

Reddit moderators vow to continue blackout in API access fees row

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Reddit's battle with its own users over new access fees will continue beyond the planned two-day protest, as hundreds of volunteer moderators declared their intention to maintain a blackout indefinitely. The social network, which intends to begin levying swingeing data charges against developers of third-party tools used to browse the site, says it has no intention of backing down from its plans in the wake of the campaign. The new fees, payable by any service that uses the site's tools, or API, to access information, are in part intended to allow the company to monetise its popularity among artificial intelligence researchers, who use the database to train in tools such as GPT-4. "We're not planning any changes to the API updates we've previously announced," a Reddit spokesperson told the Guardian. "We're in contact with a number of communities to clarify any confusion around our data API terms, platform-wide policies, community support resources, and timing for new moderator tools." "Expansive access to data has impact and costs involved; we spend multimillions of dollars on hosting fees and Reddit needs to be fairly paid to continue supporting high-usage third-party apps," the spokesperson added. "The vast majority of API users will not have to pay for access; not all third-party apps usage requires paid access. The Reddit data API is free to use within the published rate limits so long as apps are not monetised. API access is free for moderator tools and bots." The site's intransigence has prompted some moderators to announce that they plan to continue the blackout indefinitely. "Reddit has budged microscopically," wrote one user, SpicyThunder335, a moderator of six subreddits including the forum coordinating the protest. "But our core concerns still aren't satisfied, and these concessions came prior to the blackout start date; Reddit has been silent since it began. 300+ subs have already announced that they are in it for the long haul, prepared to remain private or otherwise inaccessible indefinitely until Reddit provides an adequate solution." Among those that have said they will continue the protest, in which new users are barred from accessing the subforms, are multiples with more than 10 million subscribers, including r/aww, r/music, r/videos and r/futurology. Thousands more have yet to decide either way, even as the blackout period comes to an end: r/funny, r/science, and r/mildlyinteresting, each with more than 20 million subscribers, are still private.