



Oral History of Winifred Mitchell Baker

Interviewed by:
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Marc Weber: I'm Marc Weber of the Computer History Museum. And I'm here with Mitchell Baker, Chairwoman of Mozilla. Thank you so much for doing this interview.

Winifred Mitchell Baker: Thanks, Marc. I'm happy to be here. The museum has been a bright spot for a long time, so I'm honored as well.

Weber: Thank you. As am I. So start with a bit of your background. What is your full name? And when and where were you born?

Baker: My full name is Winifred Mitchell Baker. My mom was a little eccentric though, and she never wanted me to use Winifred. So it's my first name. But in her mind, I was always Mitchell. So that's what I go by. And I was born in Berkeley in California in 1959.

Weber: And tell me a little bit about your family and where you grew up.

Baker: I grew up in Oakland, so the East Bay across from San Francisco. It borders Berkeley. My parents were born and raised on the East Coast and moved west, as people did in the '50s, where it seemed [like] starting a new life.

They were each eccentric. And each had their own view of their world and really clear opinions. And I think some of that has rubbed off actually.

Weber: So eccentric in what way? What did they do?

Baker: Well, my dad was a classic entrepreneur. Not a Silicon Valley, venture-backed kind of entrepreneur, but sort of more classic American sole proprietorship, was happiest running his own business, preferred to make mistakes on his own than to be told what to do very much.

And my mom had a range of skills. She was unusual for the women of her generation in that she went to a professional school. She was a graphic artist, which I learned later was pretty rare in her generation. And had some significant time in a career before I was born -- also really rare.

So her view on the world was always different. And she didn't quite fit into her demographic of her age either. And so they were two individualists, if that's a word. And my dad in particular was an iconoclast. And he loved nothing more than to take a contrary position and see what happened.

Which I actually think was valuable, because we had years, actually, of very heated dinner conversations. He loved to talk politics and world events, and take some contrary position and start a fight and see what happened. So I think that growing up in that setting of really active, verbal debate, which would get heated but wasn't personal, has been very helpful, actually, career-wise.

Weber: And what sort of values did they have -- or him? I guess both.

Baker: Yeah. I think I grew up in a setting where the underdog had appeal, for my dad in particular, almost across the board. And he was an early proponent of, I would say, equal rights and civil rights. A couple times, he came home and told my mom and I he might have lost his job because he'd found something really offensive that one of his customers was saying, or when he was employed by someone else. And he had reacted, and he wasn't really sure what happened.

And so he really was pretty focused on the individual. He himself did not want ever to be part of a mass group. And so even if life wasn't as good, he was going to do his own thing.

So I would call them progressive. I would call them really focused on -- well, so for example, he would never pay minimum wage. They ran a small business. It was pretty--

Weber: Doing what?

Baker: -- hand to mouth. A pewter factory, making wine goblets and gift items out of pewter. Not so easy to do in the Bay Area, which is expensive. And so he would hire someone at minimum wage. But he had a period of time -- it was six weeks, or two months, or three months, or whatever it was-- after a probationary period, and then he refused. He felt he needed to pay a living wage.

And I grew up. And in those days, you went to the mailbox. And you look for both orders and checks, because that's how a small business is. You don't know what there is.

Even in all that tension, he was really determined to do the best that he could, which is hard in that setting. So he was pretty focused on those things. And I think my mom, too. But I think she was always a little more scared about the family, and would there actually be enough? And what kind of checks would come in? And what would happen to us? And my dad would just plow through that.

Weber: And so growing up in Oakland, Berkeley area in the '60s, then, did some of the big debates at the time come into your house?

Baker: Oh, yes. For sure.

Weber: How did they feel about Vietnam War protests and free speech movement?

Baker: Well, I think our family was probably an early convert to the likely futility of the war in Vietnam. And I had cousins in school in the era. And so I think they saw it wasn't going to come to a good solution earlier than most.

Weber: But they weren't actively involved?

Baker: No, not at that point. I think they were probably past that era. Protests are a group action. And neither of them were really big on going out and being in groups. So I would say their actions were much more personal. And my dad would think nothing of -- he had organized a tennis club. But bringing politics into it and alienating all of his tennis club buddies because it needed to be discussed and these things had come out.

But go join a group? [LAUGHS] Go play someplace where somebody else was maybe directing or no one was directing? Not at all.

I have a half-sister who was really active in the women's movement early in Philadelphia. And she would participate. She was active in organizing those things. But my parents? No.

Weber: And then talk a little bit about what was your neighborhood like? What did you like to do as a kid?

Baker: Oh, that's interesting. Well, my neighborhood was hilly, which I like. Houses-- our house in particular-- was pretty funky. Built on the side of the hill. A lot of hill houses have drainage and foundation problems.

And the house changes every year. New cracks appear. The hill moves. The house changes. Things roll differently. So it was a little bit eccentric, but very homey and comfortable.

I went to college at Berkeley-- actually, grad school, law school, in Berkeley, too. But for most of my college years, my roommates and housemates in Berkeley... [my] boyfriend and I would come home and have dinner at least one night a week over the weekend with my parents, because the house and the atmosphere and the political discussions were pretty appealing.

And I would say my parents were actually good at having friends across a wide, wide age spectrum. Both of them regularly had friends that were 25 or 30 years younger than they were. And so it was kind of a mixed household in that way.

Oh, and what did I like to do? I read. As a kid, I read all the time. And throughout many, many years, especially when I first set off traveling in Asia, you always had a book.

I went to the post office, I just read. It didn't matter how long the line was. And so I just read voraciously. In fact, I read more than any other person I ever knew until I met my husband.

Weber: And I take it a wide range of interests in what you read.

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: Describe your school experience. What were your least favorite and most favorite topics?

Baker: Oh, let's see. School. Let's see. Well, that seems a long way ago.

The first really thing that comes to mind for me is college, actually, when I started studying Chinese, which was an odd thing to do. I'm old enough that was unusual then. And a Caucasian person launching onto that with no background related to China at all was completely unusual. And starting in college for a language is hard. But that really captured me.

You know, it's an area where you have to do a lot of building on [a] database to be able to think very well. But once I had enough of the characters and the ideas -- just the way the language fits together, and the different ideas, and how a character has sometimes a very specific meaning. But in addition to that, often a kind of a range or a scope of an idea. And so when you put two or three of those ideas together, you get something more specific.

And so that kind of puzzle piece of understanding of how all that worked was really fascinating. I think I've forgotten-- I was once pretty fluent, but I've forgotten most of it. I think if I had a lot of time I'd go back to that.

Weber: And in interviews, you've described going to an alternative school at the Oakland zoo?

Baker: Oh, yes. Yes. My time in Oakland-- you know, the Oakland schools have struggled for quite awhile. And the school district-- there's a school up in the hills called Skyline. And that's where I went.

And everybody goes to school by bus in Oakland, because we just all did. And so you sort of get all mixed up in the high schools. But the overall district and the quality of the education has really struggled. And I and many of my friends and acquaintances were really looking for something that involved us more.

And the school system had offered it at Skyline. They had a sort of school within a school. But my time at Skyline was pretty traumatic. That was cancelled.

A new superintendent of schools came from Philadelphia -- Marcus Foster I believe was his name -- was assassinated was in my 10th grade. So bright hope for a new school system, murdered. Some of the buildings, even at skyline, one of them burned down. There's just a range.

Like I personally never felt unsafe, which is not true of a lot of people in the schools in Oakland. My physical safety and the ability to learn -- I was very lucky. But the school itself wasn't able to provide the kinds of things that would've made it interesting.

And so we tried desperately to get a school within a school reinstated. And I think once the superintendent was killed, there just wasn't much space. And so many of us, I'd say probably 30 of the people I was closest to found some way to do something else our last year of high school. And found some alternative or something.

Because we'd been going to the school board and turn trying to create a school within a school that made. And the city started a program -- very interesting -- drawing students from all the high schools into a particular program. So you get a mix of geography, and that means also often socioeconomic.

But it was an interview-only first class of 30 or 40. And so I went and applied and did the interviews. And it ended up being at the Oakland Zoo, which lasted I think a few years. It didn't actually last very long. I think the alternatives got moved back into the major high schools.

And so the teacher who ran it called it the Lyceum. That was his view of it. All the rest of us called it the Oakland Zoo School. And I did four of my credits.

I still got a diploma from my standard high school. But of the last six credits, four of them came through the zoo school directly. And two of them I went over to Berkeley and did research and did particular

projects. Most people had two classes at their regular high school. But I was able to skip that altogether and spend my time at the university instead.

So that was really interesting. It was a really different mix of people than you normally get all thrown together, where you can't -- you're only a group of 30 or whatever. And it had a pretty strong focus on the environment, since the zoo was there. And the zoo also has some open space around it -- or it did then, anyway.

Weber: I had some very similar experiences.

Baker: Yes?

Weber: And you got interested in East Asian studies there, or later on at Berkeley?

Baker: I got interested in East Asian studies later on. Let's see. I guess after-- well, somewhere early on after my first year of college. I think I took a quarter off. And I ended up going, doing that quarter, to the local community college and taking a class related to China by a Chinese American man, who grew up in California and was one of the very early American citizens to go into China.

So in that era, it was very odd and unusual. And you went to Hong Kong, but there were no flights. It was before the Rapprochement. And so you didn't find many American citizens who had actually been in China.

So he had done that. And he had a class. And he combined readings about modern China with his trips to China. And it was a pretty optimistic view, I think, of China. But it was fascinating to me, because it was a society -- like, we're all human. So there's a constant about human nature across the species.

But different societies reflect it differently. And his stories about China were very different and overtly political. This was still a period of time where people, even in the West looking into China, studied Mao Zedong's thought.

And that was all a really very fascinating system. And that just captured me. And so I took that class. And when I was done with it, I realized, OK, when I'm going to Berkeley, this is what I want to study.

Weber: And then did you have exposure to computers in this period?

Baker: No, actually. I'm of that generation where you remember when your first computers arrived. And my first computers really came about through friends. And they were studying tools.

So gosh, probably the first computer I ever used was an old eight-inch floppy disk CPM machine. And then I graduated to the early Macs, the little boxes. But very, very early on in the Apple world. Because actually, a friend of mine who was the computer geek in my world and had an office, I used what computers he had. And he was probably one of the very early Mac developers.

So that came really early on. And for me, at first, they really were the tools to get my schoolwork done. Which is less research than you would think, because no internet. But a lot of writing and note-taking and working with others and things like that. So that really captured me.

And I think seeing the early Macintosh's was probably formative. Even in those little boxes, they were sort of friendly and cute and invited you to come try things out. But yes, I started with commands and green blinking lights and command line stuff.

Weber: And you went to China as part of your--

Baker: A part of law school.

Weber: Oh, that was much later. OK.

Baker: Yes, it was much later.

Weber: And so what did you do between college and law school?

Baker: Ah. Well, I actually worked at the university, at Berkeley, in the library for the Center for Chinese Studies. Which was a really interesting place, because there were three of us. And the other two, native Chinese speakers. And the library had both English and Chinese language books.

And so in those days, there was no way to make a card for the card catalog -- pre-online ease. And the card catalogs, there was no way to make them in Chinese. You couldn't buy them. You couldn't order them. And so all of those were made by hand.

And our head librarian would get a book. And he would figure out how it should be categorized, and what the numbers and what the topics were. And he would scrawl something out. And then the woman who worked there would put it in a neater factor. And I made all the card catalogs.

Which sounds a little tedious, but for learning a language it was phenomenal. And Chinese, like many languages, the hand-written version takes a little bit of practice to be able to actually read what character it is. And so I would read these characters. And they all had a Romanized line underneath them. And so it would be the characters, and then in our alphabet would be a system for reading it.

And so it was a really phenomenal, actually, learning experience to be doing all those things. And so I did a lot of that. And I just heard Chinese all the time. So it was pretty useful, actually.

And I did that for a few years. And then I, kind of in an odd moment, realized, wow, I want to go to law school.

Weber: What made you?

Baker: Well, it's funny. I always knew all my life that I would never want to go to law school, because it had so much memorization involved in it. And then one night-- these decisions for me sometimes take place really quickly.

I was at a party with some friends. And four of them had gotten together and bought a very expensive computer which was aimed at geophysical analysis. They were geophysicists. And so they had formed a little company and they bought this computer, which was, I don't know, probably \$100,000. It was a good chunk of money in those days. And they split it.

And one of the guests at the party said, oh, how did you split it? They're like, we all put in an equal amount of money. We all get an equal amount of the profits. And we all get an equal amount of whatever it is.

And this man said, oh, well that's interesting. He was a lawyer. He said, you know, you could probably arrange your partnership so that all of you would come out better. Meaning maybe some people want the profits that come out of it. Maybe some people want a tax deduction that comes out of it. Maybe some people want long-term gains.

And then you could probably arrange your partnership in a way that you all just get more out of it. And I thought, 'I want to be able to do that.' Not in taxes, particularly. But just in general, to take a setting, a

statement, a relationship of people and be able to figure out how to organize it so that everybody comes out better.

