. I couldn't do this five years ago. This is just really exciting."

02:25:32;05 And so, it's hard to stay away from that. And certainly so, I don't feel like I've given anything up by choosing this path. And there certainly are, could have chosen ways to make more money at it, personally. But there are a bunch of other rewards to what we're doing. So.

QUESTION:

02:25:55;09 Talk to me a little bit about, I mean, you've got 110 employees, I think you said?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:25:59;26 Something like that.

QUESTION:

02:26:00;11 But then there's 200,000 volunteers?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:26:04;00 Something like that.

QUESTION:

02:26:05;09 How do you coordinate that and motivate the the volunteers, they don't get any money, and the employees I mean, how does that all work? How does it, how do you make it work?

MITCHELL BAKER:

02:26:16;05 There's a set of things. First of all, there are a lot of reasons that people participate in Mozilla. And so, that's one thing. Many different reasons. Some are, they have the internet bug just as much as I do. Some, there's a sense of community. Some people want this product

to be available in my language, to the people I care about.

02:26:34;11

Other people like technology. Other people like to be part of something. So, there's a range of different reasons. And that's important. And it doesn't matter sort of where you fall in those reasons. If you start to like, do things that disrupt other people, then we care what your motivations are. But among those set, everybody's got a different balance on that. We provide lots of different ways to get involved. So, you can be involved in a very focused, many hours, in a way that's very focused and involves many hours. Or, much less so.

02:27:14;16

You can be involved at the center. You can become a technical or marketing, or discussion, or support leader, who's critical to the effort, if you want. And in that case, you live in a, especially, in the engineering side, an extraordinarily disciplined world. On the other hand, you can live on further towards the edges, in which, much more spontaneity and freedom, and flexibility is okay.

02:27:40;27

And so, part of what we do, is we build lots of frameworks. So, here's the framework if you want to be at the center. And here's the kinds of discipline you have to live with. And here's how you gain a role in decision making in that discipline. And at the same time, frameworks that say, "Oh, here's an area where you want to go off and play, and you want to do things that are really of interest to you?" And you need either some help or some interaction, or you want people to know about it?

- 02:28:06;00 Well, here's a structure or a framework for doing that. And of course, it's much looser, and if you want to change it, it's fine. I think the main thing that crosses all of those, is the sense of engagement and emotional ownership. Not in the sense of money, but there are thousands, tens of thousands, I don't know how many people around the world, who feel like, Firefox is theirs.
- 02:28:33;05 They helped make it. They have a piece of it. It's theirs. And they're right. And so, part of managing this organization is, not to get too hung up on, it's mine. Or, employees are different. Or, to feel like, we or I, or some anointed set will make every decision. But to actually have internalized that it is much better for these thousands of people to feel like, this is mine. Right. And sometimes it's contentious.
- 02:29:06;04 Because by the time you've put time and energy into something, you feel it's yours, you're really angry if something isn't right, or you can't get your work done, or someone's in your way. But at the same time, that's the level of commitment and engagement that you need.
- 02:29:21;17 Right. Because Firefox is, you know, one step. Today it's a browser. All sorts of things will happen across the internet. And we're trying to build a world where people can participate. So, first, what's the starting point?
- QUESTION:
- 00:00:37;05 So, you created this big community of people who feel ownership of this Firefox product, and what does that mean to you?

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:00:42;20 Actually, what we're trying to build a community of people who can go beyond consuming when they want to. Because it's great to be able to consume in life, clearly we all need that. Right? And below a certain level of consumption, deep in poverty it's definitely you know, a place where being able to consume is critical.

00:01:05;28 But there's also being able to build something. And so if all we can do with the internet is consume, then we're actually quite limited. So, consumption's great. And free consumption, being able to do things and get products and services for free is really great. And we see that on the internet today now. Lots of things are free. The software is mostly a lot of it's free. Browsers are free, all sorts of things are free.

00:01:27;29 And when you go to websites, most websites are also free. There are some where you have to pay, but the bulk of them that we use every day, they're all free. So, now we've reached a point where you can consume without exchanging money. You're probably exchanging value in some fashion 'cause nothing's really free forever, right? You have to create value somewhere.

