

Getting started on BlueSky

A guide for scientists



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An introduction to BlueSky & how it works

Bluesky is a federated network, meaning that it is built on a decentralized framework. This removes control from a central authority and places it with the users. This also provides interoperability between platforms. Potentially, this means that users could create their own platforms (Mastodon calls these “instances”). It also means that there may be future interoperability with Mastodon.

The other benefit of a decentralized platform is that it enables users to choose from various feeds created by the developers or other users, meaning they aren't locked into an algorithm. However, this means that things work a little differently than you may be used to.

Tips

- Likes don't help to promote content, so **repost!**
- **Use hashtags** - they help specific feeds to capture your content
- **Follow feeds** of interest
- **Utilise starter packs** to get started and to find new people to follow

Finding people to follow

The best way to find people to follow is to import them from other platforms using tools like Skybridge or by utilising “starter packs”.

Find the people you were following

The easiest way to find accounts from Twitter/X is to use the Sky Follower Bridge Chrome plugin. There is a [video and text-based walkthrough](#) on how to find the accounts you followed on Twitter/X.

Find new people to follow - Starter packs

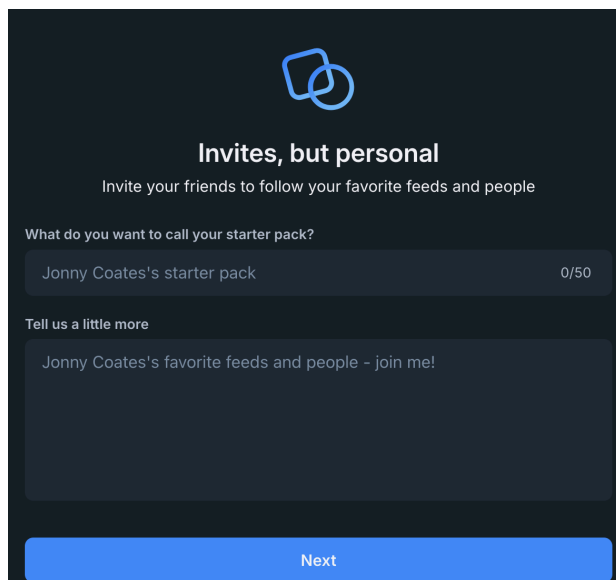
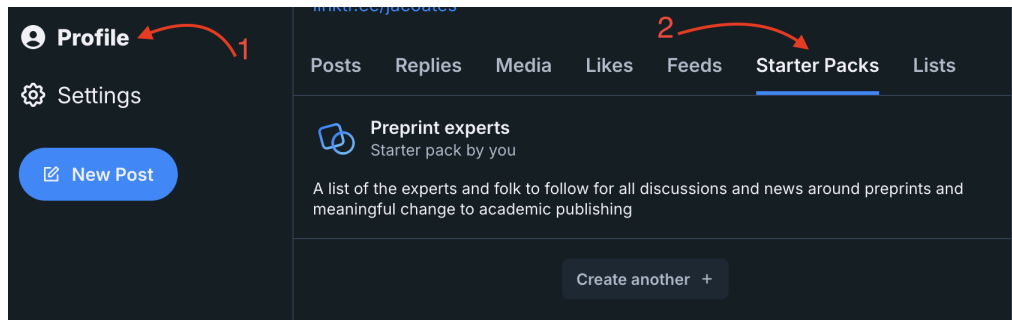
Starter packs are user-created curated lists of accounts to follow. These may be grouped by themes or interests. Once you've gotten started, you can create your own starter pack too! You can use these starter packs to follow everyone all at once or to browse through for individual accounts. These can also include up to 3 feeds within the starter pack.

Some useful starter packs include:

- [Preprint experts](#)
- [Open Science researchers and experts](#)
- [Open Research library teams](#)
- [Open science folks](#)
- [Sci com folks](#)

There are also numerous field-specific starter packs and other lists that you can browse and search using [this tool](#).

To create your own starter pack, navigate to “Profile” and then “Starter Packs”. You will be presented with a screen to give the pack a name and description. You will not be able to search and add accounts.

