Twitter Thread by Sean Killeen

Sean Killeen
@sjkilleen

So, there have been some things going on with .NET Hot Reload you may have heard of this week. It's an important issue. Others had it covered so I thought I'd hang back, but I've seen calls for more voices, so here's mine. ■ 1/

Some background: Microsoft merged a PR that removed Hot Reload from the .NET 6 despite it working, an unusual move, and said it was due to prioritization for Visual Studio. There has been lots of backlash, snark, and attempts to reinstate it as a result. 2/

First up: Lots of amazing people work at MS who care about OSS and the community. Folks I continue to look up to. MS contains multitudes, and I think we'd all do well to keep that in mind. I'm rooting for them. 3/

On to the opinion section-- This decision is troubling for a bunch of reasons: 1) The surprise factor 2) The transparent business interest driving it while pretending otherwise 3) the communication around it 4) The implication of those business moves for the larger community. 4/

1) Surprises: this code was working, in an RC release, and people were starting to use it. It had been touted as a great feature of .NET 6. Then it was just gone, "de-prioritized". But de-prioritized doesn't mean it has to be removed. Patterns exist for flagging it, etc. 5/

My initial reaction was "well, MS has to support it, so it's only fair that they get to prioritize or not what they take on". I sympathized with MS. But then I realized it was essentially feature complete and usable, and things seemed fishier from there. 6/

2) Business interest: then the Verge piece came out saying that an MS CVP is essentially clawing this stuff back from OSS and wants to make it a proprietary feature of Visual Studio for business reasons. Oof. That's really not OK. 7/

MS should be all about making profit. But I wanted to believe they'd learned a lesson about making profit at the expense of community and "bigger tent" strategy. This flies in the face that. Terrible business decision. Squanders goodwill. /8

3) Communication: Initially I thought this was poor communication about readiness. I was going to suggest longer explanations in PRs, a call for the community to help, an open discussion on the roadmap sooner. But since the Verge

article, I'm realizing it wasn't about that. 9/

This truly does seem to be the "old" Microsoft rearing its head again, and trying to sneak it in under the radar with vague corporate speak around priorities. That's very disheartening. And it does make me mad. 10/

4) Implications: The reason it makes me mad is that I truly feel that, warts and all, we're working toward a better place in .NET OSS. And the MS turnaround has been such a big part of that. For a CVP to endanger that is just bananas reckless. 11/

With one move, this decision gravely undermines the idea that .NET works in the open, that it builds for community first, that it wants to be a player in an overall ecosystem vs "just get yours" mentality for its product teams. It is actually a big deal. 12/

So, how can MS fix this? 1) Revert that PR if it's being held back for any reason other than quality and/or completeness. 2) Re-affirm that this was a mistake, both of leadership vision and of communication. 3) Work toward a unified approach to OSS and ensure CVPs respect it. 13/

Since MS hasn't fixed it yet, it sounds like the community is going to. Forks are beginning to take place of these tools. This is probably the appropriate thing to happen. If the community wants the tooling and MS won't look out for it in this case, 14/

Then "we'll do it ourselves" is the correct response. Looking forward to seeing how I might jump in there.

MS: This is not a good look. Do better. Listen to your OSS veterans. They have your best interests at heart. 15/

OSS is more than just tech. It is also a social contract and a community you agree to participate in alongside your most ardent fans and adopters. Don't take that for granted. There are many inside who know that already. Elevate them. (fin) 16/16.

17/16: I stink at tweet threads and forgot links because of course I did.

* Original PR with vague wording and blog post link: https://t.co/5fpHvtiLan

* The Verge article: https://t.co/wHkGETk2PI

* Great blog by @dustinmoris on the topic: https://t.co/gZBknsbRnX

18/16: Lastly, I'll say that I think folks are trying to work on this internally. I see you and I love you for it. Corporate culture change is so difficult. You have my utmost respect.