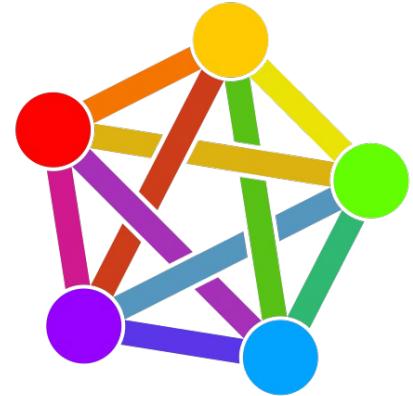


# Mastodon and the Fediverse



An introduction to Mastodon and the Fediverse.

Logo By Eukombos [CC0], from Wikimedia Commons

# Introduction:

- Bob Murphy
- System administrator in New Jersey
- Long-time Linux user, long time Fediverse denizen.
- [@murph@hackers.town](mailto:@murph@hackers.town)
- [@murph@gardenstate.social](mailto:@murph@gardenstate.social)
- <https://identi.ca/murph>
- Email: [murph@weirdness.com](mailto:murph@weirdness.com)
- Slides available at [murphnj.neocities.org](http://murphnj.neocities.org)

# Overview

- The fediverse (a portmanteau of "federated" and "universe") is a collection of protocols, servers, and users.
- Together they form communities that can communicate together.
- Users can exchange short messages, blog-style posts, music, and videos between services.

# Some history

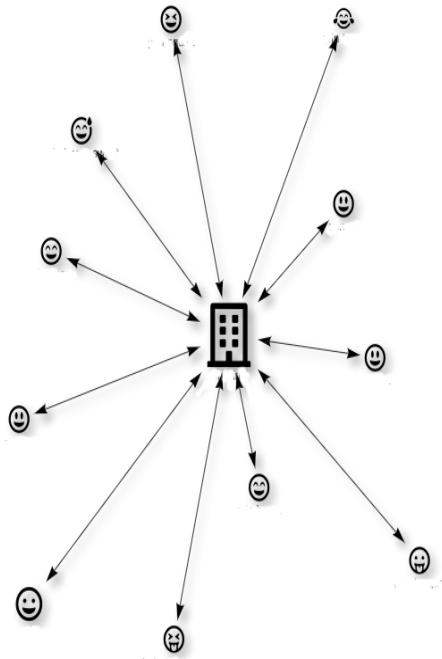
- In 2008, Evan Prodromou created a microblogging service called identi.ca using the Ostatus protocol and status.net server software.
- In about 2012, he changed his service to use a new protocol, pump.io. He released the Ostatus protocol to the Free Software Foundation, where it got incorporated into GNU/social. The fediverse continued along for several years.
- March 2016, Eugen Rochco (Gargron) created Mastodon, which used GNU/social with a tweetdeck-like interface. This gained some popularity.
- In 2018, a new protocol called ActivityPub was accepted as a standardized protocol by the W3C. Most Fediverse platforms have adopted it. It was authored by Evan Prodromou, Christine Lemmer-Weber, and others, and it expanded upon the previous services to provide a better and more flexible protocol.

# Federation

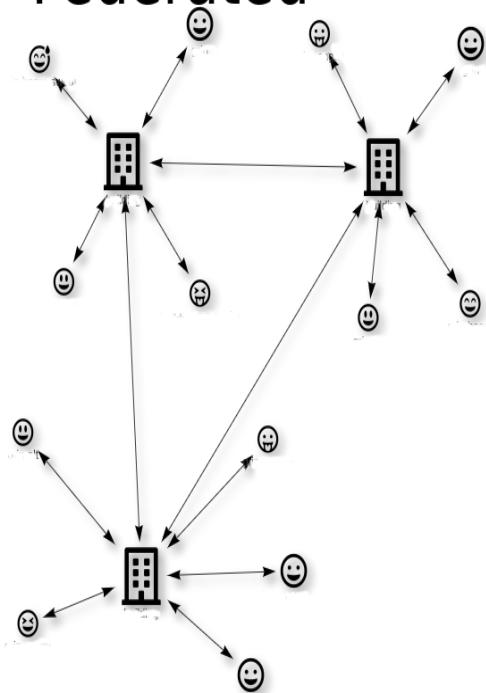
- Most services are run by a single company or organization A single silo that your data is trapped in, the only way to share with others is to have them join that service.
- Federation allows users of different services to inter-operate with one another, without creating an account for each shared resource. (Largely)
- System operators can block other instances in case of egregious issues, and users can likewise block users or instances to improve their experience.

