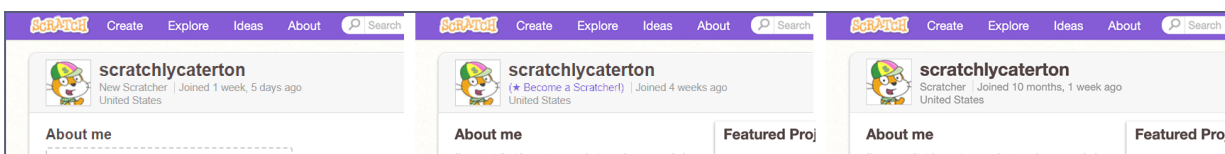# Getting Started in the Online Community

The Scratch online community is a global space where young people can create, share, and receive feedback from others around the world. It is a unique aspect of our coding platform that we encourage users to explore.

To help users get more familiar with the online community, in this document, you will explore:

What Is a Scratcher?

A Scratcher is another name for a person who uses Scratch. We also have account statuses which will appear on your profile page. When you create an account, you'll be labeled as a "New Scratcher." To make the transition to "Scratcher," you should make and share projects, comment helpfully on other Scratchers' projects, and be patient! After you've met the requirements, a link will appear on your profile page inviting you to become a Scratcher.

What Is the Scratch Online Community?

When Scratch was first launched in 2007, it launched alongside the online community, as the team believed peer interaction was central to the learning process built upon the 4 P's of Creative Learning: Projects, Peers, Passion, and Play. The Scratch online community has grown into a global space where young people can create, share, and receive feedback from others around the world. We see the role of the community in two ways:

- **Audience:** We provide a space where young people can create and share their ideas with others around the world.

- **Inspiration**: It's a place where young people can learn from and collaborate with their peers. They can gain new ideas, borrow scripts and images, and incorporate them into their own projects by remixing others' projects.

And we see community and collaboration happening on Scratch in many different ways:

- **Constructive dialogue**: In addition to peer interactions we see through project creation, we also see a lot of interactions within commenting. Specifically, we see constructive dialog on Scratch that ranges from admiration, to finding a bug and offering a solution for how to fix it, to making a constructive suggestion on what to do next with a project.

- **Remixes**: Everything shared on Scratch is licensed under a Creative Commons license, meaning Scratchers can take the work others have shared and build upon it, adding their own ideas. And then others can remix and build upon that!

- **Thematic Studios**: Studios are spaces on Scratch where Scratchers can come together around a common interest. Studios can also be about issues important to Scratchers and often can be a reflection of what is going on in the world.

- **Collaborative Projects**: Projects are sometimes created through collaborative storytelling developed in comment threads, finding common interests, or mentorship and recognizing different strengths, as Scratchers leave comments in studios, on profiles, or under projects. Another form of project collaboration we see are Multi-Animator Projects (MAPs), which are animations created by multiple Scratchers, then stitched together into one larger project.

