

# Setting up a Nostr Client on Windows with Gossip

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## Synopsis

Nostr is a decentralized protocol that empowers users to participate in a censorship-resistant network or set of networks that is built on relays and end user clients. While anyone can run a relay, the initial challenge can be setting up your account. To use Nostr, you need a client. Gossip is a client that is intended to run on the Desktop. This guide provides the steps I took to setup Gossip as a client on Windows, generate my private and public key, configure relays, follow users, and and then export my private key to use in other applications.

## Change History

2023-02-15	Initial Document
2023-02-18	Cleaned up current limits on verification referencing nostr post

## Download and Install Gossip

Gossip is a desktop client for Nostr initially written by Micahel Dilger released under the MIT License. It is intentionally "plain" in the sense that it's not a full on HTML rendering engine with CSS and Javascript support, instead preferring a very simple textual output, with minimal support for hyperlinks and avatar images, and very good bandwidth management. The project is located at <https://github.com/mikedilger/gossip/>

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The latest releases with prebuilt binaries can be found on the GitHub releases page here

<https://github.com/mikedilger/gossip/releases>.

For Microsoft Windows, download the gossip-0.4.0-microsoft-windows.zip. Locate the downloaded file in Windows Explorer, right click it and choose Extract All... A folder of the name gossip-0.4.0-microsoft windows will be created with three files inside as follows:

- gossip.0.4.0.msi – installer
- SHA256SUMS.txt – lists the SHA256 hashes of release files
- SHA256SUMS.txt.sig – PGP signed result of the SHA256SUMS.txt file to use in verification

Open a command prompt by pressing **WINKEY+R**, typing **cmd** and pressing <enter>.

Navigate to the folder you downloaded the file to. If your Downloads directory, you can type the following: **cd Downloads\gossip-0.4.0-microsoft-windows**

Next, get a hash for the file by typing: **CertUtil -hashfile gossip-0.4.0.msi SHA256**

The output should appear as follows

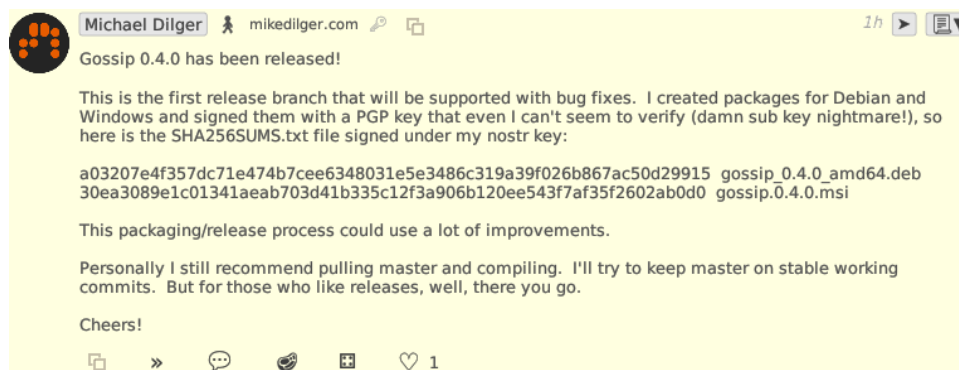
```
SHA256 hash of gossip.0.4.0.msi:  
30ea3089e1c01341aeab703d41b335c12f3a906b120ee543f7af35f2602ab0d0  
CertUtil: -hashfile command completed successfully.
```

View the output of the SHA256SUMS.txt file and verify that the line for gossip.0.4.0.msi matches the same hexadecimal string by typing: **more SHA256SUMS.txt**

This release did not have a good signature so we can't verify by traditional means using the SHA256SUMS.txt.sig file. This is confirmed in [issue #228](#).

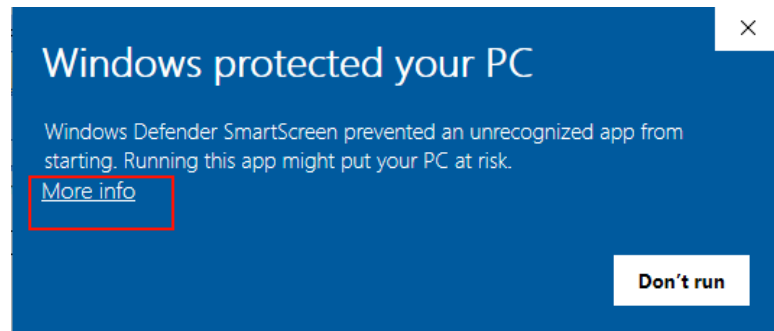
However, Michael Dilger posted a note via Nostr attesting to the hashes as signed under his nostr key. Having already setup Nostr I'm able to see that post via another client and his profile, but you can also see this note using a web browser at