That's a pretty awesome thing to be able to do. So I thought, OK, I want to go to law school. And things were less formal in those days. It happened to be in the fall. That was lucky. I looked around. There was one last LSAT, the test that you take to go to law school, available that year, 12 days later.

So I got a book. I signed up. I got one of the last places. I got a book. I studied for 11 days. And those are things about the past I probably miss. And I think some of the students today don't have quite that much flexibility. But that's how it happened.

Weber: What then led you toward, well, Fenwick & West, but toward high-tech?

Baker: Well, a couple things. I am always drawn by the network and connecting things, building things. And so Silicon Valley is doing that. And I was also looking for a law firm that had something going on related to China, which again, today sounds really odd.

But in my era, there were almost none. Maybe four or five in the country, actually -- one or two on the East Coast, one in LA. And Fenwick & West wasn't involved in mainland China, but very active in Japan and very active in Taiwan. Acer had been an early client.

And so it was clear to me when I got down there they understood that part of the world is real now, not something in the future. Which, for a lot of other law firms, maybe they'd have an office in Hong Kong. But it just didn't really matter. And so that combination of "stuff is happening here," Fenwick & West was understood and real about East Asia. And the people there have a style that resonates well for me.

It's a "you find your own path." Even a very young lawyer, you find the people that you like to work with. And you prove your worth, and then they come to you. So you make relationships very early on based on mutual interest and helping each other out.

There's not some big bureaucratic committee that says, oh, you're first-year intern number five, therefore here's your project. The law firm I worked at before-- I'm not kidding-- I would get a manila envelope addressed to me. Inside would be a memo that says, "Unknown Associate X" and an assignment.

Weber: But you had been at another firm.

Baker: Yeah. And I didn't want to work that way.

Weber: In Silicon Valley as well?

Baker: It was in San Francisco, the other one. So that combination of three things brought me down here.

Weber: And you moved down the Peninsula.

Baker: I did. And because it was Fenwick & West and they understood it was real, I asked for six months between jobs to go back and live in Taiwan. And I remember Hank West took me out to lunch and quizzed me about why. Why would that be worthwhile? Why would the firm care about it?

And I talked to him about language and culture and learning. And he said OK. So I spent more time in Taiwan, and then I came back and started.

Weber: And you'd been to China before.

Baker: Yes.

Weber: During law school?

Baker: Yes, I took a year off in law school. I arranged-- it was pretty ad hoc. The law librarian at Berkeley, a guy named Bob Berring, also has an interest in China and will do things out of the mainstream. And so he helped me. And I spent I think it was six or seven months at Peking University as a foreign exchange student, and then the summer traveling, which was life-changing.

Weber: And you were there almost in the Tiananmen era?

Baker: Pre-Tiananmen.

Weber: Right before then?

Baker: Pre-Tiananmen, yeah. Yeah, when I went back after Tiananmen, the University was more closed.

Weber: But the students that you knew were some of the same that would have--

Baker: Yeah. Yeah.

Weber: So there was a sense of change in the air?

Baker: Oh my gosh, for sure. For sure. And it was very interesting. I was there just before the great economic changes. So there was a sense of change in every regard.

Weber: And so when did you first go online in some sense? Were you on the WELL or anything like that? Or was it in a later period.

Baker: Wow, that's really hard to remember.

Weber: When did it make an impression, not necessarily the—?

Baker: I would say-- I got down here in 1990. Sometime in the '90s. Even while I was working as a lawyer, I was deep in the technology space -- and my now-husband as well -- and so aware of it pretty early on. But not actually using it. I wasn't doing research and wasn't actually engaged in building it. So I didn't start using it until much later.

Weber: But like at Fenwick & West, were you using email?

Baker: Oh, for sure. Fenwick & West was actually very early on so connected into technology-- really early on. But connected into using the internet into my work came later. None of those systems-- oh, email for sure.

Weber: And your husband's in high-tech as well?

Baker: Yeah, he's a programmer?

Weber: You went straight from Fenwick & West to Sun, right?

Baker: Yes, I did.

Weber: OK. So what made you want to switch kind of to the client side? And they were a client, right? Or not?

Baker: No. I actually did not go from someone who was my client in the law firm and move. That's a very common move. But two things-- well, in hindsight, I've learned from many of my clients that I was a very good service provider. They liked having me as their lawyer and they felt like they got great service.

But I think as my core personality, 100% service all the time, is not actually my sweet spot. And I found myself struggling, because when one client would call, the work for another client, it's irrelevant. And so that kind of prioritization was very hard. And I found myself saying, yes, of course I'll do that. That makes sense to me. While inside I was screaming, saying -- literally, sometimes you would know that's the midnight to 2:00 AM shift that I just said yes to.

And I just felt like I wanted more flexibility in that part of the process, on the one hand. And maybe if I'd stayed longer -- I think techniques for doing that may be better now. Maybe it was my own failing that I didn't figure out how to solve that in the law firm. But also, I'm really interested in the puzzle pieces of how technology fits together.

What does this piece do? What does that piece do? What's the product? Why are you doing it? How does it connect to these things? And law firm vision gives you pieces of lots of things. But I really wanted to have a deeper role in a coherent ongoing technology endeavor.

Weber: To feel you were building something.

Baker: Yeah, exactly. And it was a geeky job. In that era, Sun had a software division for the operating system Solaris. And it had another software company run by Eric Schmidt, as it turned out, called Sun Technologies, Sun Enterprises-- STE.

And it was compilers and developer tools, and pretty deep into the build software space. They were productized, but they weren't consumer products. So that was a really interesting, informative phase. I learned a lot there.

Weber: And your role there was specifically?

Baker: I was a technology deal, IP business lawyer for that company, that STE—

Weber: For that division.

Baker: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. And over time, it got increasingly integrated into Sunsoft, the company that ran the OS Solaris piece. So they got integrated. So I got a little bit of-- pretty small group.

STE was much smaller, really deep in the technology, but also a big company. How does a service organization work across a large company with many different divisions or product lines? And that was actually quite helpful for Netscape and Pete and Mozilla.

Weber: And Java was getting going in that period?

Baker: Yes.

Weber: Did you have any exposure to that?

Baker: Oh, yes. The very first contract arrangement that Sun did for Java was for Netscape, IE, and so me and obviously the leader of the engineering group at the time. And so we went through months of trying to figure it out. And some of the technology was new.

And I take confidentiality really seriously. I think one reason why Mozilla, as an open-source project, is stunningly good with confidential information is it's important to me. And so I remember when I was negotiating this contract, there were some new concepts about Java and byte code and how the VM was handling them.

And I'd go home and try to talk to my husband about the concept in general without giving away what was actually happening, because it was all really new and difficult. It was hard on both sides. I remember we had a version we thought maybe was there. And Bill Joy looked at it. He said, "nope, that's not goanna work for Sun." And it all really changed.

And then we had another version. And I looked at it. And I said, "Eh, that's not going to work for us. Like, if this is we're ending up, I'm going to have to recommend to the management team that we not sign this deal."

And so that changed in the last week to get to something. You know, I think all the clauses that were in there about not fragmenting, maybe they were the right thing for Sun, although they did not do that with Microsoft. But they were big part of why we could never make Java work on the client.

Weber: [INAUDIBLE].

Baker: What's that?

Weber: Talk about those clauses a little bit. If you—

Baker: Oh, I can't actually remember exactly what they were.

Weber: But what the issues were.

Baker: You know the "write once, run anywhere" piece had a bunch of requirements in them. And we tried for a long time to make Java a key technology on the client side. And we could not do it. And so maybe it's the nature of the technology itself. And maybe it never could have happened. But our experience was we just could not do what we needed to do with the limitations of the contract.

And I don't think it was the technology. I think it was the contract. Because when the Microsoft contract was finally made public in the lawsuit, those limitations weren't in it. So I assume that Microsoft had the same reaction, but somehow, you know-- things have changed in the years since we signed our contract.

Weber: But that was after you were at Netscape. So talk about what took you from Sun to Netscape.

Baker: Oh, sure. While I was at Sun, the early Mosaic browser appeared. And so I began using that. I think one of the first things I did was go find Peking University, which was actually online in 1993, maybe-- like, incredibly early. There wasn't a lot of background material, at least in English. But it was there. And so it was really clear to me, wow, that's exciting.

And one day at Sun I got a call from a lawyer I had worked with at Fenwick & West. And he said, hey, there's this company. I have a friend over there. She's the lawyer. I think she was six or seven months pregnant. It's a new company. It's got the guys from Mosaic. I think you'd be happy there.

And so I said, well, that's interesting. And first, I guess, talked with the lawyer, who really was six or seven months pregnant. And then went and talked with Jim Clark, who was the CEO at the time. And that went well.

And I knew there was tension when I got there. It was clear. Which turned out to be this ongoing disagreement with the University of Illinois. So I could see that.

Weber: But when did you first talk to Netscape? They were already Netscape?

Baker: No, no, no.

Weber: Or Mosaic Communications?

Baker: This would have been November of 1994. And in fact, in a funny thing I sent my acceptance notice to Jim from a fax machine at the Friendship Hotel in Beijing, because I happen to be back there. So that, to me, was a funny sort of circle.

And so it was interesting. It was clearly fascinating. It was something new. I'd already seen what a browser could be. Very drawn to it. Like new things. Like, I'm probably a little insatiable for new things.

Some people want to have a feeling of mastery. It's time to really dig in and enjoy it and love it. But that's when I want to go do something new. So I was drawn to it on many levels.

And also, I think I wasn't worried about what I would do if it didn't work out. There's one good thing about Silicon Valley, one truly great thing, is there are a lot of jobs here. And even people at Sun, whom I was leaving, they were very clear we value you. And we don't hate you because you're leaving. That's what happens here. We think there's a spot if you want to come back.

And that's a very special thing about Silicon Valley, because I do run into many people-- a few here, but mostly elsewhere. And leaving is sort of so traitorous that you're done there, whereas here, you have some personal relationships to take care of and so on. But the idea that you might come back, and you might have learned something, or you might try something and it was a mistake or it didn't work for you, or it was great and you're coming back and bringing new things, I think is one of those intangibles about this area that makes it so successful in the long term. So I went.

Weber: And so this was before all the legal stuff with NCSA then? Or in the middle of it?.

Baker: Well, was before the hardcore, all-day, all-the-time stuff. It was after the 0.9 Mosaic release and pre-1.0. And so when I got there, there was clearly tension. But that went way up. And the outside counsel that was helping us sort of moved in full-time. And eventually, Netscape filed I think a declaratory judgment.

Because it was increasingly difficult to talk to people about the product. Or in those days, of course, they were still sales. The browser wasn't free. And so all of those business arrangements were being impacted by the question of, do you actually own it? Can you actually make this deal?

Weber: Right. And a lot of it was around the source code.

Baker: Well, I think a lot of it was probably around the nature of the product. Like the source code was different, like recreated, but it was a product doing a similar thing by the same team. And I think it was difficult, emotionally difficult, to get to the point well, that's how Silicon Valley works. You go way back to Fairchild, right? That's the way it works.

And that it was really different. And that it can completely recreated. And there was no copyright violation I think was just difficult for the original folks at Illinois to actually internalize all of that.

Weber: And there was the settlement, which I guess-- is that still confidential?

Baker: You know, I don't know. I don't know.

Weber: Because I interviewed people back in it would have been '96, '97. And it was very fresh.

Baker: Yes, that's right.

Weber: And [INAUDIBLE] and various people couldn't talk much about it.

Baker: I actually don't know. I have been-- yeah, I don't know.

Weber: Because if there's anything more, I would certainly be interested, if there is more that could be public.

Baker: Yes. Actually, I haven't really followed it. I did once run into someone who was on the other side of that, either at Illinois or at Spyglass. I can't remember the person's name and I can't remember exactly where they were.

But we compared notes. And it really was astonishing, their experience-- like, I knew what we were saying out of Netscape, because I was involved in it, and yet what they heard. Or maybe it was someone at Illinois. You know, it was just three parties-- very messy, lots of emotions. Those things are often messy.

Weber: Sure. But the upshot was you gave up Mosaic as part of the name, took Netscape--

Baker: I have to confess, I don't remember if that was part of the settlement or not. So clearly, we changed the name to Netscape. But I don't know if that was the settlement or for--

Weber: I mean, don't say you don't feel you can. So there was money from one side to another?

Baker: You know, I really-- I know it sounds funny, but I really don't remember. I really don't. At one time, it must have been totally top-of-mind, all of those details, but not now.

Weber: But for a while that was a real dominant effort?

Baker: Oh, for sure. Like if I had been a rational person making a reasonable career decision-- let me say that. I don't think I'm an irrational person. If I had made that decision based on the chart of potential problems, it was a pretty risky job to take.

Weber: Because there was a real existential fear that the company could be--

Baker: Yeah. That's right. Because it's a startup with an IP issue that is fundamental to the entire scope of everything it's trying to do.