# Illustration of federation

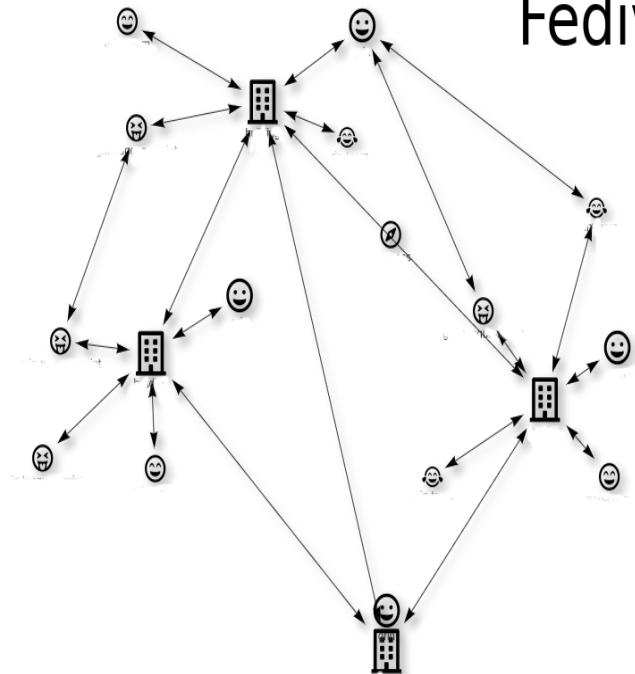
Centralized



Federated



Fediverse



# Services available (partial)

- Mastodon, pleroma, misskey Microblogging
- Pixelfed Image hosting
- Lemmy Link aggregator
- Writefreely.org, Wordpress(plugin) Blogging
- Peertube Video Hosting
- Funkwhale Audio Hosting
- Mobilizon, gettogether.community Event planning

# More services

- There are many new services that all use the ActivityPub protocol to work together
- More are being created every day, development is rapid.

What some call "Fediverse"...



... is just different social networks speaking ActivityPub to each other.

# Example: Mastodon (default)

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://gardenstate.social/home>. The page displays a mastodon instance with a blue header bar.

**Left Panel (gardenstate.social):**

- Search bar: Search or paste URL
- User profile: @murph
- Text input: What's on your mind? (with a smiley face icon)
- Post controls: Publish, with options for visibility (public, private, unlisted), language (EN), and character count (500).
- Post preview area:
  - CK's Technology News (@CKsTechNews@cktn.todon.de) posted 37m ago: #Linux Kernel 5.15.95 is out. Link: <cdn.kernel.org/pub/linux/kernel/>
  - Signed-off commit message from Arnd: commit 3f94c70333f61a593e08b7bfa2953fe81e8044eb. Author: Arnd... Date: Fri Jan 27 10:39:44 2023 -0100 platform/x86/amd: pmc: add CONFIG\_SERIO dependency commit abce20d18fd26e865b240ecc8819289db973f9 upstream. Using the serio subsystem now requires the code to be reachable: x86\_64-linux-ld: drivers/platform/x86/amd/pmc.o: in function 'amd\_pmc\_suspend\_handler': pmc.c:(.text+0x86c): undefined reference to 'serio\_bus' Add the usual dependency: as other users of serio use 'select' rather than 'depends on', use the same here. Fixes: 8ed615e932 ("platform/x86/amd: pmc: Disable IRQ1 wakeup for RN/CZN") Signed-off-by: Arnd... Link: <https://lore.kernel.org/r/20230127093058.2368575-1-arnd@kernel.org> Reviewed-by: Hans de... Signed-off-by: Hans...
- Post preview area:
  - TILvids (@tilvids@mstdn.social) posted 53m ago: #LINUX 🖥 vs #WINDOWS 📺 - Complete performance test! (video courtesy of @thelinuxEXP ) Link: <tilvids.com/w/rfeQ9mZcKKA6s9q9...>