<https://snort.social/search/8d600afa179801376a3c784bc79cec7753c768b8943911d3fb56fe29d63b221c>

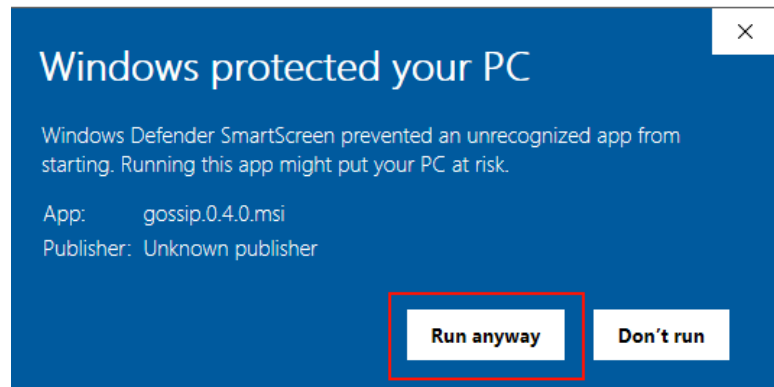


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Double click the gossip-0.4.0.msi. As this file is not signed, you may get a warning screen from Windows Defender indicating it prevented an unrecognized app from starting.



You can proceed by clicking the More info button, and then Run Anyway at the bottom of the dialog.



Once installed, you will find Gossip in your Start Menu.

Data files for Gossip are at `%APPDATA%\gossip`

The shortcut is found at `C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Gossip`

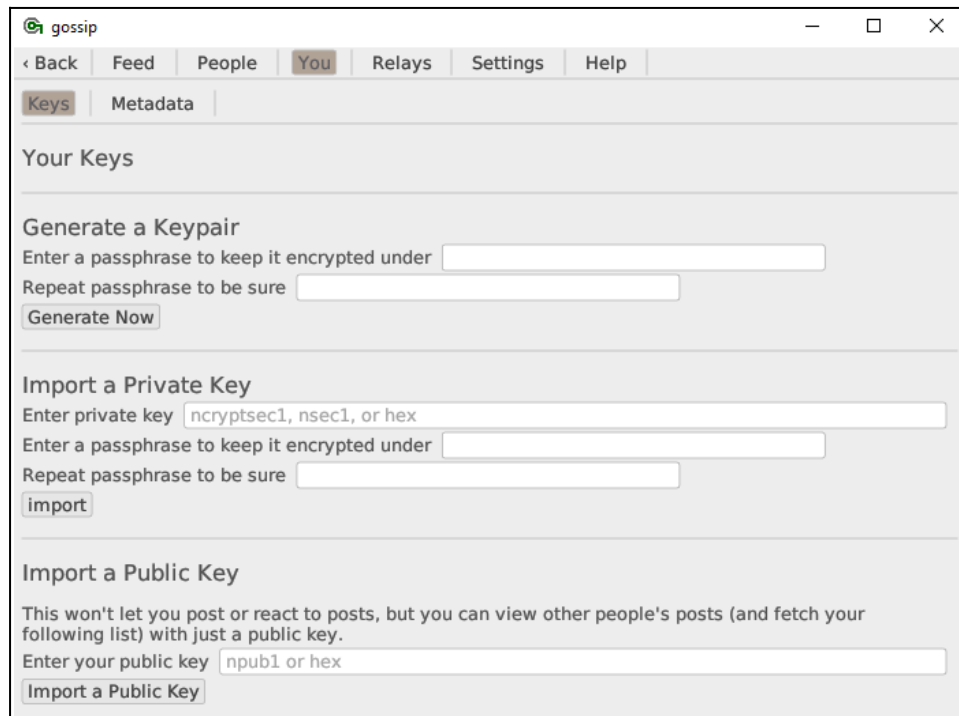
It points to `C:\Program Files (x86)\Gossip\Gossip\Gossip.exe`

## Run Gossip

When you launch gossip, you'll initially be presented with a Help – Getting Started pane. While accessible at any time from the Help menu, its worth reading through this.