Weber: And did you know that going in? Probably not.

Baker: I knew there was something there.

Weber: OK. But that's also interesting, isn't it?

Baker: Yes. Yes, it is interesting. And the Silicon Valley is a good place to take risk.

Weber: Did you find that exciting as well going into this?

Baker: You know, for me, that was not the exciting part. It was the possibility of what we were trying to build that was the exciting part. So that was there, and high stakes and high pressure, but not a draw per se. I was not a litigator. It's not the thing that I'm really drawn to.

Weber: So talk about the vision that did attract you? What were people trying to do? And what excited you about it?

Baker: Oh, a global network that general consumers, like citizens, can see and understand and interact with and communicate with. That vision, I probably had in my head before. I think there are probably

science fiction books that have had global networks long before we actually physically had one. And so I think starting to see the beginning, like that could be real and here's the beginning of it, was just mesmerizing.

And also when you get there, because it-- overused phrase-- paradigm change or step change, like there wasn't something like it before. There was no commercial internet before. There was a tool for developers and scientists, command line tool and so on. But it was all new. And what's better than that?

So an entire not just industry but connected life took a giant leap. And Netscape was at the very center of it for years. And so that's worth taking some risk over.

Weber: And the Java vision of the network as the computer, that was a big part. I mean, did you see it as also challenging the traditional computer industry?

Baker: Well, as I mentioned earlier, Java was ongoing painful for us. So like the Java piece, was that a vision for us? No. The network as the computer wrapped up in Sun and our Java piece-- we actually worked very well with Sun on pretty much everything else, pretty much everything else. And in fact, one of the executives I met at that era is now at Mozilla, running our mobile phone efforts as well.

But I think I wouldn't care [to] characterize my vision of the network and Sun or Java or anybody else's terms. I think it was just the scope of the possibility of what could happen was so clear. And I remember early on-- so it must have been '95, maybe-- being on a plane and sitting next to someone and couldn't help but notice that the magazine article he was reading had the Netscape logo over all the pages. And eventually, I realized it was HTML, how to build a website, how to participate, how to get your hobby online, how to do these things.

And when he got up, it was a "Popular Mechanics" magazine. And I was like, yes. Because now you have this technology which is easier to use and people can understand it and you have "View Source."

You can actually get into it and see what it is. You don't have this giant temple of learning. It's much easier to actually try things out and see what other people have done. And so that possibility of expanding access to the network capabilities was also pretty exciting.

Weber: And in your career at Netscape—so you interviewed with Jim Clark.

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: And talk about your first impressions of him.

Baker: I think my first impressions are that Jim was really wired. Like, Jim's a high-performance guy. And most high-performance things have edges to them. Like a high-performance car, you may have to be very careful about it. You have to treat it well. You've got to be careful not to spin it or do this or that with it.

And that was Jim-- completely engaged, pretty tense, I think. Clearly really smart, and trying to manage the tornado plus the difficulties there. So really appealing in the intellect. And I think handle with care, I would say.

But your founders have some of that. So it was really clear. He had an idea. He had the founder make a company, build a company, do what needs to get done. Those things were really clear. So that's great.

Weber: But then you reported directly to Jim Barksdale when he came in.

Baker: Right. Well, at the time, Jim Clark was the CEO. Jim Barksdale had joined the board pretty recently. And the management team was just forming. So I came, and Mike Homer who ran marketing- - I think I was the third or fourth person after him to join -- and the guy who ran sales had joined right around then, too. And so the woman who pregnant, who was on pregnancy leave, and so yes, I was running the legal department.

And I remember my dad questioning me mercilessly, saying, "well, don't you want to be the general counsel? They didn't hire you as general counsel. How can you do that? Is somebody else going to appear? Don't you want that role?"

And trying to explain to him that I knew I wasn't ready and I didn't want that role. Because you could tell-- I mean, maybe Netscape would have failed then. That was still a possibility. But that it was really at the center of something. That was immediately clear. And that if it didn't die in this early phase, it was just going to be explosive.

And I could tell that I wasn't yet ready for that. And having a job that you're not ready for and there's no time to grow into it is not glamorous at all. Like sometimes, you make it across that leap. But a lot of people get destroyed in that leap. And I did not want to do that.

And so eventually -- I was very fortunate -- the person who became our general counsel, Roberta Katz, had been working with Barksdale before. And so they knew each other. And they had a trust factor.

And one very early thing that happened is someone -- I think it was Microsoft -- came to Mountain View to meet with us. And the non-disclosure agreement had some things in it that we didn't like. And I was very glad that it was Roberta who went to Barksdale and Andreessen and said, I think you should send them home. Which in that era, you did not do when Microsoft came to talk to you. You just did not say, 'we're not going to talk to you at all.'

And I knew that if that had been me, both Barksdale and probably Andreessen would be like, Hmm... Hmm... And then you're trying to prove yourself as well as describe what you think the business needs. And so having a general counsel that had already had the background to be able to describe what the business needs with that trust already established for a company like Netscape, I was very happy about.

Weber: And they did send Microsoft packing then?

Baker: I don't know whether it got fixed after that discussion or not. But that discussion had to happen to get to the right answer. And I don't remember.

Weber: Talk about your impressions of the Mosaic-- the team from NCSA, so Marc Andreessen, and [INAUDIBLE] various McCool twins.

Baker: Yeah. Yeah, the McCool twins. [LAUGHS]

Weber: Did you deal much with-- I mean, who were you interacting with?

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: Everyone.

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: How many employees when you arrived?

Baker: It was 67. So when I got there-- well, when my colleague came back, when the other lawyer came back, we split up the work. This was before our boss had arrived. And so yes, we were both reporting to Jim Barksdale at the time. But we split it up.

And we said, once something's on the price list, it was hers. Remember, software was sold then. The browser was free for nonprofit use. But for commercial use and enterprises and buying and using it. So there's a big sales group for selling the software.

So that was our dividing line, that once it was on the sales list and the sales guys were out selling it, all of that was hers. So that's individual sales. It's organization. It's channel. It's distribution. It's a whole range of things.

And anything until it was on the price list was mine. So that meant all the software development, all the licenses of bits of technology that you needed to make a product. There would be 50 or 60 license agreements that would go into the first browser. And they all had to fit together. That was a big job.

All the intellectual property stuff from copyright to patent. In those days, the website was not a product. It wasn't on the price list. So everything related to the development of the website-- so all the early marketing deals, all early search deals, everything related to any contractual agreement about what it meant to be online that was all on my side of things.

And that worked well for me. I think my personality matches better with engineers. Because I found on the sales side, I would hear my colleagues say, 'yeah, we're almost done. We're almost done with this deal. We just need X or Y.'

And that's the right answer for the people she was working with, because it's positive and encouraging, and it's 'go out and get the last thing done.' But I would feel my heart, like, that deal is nowhere near done. Like I know exactly what has to happen to finish that deal, because we just discussed it. It is not near done.

But that wasn't motivating, that was like deflating to that audience. Whereas for engineers, 'we suck.' And so in the engineering culture, it's much easier to start with all things that are wrong, or all the problems that are left, and work upward. And so I'm naturally just better at that.

And so I've spent a lot of time, actually, learning from my colleagues about how to have the optimistic-- like, yeah, it is almost done. Sure, there's a lot of stuff. But we've already got so much done that that piece shouldn't block us. So to try and learn the other side. But just in my natural state, talking to engineers is much easier for me. So that worked out well.

Weber: So you did spend a lot of time with the development team.

Baker: Oh, yeah. I used to-- I guess it was every Friday. We got big enough we were in different buildings. Our first building, we were all jammed on top of each other.

Weber: On Castro Street.

Baker: Yes, on Castro Street.

Weber: And then there was -- I interviewed Lou Montulli in your second building.

Baker: Yeah, on Ellis. There was two where Ellis runs into Middlefield there. But I would take Fridays, and I would go just wander around the developer zone-- the client. There were servers, too, pretty early on. But mostly the clients, sometimes the servers.

And just go hang out. Sit down and chat, and see what people were working on, and see the kind of stuff that would come up, and what was on people's minds. And so that was a really important-- I liked it, for one thing. But it was the best way to have an early idea of what was going on, or what was bothering people, or the kind of stuff that they were uncomfortable about that maybe you'd see later in a product issue.

Weber: So who were the main personalities?

Baker: Oh, well, Marc Andreessen, for sure. I think they were all personalities. You know, Lou was a personality. Jim Clark's a personality. Jim Barksdale's a personality. Mike Homer's a personality. Jamie Zawinski's a personality.

Who was there? Michael Toy was a personality. Tom Paquin was a personality. Like pretty much-- the McCool brothers were a little quiet and I think remote, too. But there were a lot of personalities there.

Weber: John Mittelhauser.

Baker: Yup, John was there. John I would say--

Weber: Alex Torch.

Baker: --has a presence. Yeah. So yeah, a lot of them.

Weber: And they mostly got along, right? I know there was the chair-throwing incident and some things like that.

Baker: Oh, yeah. Yeah, you should probably talk to them about how they got along and so on. They were a pretty close team. And I'm not sure I saw everything.

Weber: Sure. But your impression was that they--

Baker: Well, we produced. Like how they got along-- they didn't come to me with how I'm getting along or I'm not. But what we accomplished was pretty astonishing.

Weber: Yeah. I mean, there weren't divisions that held things up.

Baker: Again, you're going to have to ask them.

Weber: OK. And so you were there for the IPO.

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: Talk about that.

Baker: Well, the IPO. I think there was a lot of discussion about the timing of the IPO. It was probably at the early end of where it could have been, and I think wildly successful.

What I remember, actually, was the IPO day itself. It was obviously a lot of getting ready and a ton of work. And Jim Clark, I think, knew enough about how options worked to really want to take care of his employees and make sure it worked well for all of us. And there was some energy and effort around that. I don't remember the specifics. But I do remember Jim being really focused on making sure everybody understood what was happening, what you should do, a bunch of things around that.

And then the day came, and I think it was the most successful IPO in history up to that point. And it had this wild, wild climb. And it was pretty giddy for a very short period of time. And the big celebration was they brought out espresso carts in the parking lot. And we all went out and got an espresso drink and a t-shirt, and then go back into work, which we mostly did.

You know, when the stock is doing those things, it's hard to focus. So there was a lot of attention now on, OK, now there's more work to do. Let's get back. And then there was a movie theater event place in Sunnyvale that we went to a few days later. So there was a bunch of stuff about stock for a while and people watching it. But pretty crisp focus on getting back to work.

Weber: And how much did it change people's-- some of the people who had made a lot of money, obviously it changed their lives. Did you feel that in the company?

Baker: Not as much as you would think. Yeah, you know, we were still working so hard. And the sense things could go wrong, like that you really do need to be focused-- 1995, August '95, the internet is exploding. And I mean it.

Every single thing that happened in '95, '96, '97 came through Netscape. Netscape might not have been involved in it. But some way or other, it came through. And that is a deluge.

It's exciting. It's unbelievably exciting. But you can barely breathe. And so I'm sure it changed, but that's not what I remember about that period. And the numbers in that era are not like today. It's not like billionaires made overnight. And so it wasn't the sort of unbelievable sums that you see today. They were big for their time.

But I just remember like the IPO accelerating, the wave of incoming activities. Which meant you were always behind. People were always upset with you. You always appeared arrogant. You always appeared like you were ignoring people. There was nothing you could do that was good enough satisfy the requests for response.

And maybe some people liked that setting, or it makes them feel power or glamorous or whatever. But I think there were a whole bunch of us at Netscape who just felt like, wow, ah. Like we're not doing enough.

I did keep the t-shirt, though. I still have it. It's just a little white t-shirt with blue. And it's got the date on it. But I kept it, because it's a big date.

Weber: From the IPO.

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: I interviewed Jim Clark in Switzerland, actually, in September that year.

Baker: Yes.

Weber: Right after. And I remember—

Baker: Because it was in August. Yeah.

Weber: And then Microsoft-- that's almost-- that was that summer that Microsoft decided to pursue a web strategy as well and drop MSN.

Baker: Choke the air out of Netscape, I believe was the plan.

Weber: Right. And I remember him talking about it. That was the main fear already, was what was Microsoft going to do?

Baker: For sure. Yeah. I think it's easy to forget now how completely Microsoft controlled the industry, just what a presence they were. And today we think Google controls things. But you know, 80% market share or 70% market share or whatever Google search in the US, is really different than 99%. [LAUGHS] And whatever percentage of people are using Google Apps or whatever is very different than the 99% Microsoft Office.

And the investment piece and the way you would invest in a startup, knowing that this is the kind of thing that Microsoft will buy. And we're not aiming to compete, we're aiming to be bought. And that if you're aiming to compete, you're really in big trouble. It's hard to remember just how consuming the Microsoft presence was.

Weber: So you felt it all the time in some sense.

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: So then we'll talk a little bit about-- so your '95 to '97 is all still up, and then it started to turn.