00:01:47;10 So, somehow in using these websites, we're creating value for people somewhere else. But what we're trying to do is say, "Okay, that's great. But when any one of us wants to go beyond consuming to building or participating or creating or making something that works for me," we at Mozilla want to create a part of the internet where you can do that. Not where you have to all the time and not where you

have to be a technical elite to be able to understand or use the products or have a good experience.

00:02:16;14 But enough so that when you want to change something or fix it or make it work for you or combine it or do a range of things with it, you can do that. That you have the option, you have the rights. Some set of people somewhere in the world is probably doing it. You may not know how to now, but lots of other people do.

00:02:38;26 And so each one of us who chooses can actually help create the place we wanna live in. Because it turns out not everybody wants to be a couch potato. And even the couch potatoes often don't wanna be a couch potato in every aspect of their life all of their lives. And that there's something you know, I see a human response in people when they actually build something they're excited about.

00:03:04;01 So, for example, we have one of the people who makes Firefox available in a different language. Happens to be Mongolian. And that happened because he was leaving Mongolia to go to school somewhere in Europe. And he wanted to be able to communicate with his parents, who speak Mongolian. And because we're open source, he created a Mongolian version of our product. And he's still doing it today. So, some number of people in Mongolia can actually access the internet in their own language because we made it possible, and he chose to participate.

00:03:39;27 And so building a community of people who understand you can participate and for it to be what we want, you need to be able to

participate. And some set of people have to participate and create and build enough of the time that we have a portion of the internet that's built for what you need and what I need as well as what generates economic value for the commercial interests.

QUESTION:

00:04:02;09 Tell me a little bit about why Firefox works. You're telling me a little bit already, it's just that community and the need to create and loosening the human spirit or whatever. But there's also product features and things that made it spur other innovations when it was released. Riff on that a little bit for me.

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:04:19;02 So, Firefox was a big surprise. We knew that we had a good product. We'd begun to see the signs maybe six or seven months earlier. But even we didn't know how successful it would be how quickly. There were a set of reasons that combined to make that true. One is, I think we've talked about the browser is actually important.

00:04:38;06 Second, we had a great product. Third, the option was a terrible product. IE at the time IE6 was really a terrible product. And it's actually not surprising. And I don't say that as a value judgment about Microsoft. Because they had no competition. They had 97, I think, percent of the market. Somewhere way above 90. And we value competition 'cause without it, it's easy to sort of do less.

00:05:05;14 And that's what we saw. So, we had a setting where, this will sound melodramatic, but I think it's true. Where people's entire internet

experience was degrading over time. If you think back to, say, 2001, 2002 with the pop-ups that were everywhere and the spyware that was being installed through the browser. And people's machines were so bad that the whole machine would slow down and not work.

00:05:28;10 And after we released Firefox, we got tons of e-mail from people that'd had to get whole new machines. Right? Be, and that as it turns out, a big portion of that was the browser. So, we had the right product at the right time in a critical market with poor competition. And we had the set of people who have been building Firefox and thinking about it and were excited about it, plus the sense of engagement in his mind. So, what's called in marketing the "viral spread," I don't know if it's the best term or not.

00:06:01;18 But you combine all of those, plus a set of really severe security problems from my unit. And that led to our initial sort of explosive appearance on the market. Then after that of course because we don't have a need to generate more and more revenue over time. We need to generate enough revenue to sustain ourselves. But other than that, we're all about value, well, not even other. Even with that, what we really wanna see is value in the system.

00:06:32;23 So, we have made Firefox, like, the developer's best friend. Not only if you choose to compete with us, but in all sorts of ways of providing new functionality to people. So, we've opened it up and we've seen this immense explosion of innovation in the consumer experience in the internet in the last few years. And there's a lot of reasons for that,

but we feel and have been told by many that Firefox is one of those.

00:06:58;14

You can build good sites with it. You can innovate, you can change things. You can talk to us about what you need, and we provide a whole system that says, "Boy, go do something interesting. We'll help tell people about it." And that's a different setting from where we've been.

QUESTION:

00:07:16;11

Now, you told us a little bit you got these people wanting to create. There's a sense of ownership. Do you have to motivate them beyond that or encourage them to be more innovative? Or is it just something that naturally flows from the setup?