**Right Panel (mastodon):**

- Navigation menu:
  - Home
  - Notifications
  - Explore
  - Local
  - Federated
  - Direct messages
  - Favourites
  - Bookmarks
  - Lists
  - Journalists
  - Projects
- Preferences
- Trending Now:
  - #whiskerswednesday 7 people in the past 2 days
  - #waterfallwednesday 8 people in the past 2 days
  - #wednesday 7 people in the past 2 days

# Profile example



murph 🚲

@murph@gardenstate.social

Just an ordinary desktop Linux user. New Jersey resident, and proud of it!

This account's home timeline may be displayed publicly at a conference, so only follow if you're OK with that. If you have an issue with me following you, just let me know, and I'll remove it from this account.

## JOINED

Feb 10, 2023

## WEAK SAUCE VERIFICATION

✓ murphnj.neocities.org/

210 Posts 475 Following 75 Followers

Posts

Posts and replies

Media

Pinned post



murph 🚲  
@murph

Feb 14, 2023

#introduction

I'm a long-time fediverse denizen, #Linux user, and #NJ resident and #bike rider. Just as a little background, I'm doing a talk at #SCaLE20x this March, and for that purpose, I'm setting up an account with a timeline that I can display publicly without worries of exposing anyone's follower-only messages by accident on my main account.

So, if you don't mind a little extra exposure, feel free to follow, I'll probably follow back.

If you want to follow me, but not here, at [@murph@hackers.town](mailto:@murph@hackers.town)