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: So when did you have the sense that maybe things are turning, in your own work?

Baker: Well, a couple things happened. You know, Microsoft got involved in the industry. And you have to credit Bill for turning a giant company effectively. So a couple things started to happen.

Weird stuff started to happen in the business that we didn't understand-- like weird reactions among our customers. And it took a long time to figure out what was going on. And those things later became clear when the Department of Justice filed its antitrust action against Microsoft. And then the things that we had been experiencing became much clearer.

But we didn't know that yet. And all we knew was that weird stuff was happening.

Weber: Like what?

Baker: Like the sales team would be in a conversation with a big customer, and they'd start to say weird stuff. Or we can't do that. Or we won't do that. Or the economics don't work. Weird stuff.

And exploring what the economics are for your customers is a big part of that cycle. How do things work? And then you'd get to a dead spot, like something's going on. And if you go back and read the materials from the lawsuit, it becomes clear that Microsoft had some business practices, if you do X, we'll do Y, which there's no way to compete with.

If you have 99% market share and you're doing Y with that product, that's a pretty powerful lever. And so first Microsoft -- so we began to experience that.

Weber: Any particular clients that stick out in your memory?

Baker: No, no. There's probably materials in the lawsuit. We could go back. But as I said, those things I take really -- confidentiality and stuff.

Weber: Oh, no. I'm not—please, anything I ask that you think is not—

Baker: Yeah. OK. So that was happening. And Microsoft had a long history of taking interesting and useful things and putting them into the operating system and taking the economics out of parts of the industry. You could probably name 15 or 20 or 50 or 100 ideas or categories of companies of which that was true.

And so you might say, great. That's what the operating system should do. We do whatever we think is best for our clients. And then you might also look at the effects. And as it turned out, the DOJ looked at that, plus their business practices by which they accomplished these things, and decided all of that together was illegal. So that piece is going on.

And then Microsoft made the browser free, which I think Jim Barksdale said that he lost -- what was it 50%, 75%, or 90% I think -- the revenue overnight in a company like Netscape. So that's a pretty good wake-up call. What are you going to do there?

And then increasingly--

Weber: And when was that? That was '90--

Baker: Oh, I don't know. I don't remember the date. I'd have to go look at it. Not that long after, I don't think. So I'd have to check the date.

And then of course, they began to describe their browser as not a product. It's just a part of the operating system. And so all of those things, living through them, you can see what a threat those things are. And then somewhere in there, I think Netscape faltered in product quality for a bit. And so I think it was I3-- was that the right one? It was the really good one.

And so there was a period when Microsoft produced a really nice product. So I don't want to take that away from them. I'm not denying that at all. It's just hard to compete both with product and with the whole business process, illegal activity piece-- like rolled in one.

And so then you could see market share going down. And we knew it was going to go down, because it was the first browser. So it had a 99% market share when you start, so you expect some of that but. But it became clear that there was a lot more going on in there. And eventually, that's when the open source piece emerged.

Weber: And Apache had also cut into the server side. But that was not a significant part, then?

Baker: Well, while a browser was still a product that one sold, then the server side revenue was not huge.

But Apache was a little bit different, because it had always been there. And so on the server side, you recognize there's a market leader. And you're trying to provide some differentiation and some value to it and build a customer base, which I think I was only partially successful. Apache's pretty awesome.

And Brian Behlendorf of the Apache Foundation is also a Mozilla board member. But he says very clearly that part of Apache is sinking is they didn't want Netscape to own the client and the server. And good for them. At Netscape at the time, you'd look at it and be like, wow, how come this open source project really competes so effectively? And basically the web is being run on Apache. And I think Netscape made some inroads with customers for whom different kinds of care relationships were important, but never really cracked that.

And so yeah, I think that answered that question.

Weber: And so then talk about how what became Mozilla first came up, the idea of doing an open source. And was Apache an inspiration in the idea of open source?

Baker: Well, let's see. A couple things happened. Netscape market share was declining. I think it also became clear that Netscape alone could not successfully compete against Microsoft. And that to compete, you needed a set of people. Maybe not formal, not like a joint venture or a partnership, but you needed a product and a technology base that many people shared, shared an interest in and all wanted to succeed.

Weber: And who formulated this first?

Baker: So that's an interesting question. I can tell you the people who were involved in it. I can't tell you exactly--

Weber: Tell me that. And also, when did you first hear it?

Baker: So that was part one that was going on. Part two, Netscape had a lot of people who were familiar with open source, a lot of engineers who were very deeply familiar with it. And it was an engineering-focused company. So engineers, individual engineers, actually had more access to I think brainstorming or ideas with management than you might expect in other companies.

So that expertise inside Netscape was pretty important. And in fact, a man who was a sales engineer at the time, Frank Hecker, wrote a paper about open source and Mozilla, which was pretty widely distributed

and read. So a bunch of the engineers were involved. A bunch of the management team was involved. I'm sure Mike Homer and Eric, whose name I'm blanking on.

Weber: Eric Beener was not on the--

Baker: No, no. Different Eric. It was the first acquisition that Netscape did. Hahn, Eric Hahn.

Weber: Oh, right. Yeah.

Baker: Right. [LAUGHS]

Weber: His auditorium across his--

Baker: Yes, exactly. So that's a part, maybe. Were all deeply involved. And when I got involved formally was in January of 1998, at a very early Jim Barksdale staff meeting -- like, really early. I'm not an early morning person, and I was also like a month pregnant. So it was a big job to get there.

Weber: So Mozilla and your child--

Baker: Yeah my son. Very closely related. So there had been some series of discussions, where I don't know who -- Eric probably knows the best right now -- who said what about open source and this being the way. And so we had a discussion of it, the Jim Barksdale staff and me.

I think Roberta was always very clear, if it involved technology, a product, or source code, she didn't try to do my job. She didn't feel the need that because she was the GC to act as if she knew everything that I knew. And so she was very clear that if you're going to talk about these things, you'd have to have Mitchell here.

And so we had a long discussion about it. And in particular, how would that affect Netscape's relationships and businesses and commercial organizations, on the one hand. To know, what would it really look like? The answer was, we don't know. We really don't know. Here we are.

And then I remember Barksdale saying, OK, well, this is the plan then. We're going to do an open source release. We're going to release the Netscape Navigator code under an open source slash free-software license that is like the GNU license, GNU-like. And I think the announcement was made not too long after that. January 19, I think, was the first announcement.

So we had a week or two, whatever it was, in there in January, to pick a date by which it would actually happen. So the announcement that we would do it was January 19, and the date was March 31.

Weber: Who came up with-- I mean, Mozilla had a long history as the Mosaic Killer. But why the decision to make that the name of the new open source effort? Because it was really more of an Explorer killer, was the idea, right?

Baker: So the Mosaic Killer piece I'll leave to Lou and other folks to talk about that piece. But Mozilla had always been the user agent. So if you were a server, for example, and you were getting a request from Netscape Navigator, it didn't say Navigator. It didn't say Mosaic. It said Mozilla.

And so for the engineers, the name Mozilla had always been a part of the engineering culture at Mozilla. And we had a saying, which I actually wrote on the day of 3/31. When we released the code, there was a big sign and people signed it. And I put the engineering phrase on it, which is "Netscape-- it's spelled M-O-Z-I-L-L-A."

And so that, I think, was the representation of the engineering open source freedom, touch the code, do what you want with it coming to the fore. So the organization that was chartered with shepherding the code and building an open source community was called Mozilla.org. I'm not sure there was actual real big discussion about that. I think it was probably clear to all the engineers involved that that's what it should be.

And I will say that the management team at Netscape, having embarked on this great unknown, they really jumped in. They didn't try to embark and not do it. Like, we have to have an organization to make this an open source project. It's got to have the engineers leading it. And that's what happened.

Weber: And you wrote the license that made it open source.

Baker: I did. We looked at all the other licenses for a number of organizations. The GNU public license is difficult. That's true today less so, but very, very true then. And the nature of the required reciprocal sharing in the GNU license is particularly difficult.

And for us, Netscape, of course, had a lot of commercial organizations it was really interested in. And our focus was more getting the code used by many people. So if you imagine, for example, JavaScript created by my co-founder, Brendan, always maintained -- Brendan had leadership, so leadership of JavaScript development until recently, through Brendan. The whole JavaScript engine inside Mozilla code.

Imagine if using that JavaScript engine meant that everything that you created would be licensed under the GNU license. That's a difficult proposition to go out with. And our approach is a complement to the GNU free software -- not the same -- is to say, you must act in a reciprocal manner if you're changing our code. But you can combine it with your own stuff. Keep your own stuff proprietary.

And then we try and demonstrate why making more viewer things open is good. What the benefits are to you, why you want to do it. But we don't require it as the starting point. So different, complementary I think, approach to the GNU free software approach.

And so we looked at, could we use the GNU license, the GPL? These kinds of issues came up. And we looked at the BSD and Apache licenses, which are very permissive. You don't have to do anything. You can take Apache code and proprietyze it if you want, and make your own proprietary fork and never share it back, if you want to. You share back because the logic of the development convinces you.

And we looked at that one as well. And we found because there's a big organization at the center -- it was Netscape then -- people wanted some commitment from the organization to continue to share. It was a sense if we use the BSD license or the Apache license at the time, then everybody would be committing things that Netscape or some other big organization who was using the code could take and privatize.

And so we wanted the code to be easy to use, easy for people to pick up and use in their own products, and to show the level of reciprocity required for an understandable scope. And so I wrote the MPL, which I think of as the highlight or pinnacle of my time as an attorney, actually. It's hard. And the GPL is also a remarkable document.

But it's hard for us because of the concepts. But also because every person can have every different role. Usually, when you write an agreement, you're you and I'm me. And you're selling me something or licensing me something, and I'm receiving it. And I might license you something else back, but it's identifiable. And we know what it is.

But in these public licenses, that's not the case. You could well be a contributor to a code base, and also a recipient of everybody else's contribution. And so trying to write something where you have no actual fixed starting point is actually pretty complex.

And so it was actually a lot of work. A lot of people flat-out told us it was impossible. We had two months to figure out what license, write it, get it reviewed. We had public reviews of it. Revise it, figure it all out, do all our due diligence, get all the terms right, make it work. And in two months.

And I don't, for example, think I could do that today. But I could do it then. And I did it then. And you certainly had a lot of help from the team and the engineers.

So we had a mailing list. Mozilla's old enough, I don't know if it's archived anywhere. 331 was the mailing list. And early drafts of the license went out to that mailing list, and to the free software and open source communities. And we got a ton of review.

And I'm actually proud of it. It's a good license. And I'm proud of it. I'm also pretty proud of where the other licenses have gone. Not brought in the sense that I was involved or I did them, but as a member of the open source, sort of free software, FLOSS [Free/Libre and Open Source Software] community.

The GPL has been revised. And so it's got some things in it that people either really like or don't like. But it's certainly been modernized. and the Apache license has also really been updated and modernized, and is a much better license, I think, for protecting free software and open source communities.

And we have managed to harmonize a bunch of clauses between them-- patent clauses, defense clauses-- so that it's easier to combine code, especially Apache and Mozilla code. So in the early days, there was a lot of fighting over licenses. Within the tribe, there was just lots of fighting. And I think we've come a huge distance in the last decade.

Weber: On the data side, there's been Creative Commons. Do you think there's been kind of cross-pollination?

Baker: Oh, yes, I think a lot of cross-pollination. Probably the question of data-- we have a ways to go to understand licensing pieces. Because what Creative Commons doesn't cover, and which the rest of the FLOSS community hasn't yet covered, is what about data about me?

Creative Commons is, when I create something, how do I choose to share it, if at all? And then there's this whole topic of data that is created about me, or gathered from my activities. And what happens to that data?

Can I actually know what it is? Can I see it? Can I change it? Can I control it? Those are unanswered pieces. And so early on, there was free software and an open source definition of what was required. And I think for the data about me, we need that as well.

Weber: But in the early years, were there any real contacts with what became Creative Commons and more the data side? These are separate?

Baker: Oh, let me think. In the early years, Larry -- gosh, I'm trying to remember. I can't remember my first conversations with Larry.

Weber: Because looking back, it seems quite parallel.

Baker: Yes. Yes. Well, one of the things that did happen of which Firefox played a part was the validating the idea of open or sharing as a possibility across a range of activities. And it wasn't Mozilla that created it. It wasn't Firefox. But I think we did play a role in showing you could have a good to great consumer product.

And this thing was very funky when we started, the idea that you would share your code or let other people change it. It was just so weird. Like, only those weird -- maybe weird academics would do that. But it cannot remotely be practical, or can't have economic value. And so that has really changed. And all the areas where people are exploring, more openness and sharing and consumer action is a pretty interesting social development.

Weber: And so how did you go from writing the license to becoming the head of the effort? And Brendan was also a co-founder, but what are your relative roles?