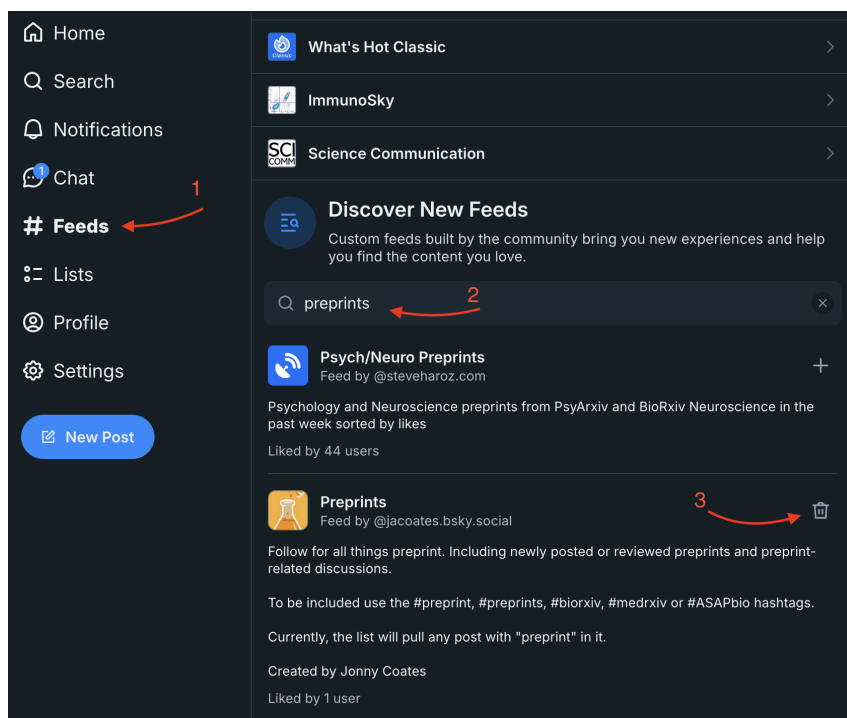


Feeds - follow timelines based on topics of interest

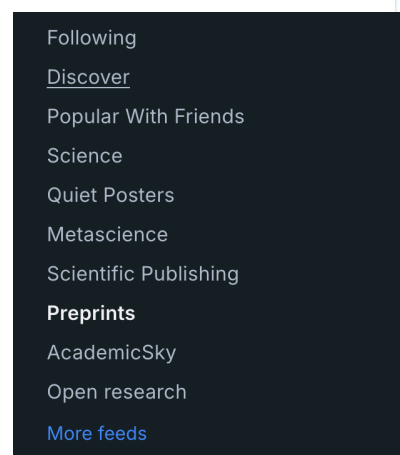
With BlueSky, you can select feeds based on specific interests, communities, or content types, offering much greater control over the algorithm's influence on what you see. To find interesting feeds, the in-built BlueSky search works well, although there are also third party apps available.

To subscribe to a feed:

1. Navigate to “Feeds” & scroll down to “Discover New Feeds”
2. Enter your search term
3. Click on the plus icon next to the feed to pin the feed



You can quickly switch between pinned feeds by scrolling along the top menu bar or on the individual feeds to the right side of the screen. To locate all of your feeds, click the large “#” button or “Feeds” button.



Some useful feeds to follow for science & science communication are:

- Preprints
- Metaresearch
- Scientific Publishing
- AcademicSky
- Science

You can also create your own feed for personal use or to share with others using tools such as [skyfeed](https://skyfeed.com). To create your own feed:

- Check that there are no similar feeds already (<https://bsky.app/feeds>)
- Use a third party tool and follow their guidance

Lists can also be used to follow specific groups of people, rather than topics as with feeds, or they can be used to quickly block a wide range of people. For example, the [following list](#) searches for “MAGA” and enables you to block all of those accounts in one click.

A beautiful system to BLOCK all the MAGA trolls IN ONE CLICK

Click on this list bsky.app/profile/did:...

Subscribe to it

It offers you "block all"

Block them in one click

Thank you [@bsky.app](#)



MAGA

Moderation list by [@skywatch.blue](#)

Username and / or description which includes MAGA, MAHA, TRUMP, or TRUMP 2024, or posts with #MAGA and #TRUMP2024 hashtags or clear indicators of support for Trump.

Privacy settings

BlueSky has a range of privacy settings and features. A semi-complete list is provided below

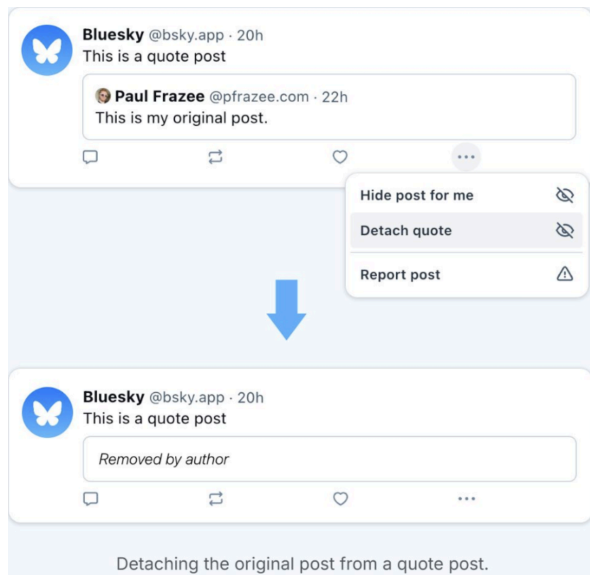
Protecting your posts

- disabling replies on your posts
- limiting replies on your posts to people you follow, mention, or include in specific lists
- disabling quote posting on your posts
- detaching your post from someone else's quote
- changing the above interaction settings even after a post is sent
- hiding replies to your posts for yourself or for everyone
- self-labeling your media for adult or graphic content to protect other users
- limiting account visibility only to logged in users
 - note: this is not 100% enforceable but all major bluesky clients and apps support it

Limiting your interaction

- blocking users from seeing or interacting with your posts
 - if you block after an interaction, they vaporize
 - if they've replied already, the entire thread below their reply is cauterized for everyone, floating in space detached from your post
 - note: your blocks are publicly visible via 3rd party apps
- muting users to remove them from your notis and feeds, and hide them in replies
 - note: your mutes are private
- muting or blocking entire moderation lists of users
 - note: inclusion in a list is public via third party apps. muting a list is private, blocks via a list are public
- subscribing to other people's mod lists
 - note: your subscription is private, muting & blocking work the same
- subscribing to labelers (moderation services) from bluesky or third parties
 - decide whether to show, warn, or hide posts that have been labeled in each category
 - report content that should be labeled to bluesky and/or third parties labelers

One unique feature is the ability to detach your original posts from quote posts. This helps to limit yourself from being “piled-on” as easily.



Useful tools

<https://www.sky-follower-bridge.dev/get-started.html> - Find and quickly follow people who have Twitter/X accounts.

<https://blueskydirectory.com/starter-packs/all> - To find starter packs and other tools

<https://skyfeed.app/> - create personal views and create feeds

<https://goodfeeds.co/> - To find existing feeds