## Creating or Importing an Identity

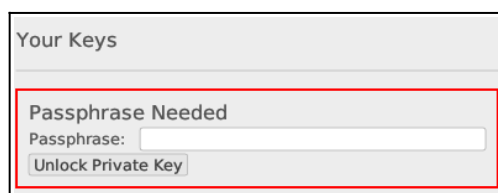
If you don't yet have a nostr identity, you can create one now. From the **You** menu, you can provide a passphrase of your choosing and then click the **Generate Now** button. Note: The first time I tried using this I did not set a passphrase, and all was working until I closed and reopened the app. It expected a passphrase to unlock my private key, and wasn't taking a blank password. As a result I had to recreate a completely new identity and this time I chose a passphrase.



The screenshot shows the 'gossip' application window with the 'You' tab selected. Under 'Your Keys', there are three sections: 'Generate a Keypair' with fields for a passphrase and a 'Generate Now' button; 'Import a Private Key' with fields for a private key (nsec1, nsec1, or hex), a passphrase, and an 'import' button; and 'Import a Public Key' with a field for a public key (npub1 or hex) and an 'Import a Public Key' button. A note states that importing a public key only allows viewing posts.

If you already have a private key, you can import it in this area, or just use your public key for read only access.

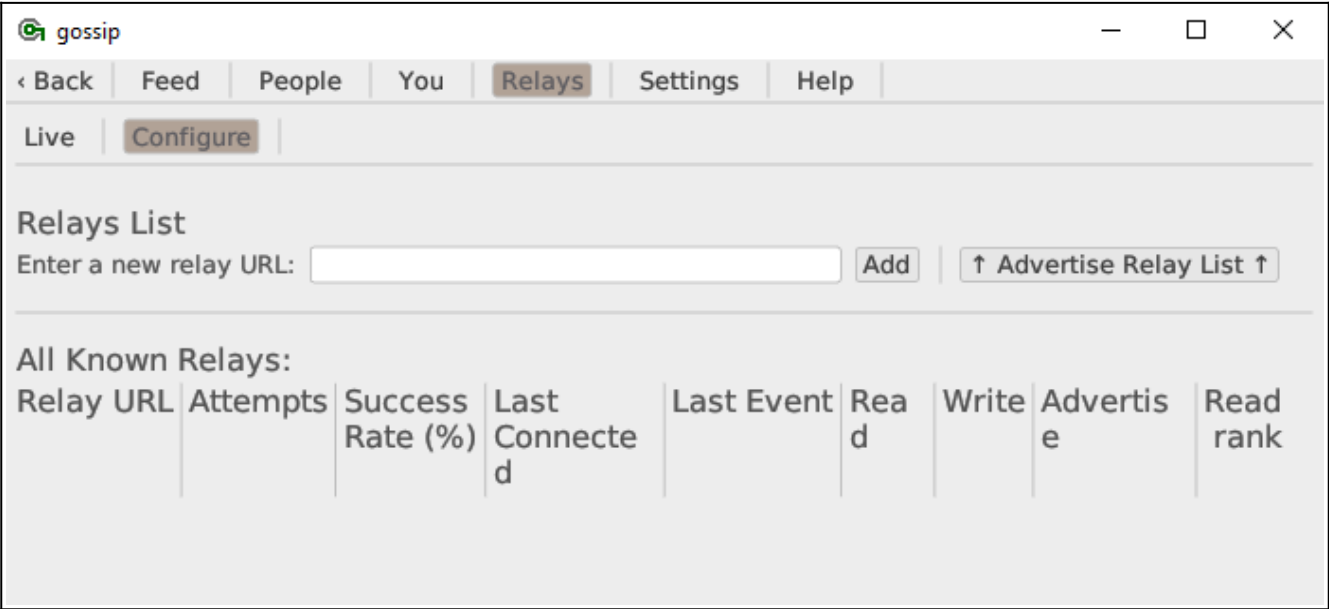
Whether creating a new identity or importing an existing one, this is a good time to close Gossip, and then relaunch it to verify that it retains your settings, and that you get prompted for your passphrase to unlock your private key on the You tab.



A close-up of the 'Passphrase Needed' dialog box. It contains the text 'Passphrase Needed', a label 'Passphrase:' followed by a text input field, and an 'Unlock Private Key' button.

# Adding Relays

To see or write any data, you need to configure some relays. To do so, click the **Relays** menu choice, and then on the second level menu select **Configure**. You'll be presented with this screen.