Baker: So in 1998, first announcement in January, 3/31 as the go-live date. So a group of people formed on the engineering side. All of Netscape, actually, was really involved in getting the code ready. And then a group of people formed to have the ongoing role of shepherding and managing the source code and building an open source project. That was called Mozilla.org, and it had seven or eight people in it.

And Brendan was one of the key players. I think Tom Paquin was technically the manager. But Brendan was the key player. And we still have a bunch of other people involved still in the project.

I was still on the legal side. I wrote the license. The license itself has to understand the kind of community that you're trying to create. How prescriptive is it? How welcoming is it? How disciplinary is it? What do you do when something goes wrong? How do you try and encourage the right things to happen?

So it shows up in a legal licensing document. But it has a bunch of clues as to the organization you're trying to create in it. And so as part of writing the license, of course, we did a lot of working through what kind of organization is it.

And we gave a lot of thought to, well, Mozilla.org-- should we make a separate organization for it? Who would run it? What would a board look like? How do you do those things? And decided, didn't know

enough at the time. So Mozilla.org became the engineers shepherding the code, but not a separate organization. We talked through a whole range of things about people dynamics and organizational dynamics, and ended up, as I said, with the license and then the group of engineers, the early Mozilla.org.

So I was involved, I'd say, part-time for the next I don't know, three, four, five months, making Mozilla.org work. Figuring out structure, relationships with other people-- a lot of activity there. And then I went on maternity leave. And I came back from that December, January I guess of 1999.

And in the meantime, the agreement for Netscape to sell itself to AOL had occurred. And a ton of work was going on. And there was a lot of reorganization and people figuring out, well, what does that mean for me for the future?

Weber: But when you went on maternity leave, did you see this as leading to something major for you--

Baker: No.

Weber: --or it's just a project?

Baker: Well, it was important to me. But no, I had not given thought to moving full-time. It was taking a fair amount of time and energy in the role that I had. So it was more than a project, because we were still building. What does it mean to have Mozilla.org? How do organizations interact with it?

So there's a lot of work going on. But I wasn't thinking about leading it or moving full-time. I was thinking really about still trying to survive. Remember, these are the six or eight months before Netscape sold itself. So trying to survive.

I still owned all the website and marketing parts, which started to be revenue generators. So now on top of everything else, we had this huge chunk of revenue to support the company. In which the timing just-- the two just did not work together. And so trying to sort out how to do that.

And there's a lot to do when you have your first child as well. So when I came back from maternity leave, it was clear that the acquisition agreement would close pretty soon. And so a bunch of people left. The natural course for lawyers was to go into the legal department or the business development department at AOL. But I didn't actually want to do that. I had already gotten bored.

Because when we started Netscape, especially on the technology side -- on the sales side, too-- everything was new. I think we wrote the first agreement that tried to define a web page. Or the original -- even before Yahoo went public. Working with Jerry [Yang] and David [Filo] before Yahoo went-- like, it's all new. You're making everything up, which I like.

But now I could tell I had a team, and they were great. And something would come in. And I'd say, 'oh, well, that's interesting. You know, this part of it, we did something like it over here. Go find that agreement. Look for these ideas. Take this part from over there. Put them together. And I'll tell you, I'll bet you these are the three problem areas that you're going to spend 90% of your time negotiating. Here, here, and here, this is likely what they're going to say. This is a place we absolutely can't go. See where you end up. Let me know.'

And it just wasn't motivating anymore. So I knew I really wanted something different. And I chatted with Roberta. Mozilla came up, because it was all new. It had all engineers-- good engineers, but not expertise elsewhere. Lots of things that were unknown.

And so I talked to her about it. And she went and talked to Barksdale about it. And Jim, as reported to me, said, oh, yeah. Well, that would be great. Yeah, you're right. Mitchell at Mozilla would be good. And she should run it.

So I started chatting with people. And I knew, of course, that there was a Mozilla.org. And there was no way I was going to run it because I wanted to or Jim or Roberta or somebody had thought it was a good idea, especially since they're all leaving with the acquisition. So I went over to find Mozilla.org. It was in the person of Brendan Eich.

And it took me a long time. Brendan often doesn't sit in the cube or in the area that has been assigned to him. He moves around. But I did find him. And we had a discussion. And Brendan was, at that time, the acting manager. The person who had been there sort of managing it I think had also left or was leaving.

And yeah, I think he knew that he wanted to be doing engineering at that point and leading Mozilla.org. And so it took him-- I don't know, maybe an hour we talked. He knew me, because I'd been in the engineering world since he'd come to Netscape -- well, related to it, not deep in the middle of the engineering world. And so it was either our first or second discussion, he said, OK, that sounds good to me.

Weber: For you to run it rather him.

Baker: Yeah. And then I knew we were set. So it was hard.

Weber: You were still a domain owned by Netscape. You were not—

Baker: We were. We were. And so I moved over, I think, full-time officially probably in January of '99. And the deal closed not that long after it with AOL. And Netscape management left. We were now part of AOL.

And my manager at that time was a guy named Bob Lisbonne -- old-time Mozilla VP of Marketing, helped launch Mozilla.org, is currently on the Mozilla Foundation Board. Still a deep friend of Mozilla.

Weber: Old-time Netscape--

Baker: I'm sorry, Netscape.

Weber: -- VP of marketing.

Baker: Netscape. Sorry, yeah. So moved over there, and it was quite hard. At the closing of the acquisition, Jamie Zawinski put up kind of a challenge to AOL, saying, hey, Mozilla is here. Like, confirm you're going to leave it. You're not going to mess with it. I don't remember the exact language. And they did, so that was good.

But the integration process was really, really, really hard. And for AOL, they were doing a lot of acquisitions. I think Netscape was a big one and they were pretty focused on it. But this little Mozilla, open source, weird thing in 1999. Like, what has it done for you? I don't get it.

And so I don't blame them. We're a tiny oddball thing that they can't see any impact from, that somehow has a stranglehold on the mindshare of this whole client division that they bought. And so we all tried.

And for that period, I would come home. Almost every day, my husband would ask me, did you get fired yet? And I'd say, no. Did you quit? No.

How about Brendan? Did he get fired? Did he quit? And one day I came home, and I said well, I don't know. I think Brendan might have quit? But I'm not quite sure.

And we had gotten into one of these discussions where the open source logic was to do one thing. And AOL didn't really understand it. And they said, no, you can't do that. Something about an open source project.

And I can understand from their point of view, like, I don't understand it. It's risky. It must've been about AIM, the messaging service, where they were dominant. And it's risky. And I don't understand it all. It's weird. Why would I say yes? From Dulles [Virginia], that would make sense.

Weber: And their browser was still around in some form, right, their own browser?

Baker: Oh, yes. That was still around but. This was more about something else, messaging. So I understand why they said no. But from our perspective out here running open source project, whatever the no was, it was unacceptable. Like you could not be a credible open source project.

And this comes up through the engineering piece. And so this was the piece where it was clear. And Brendan was really crisp and clear that he wasn't going to stay in this kind of setting. And of course if he left, it's not just like he's going to go and I'm going to stay, or the rest of us are going to stay either. They know it's a statement, I think, in a personal voice about him, but representing what was going to happen to Mozilla.

And we were extremely fortunate. Because when I heard this, I went over to find Bob, who was my liaison, my boss, my manager, and the liaison into AOL. And Bob understood Mozilla. And I happened to go find Bob as he was on the phone with the execs from AOL, trying to explain to them why they could not say no. And however scared they were or however risky they thought it was, they had to step back.

And Bob, he understands Mozilla. And he's an articulate guy. And I don't even know that he knew that -- I was trying to find him, so I was outside his cube. And you couldn't not hear it. And probably, I was the only one who knew what was underneath it. But Bob convinced them.

When he got off the phone, he thought he had convinced them. But I think we had to wait a day or two and start to take the steps that they had agreed we could take to know whether, in fact, Brendan had quit, and thus Mozilla what was going to survive or not. But Bob managed to convince them. And they stepped back far enough for us to do the things that an open source project needs to be able to do. And we went on.

And so though those first few months were hard on all of us, I would say. But also, they do create a team when you go through that kind of experience. And we went through ups and downs and hired a few more people. And AOL put some resources into it-- not all the we wanted and in different places than we expected. And then that went on for a while. And then a new set of tensions arose.

Weber: What were those?

Baker: You know, the browser itself, Netscape Navigator, is a free product. So in order to support investment into it, even an open source project -- Netscape was employing both the six or seven of us who were Mozilla.org staff, but also a whole chunk of engineers to build a client, to build a browser whose work was contributed into the Mozilla.org open source project.

Weber: But the same set of engineers that had come from Netscape.

Baker: Yeah. Yeah. They were—exactly -- still the Netscape client group inside of AOL.

Weber: And you were physically together?

Baker: Mmm.

Weber: So in the AOL offices where?

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: And where?

Baker: Where?

Weber: Yeah.

Baker: On Ellis. Not the original [Building] Two that Netscape moved in to, but the complex that Netscape built over there.

And so it turns out that the browser was incredibly good at driving traffic to websites. And releases of a browser and the excitement would drive more traffic to the website. And of course, the UI of a browser can be tuned to point people to one set of content or one set of websites, if you want to-- buttons and menu items and directions. And so AOL had spent a fair amount of money to buy Netscape and was reasonably looking to get some return on its investment. And so that all made sense.

But for Mozilla.org, our job was to build a successful open source project. And we were not trying to build a project that benefited only AOL, or where the browser's sole purpose was to drive traffic to AOL websites. That was not the charter that we signed up for.

So you had what was an inherently unstable setting. My charter, as I saw it, did not align with my boss's charter. And my manager is much more connected to AOL, and is responsible to AOL for his or her own goals and delivering things from the organization. There's a management chain, and I'm, in theory, part of it, but asserting that my charter is very different.

So again, if you were applying a very rational cost-benefit, what's-likely-to-work analysis, you would not have taken the job that I took. Because that setting is unstable. Like, that just can't last forever. And we began to have real difficulties. And the management changed a few times, so it wasn't Bob anymore.

And my direct manager was supposed to deliver value as part of her job into AOL. And we ended up having just head-to-head fights -- well, I mean, as peers. When we were peers, we would have head-to-head fights. And she would say, the engineering, or the product, or the release, or the process must do X, because that's the only way we can get this stuff to happen that AOL needs to happen.

And I, representing the open source project, would say we're not going to do X. I'm here to build an open source project. And we're not doing that.

Weber: Because if you did things that were too much for AOL, you would lose credibility with...

Baker: Yeah, you know.

Weber: -- which stakeholders outside the...?

Baker: For us, the open source piece and the engineers, the people building the open source project. Like, let's put a button in the UI that does, I don't know, make up your service X. How much in the UI is always a fight? What is the user experience? How much do we explicitly drive the user exactly where we're going to make money from them? And how much do we have a general purpose?

You put a wallet in, but it was only -- I'm making this up now. But you put a payment mechanism only tied into AOL. You put buttons in the UI that only go to AOL things. So you take a service that's available more generally.

Weber: Search function.

Baker: There was no search in those days, but a range of other things. And so having the idea that AOL would make all those decisions about the product for the benefit of AOL alone for us was a blocker. And

I'm not saying that AOL was wrong from their perspective, but as I said, the two charters were different. And there were a few issues that contentious -- probably three or four issues that were that contentious.

A second one -- it seems funny, but -- was the engineering process. Who could check code in? How good did you have to be? And who decided you were good enough to be able to put your code into our product?

For a lot of organizations, that should be made -- that's the hiring decision. If we hire you, we've hired you to code for this product. You have to be able to do your work. But we're over here saying, hey, not good enough. Like, your hiring decision may be great. They may not be great. We're not involved.

If you hire someone, that person has to prove in the open source way, through peer review with his or her peers, that his or her work product is good enough to go into the code. And the hiring manager is not a peer. Maybe your hiring manager was a coder in this area and can make that judgment, but very likely not. So that was another huge fight, control of the actual source code tree.

And again, I understand the management perspective. But for building a real open source project that was going to attract a community of people that would be committed to it, you need some quality that's not... so we had three or four those fights. And eventually, in a layoff, I was laid off. Probably the big layoff.

Weber: And when was that?

Baker: 2001. September 2001. And I think the hope was that control of Mozilla, Mozilla.org and the code base, would revert back to Netscape slash AOL management. Because I wasn't there. But we were already an open source community. And the people required to build the product, the engineering, the client group, were pretty adamant that I was the leader of that project.

And not just the seven or eight Mozilla.org [employees], but the however many hundred, or whatever it was, employees still employed as part of the Netscape client group, were clear that the vision of the product that they were there to build and that was going to motivate them to get this product built was the vision that I represented -- Brendan and I -- the vision that Mozilla.org represented. And I was still the leader in their minds.

And so I ran Mozilla.org -- ran, that's not right. I functioned as the general manager of Mozilla.org and the people. I did not run what Brendan did on the engineering side. But I kept that role as the general manager as a volunteer for a number of years.

Weber: But your title of "Chief Lizard Wrangler" came then or before?

Baker: It came way back in '99 when I joined.