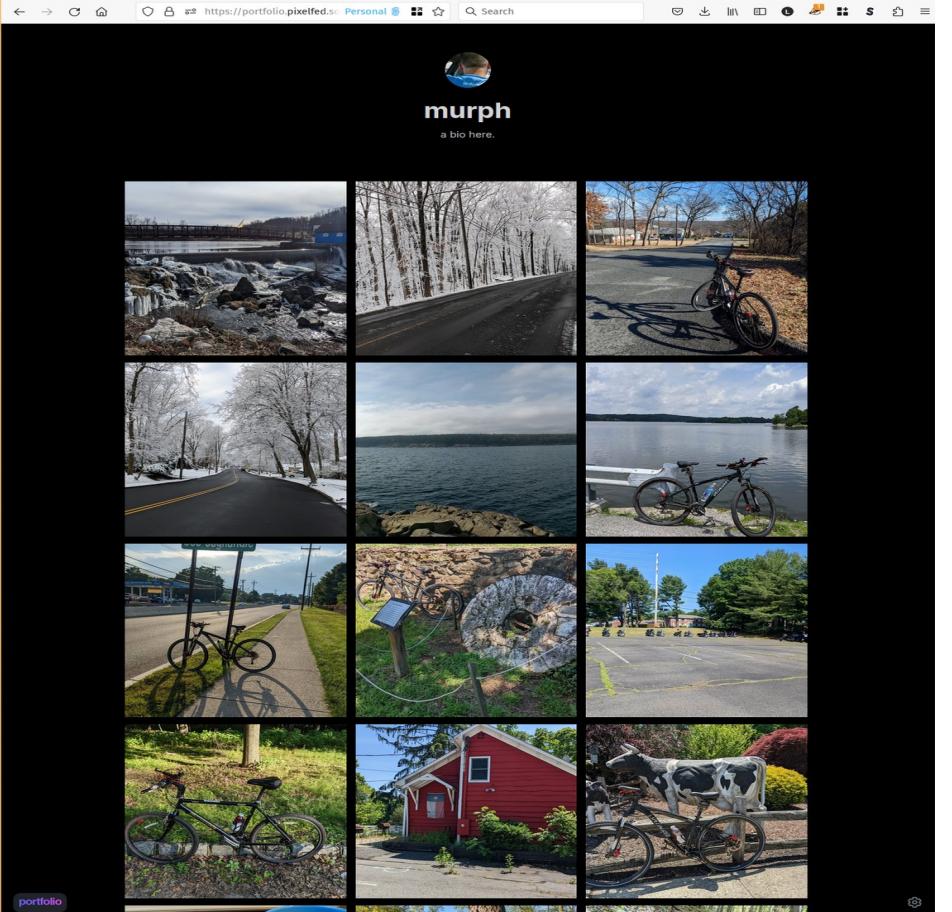


# Example: Mastodon (advanced)

The screenshot displays the Mastodon mobile application interface across four main panels:

- Home Timeline:** Shows a post by Drew DeVault (@sir@cmpwn.c... 10m) about a GitLab outage. It also includes a reply from The Privacy Foundation (@th... 10m) regarding the "Eliminating Abusive and Rampant Neglect of Interactive Technologies" (EARNIT) Act.
- Local Timeline:** Shows a post by Nathan DeGruchi (@nathand 12m) about the CDC's prediction of vaccine access issues. A reply from Lindsey Graham (R-SC) follows, along with a link to govtrack.us/congress/bills/116...
- Federated Timeline:** Shows a post by BBC 中文 (@bbccnnews@news... 21s) about US election rules. Other posts include one from Igor Jagec (@lgorgajec 22m) about GNOME 3.36, a reply from rho (@rho 38m) about alcohol, and a reply from James Vallery (@jvallery 54m) about a food poll.
- User Profile:** Shows the profile of SDF.ORG (@SDF@mastodon.sdf.org). It includes a note about tax tiers, a post by David (@chillallmen@mastodon... 42s) about a memorial vigil, and a note from aNONradio.net (#atari #vintage #computer).

# Example: Pixelfed



pixelfed

Search

murph @murph 67 Following 75 Followers

Create New Post

Home Feed Local Feed Global Feed

Discover Direct Messages Notifications Profile Go back to previous design

A Help Privacy Terms Powered by Pixelfed

Ahuka Feb 19, 2024, 8:27 AM · Grand Canyon, USA

Another look as the Sun goes down. September 10, 2017

Liked by Kerobian and 4 others

5 Likes Comment

murph Feb 18, 2024, 6:07 PM

Notifications

@davidwilkins liked your post. 2w  
@Dylan liked your post. 3w  
@idlestate shared your post. 3w  
@idlestate liked your post. 3w  
@murph shared your post. 3w  
@chris liked your post. 3w  
Nickde liked your post. 3w  
Lautaro followed you. 3w

# Example: Peertube

LinuxRocks Peertube

This month

<https://tinkerbetter.tube/c/veronicaexplains/>

murph @murph

My account My library

IN MY LIBRARY

Channels Videos Playlists Subscriptions History V4V Chatrooms

ON LINUXROCKS PEERTUBE

Home Discover Trending Recently added Local videos

murph @murph

Linux on a Chromebook, my favorite way 1 week ago • 562 views veronicaexplains@tinkerbetter.tube

When you get a shout out from @edvideo everything is nice. 1 week ago • 18 views mrfunkedude\_sh@diode.zone

Crypto Barons :: Episode 64 :: dVPN (Decentralized VPN) 2 weeks ago • 1 view defcon201@diode.zone

Open Source Cartridge Reader: ROMs and saves from real... 3 weeks ago • 312 views mrfunkedude\_sf@diode.zone

The Hastingen S01E03 - Part 6 - The Obscure Appalachia Catastrophe 1 month ago • 11 views newelljajtv@vod.newelljajtv

Obscure Appalachia - Bigfoot of Appalachia Part I 1 month ago • 2 views newelljajtv@vod.newelljajtv

No one heard my name. //EXPLICIT LANGUAGE// 1 month ago • 15 views mrfunkedude\_sf@diode.zone

Crypto Barons :: Episode 63 :: Olympix Web3 security that starts at the source 1 month ago • 1 view defcon201@diode.zone