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:07:30;08

Well, innovation is always a tricky thing. You know, it's easy to stifle innovation, first of all. So, the first thing you have to do is not stifle it. And because we have a product that's got coming up on 200 million users, that's a large amount of people, many of whom are not technical. We have some conservatism in what we do with the product. Because you can't change it too much or you can't change it so much that, you know, 50 or 100 million people don't know how to use it.

00:08:03;02

And so what we have to make sure that we have outlets to be innovative despite that limit on the product. And so we do that through providing lots of different ways to experiment, whether or not something gets in the product. So, first you have to not stifle

innovation. Two, you have to provide the tools. And that means lack of control in some area so that people can be innovative. Now, we don't do that in our core product. Like, what we ship as Firefox is a highly controlled, quality, vetted product. But around the edges, we provide, as I said before, like, all sorts of ways. And you have to do that. I mean, we can't reduce the quality bar on Firefox, even for something great. And at the same time, you want people to try all sorts of things.

00:08:55;09 So, you can't stifle it. You have to provide mechanisms for experimentation. You have to be receptive. And you have to get past the, you know, 'not-invented-here' syndrome. So, that's really important. And for some organizations, very, very hard.

00:09:11;10 So, to have an organization that's excited when you look up and say, "Wow, somebody else had these great ideas. Wasn't us! It's kind of related to what we're doing or maybe built on top of what we're doing." That's great. You have to build an organization that feels that way for our kind of innovation. Right? I mean, there are other very closed organizations that innovate differently. But for what we're doing.

00:09:33;28 And then some mechanism for taking those innovations and moving them closer towards the center. So, in our world sometimes recognition is what people really want. And we try very hard on that one. Sometimes it's belonging to a community. Sometimes it's economic. So, we also have a commercial ecosystem that's built on

top of Mozilla. And some of these experiments or added functionality have resulted in products or company that had been sold for significant amounts of money.

00:10:05;03 So, you also have to be able to embrace somebody else building a business in a space that's very close to yours and saying, "Yes, that's what I want. And no, I don't have a lot of contractual control over what you do, but I want lots of businesses out there. And if one of them happens to be good enough and be close enough to our space that they, you know, start to compete with us, well, then we should do better." I mean, we've seen what a lack of competition will do.

00:10:28;02 So you have to live by it. Now, that's hard. And it's not comfortable. And it's not that we're, like, super people. But the breadth and sense of the community also reinforces this.

00:10:43;10 So, I've tried to build an organization where everything's not dependent on the values or the integrity of a few people. I mean, you want those and you need those. And I think we've done well at that. But we also have an organization in Mozilla that reinforces that. So, if we for example were to go awry and start to say, "Oh, we don't like that innovation," or, "That's too close to us," or, "It should be ours," or, "We wanna stifle that because we didn't think of it," or, "That's not the way we wanna do it, and you have to do what we want," the rest of the community would be very unhappy. Right?

00:11:23;14 And so we would have a hard time continuing to lead and have them help build the product. I mean, we need our community to build the

product. All right? Today to build a modern browser is an enormous task. Right? And we're a fly speck compared to Microsoft. You know, or anybody else who might Google announced a browser. I mean, we're a fly speck compared to Google. We will never, ever, ever be able to hire enough people to build a browser to compete.

00:11:48;05 And we will never be able to hire enough people to distribute a browser. You know, Microsoft has not a complete legal office, as they once did on the distribution channel. But it's hard to get onto a PC. And it takes money, you know, we don't have. We don't have that kind of money. So, we can never compete in the traditional economic resource sense. We can only compete in being successful because people feel Firefox is a great product, and it's theirs and they want it.

00:12:15;28 So, our best estimates are we have something like 200 million users today here in September of 2008. And almost none of those came on a machine. So, that's 200 million decisions to go out and get Firefox and put it on a machine, even though you have something very similar. Not as good, certainly. And maybe really bad if you got IE6. But that's a lot of individual decisions. And you can't buy that.