Weber: OK, so with the original--

Baker: Yeah, so I kept the title. In fact, that's what it showed up as. This is a story I was told, but didn't participate in directly. When you have a layoff, you show an org chart, and you've got whoever's acting. And so there was a box that said, "Acting Chief Lizard Wrangler," some other name. And that didn't work. There's only, at that time, me.

Weber: But how can you-- this is something that's still owned by AOL.

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: So how can you be a volunteer manager of something within a company if they don't want you to be?

Baker: Right. Well, you can be a volunteer manager of an open source project. And the key thing is AOL -- Netscape, called whatever then -- needed its engineers to stay to do work, to do good work, to be motivated. And the only way that was going to happen was if I remained Chief Lizard Wrangler of the open source project.

Their work, they're paid by Netscape. But the actual code they develop goes into Mozilla.org code. The engineering processes they wanted to work under are the ones that Brendan and I had put in place, not the processes that AOL management wanted.

And the vision of the product, and the pulling in of a larger community of people to make decisions based on peer review and engineering expertise, were the only things that were going to motivate them to stay and ship the product. Because there are engineers in high demand in Silicon Valley. So that's how.

And we developed... we had a process where we would build Mozilla.org code into the product we thought was right. And then AOL or Netscape would run a subsidiary build process and add in or change or do overlays for the ways they wanted to change the UI so that it would fit better into their own suite of products. And so that went on for a number of years. And we finally, in the middle of that period, managed to ship our first Mozilla product, the Mozilla Application Suite 1.0.

Weber: And when was that?

Baker: That I think was in June of 2002, I think. We had a party up in the city at Jamie's club.

Weber: And you were volunteer for how long, approximately? From 2001—

Baker: Well, from 2001. I became a full-time paid employee of Mozilla again I think in 2005.

Weber: So quite some time.

Baker: A long time.

Weber: And so you were not making money in this period.

Baker: Well, I went to work part-time for Mitch Kapor's open source organization. And so Mitch, who I admire -- Mitch helped us form Mozilla.org -- I mean, helped us form the Mozilla Foundation. We haven't gotten there yet.

But I went to work for Mitch's organization. It's funny. I had gotten an email from someone who worked with him when there were three of them, saying, hey, I'm working with Mitch Kapor. We're working on this new open source organization. We see Mozilla.org. Can we come down and just talk to you and see about what you're doing?

I thought, wow. Well, of course. They happened to come the day I was fired. So the very first meeting I had after being laid off was with Mitch. And anyway, so we stayed in contact for a while. And as his organization grew...

Weber: And he was sympathetic, obviously.

Baker: Yeah, I think so. Well, I told him, I'm happy to share my thoughts with you. But I need to tell you that I've just been laid off. And there is a power struggle underway. So you have to take my ideas with a grain of salt here.

But anyway, I went to work for his organization part-time. And Mitch funded me... I think it was a day a week. I think he paid me for... I can't remember. But of the number of days he paid me for, one was

explicitly to be working on Mozilla. So I was paid one day a week to work on Mozilla, thanks to Mitch's foresight.

And then maybe that might have shifted to two. But full-time back at Mozilla was- - yeah, it was a long time. But it was good.

Weber: So you shipped the product in that period.

Baker: Yes, the Mozilla Application Suite 1.0.

Weber: And you were [a] volunteer, but the others were still working at the same place in Mountain View.

Baker: Yes.

Weber: Separate, physically, from the rest of AOL then, or not?

Baker: Still, I think, co-located with the Netscape client group inside of AOL.

Weber: Right, OK.

Baker: So it was still physically together in that case. And their first product was technically good. Everyone in the technical and open source community responded by saying, wow, I didn't expect it to be that good. Or in engineering speak, wow, it doesn't suck. That's phenomenal.

But it didn't grab people's hearts. It was a combination of browser, email reader, IRC client, and one or two other things. And it had a lot of knobs and dials. And I guess IE was still good enough at the time.

So we shipped that. And we were proud of it. We shipped it for a long time. And a small group of people started working on something that was a browser only. Partly because 'browser-only' a lot of people wanted. And it was a place to be able to experiment with UI and get out of these constant fights with AOL about what the UI should be, because it was a different product.

And so that got started. I think it was five or six people. And meanwhile, I'm working with Mitch. And Mitch also did not like the Mozilla 1.0 product. He's very focused on user experience. And he didn't like the product, didn't want to use it, preferred IE. But even so, he understood that Mozilla had a place in the ecosystem and in the open source ecosystem and that we were important, important to the future.

And so he and I had been talking back and forth about well, what's the future of Mozilla? Can it really survive inside of AOL? Is there any place that would be better? Is there a home for it? What could happen?

We thought about his organization. And I think each independently decided it didn't make sense. It was using different technologies, different processes... just sort of didn't make sense. But we had really been pretty deeply engaged with it.

Well, let me tell a story about -- I might have to ask you cut it out, because I don't know if it's OK.

Weber: Yeah. By the way, anything you want off the record--

Baker: Well, I don't know. I'd have to ask IBM. So I'll tell this, but I do need to...

Weber: But I'm saying this partly so we'll know where this is.

Baker: Oh, OK, great.

Weber: So this might be...

Baker: OK. And at the same time, some of the folks from IBM began to look up at Mozilla and be really astonished. Because even though people weren't really in love with Mozilla 1.0 product, the open source, like, [the] Technorati -- enough people were interested. When we released a milestone, like a million people would come get it. And in 2001, 2002, that was a lot. To find an open source project and download a browser, a million people every X weeks? It was a very large number.

And so the IBM folks, their advanced technology, whatever department it was, had their pulse to the ground...had their ears to the ground. And so they found us to say wow, you're further along than anybody actually understands. Can we help? And so a lot of things were sort of in the air.

And then AOL decided to stop building a browser and to lay off the whole engineering/Netscape client division that they still had. And fortunately for us, Mozilla had enough mind share that I guess they decided they didn't want to just kill it outright. And in a chance meeting, one of the AOL executives, a guy named Ted Leonsis, ran into Mitch Kapor at the D Conference that Kara [Swisher] and Walt [Mossberg] run.

And Ted knew that Mitch was doing open source. And Ted knows he's got this open source Mozilla project. He's like, hey, Mitch. [LAUGHS] Maybe you're the guy. And this is, of course, all relayed to me. I wasn't there. But that's as I understand it.

Mitch, I've got this project. It needs a home. Why don't you take it? Something like that. I don't know the exact words. And Mitch, fortunately, is like, oh, I know your project. It does need a home. And I know I know who should be that home.

It's not me. But she's working for me. And she and Brendan have been leading this project. And so we've got a home for it. And so that was the start. And we worked at that for a while.

Weber: And the funding came from?

Baker: Came from AOL. They started it at \$1 million. And Mitch helped us get a second million. Mitch and I sat down and figured we needed 10 people minimum working full-time to keep the project viable.

Weber: And by the way, we're now at 40 minutes after.

Baker: OK. Let's try and-- we'll work our way through.

Weber: Yeah, OK.

Baker: We needed probably 10 people. A browser's a big project. The web is growing. Just all volunteers, it would be slow, too slow to make a difference. And so we figured \$2 million would give us maybe close to two years to figure out what to do.

And so Mitch helped us a lot in getting some of the terms with AOL settled. And I negotiated the rest. Legal training came in helpful there. I used it more in that phase than I'd used for the prior few years, I think. And we negotiated.

That was important. And the other thing we spent a lot of time over was these four big boxes, servers that I had struggled while I was still inside AOL to get funded for Mozilla.org. And it seems funny today that four machines would be a long, long negotiating process. But it was the only thing we had to run Mozilla.org on. So we spent been a long time on those, and eventually came to an agreement.

And we also talked -- we knew that AOL was going to be laying off people. Some of them they wanted to reassign to other organizations. And we discussed pretty explicitly a set of people who had moved to Mozilla.org. Because we didn't want to have the first thing happen after signing an agreement look like we're poaching people.

Weber: Right. Because it was only a subset, a fairly small subset.

Baker: Very small. And so that happened in 2003. July, I think, of 2003 we were able to form the Mozilla Foundation. And Mitch, again, was incredibly helpful in many ways -- and also to me as a mentor.

And now I'm responsible for an organization. It's a nonprofit, so it's got some extra advantages and some extra constraints. But [I'm] now responsible for figuring out the business model, and how to support this set of people, and how to grow it, and how to take advantage of the opportunity of really controlling our own destiny.

Weber: And so you formed a board, obviously.

Baker: Mhm.

Weber: Who were main players?

Baker: Ah, OK. So the board -- Mitch was our first chairman. That was when I asked Brian Behlendorf of Apache to represent another free-software, open-source perspective. Brendan [Eich] and I. And the fifth person is a man named Chris Blizzard, who had been a part of Mozilla.org for many years. I think he was our first full-time, paid employee from another company.

He worked at Red Hat. And Red Hat employed him to work on Mozilla.org for a number of years. So that was our first board.

Weber: And you were the chair.

Baker: Mitch was the chair, Mitch Kapor.

Weber: Oh, OK. Right.

Baker: Mitch Kapor. And I did much of the work of forming that board at Tim O'Reilly's open source conference in Oregon. So that was actually very convenient, because many of the people I wanted to talk to were right there. And so we announced it not long after that in July.

And the reception was surprising. It turned out once we had an organization, people and other organizations began to contact us. Businesses and organizations, now they had a place, something to point to. So we got a lot more response than we actually expected.

Weber: When you were within the company.

Baker: Yeah. And that was 2003. We were still shipping the Mozilla Application Suite. When we started, we had one front-end product application developer for Firefox, one for Thunderbird, two back-end platform guys, and Brendan, me, engineering manager, release manager -- that was a release manager, but our community program guy. A bunch of these people are still at Mozilla. Pretty slim. And we shipped the Mozilla Application Suite for 15 months with no employee working on the code.

Weber: But you had people in the open source community, obviously.

Baker: That's right. And our back-end guys were doing stuff aimed at Firefox, at the new product, but useful to the old one. But the maintenance and the release and keeping that product useful for us -- we made a bet that we were going to place our resources on a new product for the future.

Weber: And how many people do think were core in the volunteer open source effort?

Baker: Oh, wow. Well, it depends which layers you count and where and when. And so in the actual code -- well, for Firefox, probably small to start with. For SeaMonkey, I don't know, hundreds in some areas, thousands in others. And when we got to Firefox and it began to grow, tens [of] thousands. So it really varies.

Weber: But for the original suite it was still big numbers?

Baker: Yeah. Yeah. There's still actually pretty good-sized numbers for the number of people. What happens is as you have more employees, who have however many hours a week they work on it, what happens is the number of people contributing may stay at a percentage. 30% or 40% of the people who contribute are volunteers, but they don't have 40 or 60 or 80 hours a week. So the size of the contribution will change with your employees.

Weber: It's the sort of long tail of contribution.

Baker: Right. So we still have large numbers of people contributing.

Weber: And you were in Mountain View at the same place you are now?

Baker: Ah, let's see. When we first formed the foundation, our first office was a sublease of a company called Tell Me, run by Mike McCue from Netscape with another long-time Netscaper as the technology lead there, a guy named JG. And so that was a pretty funky sublease, which we were incredibly grateful for.

And I think was good for them, because it was just after the crash of 2000. And they had a ton of space. And it was all expensive space and all that stuff. But also, they went out of their way to help us and give us a place.

And so that was, way, way, back around in the complex. And you had to wander around. And the doors were always locked. And you couldn't get in unless somebody was there. And no water or anything. You had to go to the janitor's closet to get water or wash a dish or something. But it was really great for us.

Weber: Mountain View, as well.

Baker: In Mountain View, yeah. By Shoreline [Boulevard,-- if you're going towards the hills, sort of west. It's on Shoreline. You come over Alma, and you turn right. That complex right there. The train goes right by it there.

And we set up the infamous soda can bridge that came out of Netscape there. And we had cantinas every Friday, where the volunteer community that was local and still passionate would arrive and bring the cantina with them every Friday to be helpful and supportive. That was a really important period.

Weber: Talk about the cantina.

Baker: It would just be some food. People would arrive with food and something to drink. Come on Friday afternoon and really hang out and help.

Weber: Were there -- I mean, obviously, a lot of ex-Netscape people were involved. But did it sort of bring in people who had been with Netscape?

Baker: Some. I think the cantina part ... as I recall, [was] not so much the growing-the-community piece. I think that was actually happening more in the Firefox development piece with people starting to get involved.

And so we started -- we're working on Firefox.

Weber: Well, in HTML5, you were--

Baker: Not quite yet. But we did a lot of things early on.

Weber: That was 2003 though, right?

Baker: Yeah. We do a lot of things early on. That came pretty soon. We started with the plug-in APIs, which were all broken. And we managed to get all the major plug-in players and a bunch of people together in a room to solve some problems, which was astonishing. Brand-new Mozilla Foundation, like it actually worked and we saw solutions that lasted for many years.