Expedition Sasquatch (podcast edition) - S02E06 - #18 - Discovery... 1 month ago • 1 view newelljajtv@vod.newelljajtv

What is Aleo? 1 month ago • 0 views defcon201@diode.zone

NEW ELLIJAY WEATHER JANUARY 2020 1 month ago • 6 views KSPR - S01E05 - Please Do Not Treat The Deaf Girl Like A Dog. 1 month ago • 2 views

The Master Mystery - S01E05 - Part 1: The Big... 1 month ago • 2 views

The Hastingen - S01E03 - Catastrophe - Part 5: The Big... 1 month ago • 2 views

murph @murph

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LinuxRocks Peertube

https://tinkerbetter.tube/c/veronicaexplains/

murph @murph

Channels Videos Playlists Follows History

My videos 10

Filter... Last published first

shortride2 6 months ago • 5 views presentation\_videos Public - Published

2020\_0904\_173218\_024 6 months ago • 15 views presentation\_videos Public - Published

acadia 1 year ago • 5 views presentation\_videos Private

Intotothefdiverse-SeaGL 1 year ago • 24 views presentation\_videos Unlisted - Published

TCF-hourlab 2 years ago • 7 views presentation\_videos Unlisted - Published TCF Bob Murphy Videos

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# How to find people to follow

- Look in your local timeline.
- Find interesting people, and follow them.
- See what they post and boost, and look at the people that follow them.
- Search for hashtags that interest you.
- You can follow hashtags in your Home timeline.
- From there, find the people posting about what interests you.

# Will the Fediverse stick around?

- Some people reported that since many of the Twitter users that tried Mastodon moved back, that Mastodon is doomed to fail.
- Since the fediverse is not tied to a company that has to provide immediate profits, slow growth is OK, it allows communities to work to accept new people



graph from the-federation.info

# New services that federate?

- **Bluesky**
- Controlled by a small number of people.
- Not yet federated with anyone.
- Moderation seems iffy
- **Threads**
- Controlled by one rich dude (Sound familiar?)
- Seems to have died down after a big initial splash
- Also does not federate with anyone yet. (They have been experimenting though)

# Conclusion:

- The Fediverse is a way to use the web in a more individual way, either by choosing an instance with a community that suits your needs, or running your own server, and making it exactly the way you want.
- It avoids the advertising, algorithms, and other unpleasanties that plague some other social networks.
- When you join the fediverse, you are joining a community of the instance that you choose, you are not a way for a company to figure out how to make profit from your communication.

# Where to learn more:

A few links to find more about the Fediverse:

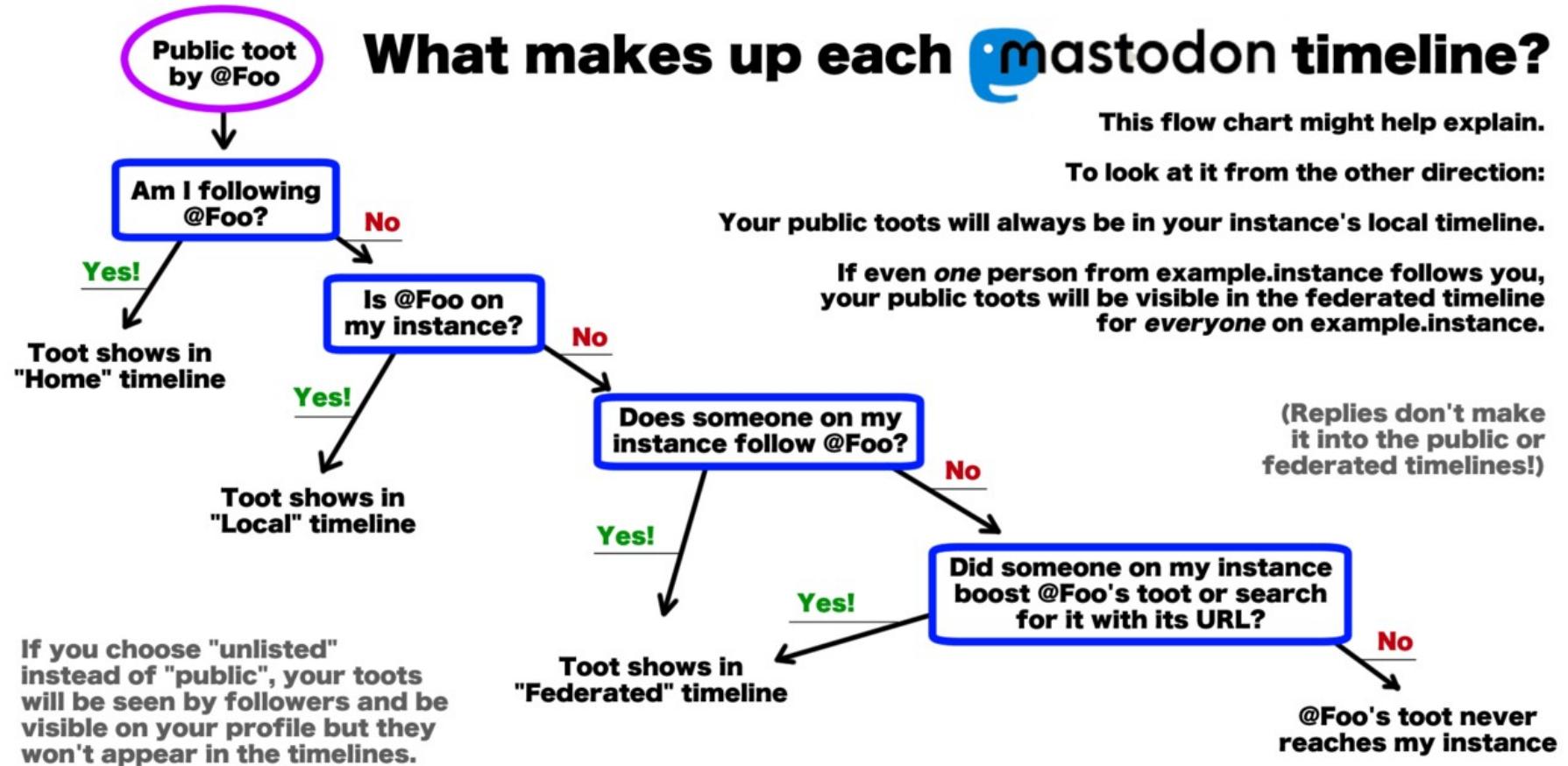
- General info:
  - [fediverse.info](https://fediverse.info) -- Nice video explanation, also, subject-based way to find (self-selected) users.
  - [fedi.tips](https://fedi.tips) -- Comprehensive guide for users.
- Where to start
  - [joinmastodon.org](https://joinmastodon.org) -- largest list of Mastodon servers
  - [joinfediverse.wiki](https://joinfediverse.wiki) -- Great information on different fediverse services and instances
  - [Fedi.garden](https://fedi.garden) – well-curated list of instances
- Which instance to join (assuming you don't want to spin up your own just yet):
  - [fediverse.party/en/portal/servers](https://fediverse.party/en/portal/servers)
- Biased recommendation for this audience
  - [gardenstate.social](https://gardenstate.social)
- Stats, monitoring service, and list of the known Fediverse:
  - [the-federation.info](https://the-federation.info) - charts and graphs of fediverse use.

this slide shamelessly stolen from [Mauricio Uribe](#) (with permission) and subsequently vandalized beyond recognition.

# Thank you.

- I'll be happy to entertain any questions, or further demonstrate what I can on the fediverse.
- Contact information:
  - @murph@hackers.town <https://hackers.town/@murph>
  - @murph@gardenstate.social <https://gardenstate.social/@murph>
  - murph@weirdness.com (email)

# How the timelines work:



"La grande vague" by David Revoy, framasoft.org – CC-BY 4.0



And lo! The spirit of the febiw're  
spake to thee, and said. Thee will  
curate feeds of int'rest and maketh  
the timeline gloried for all thy kin  
and thy wal'rous deeds shall seeth thee  
blessed with wholesome vibes bestow'd  
by the fedimins.

As twast writ, so shal't beest.