00:12:46;00 So, we have an organization and a success that requires us to continue to be different in the ways that have made us successful or we will fail. And that's the same reason why the revenue, most of which comes from Google, at least today, doesn't end up having Google control us. It's because if we lost that revenue, that's bad. I mean, we need it. We need to find another source, and we need to sustain ourselves.

And that's hard, and, you know, it's not going to be a pleasant few months if that were to happen, right? But it is possible.

00:13:14;22 But if we let money from any source determine the product we ship, and we lose the community of people who build it and distribute it and put it on your machine, we're dead. There is no recovery from that. Right? And so sometimes people ask me, "Well, how do you personally walk away from," and then they name a number that's usually in the billions of dollars, to stay at Mozilla.

00:13:35;01 And I think, "Wow, well, I mean, I'm pretty content with me as a person, but I don't know that I would do that." If you put four or five or X billion dollars on the table in front of me, and I thought of my husband. I mean, I don't know if I would. But the reality is I'm not. Because if you try to harvest that money for a small set of people, you lose the community and you're dead.

00:13:56;03 So, I think it's important to try and have organizational structures that reinforce some of these values and what you need. 'Cause otherwise the pressure on someone's integrity, you know, even if you live with it, it's an enormous amount of pressure. And then you have succession problems and so on.

QUESTION:

00:14:14;22 Now, you don't wanna get, even though you can't compete, you don't wanna get too big at the same time, right? I mean, you don't want suddenly that Firefox is the only browser 'cause then it's turned into your worst enemy.

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:14:26;15 Well, maybe not your worst enemy. We like to think that there's something about our structure that would make a better product. But we are not eager to become a monopoly player ourselves. But among ourselves, we vary differently at what level of market share we would get uncomfortable at. I don't know what that level is.

00:14:49;05 And I don't know even if we had well over 50 percent market share, for example. If we could see that we still had a healthy community and lots of input and that the industry around us had lots of people doing lots of different things. And we might feel okay about it. But there is a concern in the project that at some point, now you have institutional forces that lead you to think, like, you can do whatever you want. And it's not gonna matter. And so we're pretty sensitive to that as well.

QUESTION:

00:15:16;16 And you mentioned that, you know, Google just spent all this chrome. Is that really competition? Or what's your take on all that?

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:15:24;01 Well, it's a browser. It's a browser launched by the powerhouse of our age. Name the internet powerhouse. It's unquestionably Google, and it's a browser. So, I understand, like, their traffic comes to them through a browser. Some of their products, you know, have specialized apps. But certainly the search and advertising business is built on traffic that comes through a browser.

00:15:53;17 And still today in the United States, I don't know, three-quarters, four-fifths maybe of their traffic is coming through Microsoft's browser. I mean, we're incredibly successful to have reached 20 percent in the United States and 30 to 40 percent in big chunks of Europe. But still, a good portion of their traffic is coming through Microsoft. And Microsoft has been very clear that they want that business for themselves.

00:16:17;01 So, I understand that. I think though it also reinforces why Mozilla is important. That we are not a business. Right? We exist to create this broad internet. And so I still would like to have my browser come from something that's not tied to a business or a business plan. Since I have the option.

00:16:42;18 But I expect, you know, they're very smart. They have lots of resources, and they have lots of information about what we do online. And so I expect to see very interesting and clever things. I hope so. I mean, if they don't produce clever ideas, you know, that's not the Google that we would expect. But I think over time that browser may reflect Google. And I'm not yet living in a Google world. So, we'll see how many people want to really be in a Google world.

QUESTION:

00:17:07;09 Right. Let me ask you this. We talked to somebody, and they said that in the open source, there's not a lot of women in it for some reason. This is, like, two percent. I don't know if that's it, tell me a little bit about that. Is there a gender barrier? Or it's just that we tell

girls they shouldn't learn math or what's that all about?

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:17:21;11 You know, I don't know exactly. Because when I've looked at these figures, they're higher for women in technology in general than they are for women in open source. So, it's not that girls don't do X. Right? Because the numbers for open source are even low. And so I don't know.