We did always spend time on HTML and a bunch of other things. So that was 2003. By February of 2004, I think we were at 0.7 or something of our other product, which was not actually called Firefox at the time. It was Firebird.

Weber: And where did the "Fire" names come from.

Baker: Well, when the work on Firefox first started, way back inside Netscape-AOL, the code name was Phoenix, rising from the old --

Weber: For obvious -- yes.

Baker: And there's a company that's been around for a long time, Phoenix Technologies, BIOS stuff. But at one point, they had some kind of browser piece. And so they came to us and said, you can't call it Phoenix. So then from Phoenix, the obvious next choice, Firebird. And I think I--

Weber: Isn't that Pontiac?

Baker: Yeah. But it's a car -- [a] car and a browser.

Weber: Oh, right. True.

Baker: So that's OK. And I think I was -- maybe I was still a volunteer. Yeah, I must've been at this point. And I did a lot of checking. And some part of some legal group somewhere came back and said, yeah, that sounds good.

But it turns out there was an open source database project called Firebird. And database and browser are different technically, like, maybe legally OK. But they were upset. They're like two open source projects -- what are you doing? And that went on for a while.

And then Brendan in a mailing list somewhere wrote, yeah, you're right. We'll change our name. Very clear, very crisp. Well, we didn't have a name. And we were ready to ship. And we couldn't ship, because we didn't have a name.

And so that was a very funny period of trying to figure out a name. And we did a whole ton of stuff. We have branding expertise. And thinking about the names and the ideas and the concepts -- did a lot of work on that.

And then keeping the "Fire" part made sense, because we were worried about losing momentum. Oh, it's an 0.7 product but there are already people following it. So you change the name, or you go out without a name. And people get lost on it. It's just a bad way to build product cohesiveness.

So Fire seemed good. And the guy who was working on Firefox, or Firebird at the time, Ben Goodger, I think he took a dictionary. He said, OK, well, what 'fire' things are there? And Firefox came up. It's a type of panda. It's a red panda. And we liked it.

And there were no -- it was a very small trademark thing. Trademark stuff is hard. It's actually really hard. And so Ben found that name and suggested it. Looked like it worked out. And we were able to ship our product.

Didn't have the logo then. Logo came later. It was another volunteer community member that just appeared one day and did the logo.

But we are able to ship 0.8. That was good. Then we shipped 0.9 I think in June. And that's when we knew we had something.

Weber: June of 2004.

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: And the fox is not a panda though, in the logo.

Baker: Right. Exactly. It's a funny thing. Actually, firefox is a name applied to a real live animal. But we use the Firefox, because the word is fox. And putting panda in is a little confusing with "Firefox."

So we got to 0.9. And as I say, we knew we had something then. We didn't know what. But people were paying attention to it. People were contacting us. People were interested in it. Online we could see people were looking at it.

And then one day, Tim O'Reilly called and asked if he and his folks could come down from Sebastopol and see what was going on. And then we really knew we had something. Like, Tim has a phenomenal nose for what's new and interesting and valuable. And so when he called us up to say, hey, can I come talk to you? We're like, ooh, wow, that's really great. We still had no real idea.

And 0.9 did not have the extension mechanism. And Ben really wanted the extension mechanism, and he was right. So we waited for that. We thought it would be short. Five months go by. 0.9 was a long time in between 0.9 and 1.0, but that was the right decision.

And people did begin noticing it. And in that post-0.9 phase, we had a guy who was doing business development for us, a guy named Bart Decrem. And he started the discussions with Yahoo and Apple about the search box. Because we'd had this search box forever. We'd had Google in it forever.

And I don't know if someone else-- or where the idea came from that that's a distribution channel, there might be some revenue related to it. I don't know when Apple first did that. So we started those. And we could tell -- Google is an engineering culture. And we found that in among all those 0.9 advocates, so the people who were using it and liking it, are a lot of people at Google.

And so we began the discussions about the search piece. And that took a lot of time, as you can imagine. Because people don't know Mozilla, don't understand Mozilla. For us to do a business arrangement is new, so you have to make sure that all the things that are core to your identity and open source and product freedom are there and are values of choice. So we spent a lot of time on the choices available in the search box.

And I think not everyone knows there's that little arrow where you can see other search boxes below, which I actually find very useful- - like being able to search in LinkedIn and Wikipedia directly is just

phenomenally useful. And there's a search engine that used to be NASA images. You search for an image in NASA, so get these -- anyway, so that's my personal, oddball--

Weber: No, I agree.

Baker: So it's pretty useful. But that was a requirement on our part. And we were the first product to have more than one. And it's a requirement for us that the user, the individual, can make a choice. You can change. Others can add in there.

And so talking through that sort of thing. Talking through, well, what would it mean if you're shipping a product that's got a connection into a Google or Yahoo or whatever service, but you've got an open source code base? How does all that work? All that stuff, that took a long time. So we worked on that over the summer.

And then I think the last set of things were really about the look and feel. Again, the UI of the product, where open source project, when you start our old products, like what would you get? Hey, here's how you get the source code. Hey, you want to contribute. Hey, you want to build it. Useful for developers, but not for a consumer product.

So trying to make the start page and the opening and the UI really elegant. And a set of volunteer designers appeared out of the far, far East Coast of Canada. And lo and behold, the original Firefox logo came. So that was all knew. That was exciting.

And then we figured out what should we do with our start page. It's clear that Bugzilla and Buildbot aren't the right things to have on the start page. And we spent a lot of time on that too, and finally decided at the time, the only thing we knew everybody did was search.

That's not the automatic, necessarily, starting point for everybody today, is just web-wide search. But in 2004, unquestionably. And so that's what we did.

And the extension mechanism finally got tuned enough to be ready to ship. And the look and feel and the UI piece got pulled together. And probably the very last thing was the search, the actual contracts for the search deals.

Weber: Because that was a separate contract to the providers.

Baker: Right.

Weber: And you have-- later on, you had a special relationship with Google and sort of their official- - the browser they supported before Chrome. But that came later.

Baker: That was not ever official. That was a Google decision that it was good for them.

Weber: Unofficial, then all right.

Baker: But at the time, for sure, they were--

Weber: But that came later than what you're talking about now? Or was that in the...

Baker: They were excited about Firefox, and so pretty excited about, 'wow, what would the web be if you weren't always going through IE?' For one reason, IE at the time had deteriorated, technically. Which to me is totally rational. That's why monopolies are difficult. There's no economic reason to invest in something.

And so I don't think of that as a moral judgment or an engineering judgment. It's just a rational economic decision when they own the market and there's no competition. Sometimes on your own you can stay excellent.

I think probably each of us experiences that. Like on your own, accountable to no one, each one of us can maintain our excellence for some period of time. But it's really weird to stay in top form when there's no external incentive to do that.

Weber: Like the old skit about AT&T. "We don't care. We don't have to."

Baker: Ah. [LAUGHS]

Weber: Back in its monopoly days.

Baker: Yeah, so it was technically better, Firefox, by a long way.

Weber: And faster.

Baker: Oh, for sure.

Weber: As I recall, for Google that was tremendously important.

Baker: Yes, exactly. And it's still fast. I think the conventional wisdom today is that Chrome is faster. But I think that's conventional wisdom of two or three years ago, but not true today.

Weber: But at the time, there was no comparison.

Baker: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. Firefox was better on everything.

Weber: And sorry. So the HTML5 chunk, just talk -- because we're passing that chronologically -- talk about that and your relations with W3C. And you've been quoted saying they were more, at the time, focused on the semantic web. HTML5 was kind of an afterthought. So how involved did the Mozilla Foundation get with -- you have W3C people on your staff.

Baker: Yeah, we've been involved with the standards bodies in a pretty serious way forever. And we still are.

Weber: Netscape was, and you sort of inherited that?

Baker: Yes. And it's philosophically part of the world we want to see, which is that the internet is open and accessible to all of us. But not through a monopoly, but through interoperability. So that you can make your choices about product or services or payment or identity or whatever's important, and I can, but we can still get to similar content.

We're not locked away from each other. And you need interoperability for that. So we've long been key supporters of the standards bodies.

Weber: And so HTML5, you were part of that committee then.

Baker: Yes. So we've been part of HTML5 forever. We did struggle with W3's focus on the semantic web at the time. Because it was clear to us that HTML still had a lot of value to the world. And it needed development. And it needed focus for that.

Having a disagreement doesn't mean you're enemies forever, or you can't work together. In a different reality, W3C could have been right and we could have been wrong. Maybe if you just sort of shift reality five degrees to the right, it would've been different.

But we're here now. And so we actually were instrumental in starting the WHAT [Web Hypertext Application Technology] Working Group, which is sort of a fork of the HTML5 working group, the W3C. And a guy who had been at Opera was deeply engaged in it.

Weber: Who?

Baker: Ian Hickson. And so we were fundamental in that, because we saw ourselves as the force for whom HTML was fundamental. I had some proprietary technologies. And we figured if they needed to, they'd develop something else.

Apple participates in standards, but was not the leader at the time on these things. Apple comes and goes as it makes sense to them. And Google wasn't interested in standards in those days. They've changed, but in those days it was different.

So we formed that. And we were really active at it and pretty aggressive at it, because it was clear to us this technology has to evolve. There's nothing else like it. And it's got a bunch of traits that are really important.

And so we were successful at that. Not successful, I think, in telling the story. I think if you talk about HTML5, people don't think of Mozilla.

But Apple and Mozilla, that was us in the early days, the foundation that made it happen, and that drove it, and that did the work about what's the WHAT Working Group. How does Apple, for example, participate in something that's not a formal standards body? What do they need?

How does Opera participate? What do we need? Who runs it? All this stuff. What's the copyright notice? There's a bunch of things to have made that happen. And we did that.

So we're very happy to have been successful at it, and also very gratified that the W3C looked up, and said, oh, huh. There's stuff happening over there. It really should be part of the standards process that we're engaged in. So let's get connected on that.

And sometimes people don't do that. It becomes like on an ongoing blah kind of setting. And so I think that's -- what's the word I'm looking for?-- [INAUDIBLE], but a really positive thing to be able to start to have those connections again and to move back together, closer to something.

Weber: And you saw the multimedia part of it as key, being able to support video.

Baker: Yes. Sometimes people describe the web as text. Well, no. The traits that we call the web are more about interoperability and finding things and be able to access them and search and so on. So human beings like sound and images.

Weber: But to push HTML in a direction that would have more—

Baker: Oh, yes. And we continue to do that. So we pushed audio and video. Although I will say -- was it the audio or the video tag? Really, the first time I ever heard it was from Håkon Wium Lie of Opera, their CTO. And I think it either came through Brendan or it came to me directly. So he should get credit for that. He was the guy who looked up and said wow, we could actually do this.

Weber: Oh, yeah. Well, I mean it's been proposed in HTML for 20 years or more.

Baker: Yeah. But when we actually got started doing it, that was the right time to look up and say, hey, we could do this. And it went. And we continue to push the web, the capabilities of the web.

So in the mobile arena, for a while people would say, oh, the web can't do the things a mobile device needs. Well, it can. Let's make it do it. Nobody else is interested enough to make it do it.

So you want touch screens. You want accelerometers. You want the range of things that a mobile phone or tablet has. Well, we've added those into the web as well.

And now we're looking to virtual reality and voice calls. There's a range of things that can happen. And so we continue to try and expand those capabilities.

Weber: But after that-- so that big initial release, that's kind of what created the world that you're still expanding. You got credibility for both Firefox and Mozilla Foundation. So what happened next? So you had that...

Baker: Well, in those settings, when things just expand so rapidly, you spend some period of time trying to catch up. Sort of running behind, like, wow. Once again, there's just so much to do.

So we spent some time building the robustness of all of our systems. We created the subsidiary, the Mozilla Foundation, because there was enough revenue coming in. I didn't want to be--

Weber: Because you were a 501(c)(3) initially.

Baker: Right. So some people say we have a for-profit subsidiary. And I say no, that's not true at all. We have a subsidiary that pays taxes. But that subsidiary exists and makes decisions in order to serve the mission of the nonprofit. It's just easier today to have that revenue come into an organization that the IRS understands.

Weber: And this is primarily the revenue from the licensing of search, or...

Baker: Yeah. Or revenue generation. So I made a decision early on. Everything that we do, I think, is utterly focused and for the benefit of the mission. But I didn't think it was Mozilla's best purpose to fight that battle with the IRS. We thought about it. Which battle should Mozilla fight?

Weber: Because as a nonprofit, that would be earned income, but--

Baker: Well, you don't. That's the argument. Is it earned income? Does it look like a trade or business? How closely associated to the mission is it? There's a bunch of questions about that.

And I thought about it. And I thought, you know, the mission of Mozilla is to build the internet as a global public resource. That's the thing that brings us together. And this other battle is a big battle. And it's not really our focus. So we'll make the subsidiary.

Weber: But a foundation is still -- I mean, so the Foundation receives the income, and then disperses it back.

Baker: No.

Weber: Because that doesn't work.

