

Want to be a Space Communist? Take off!



DSA Member Verification Through RocketChat

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Introduction

The [Libertarian Socialist Caucus \(LSC\)](#) is a group within the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) which believes libertarian socialist values are the fullest embodiment of this democratic socialist vision. **To be in the LSC, you must be a dues-paying member of the DSA.**

DSA Chat is an online chat server organized by DSA National. It is set up and maintained by DSA volunteers and allows members across the country to communicate and share info with each other instantly. To coordinate for the People's Summit, DSA members used DSA Chat to help communicate and found it to be rather helpful. For the National Convention, volunteers used DSA Chat as well.

DSA Chat is powered by an open source software package called [RocketChat](#), which works a lot like Slack, HipChat, and similar online collaboration services that you may have used at work or with your local DSA chapter.

Because DSA Chat is the best way to confirm whether someone is a member of DSA without having to ask them for confirmation via e-mail or through Facebook and then doing a lot of cross referencing, **using your DSA Chat username or e-mail address will be the LSC's way of verifying that you're a dues paying member of the DSA.**

Below are instructions on how to get started with DSA Chat. **If you're intimidated - we're here to help!** The DSA national Tech team has volunteers available at chat-support@dsa-tech.zendesk.com if you have any difficulties getting set up. You can also contact the DSA-LSC Organizing Committee at lsc.dsa.lux@gmail.com

Step 1: Sign up for DSA Chat

Register for DSA Chat by visiting <https://dsachat-register.herokuapp.com> and filling out the form. Please remember to use the same email address that's associated with your DSA membership – that is, whatever you entered when you last paid your dues or signed up a DSA email list. Enter that email address using the exact same capitalization to make sure registration goes smoothly.

After you fill out this form, an automated process looks up your email and name in the DSA database, and if it matches, will email you further instructions. You can then login to the chat at <https://dsausa.chat>! **It's possible that this e-mail doesn't get sent.** If you don't receive an e-mail in 5 minutes, the hamsters probably chewed on the cables again. If you're a dues paying member, and you are sure your email address is right, you use the "forgot password" functionality of the <https://dsausa.chat> log in screen.

If something goes wrong with your registration attempt (for example: the username you requested has already been taken), you should receive an email within 5 minutes. If you don't get any response via email within 5 minutes, please email chat-support@dsa-tech.zendesk.com.

Step 2: Learn to Chat

The chat will look like this after you log in at <https://dsausa.chat>.

Some basics on how to use the chat:

1. **Message box:** Type your message in, hit **Enter**, then your message appears in the chat channel. Easy! (If you want to make a multi-line message, hold **Shift** while you hit **Enter**.) If you would like to notify a specific user with a message, put @ and type in their username (for example, @tglom).
2. **Channels:** The chat is separated into different channels, each dedicated to a specific topic. All channels start with a #. You start in the channels #general and #random, which are for general DSA related stuff and whatever you feel like chatting with other DSAers about, respectively. There are issue based channels (like #socialistfeminism) and locale based channels (like #milwaukee).
3. **Search box:** You can use the search box to join new channels. For example, let's say you want to join a channel dedicated to fighting racism. In the **Search** box, type in antiracism, and the #antiracism channel appears in the list. You can click on the channel, then click the **Join** button (where the message box would be) to start participating in the channel.

Step 3: Tips & Tricks

Now that you know the basics, here's how to have fun with the chat.

1. **Add an emoji (smiley) to your message:** In the Message Box, click on the Smiley Face on the left side of the box. This will pop up a window where you can add the emoji of your choice. You can also add an emoji while you're typing by putting colons around each side. For example, try :rose:
2. **Add a photo:** On the right side of the message box, click the paperclip. You can add an attachment to your message, like a photo, video, or document.
3. **Reply/edit/react:** Did someone write a message that you strongly agree with or would you like to respond directly to that message? Did you make an "oopsie" with your message? If you hover over a message, a little gear icon will appear:

Click on that, and you get a series of options.

- A. **Reply to:** If you would like to reply to a specific message, click the reply arrow, and type the reply. In the chat window, it will show the message you're replying to and notify the person who wrote the original message.
- B. **Edit/Delete:** Hit the pencil to edit your message (dagn tipos!) and the trash can to delete your message. This will only appear for messages you've created.

- C. **React:** Hit the plus-smiley, and an option to add an emoji will appear. Once you select the emoji, it will appear under the message like below. If you agree with someone else's reaction, you can simply click on the emoji to "co-sign" on that reaction.

Step 4: Customize

In the top left corner next to your name, there is a down arrow you can click to access My Account. Here you have multiple options.

1. **Preferences:** here you can customize your notification settings, your view mode, and the message send behavior (to send messages when you hit Enter or not).
2. **Profile:** You can change your password or delete your account here.
3. **Avatar:** You can upload a picture to appear by your name (or remove said picture) here.