00:17:38;07 And in fact, I've just started asking about organizations that talk to women in technology or women in CS or college student associations, thinking I should go ask and see what I can learn and find out or talk, if anybody's interested. So, I don't know what that is.

j00:18:01;01 I think with Mozilla, it's not the case that it's an organization that doesn't like women. Certainly, I'm pretty sensitive to that. So, there you have that, I would notice if somehow some of that had crept in. But I don't know why it is. Some of the explanations often it's a bull-headed crowd? It's not always easy to find a way in. And so we were starting to work more and more on that. But traditionally, it's gotta be someone who's comfortable working alone and comfortable asking, like, beginner questions, running into trouble sometime and just being determined, "I don't care what you think."

00:18:49;16 So, I've had some people suggest that maybe that's why. That maybe open source is unfriendly, but I don't know because I'm not one of the women who could be an open source, but isn't. But I hope by next year to know more.

QUESTION:

00:19:02;05 It's a mystery at this point.

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:19:04;21 Yep, it's a mystery.

QUESTION:

00:19:33;00 And, you Mitchell took some pictures of the staff meeting a while ago. Just if we wanted the match up, what was going on down there? What were you talking about and how did that all work?

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:19:42;05 The main gathering there is more than a staff meeting. That's actually a public meeting. And there are many people on the phone who you don't see. The bulk of those, we think, are probably remote employees.

00:19:56;14 But the number for that meeting is posted publicly. And anybody who's interested in what we're doing is welcome to dial in. And sometimes reporters do, sometimes others do. So, that is a weekly update of what's either happened that we wanna make sure people didn't miss or better yet, what's coming in the week that you should be alert to or that you might wanna know.

00:20:20;19 So, some of the reports are, "This is an event-planning meeting. If you're interested in Mozilla events or there's some place you think Mozilla should be represented, or you want to represent Mozilla, call in and tell us about it." Now, telephone isn't the best, especially in some parts of the world 'cause somehow or other you have to get a call.

And we're in the United States, so you have to call the United States.

00:20:42;16

So, we're starting to do video. In fact, in the first meeting you saw the camera. That's us streaming video. Because it's much easier to follow along remotely if you've got some images. And so that's what that meeting is. And we go through the product things, project things, infrastructure things. And any of the things that you might just have missed that you ought to know about. And so that's mostly an update meeting. But we do sometimes have pretty serious discussions when there's a topic that's of interest.

QUESTION:

00:21:14;11

And Firefox is all over the world. I don't know how many languages. Somebody told me, I forgot the statistic. But is there something about this community? Is it mainly an American community? Is there something about innovation that's still... people always said America was innovative, but we still have our regiment? Tell me a little bit about how you see that.

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:21:32;08

So Mozilla is a global community. And in fact, more than half of the people who use Firefox are not in the United States. And more than half of the people who use Firefox use a language other than English. And every one of those languages is created by a volunteer who wants to see Firefox in their language, or a team of volunteers. So, we have developers all over the world. And they tend to be in the more developed economies now, and less so in Asia and Africa. But we're

working and that's changing as well. So, we are increasingly global.

00:22:05;03

As to innovation, certainly everything I see suggests that we're still a wildly innovative culture in the United States and that we are tolerant of a number of things that lead to innovation. And one of those is the classic ability to fail, accepting failure, having a second change.

Another one is perhaps sometimes when you're really innovative, the first time isn't right. It's not perfect. So, there's that progress notion. "Okay, here's this." "Well, it kind of does okay, let's go tinker some more," or, it's not a matter of shame that the first version isn't great.

00:22:43;26

And so those things I think are still very true. They may be true in other parts of the world. I mean, I hope so because we have some pretty large, global challenges right now we have to solve. Both in our climate and in how we get along with each other and in various technology issues. And so we need all the innovation on a global scale that we can if we're actually going to have a healthy earth pretty soon.

00:23:06;09

But as to the U.S. piece, I think the key is this piece about consumption. If we become a society where the ultimate goal is simply to consume, and to consume as much as possible, and that's the only thing that matters, then we won't be innovative. Right? We need to be a society that goes beyond consumption and says, "At some time, I wanna invent, I wanna create, I want mine. I wanna tinker." And if you start by tinkering on something somebody else has done and improving it, that's a step along the way to really wildly new creative ideas. And so this consumption plus, you know, it's really

important.