I have found <https://nostr.watch/relays/find> to be of great help to find a few public relays. When configuring a relay in Gossip, you need to prefix the name of the relay with the web sockets protocol. E.g., for "e.nos.lol", specify "wss://e.nos.lol". There's no way for Gossip to know if the hostname you enter is correct or not, as it will just assume the relay is offline if spelled incorrectly.

For convenience, here are a few relays you can enter.

wss://nos.lol	Wss://e.nos.lol
wss://relay.bleskop.com	wss://nostr1.tunnelsats.com
wss://nostr.bitcoiner.social	wss://nostr.cheeserobot.org
wss://nostr.pleb.network	wss://relay.nostr.info
wss://relay.snort.social	wss://nostr.onsats.org
wss://zee-relay.fly.dev	wss://nostr.One.day

## Following other Nostr Accounts

If you imported your account and followed people previously, you can click on the **People** menu, then **Followed**, and then **PULL Overwrite** or **PULL Merge (Add)**. This should bring in your contact list.

To follow an account, you add them under the **People** menu by choosing **Follow Someone New**.

There are three different methods you can use to follow someone based on the information you have about them.

### Follow Someone

NOTICE: Gossip doesn't update the filters when you follow someone yet, so you have to restart the client to fetch their events. Will fix soon.

NOTICE: use CTRL-V to paste (middle/right click won't work)

---

#### Follow an nprofile

Enter

---

#### NIP-05: Follow a DNS ID

Enter user@domain

---

#### Follow a public key at a relay

Enter public key

Enter a relay URL where we can find them

### Follow an nprofile

If you have the nprofile identifier of another user, you can enter it here. This seems to be the least common thing shared, and I've only seen it really exposed well in Gossip itself. For example, my nprofile is

nprofile1qqszrdqezqk63lqt4yzgftkfxj14tdatea67akeezf8g6a0yj86p5hsprdm  
hxue69uhkummnw3erztn5w4hxuettvwdshguewvdhk6c3a0j5

### NIP-05: Follow a DNS ID

This one is the easiest to use in my opinion. Not everyone has such an ID though. If you want one, you can get one associated with your nostr public key at places like <https://stacker.news>, <https://nostrverified.com>, or buy one through <https://snort.social> or <https://nostrplebs.com/>

Try following me with: **vicariousdrama@nodeyez.com** or **vicariousdrama@stacker.news**

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## Follow a public key at a relay

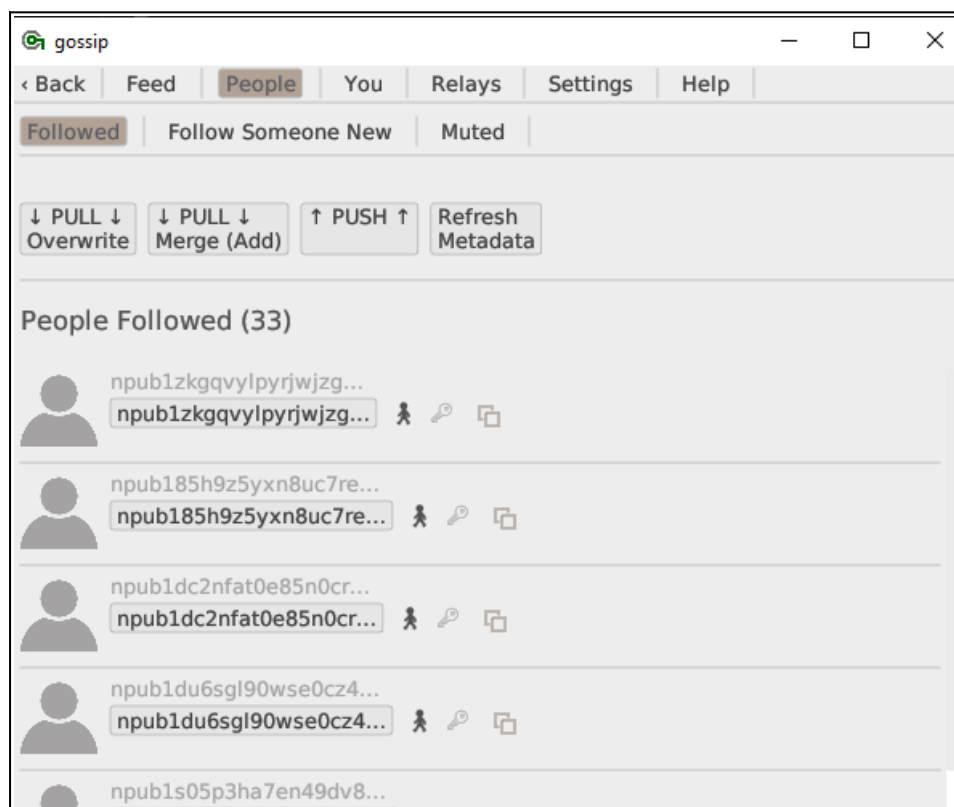
Most people sharing their nostr information to follow them provide their public key, typically in npub1 format. For Gossip to use this, it expects you to provide a public key, and a relay url where you can find them. I hope that in the future Gossip updates to just try the already known relays you've configured. Until then just manually try to enter one of the relays. If you don't specify a relay URL, you'll get the error message "Invalid Relay Url" in the status bar at the bottom of the window. Confounding this is that the status messages don't clear until you click them, so you may enter information it accepts, but won't know until returning to the Followed screen.