We think learning about and interacting with the online community intersects well with educator classroom practices focused on collaboration, leadership, and community building. It may also be a user's first time interacting with others online and provides a great opportunity to explore what it means to be a good digital citizen. In a classroom setting, you may choose to approach different aspects of the community over the course of a few lessons. Feel free to print and share relevant sections with users.
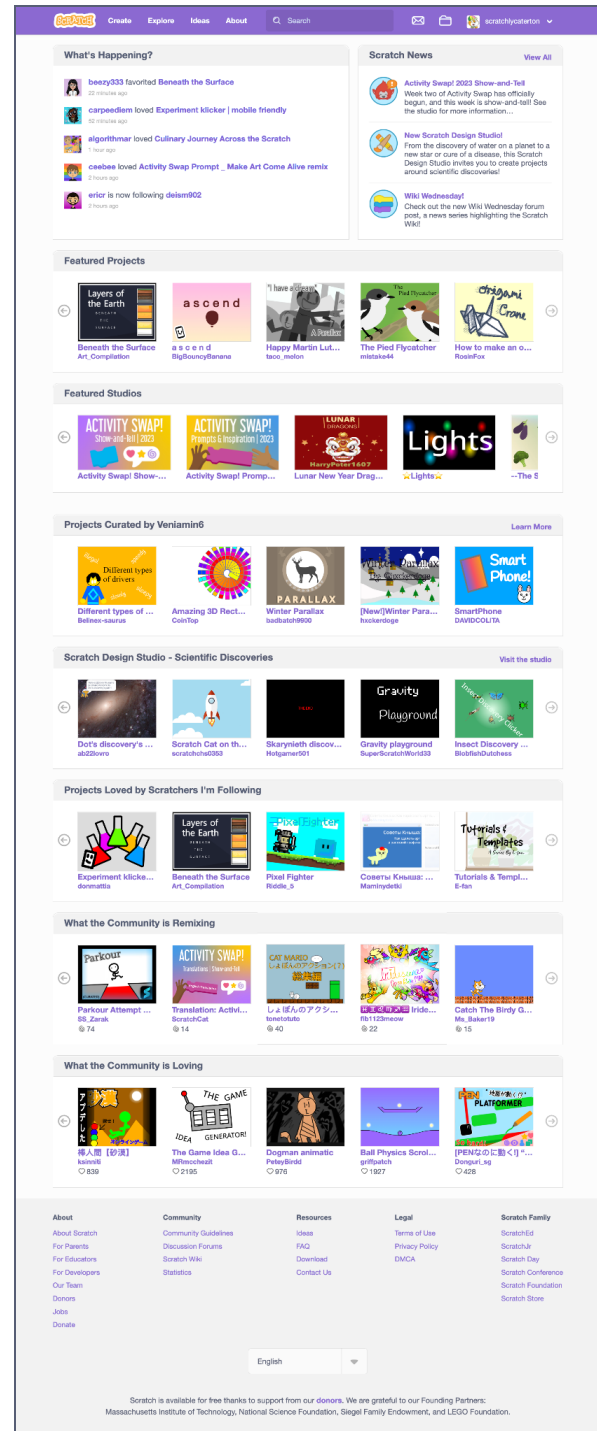
Get to Know the Scratch Front Page

Visit this link to get started: https://scratch.mit.edu

On the front page you can see:

- **Scratch News:** We share news about Scratch Events like Scratch Team-owned studios and the latest Scratch Design Studio.*

- **Featured Projects** and **Featured Studios**: We highlight projects and studios that we think show a good use of Scratch. And we feature many different kinds of projects made by Scratchers of many different experience levels. Our hope is these projects will appeal to and perhaps inspire others.

- **Projects Curated by**: We partner with Scratchers who have applied and been chosen to highlight projects they are loving for a week.

- **Scratch Design Studio**: We partner with a select group of Scratchers to develop studio themes that will engage other Scratchers. Any Scratcher can submit related projects to the studio.

- **What the Community is Remixing** and **Loving**: A snapshot determined by metrics where you can find inspiring things.

When a user is not logged in, the "What's Happening" and "Scratch News" sections are not visible.

Set Up Your Scratch Profile

Visit this link: https://scratch.mit.edu/users/[your username]

Once you have a Scratch account, you can fill out your profile "About Me" and "What I'm Working On" sections, pick a user icon, and also set up a Featured Project as soon as you have your first project shared. These can all be updated at any time.

A **user icon** is an image attached to your profile used to represent/easily help identify you. It appears, alongside every comment or forum post you make, in the "What's Happening?" box, on the notifications page, and next to your username on a project page.

New accounts start out with the default Scratch cat icon. Stuck on what Profile Icon to use? We don't allow users to post photos of themselves for their icon, in order to follow our Community Guideline about keeping personal information private. You can create an icon that looks like you using Scratch, however! Try searching Scratch for an "Icon Creator" to get started: https://scratch.mit.edu/search/projects?q=icon%20creator

Maximum file size for a user icon is 512 KB and your image must be less than 500x500 pixels.

As you complete your "**About Me**" and "**What I'm Working On**" sections:

- share topics you are passionate about, words that describe you, how you like to engage with others, requests for collaboration or help, etc.