DSA Chat or Email?

DSA Chat supports several different types of conversations.

1. Group conversations that are visible to any current and future registered DSA members (public channels, in RocketChat's terminology).
2. Private group conversations (private channels), visible only to the users that the channel's administrator has invited.

3. Private one-to-one conversations (direct messages) for collaborating with other individuals.

We've found numerous advantages to using RocketChat instead of email.

1. **It's better for quick back and forth communication.** When others are online at the same time, it's much easier to send quick messages back and forth than to wait for longer emails.
2. **Channels are better than long email threads.** Have you ever had a long email thread where everything gets off topic and it's difficult to figure out who is responding to whom? Chat channels make it easier to create focused conversations on specific topics. If another topic comes up, you can always split off to a new channel.
3. **Channels work better for people jumping in or out.** Have you ever had someone forward you an email chain, only to have to spend fifteen minutes trying to figure out who everyone is on the chain and what they already talked about? When someone joins a channel they can easily see the history, who said what, and it should be easier to figure out what's going on.
4. **It's easy to notify other people.** When you bold or highlight someone's name in an email, there's no guarantee they'll know they were called out. When you mention someone else by their username on RocketChat, they are instantly notified so they know that they need to respond to something.
5. **It's a lot more fun!** With emojis and easy link sharing, and the ability to react to individual messages, it's fun to use.

That's all great, but there cases where other tools will likely work better.

- Use email when you need to make an important announcement to a large group.
- Host a conference call when you need to make decisions as a group that require a lot of discussion (more than would be practical/comfortable to type).

Channels of Interest

To help get you started, we've compiled a list of the Rocket Chat channels we think will be of most immediate interest to LSC members. Be sure to check them out! And don't forget to **explore** other channels yourself and, if you have a good idea for one, **make new channels** for the enjoyment and gratification of DSA's membership!

#anarchy is for smashing the state.

#bylaws is a great place (sometimes) to ask for help drafting local bylaws.

#convention_2017 is for people confused about the convention who aren't **#delegates**

#design is for asking where the Design Style Guide is.

#delegates is for everyone who's extremely confused about the Convention.

#emotions is for venting, mutual support, and feelings chat.

#environment is a gathering place for crickets displaced by climate change.

#general is for saying hi, asking where **#delegates** is, and having general discussions.

#grrltalk is for women, femmes, non-binary persons, and other non-males only.

#international is for screaming at each other about Syria, the DPRK, and Venezuela.

#labor is for getting organized.

#leftcaucus is for talking about what the hell ever happened to the Left Caucus.

#lgbtq is for queer socialism, not rainbow capitalism.

#leftcaucus is for asking what the hell ever happened to the Left Caucus.

#libertariansocialistcaucus is for us.

#marxism is for asking about the dialectic and getting lectured about coats and sheets of cloth.

#memes is for people banned from the Dank Meme Stash.

#newbies is for saying hi.

#nonhuman_comrades is for documenting the oppression of our animal friends and neighbors.

#podcasts is for discussing all the leftcasts including (but not limited to) the problematic ones.

#random is where you go to post links someone already put up on **#twitter**.

#religioussocialism is for discussing the intersection of faith and organizing.

#resources is for sharing helpful links, articles, guides, and techniques for DSAers.

#rural_organizing is off to a slow start, much like the rural organizing it's for.

#tech is for computer nerds to talk shop.

#tech-organize is for radicalizing coddled computer nerds.

#twitter is for getting mad at bad takes.

#workgripes is for kvetching about the boss.

And remember! **Your own local** probably has set up its own channel(s), so be sure to explore!

Final Notes

Any DSA Chat user can create public or private channels whenever they want, without an administrator's help. If you want to create a separate space for your particular discussion (ex: a resolution), go right ahead!

There are **official apps** for [Android](#), [iPhone](#), [iPad](#), [macOS](#), [Windows](#), and [Linux](#). If the apps aren't working well for you, you can always load <https://dsausa.chat/> in your web browser, even on your mobile devices.

As with any online service, **there are occasionally connection issues with DSA Chat**. If these issues come up, a "Reconnecting..." dialog will appear at the top window, or you will get an error when accessing the website or opening the app on your mobile device. These errors are intermittent and will resolve quickly.

The DSA national Tech Committee has help desk volunteers at chat-support@dsa-tech.zendesk.com if you have any difficulties getting set up.

Most of the “why are we using DSA Chat/RocketChat?” questions [can be answered here](#). That document was written when DSA transitioned off of Slack, its previous unofficial group chat solution.

You can also refer to the [brief and basic user guide](#) produced by the maintainers of the underlying Rocket.Chat software, which may be useful.