Try following me with:

`npub1yx6pjydpd4r7qh2gysjhvjdd9l2km6hnm4amdnjydw3467fy05rf0qfp7kza`

and any of the aforementioned relays

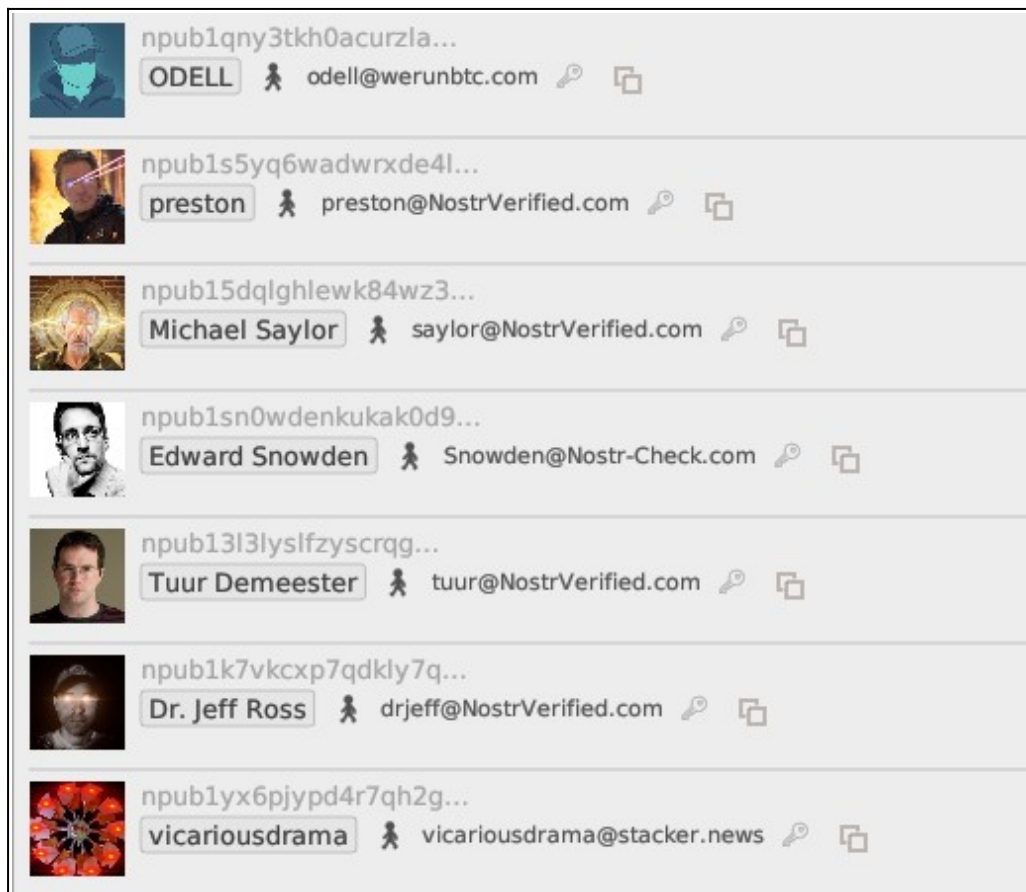
After you've added a few people, click on the **Followed** action on the secondary menu to list the people you've followed. You'll see the list of npub values.



This is rather bland and not very helpful! You might as well be looking at IPv6 addresses! Let's do what we can to fix that.

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Next, click on **Refresh Metadata**. Accounts that have defined metadata and posted their profile will then get populated.