- stay within the Community Guidelines; be welcoming to all, appropriate for all ages, and don't share any personal information (such as your full name, location, or school name)

- we restrict links you share to outside sites, so no social media handles or links to personal websites where unmoderated chat can happen or personal information could be revealed

The "**What I've Been Doing**" section of your profile will be automatically populated as you like and favorite projects, take actions in studios you manage or curate, share projects, etc.
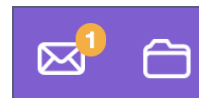
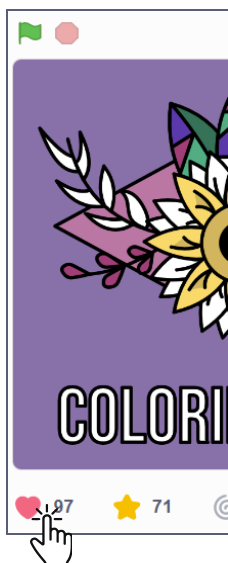# Engagement Opportunities on Scratch

Multiple ways to engage; choose what makes you comfortable!

In order to engage in the online community, you must have a Scratch account and be logged in.

When another Scratcher engages with your content (remixes, comments on your profile or project, likes or favorites your project), you may get a notification (look for the envelope in the header bar).
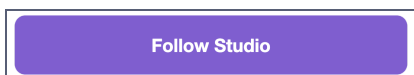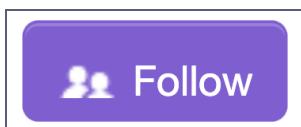
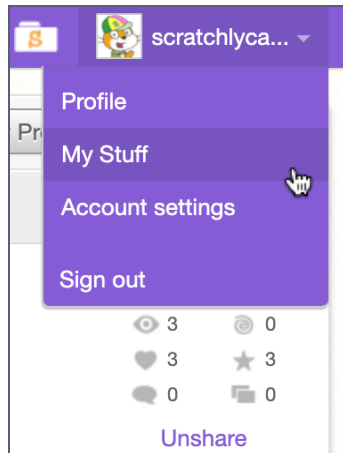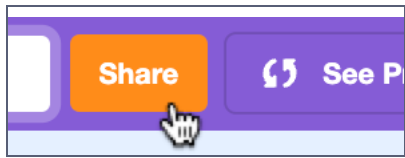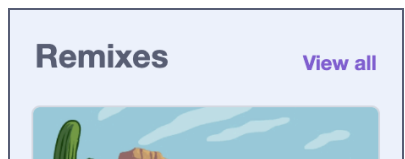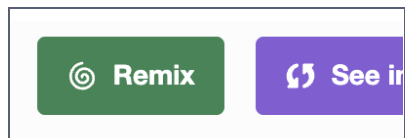| Engagement Options	
	Like or Favorite another Scratcher's project. When you like (heart) a project, Scratchers that are following you can see that notice in the "What's Happening" section when they are logged in and on the front page. It also shows in the "What I've Been Doing" section of your profile. The same is true when you favorite (star) a project, but those projects are also saved/shown in the "Favorite Projects" section on your profile page (so you can always return to them later) and other users visiting your profile can see them. *Note:* You should never feel coerced into liking or favoriting projects. Projects or comments that demand such actions are discouraged and can be reported via the "report" button.
	You can choose to **follow fellow Scratchers or studios** that interest you. Following means you'll receive notifications about what those Scratchers are liking and favoriting. The list of Scratchers you are following (and who is following you) and studios you are following also appear on your profile (so you can easily revisit them later). *Note:* Some Scratchers are interested in F4F (follow for follow), but you should never feel pressured to follow anyone you don't want to. Politely indicating you don't do F4F or simply not responding is perfectly fine.