QUESTION:

00:23:42;12 Let me ask you this. When you sort of look down the road. I mean, there's sort of this inherent what are you gonna do next or what are you planning? Or I mean, do you have some sort of path you're trying to follow? Or do you see some goal you're after? Or is it just come in to work every day and try to do all the things you told us about? Is there, like, a next chapter that you're leadin' up to?

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:24:04;15 There are a couple things that I think are as important to the future of a healthy internet as the browser has been to the past. And those are information, data, what happens to information about me, who controls it, who owns it, what piece do I have in that? And so many people are worried about privacy. But of course it's hard to get really customized, useful services without sharing some of your data.

00:24:28;25 And so, that's a very tough balance to sort out. So, I think that's a really important piece that I'm, again, interested in. Because I want my online identity to be mine. I don't want it to be in bits and pieces among various organizations. Even if they were non-profits, I wouldn't want that. But many of them are also commercial.

00:24:46;18 So, that's very closely related. And it's still tied to the same internet bug that I talked about before. But it is different in kind. It's not putting a piece of software on your machine, necessarily. I think we can do a lot with our product. So, the next phases of what we try and

do with our products, we'll probably try and deal with data and who are we.

00:25:06;08 And so that question of who are we and how do we interact is what I'll keep following. I mean, I have an eclectic path. My undergraduate degree is in Asian studies. Chinese studies at a time before China was an economic powerhouse and when it was crazy to study China. And that's what people would ask me, "Why do you care about China?" And then law, which was all about, for me, how do people create structures and institutions that they're willing to live in? And then Mozilla. So, this question of who we are and how do we interact and how do we create the world about us, I think that will always be a piece of whatever I'm doing.

QUESTION:

00:25:44;23 Okay, when you reflect on what you've done so far, are there two or three of your things you're most proud of? I mean, you've done so much. Are there a few that stick out that you think, "Boy, I really aced that one," or, "I'd like to think about that."

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:26:11;06 There have been a few things in Mozilla that I think have been really exceptional. First, it was a very technical piece. There's a document called the Mozilla public license that I wrote when I was pregnant and while my dad was dying, as it turned out, in a couple months, that I think I aced. And many people told us it's not possible. You can't do it at all, and you certainly can't do it in the two months that you have.

00:26:36;28 But I did it. With some help, but mostly me. And I think that was a pinnacle of one part of my professional career. The part that really was a legal drafting, getting people to agree to a legal document. 'Cause that's what I liked about the part of law I did. People had to agree. It's not litigation. It's two of us have to put our name on something and say, "Yes, we wanna live with this." And so I think that this Mozilla public license was the pinnacle of that piece.

00:27:01;29 And I think that forming the Mozilla foundation was the pinnacle of another long process, of earning trust and of pulling enough people together, out of articulating a goal and a vision through the dark days when everyone else knew we were a failure. And outlasting the inertia at AOL to actually form this organization that gave us a chance. So, if you're looking for a particular moment and also, probably, you know, the launch of Firefox was a pretty exciting moment.

00:27:39;10 I, on a personal level, think well, there's a lot in life. But I think probably, my dad's dying was about as good as you could hope for. He had a long life, and it all kind of came together well, and I was proud of kind of my small very family. But nevertheless, he lived his life absolutely true to his values through his death, like, unaffected. And, we were able to be there to help as much as one can. And probably something about my kid and my husband and, you know, those things as well. But there's a few. That's probably enough on that.

QUESTION:

00:28:30;26 Okay. This is a tricky question to answer. But, you know, some day people are going to look back at all of this and make judgments. You have, you know, or would be in the history. We've got this interview, you've been written about. What if you had a choice, how would you like them to think about you or be remembered through certain things or what would you like to have happen with that? If you could control it.

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:28:54;01 I, and if I could control it? I'd hope that the future would bear out. Something that said that Mozilla and my role in it was a turning point so that the internet actually becomes a participatory piece of infrastructure that individual people still matter. And that we did with integrity and hopefully some humor. And in a way that drew people in for positive reasons.

