

Fediverse for publishers

A new way of thinking about the internet

Major tech news sites think it's the future of the internet [1]. Meta says it "will play an important role in the future of online platforms" [2]. Governments want to get all their organisations on it [3]. We're talking about the **fediverse**. But what is it exactly, and why does it matter for journalism?

The fediverse is a new way of thinking about the internet, in which websites and social networks can all interact and connect with each other, crossing platform boundaries. The fediverse is a place where people are not beholden to a few Tech billionaires for their social connections. It presents significant new opportunities and potential for journalism.

Fediverse and publishers

In the two years since Elon Musk bought Twitter, the great migration away from Twitter that many people expected never fully played out. Yet, Twitter's influence towards news is diminished, but no clear winner alternative has emerged [4]. On centralised social media platforms you do not have full control of your account, and journalists can and have been banned for sharing their writing. Their algorithmic feeds deprioritises links, making it less likely that people will click through on your post to your website.

Decentralised social networks, aka the fediverse, seem capable of giving back control to publishers. It gives the option to own your data and connections with your audience, and gives your limits the ability of an external party to interfere with your audience—whether by blocking connections directly or by manipulating algorithms to hinder your reach.

What makes the fediverse unique is that this interoperability is not limited to microblogging: any type of website can join the fediverse; whether that is blogging, video streaming, or even just any regular WordPress website. These new types of connections create new opportunities for journalists to spread their writings and build deeper connections with their readers.

Fediverse

A collection of independent social networks that all interoperate with each other to form a super-network of social networks.

Mastodon

Microblogging software that allows people to run their own independent social networking website. Some Mastodon sites are large with millions of accounts, and other Mastodon sites only host the accounts of a single organisation. Mastodon sites can all interoperate with each other, meaning that the small Mastodon site for a single organisation can talk and interact with the people all the other sites.

Bluesky

A popular microblogging platform that is partially connected to the rest of the fediverse. Bluesky makes it easier to search and index what is happening on the entire network, which can be more difficult on Mastodon. Where Mastodon consists of many connected websites, requiring you to join one, Bluesky consists of one open network where people can take ownership of their account and data.

Threads

Meta's answer to X/Twitter. Threads is working on adding integration with the rest of the fediverse, using the same underlying protocol as most of the fediverse. People on Mastodon can follow accounts on Threads.



Getting started

There are easy ways to get started with the fediverse, and the different ways each offer their own advantages and considerations. Here are six different ways you can get started with the fediverse, each with their own advantages and considerations.

Join Threads

- + Easy to get started with.
- + Has by far the largest user base.
- ? Mainly an algorithmic platform, making the reach of posts fluctuate more.
- Threads says it will not encourage politics and hard news in its algorithm, limiting the reach and impact for journalists.

Join Mastodon.social

- + Easy to get started with.
- + Can always transfer your account to your own server if needed.
- + Enthusiastic community that is looking for more news presence.
- ? No algorithmic feeds.
- Not final ownership over your account.

Connect a Wordpress account to the fediverse

- + Make your writing available in full-text in the rest of the fediverse, and people can share and reply with their Mastodon account.
- + Fire-and-forget, once it is set up does not require extra work from your team.
- Plugin still in development phase.

Join Bluesky

- + Easy to get started with.
- + Easy and clear verification with your website address as your handle.
- + People can create their own algorithms and feeds for content discovery.
- Taking full control of your data is possible, but requires extra effort.

Run your own Mastodon server

- + Full control of your own data and identity.
- + Your social identity becomes a full website people can visit.
- ? No algorithmic feeds,
- Full ownership also means moderation work.

Connect a Flipboard account to the fediverse

- + Full fediverse integration.
- + Part of an existing product with a long track record.
- No ownership over your data and account.

Some final notes: Most tools social media tools for professionals, such as Buffer, support Mastodon, Bluesky as well as Threads, making it significantly easier for a social media team to support posting to an additional platform.

The next generation of text-based social networks is likely not to be a winner-takes-all as it was during the high days of Twitter. Multiple networks are competing with each other, while being (partially) connected with each other. Social networks are starting to trend towards having more specific defined audiences. The state of social networks is currently in flux, and things are constantly changing. To keep up with all the latest happenings, [Fediverse Report](#) publishes a weekly update on all the news in the world of decentralised social networks.