Share! While logged in users can create projects and keep them just to themselves, we encourage Scratchers to share projects so other Scratchers can be inspired by them. Sharing is also a great opportunity to ask other Scratchers to user-test projects for bugs, offer ideas to iterate and expand a project, or look for collaboration opportunities. When we feature projects, we look for a variety of experience levels and interests to showcase all the ways one can be creative in Scratch. Our Scratchers come from a variety of backgrounds and ages and experience levels, and we welcome everyone.
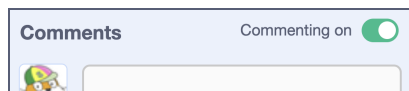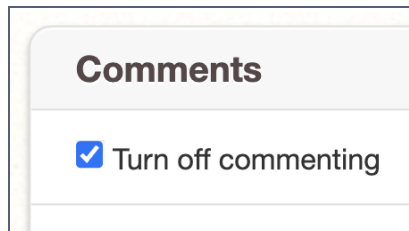
Note: We ask Scratchers not to spam links to their projects in comments. Instead, many studios welcome project submissions if your project matches the theme and there are Show & Tell/Advertising studios as well.

Also, you can also unshare a project. Under "My Stuff" you will find the option to unshare any shared project. When ready, you can always share again.

Remix another Scratcher's project and add your own ideas. Remixing is encouraged, since we have seen how remixing can lead to creative, interesting projects. It is a great way to collaborate and connect with others and can lead to new ideas and also help others grow as creators. You're welcome to use anything you find on Scratch in your creations, as long as you provide credit to everyone whose work you used and make a meaningful change. And if someone remixes your project, consider giving it a like or leaving a comment!

Note: Just as you can remix things created by others, when you share on Scratch, you're giving others permission to remix your content in their creations as well. Others can build and expand upon the ideas you've started and it can be a great way to collaborate on Scratch! If you feel someone had remixed your project and not made any significant changes, added something inappropriate, or created a remix that is completely unrelated to the original project, you can use the "Report" button to have the Scratch team of moderators review it.
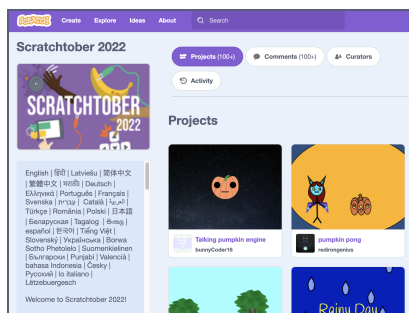
	Leave constructive or encouraging feedback on other Scratcher's projects. **Respond to comments on your own profile or projects**. Scratchers who aren't comfortable yet with engaging with others via comments can choose to turn off comments on their profile and on individual projects that they share. Comments can always be turned back on. *Note:* Inappropriate comments can be reported using our "report" buttons. We encourage Scratchers not to engage with inappropriate comments and instead to report them for the Scratch team of moderators to deal with instead.
	Participate in a Scratch Event studio, create your own studio, or join another Scratcher's studio. Scratch studios are a great way to gather ideas and creations from your coding community. Studios can be used to share inspiring projects, organize projects by theme, and promote collaboration. See our Scratch Studios Guide (https://resources.scratch.mit.edu/www/guides/en/scratch-studios-guide.pdf) for more detailed information on creating and managing studios. Or learn more about our Scratch Event studios here: https://resources.scratch.mit.edu/www/events/en/ScratchLearningResource_ScratchEventStudios.pdf

Find Inspiration, Share Your Creations, Meet Others on Scratch

- Drop by the Scratch Welcoming Committee to say hello in the comments and check out projects with helpful information and friendly greetings. (https://scratch.mit.edu/studios/146521)

- The latest Scratch Design Studio (SDS) is a great place to be inspired by a theme and create something fun. Look for it on the front page or visit https://scratch.mit.edu/users/ScratchDesignStudio. Once your project has been shared, you can copy the project link and put it in a comment on the studio so the studio curators can review it (to ensure it follows the guidelines in the studio description) and then add it!

- Look in the "Scratch News" section of the front page to see notices on our latest Scratch Events. These events are often Scratch Team-owned studios where all are welcome to participate by sharing a project. Learn more here: https://resources.scratch.mit.edu/www/events/en/ScratchLearningResource_ScratchEventStudios.pdf

- Look for collaboration opportunities like Multi-Animator Projects (MAPs), which are animations created by multiple Scratchers and then stitched together into one larger project. You can search the site for MAP projects and find active projects still looking for collaborators (usually noted in the notes and credits on a project page).