Baker: That's right.

Weber: That's self-dealing or whatever.

Baker: Yeah, I will say that trying to build a public commons like the internet in the current US system is really hard. Like, it's distressingly hard. If I wanted to be personally wealthy, I wouldn't be doing Mozilla.

If anybody wanted to be personally wealthy -- we're trying to build a public resource because the network that underlies life shouldn't be owned by one or two organizations. Somehow it has to belong to all of us, or be accountable to all of us, or be accessible to all of us. It underlies every aspect of what we do now.

It's just very hard in the US system. So I understand what the IRS is worried about. But still, I wish that we could devote less of our energy to these aspects and more of it to actually building the internet we need.

Anyway, so it in that period, it was really wild and crazy. Suddenly the world was looking at what we're doing and understanding it. For so long, we'd been trying to describe why a different way of accessing the network -- in those days, a different browser -- would be important. And it was hard for people to see.

You're just very accustomed. There's a blue E. It does whatever it does. That's the way life is. And it wasn't until we could put something in front of people and say that this is what life could be like that it was actually understandable. Something, I think, we see again with mobile devices and other areas today.

And so that was exciting. People began using it. We began, as I said, making our system stronger and more robust. We began bringing in some new people to help us.

We focused for a while -- a long while, actually -- on organizational development, how to grow as an organization. With 15 employees, you can be family-like. But if you grow and you're going to maintain a high-quality product for increasing numbers of users, how do maintain the magic of Mozilla, but build an organization that's got bench strength, and people [who] can do different roles, and [so that] people know what's going on, and so on. So we did that for a long time.

Weber: And how big did it grow? In what kind of chunks? So from 15 to--

Baker: Well, so I think--

Weber: What were those main phases as you developed as an organization?

Baker: Yeah. So we grew incrementally probably for the first six months. In July of 2004, I think we hired the person who, over time, became our CEO, who I asked to take my spot as CEO, and our first new engineering VP. And so that was the beginning of a large stage after that. And then we grew reasonably quickly. And then in the last probably three or four years, we've had another large growth spurt.

Weber: And how many are you now?

Baker: We're about 1,100 employees. Pretty good sized. A big chunk of that is in the mobile world today. You can't build one layer. The mobile stacks are integrated. They're tightly integrated. They're controlled. From top to bottom, they're one organization.

And so it's very hard to just have one layer and really have impact or open things up. And so the Firefox on a mobile device needs to be much more of the whole OS and the stack and a bunch of other things. So that's a good component of people. And then when you look at the treatment of data, what happens with data, our development there, you need a chunk of people there as well. It's a different expertise than the client-side browser piece.

So much of our recent growth has been driven by the Firefox OS and the need to touch the individual person in so many places. In the old days, you could build a browser and it would sit on top of the operating system and on top of the hardware. And the apps were a layer above. And however it is that you paid for things and where your identity was stored could all be different. But in today's mobile world, they're all one big chunk. You make one choice, not more.

Weber: So you've had to hire new teams for all these various--

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: And back with the relationship with Google. So you had quite a close working relationship.

Baker: Yes.

Weber: And I've heard about this from the Google side. Tell me that story.

Baker: Well, let's see. So we went over to talk to Google before we shipped 1.0. We found a lot of the engineering geeks there were using Firefox, big excitement. Also probably good business-wise for them to have an alternative to Microsoft. So a lot of things lined up, a lot of technical talent. We did work together closely for a while.

Google, for many years, was a great partner for us. In large part because we were all very clear that the search box was different from product development. The revenue piece was not tied to developing a product that Google liked.

Weber: Right. You didn't want to be back in the relationship with AOL, basically.

Baker: Right. Right. Exactly. So great.

Publicly, people don't actually believe that. So in a way, there's like a no-win piece. So for the longest time when Google worked with us, they're like, oh, you're just Google's browser. You do whatever Google tells you. There's Google engineers. That means they're running the show. We're like, no, not really. But it's just hard to get people to understand that.

And both Google and Mozilla talk about the open web. And we're aligned in many areas. But we do have different world views. And your world view is expressed in the products that you create. And Google's world view -- at the time, we were really concerned about privacy.

So two things happened. One, I think, there were some differences there that we struggled with. Two, the browser's really, really important. And if you have the resources to do your own, maybe it's hard to rely on somebody else.

And three, I think we should admit that when Chrome first came out, they leapfrogged us. And I think we've caught up. It's hard to change the general perception of the ways in which Firefox now exceeds Chrome in its capabilities. But technically, there's a lot of them.

But I think it shows that anyone, even well-meaning people like Mozilla, we need competition. Human beings, we need competition to do our best. And if you don't have competition, you can be really excellent for a while, as we were. But without a challenge, maybe your vision gets shortsighted. You see right in front of you, but not the field.

And so I think, probably, Google has some frustrations about us. So there's probably some business reasons to want your own, to want control. Maybe they already saw an integrated stack coming that made sense to them. And to be complete -- probably some frustrations about us, some of which I think we deserved. Because when Chrome came out, it was different. It was fast. And so I think we've learned that lesson.

I'm not Google. You probably know more. They probably talked to you more about it. But those are the set of things that I noticed.

Weber: But they didn't give you much warning when they kind of--

Baker: Well.

Weber: But I mean, that was--

Baker: I would say what Google did or didn't say to us about Chrome beforehand is in that category of things that I'll keep to myself.

Weber: OK. But when you say "real competition," I take it -- I mean, Safari was already out there by then.

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: But I guess you've just said that you don't--

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: It didn't feel like a real competitor.

Baker: That's right. I think that's right. And we look at it. And we look at what goes into it. We look at where, if anywhere, Apple's trying to lead Safari in developing the web. A range of other things.

Weber: But did that change? Because then the next phase-- mobile is clearly the important--

Baker: Yeah.

Weber: But Safari on the desktop is quite different than what Safari did in iOS as a way to popularize the mobile web.

Baker: Yes.

Weber: So talk about when mobile really came into the picture for you.

Baker: Well, let's see. We had been looking at mobile I think long before iOS. So pretty early on, we were experimenting with it, thinking about how would you get really a full-fledged web experience onto a phone.

But of course, iOS was the answer to that. And that took, I think, not only [a] visionary, but also someone with access to all the layers of the stack that Apple has. And so the short answer is [it was] on our radar well before iOS, but clearly iOS changed everything.

Weber: So you were thinking about it on Treos and different sorts of earlier smartphones?

Baker: Yeah, you remember J2ME and Brew. There's a bunch of things, all of which we had experiments at. But it was pretty clear-- we could see far enough to know that wasn't the answer. And so we had an ongoing project and exploration, but we didn't have a big, here's our product. Here's the next phase. Because we could see it wasn't there yet.

And then of course, iOS really changed the entire landscape. And so we've been looking at it for them, but also trying to figure out what is it that we ought to do? And what is the entry point for us?

And it took a while to find -- how do we have leverage? And so on the technical side, it turns out the way we have leverage is by using the open source parts of the underlying Linux Android kernel piece. Because there's layers of that technology piece as well. There's a kernel-like piece, which is open source. And then as you go up, there are more layers. And Google has done more things differently.

And so finding that piece on the technical side was important. And we waited until we had that. Because redoing all the device drivers took Linux forever-- I mean, a really long time to get the device drivers for a consumer product to work. It works today. But it didn't work for a long time. Because it's a big project with a lot of relationships and loose ends.

And so having those layers available to us through open source was an important piece. And when we began to understand, yes, the web can do that stuff. After you've looked at it for a while, and you've looked at the new capabilities the hardware has, and become convinced that ah, yes. No one's put them into the web yet. But we understand enough that we can do that.

And so certainly, we wish we had figured all that out earlier. But I'm happy that we didn't make a giant bet on the old Brew piece. We didn't make giant bets on things knowing they were too early.

And I think we probably did not expect that the openness and horizontal layer of the web would switch to closed integrated stacks. Like one organization making decisions from the technology you can use to what your identity and payment is, all in one system tied together. I don't think we expected that to happen as quickly as it did.

Weber: Apps and [INAUDIBLE].

Baker: And your identity and your payment, what services you can get, what competition is available on that device. It really switched quickly. And so that's also taking a little bit to figure out, is where are some of the leverage points? And how can we bring that kind of choice, and competitive piece, and openness -- our reason for existence -- into those platforms?

So we're working on that now. Firefox OS as a phone has been launched in probably 25 countries, not the US as well. Then there's a real product piece. Like what we want to do now is say, all right. So now we have the hardware. We have the operating system.

In some ways, it's like the web of old. You can look at the source code for anything that phone does. Like in a way that we're used to, but anybody coming on to the network today has not seen.

So what we're looking at now is, OK, wow. We actually have the web in these devices with the capabilities of the hardware represented in the freedoms and openness of the web. What kind of experience does that enable? And that's the coming year for us.

One other thing that we've been working very hard on the mobile side is to bring an [INAUDIBLE] experience down in price point. There's the tendency, especially here, to go up to the best hardware, to get the most that's absolutely possible and to go up the resource and cost stack. Because that's exciting, and there's fun new things.

We actually have, also, a really different focus, which is how much power and elegance and ability to experience the web can we get at very affordable devices? And so we've spent a lot of time pushing that, and working with the chipset manufacturers and so on, to try to get real first-class web devices at a fraction of the price. So we start to see movement by others in that direction, and hope that in the next couple of years we see really high-quality stuff in very different price ranges.

Weber: Well, thank you. And just to finish up, how has your thinking about the web and what it should be changed over the decades?

Baker: Ah. I think the web started out as a particular experience. Back to that thing, Peking University online for the first time. So it started out as being able to make that kind of connection at a distance and remotely, asynchronously, and so on. And so now it's moved. That connection had a set of technologies and a particular user experience.

And now I think of the web as a set of design principles which can cross technologies. And those are really decentralized. They're very much like the original design principles for the internet protocols. How decentralized is it? How can somebody at the edges actually participate on an equal basis?

How can we have more decision making at the edges so that we get more creativity and flexibility and more people are making decisions? So if you make decisions at the center, then there's one center. But if you make decisions at the edges, a lot more of us can do different things. And so the experience of the web has some traits like that. And it covers a much broader range of audio, video, sound, Skype, you name it, just a much broader range of experiences than in the beginning.

Weber: Talk a little bit about being a female leader in high-tech in Silicon Valley.

Baker: Yeah, that's an interesting topic. And I think my thinking on that has changed, too. There's more research now. And it shows both women and men undervalue women. It's really dramatic. You take the same piece of work and you change the name, and people view it differently.

So now I'm convinced there's a lot of impact. I don't exactly know what it was. I've been very, very fortunate. I can't-- well, there are a handful of incidents in which I can point and say, OK, there's someone who did the following negative thing that damaged me and maybe Mozilla because I'm a woman. There's a handful of those.

But in general, I can also point to the opposite-- a set of people, both men and women, who were both supportive and went out of their way and did an unbelievable range of things. I mentioned Mitch Kapor, for example. And there are others. So I can't say exactly how it influences, I just know that today we know it's in the air for all of us. And both genders are engaged in this.

So it's had some set of impacts. I can't exactly say what. I will say that over the years, the number of women, real decision-makers, has not gone up very much. At Mozilla, we have -- there's another woman on the board. One now, before, so our board has actually had another woman on it.

So when I go into the Mozilla corporation meetings, there is another woman decision-maker at that level. Same thing too at the Mozilla foundation. And clearly Marissa is there as the final decision maker. But it's just not that often. And that has not changed.

So I think there is a ton of work still to be done. And I'm actually, these days, a little more focused than before on trying to figure out what are the right next steps.

Weber: Is there any advice you would give to young people, and perhaps different advice to girls?

Baker: Well, let's see. Young people in general, I'd say if you have the slightest glimmer of interest in how something works, I'd follow it. We find lots of people coming online for the first time -- parts of the world where the internet is new actually don't yet know what the internet is.

They'll know an app. Or I want to use this app. Or I want this capability. So we have a lot of learning programs there.

But for anybody who's got the interest and the resources, or go find some resources, because understanding how something works is the key to self-determination. If you know how to use it, you can do so much. But how it works also has an impact on what you can do and how you can do it and the kind of controls you live in. So I'd say explore how things work as much as possible.

And I think for girls and women, it's hard to have -- I don't have the answer, as I just said. But I would say, I'd think hard about seeking out supportive environments. Often, I find women who are in an environment where it's clear it's not working. And sometimes they can point to really horrendous things. And they somehow feel compelled to change the environment or to give the benefit of the doubt.

So I would say if you have the chance, and somebody's not treating you well, that's their problem. Leave them. Don't try to save them. Now, that doesn't always work, because we live in an environment and the whole environment is sort of stacked against us in many ways.

And so lots of people don't have that option. And there's no place else to go. So it's not a panacea. But I would say, when you have a choice and you have an environment that's supportive, I would not feel so committed to helping the other people hopefully change so that you're treated better. It's a partial answer for now.

END OF INTERVIEW