Matt Mullenweg returns as Automattic CEO two days after getting booted

Two days after being placed on a paid leave of absence, Matt Mullenweg says he has been reinstated as CEO of Automattic, according to a Slack message seen by *TechCrunch*. WordPress Executive Director Mary Hubbard confirmed Mullenweg's return to the CEO role in a Friday post on X, which the official WordPress account shared and Mullenweg reposted.

As *404 Media* reported on Wednesday, Mullenweg had told staff in Slack that morning that CFO Mark Davies "conspired" with the board of directors, who voted to "put me on a paid leave of absence." (Mullenweg said he voted against that.) He also told staff that the board had voted for Davies to become interim CEO. Davies, in a separate message, said that Mullenweg would still be a board member, according to *404 Media*. An Automattic spokesperson told *The Verge* that Mullenweg was "currently on leave" from the company and confirmed Davies' interim appointment.

In the message viewed by *TechCrunch*, however, Mullenweg wrote that the board is "back in agreement" and that he's "in control of Automattic." He added that "A lot happened in the past 48 hours that we need to sort out, and I hope much of it was a misunderstanding, because I have huge respect and regard for those involved." *TechCrunch* reports that Davies' Slack account has been deactivated and that Mullenweg had removed "all" admins from Automattic's Slack.

404 Media also reported on Mullenweg's posts about his apparent return, saying he made the posts "late Thursday

evening.”

Automattic, which owns companies like WordPress.com, Tumblr, and Beeper, didn’t immediately reply to a request for comment from *The Verge*. At 12:20PM ET on Friday, Mullenweg posted on X that “If you don’t have a coup attempt every few years, you’re not hiring strong enough leaders,” adding in a separate post that “I think this was my fifth.” Mullenweg also published a blog post on Friday titled “Major Life Announcement” about making an offer to buy a houseboat.

***Updates, September 11th**: Added 404 Media’s report and a post from WordPress’ executive director.*

https://www.theverge.com/tech/994087/matt-mullenweg-automattic-ceo-return