- Join studios around topics you are interested in or passionate about. Look at the studio description to see the goals the studio manager has for the space. Studios are, by default, open to every Scratcher and no studio (or Scratcher) should discriminate on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, abilities, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity. However, you are asked to respect the guidelines set by a studio manager in terms of the types of projects they are looking for, whether one can advertise, curation requests, etc.

Collaborating (within the Guidelines) on Scratch

Shared accounts are not allowed on Scratch, because they could expose personal information, such as email addresses. Likewise, linking to outside sources (like video chats or live streams) for the purposes of chatting/working on a collaboration could lead to exposure of personal information, so sharing links to those services on Scratch isn't allowed. Instead, Scratchers are encouraged to use remixing to iterate on each other's work and the comments under the project or in a forum post to discuss work on the project/troubleshoot.

Some helpful forum spaces are "Help with Scripts" (https://scratch.mit.edu/discuss/7), "Collaboration" (https://scratch.mit.edu/discuss/10), and "Requests" (https://scratch.mit.edu/discuss/11).

Scratch Digital Citizenship & Global Reach

Visit this link: https://scratch.mit.edu/community_guidelines

We want to model collaboration, leadership, and community building that we would like to see across the Scratch platform, and ideally across the web. The Community Guidelines promote healthy interactions online, as well as modeling positive digital citizenship. A link to our guidelines is on the bottom of every page. Our six core guidelines are:

- Treat everyone with respect

- Be safe: keep personal and contact information private

- Give helpful feedback

- Embrace remix culture
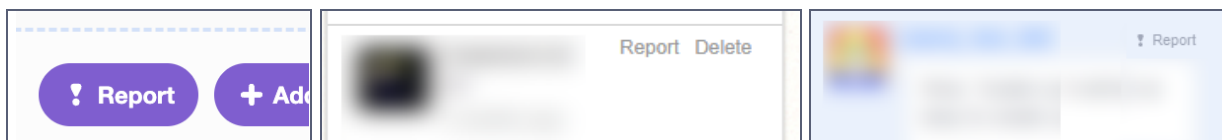
- Be honest

- Help keep the site friendly

The Scratch Team models and encourages digital citizenship through our interactions with Scratchers in comments; in Scratch Team-owned studios/events where we aim to be inclusive to Scratchers of all experience levels via open-ended prompts and invitations to create; and by recognizing our global community by creating translation studios alongside event studios.

We also aim to strike a balance between expression and moderation. While we allow intense conversations and emotionally charged content, we do remove unconstructive content, inappropriate messages, and anything else that violates our community guidelines.

It is also important that Scratchers keep in mind everything shared (from comments to studios to shared projects) are public and visible to anyone logged in or not.

Reporting Inappropriate Content on Scratch

Users that are logged in can report inappropriate comments they see by hovering over the comment and clicking the "report" option that appears, or report inappropriate projects using the report button on the project page.

For users that are not logged in or for other concerns, we can be reached via the "Contact Us" link at the bottom of every page.

Additional Scratch Spaces of Interest

Already comfortable engaging in Scratch? Here are some additional opportunities:

- Propose Projects to be Featured studio https://scratch.mit.edu/studios/28715018 – Propose a project created by another Scratcher, which you think shows a good use of Scratch, for featuring on the front page.

- Propose Studios to be Featured forum topic https://scratch.mit.edu/discuss/topic/569708 – Propose a studio you or another Scratcher has created for featuring on the front page.

- Front Page Curator Applications studio https://scratch.mit.edu/studios/386359 – Every week, a member of the Scratch community is selected to hand-pick projects that will appear on the front page, and this is the studio to apply for the opportunity.

- Become a curator in a Scratch Event studio – In general, curators are not chosen upon request, but some Scratch Event studios and the Scratch Design Studios (SDS) offer Scratchers the opportunity to apply beforehand to help. If there is no curator application process for a Scratch Event studio, being active, helpful, and kind could lead to a curator offer from a studio manager. Learn more here: https://resources.scratch.mit.edu/www/events/en/ScratchLearningResource_ScratchEventStudios.pdf

Tip: If you'd like to translate this guide, **click here to make a copy** of this Google doc.