QUESTION:

00:29:23;10 What are, I mean, we all have this sense that the next generation's coming up. If we had a bunch of school kids here in front of us today, and they said, you know, "What would be your recommendation? We're just starting out our lives." What do you think you'd tell 'em?

MITCHELL BAKER:

00:29:39;06 Oh, explore. First of all, explore. I would say what I have found to be effective is to identify a few people at each stage in my life in whom I have great confidence. And to have an understanding, sometimes

explicit with them. Sometimes implicit to me. That if they look up and say they think I'm off-path that I stop. Even if I disagree, most likely I'm going to disagree. But that I have to stop and that I will stop. And I will reassess, and I will try and put my defensiveness or whatever else it is aside and really pay attention.

00:30:21;20

Because I don't have particular role models and I'm trying to do something new. And I can't chart the path, and I can't chart what success looks like. And I care a lot about my name and what it means. That there is always some small set of people. And, you know, it happens. Like, every five years or so my husband says something. And he's one of them, right?

00:30:45;00

But there's others in professional life to make sure that, you know, I either don't become obsessed with something or my own ego doesn't get in it. Or, you know, whatever it is. I mean, we all have some ego. But I've found that that's very effective because it gives me some freedom to follow those people. And I try to get them from different perspectives, which is painful. But if they're all feelin' okay, you have some more flexibility. And then along with that, again 'cause I don't have particular role models, and I'm not tryin' to do something that I know what it looks like. So, once I have the set of people who I stop and listen to almost no matter what, is to follow, like, my own voice then. And not to be so worried if I don't necessarily fit in the mainstream or if the larger set of people around me think, like China, well, who cares about China? Well, I cared about China. Look what

happened! Right? And I cared about Mozilla, look what happened. So that the conventional wisdom or the mainstream voice may not be right. And sometimes it's best to follow your own.

QUESTION:

04:01:17;14 So, tell me a little bit about following the conventional wisdom, and how your inner voice sort of directs you to not always do that.

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:01:24;01 Well, as I've said, I try to have a small set of people, who I listen to, even when I really don't want to. In particular, if I really don't want to. And then, after that, to recognize that for me the conventional voice may not be helpful, and that even if it's good for others that I'm trying to do something that I can't describe and I don't know what it is. And I probably wouldn't know it even if I saw it. I only know when I get there, or when I'm on the way, even more. And so, that conventional voice just sometimes leaves me cold, and I have to follow my own.

QUESTION:

04:02:03;12 Okay, let me ask you this, are there any misconceptions about you or Mozilla that we should while we were talking to some people, we showed them some quotes, they said, "Well that's not what really happened. I'd like to," you know, they corrected some stories. Is there anything like that that you might want to offer up?

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:02:19;22 Oh, there's plenty, I think, of misconceptions about Mozilla.

QUESTION:

04:02:22;05 Well, what's a few of them?

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:02:24;24 All right

QUESTION:

04:02:24;19 This is the time to...

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:02:26;11 There's one that it's all young, you know, 16 year olds, and that's not true. We have a whole bunch of people working on it. And, you know, some of the volunteers, one in Italy, is a chemical engineer by day. You know, one was an organist in his church. I mean, it just travels everywhere. We have lots of people who have kids. We have lots of people, who don't work on code, but are interested in other things. We are disciplined. Many people think we're chaotic. So, there's all sorts of things.

QUESTION:

04:03:01;15 And you work really hard, too, don't you?

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:03:03;13 We do work hard. Right. Often people ask me, "What do you think is the hardest thing about running Mozilla? What's the biggest challenge that keeps you up?" And often, they expect an answer about open source or volunteers, but for me, the hardest challenge is the market challenge. No one in their right mind picks the competitive space that we entered. I think no one picks a market where Microsoft has 97

percent. Plus the only distribution channel. Why would you do that? There's no economic rationale in doing that. And certainly, you know, Apple is a big company, and Google is a big company, so you don't pick that because you think you're gonna make a fortune in it. We picked it, 'cause it had to be done. And so, lost my train of thought.

QUESTION:

04:03:48;09 That's all right. You work hard. It was a misconception.

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:03:50;07 Oh, oh, that's right. So, the market is hard. So, it's incredibly competitive. And so, you have to work hard. And you have to work hard like today and tomorrow and the days after. So, it is hard. So, a lot of things about it that are hard. So, yeah, we work very hard.

QUESTION:

04:04:06;06 That's good. I mean, it's casual. People might think everybody's goofin' off, but they're actually here working very hard in a very serious way on something they love. I think that's, you know, kind of an area.

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:04:14;08 Yeah.

QUESTION:

04:04:14;08 Before you were mentioning about the meeting downstairs. You said the first half was not really the staff meeting.

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:04:18;01 Right.

QUESTION:

04:04:19;19 You never finished saying what the second half was. Was that the staff meeting?

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:04:22;23 Oh, we do have a weekly, much shorter meeting, that's got things that relate to employees. So, our HR stuff comes up. You know, various other things like that come up. And one of the things that's been controversial about Mozilla is we do have some confidential information. So, because we deal with other organizations, we have partners. And so, our rule for that is, if it relates to engineering and the product, there is no confidential information. Right? It lives in our public development system. But if you have a business plan, right, that we are willing to hear, then we'll keep it confidential if you need to. A lot of times we'll say, "Just don't tell us."

04:04:58;24 But things like the discussions with Google, and the discussions with Yahoo over our search agreement, right? They're quite interested in confidentiality. And so, it is an innovation in the open source world, and, I believe, it is not possible to tackle at the same time, confidentiality. So, we do have some. And so, if there is something that we need to describe, it happens there. So, for many open source advocates, that's an imperfection in our system, but it is there.

QUESTION:

04:05:31;23 One of your proudest moments was the initial license, the Mozilla Open?

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:05:34;28 Yeah, yeah.

QUESTION:

04:05:35;26 Tell me a little bit more what was the, I'm not a lawyer obviously, but what was so great about that? Other than people agreeing that it must have been really tough, if you're so proud of it.

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:05:44;09 It was.

QUESTION:

04:05:44;27 Tell me a little bit how that all went too.

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:05:47;04 Well, at the time, open source and free software wasn't understood at all. And there were two main licenses, and one was very flexible. It pretty much says, "Here's the code. Don't blame us if something goes wrong. Don't put our name on it. Do what you want with it." And the other one is much more attuned to making sure that the code always stays publicly available. And so, it has some restrictions, and if you combine anything, it applies to the combination.

04:06:16;22 And so, that's a scary thing. Right? Because you may not know what the end result of that is. And so, we set out to make something in the middle. Something that has open source DNA that is truly and legitimately open source, and vetted by that community. At the same time, would work for both individuals and commercial organizations. And so, that had not been explicitly done before. To say, "We want

commercial organizations involved. We want other business organizations to take this and ship it as part of even closed products." Our piece always has to be open and publicly available, but you can combine it with something else and ship it.

04:06:56;02 And this is important to us, at the core of what we're trying to do. To be a hybrid organization and to be across the spectrum. So, we recognize that there's value in commercial activity, and it's an immense driver of economic development and social gain. And so, we want to be a part of that. And we want those folks to be able to use our code, at the same time, you know, be open and true to our own DNA. And so, the license was a combination of those two things.

QUESTION:

04:07:24;23 And are other people, could they take that license down and incorporate in the things they do?

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:07:28;18 Yes.

QUESTION:

04:07:28;17 They can?

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:07:29;11 Yes. And so, some set of people just use the Mozilla public license as their license, and then many others take it and will change the name and governing law, or something like that.

QUESTION:

04:07:38;27 Okay, last sort of question. This is an interview that's gonna last. We

hope we'll preserve it, it'll be here a thousand years from now.

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:07:45;28 Yeah.

QUESTION:

04:07:46;25 So, I mean, this might be hard to answer, but if you had to look down the road, thinking that are people gonna watch this a hundred, 200 years from now, what would be something we'd say to the people in the future?

MITCHELL BAKER:

04:08:00;16 That's a question. I can't even imagine what 100 years in the future is gonna look like. So, it would have to be something very personal and humane. I think I would say if you find a string you can pull that gives you some control over your own destiny then take it. It may be hard work. It may not be the only thing you do in life. But if you find it, take it.