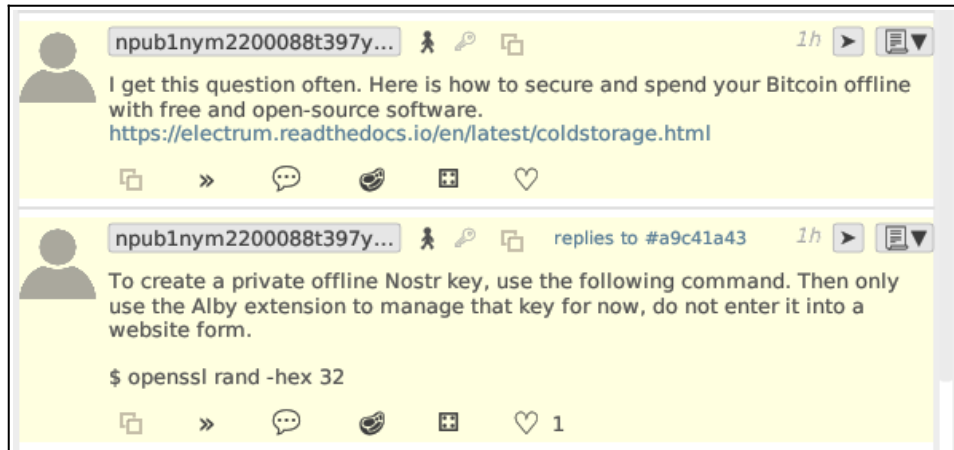
When these accounts post new content, you'll see their profile image and label with what they wrote instead of the nostr public key.



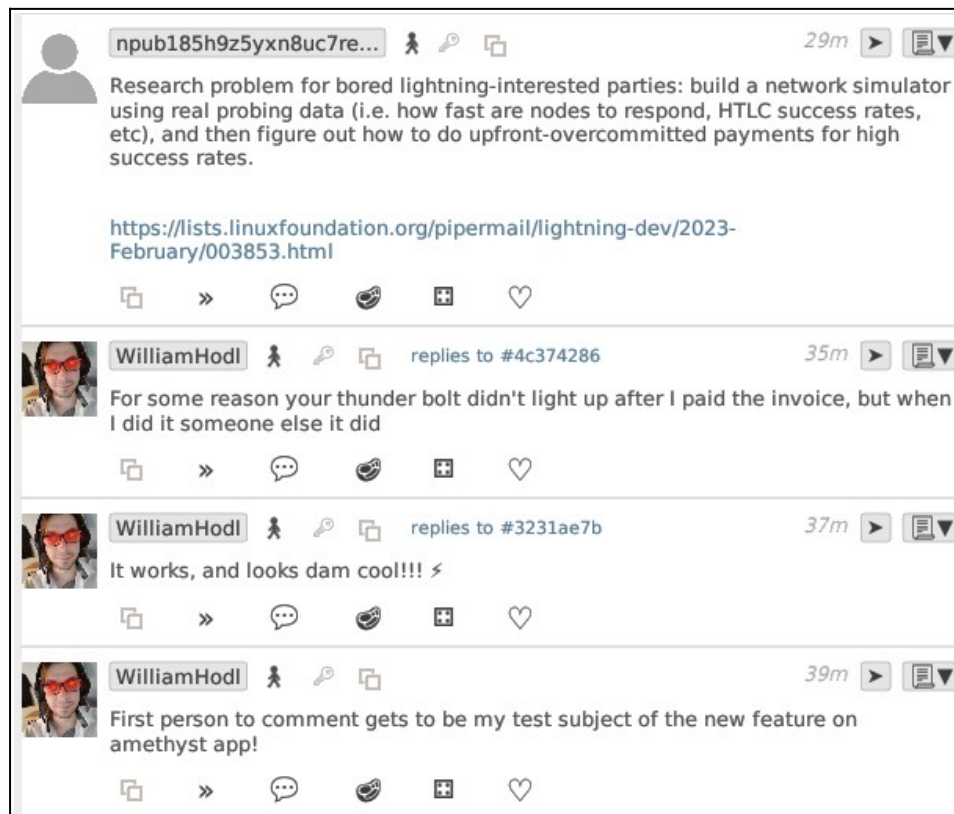
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## Viewing your Feed

With your relays setup, and following people, you will start seeing their posts display in your feed. I followed [nym@nostr.fan](#) and these were some of the posts that appeared before I had refreshed the metadata for accounts I was following

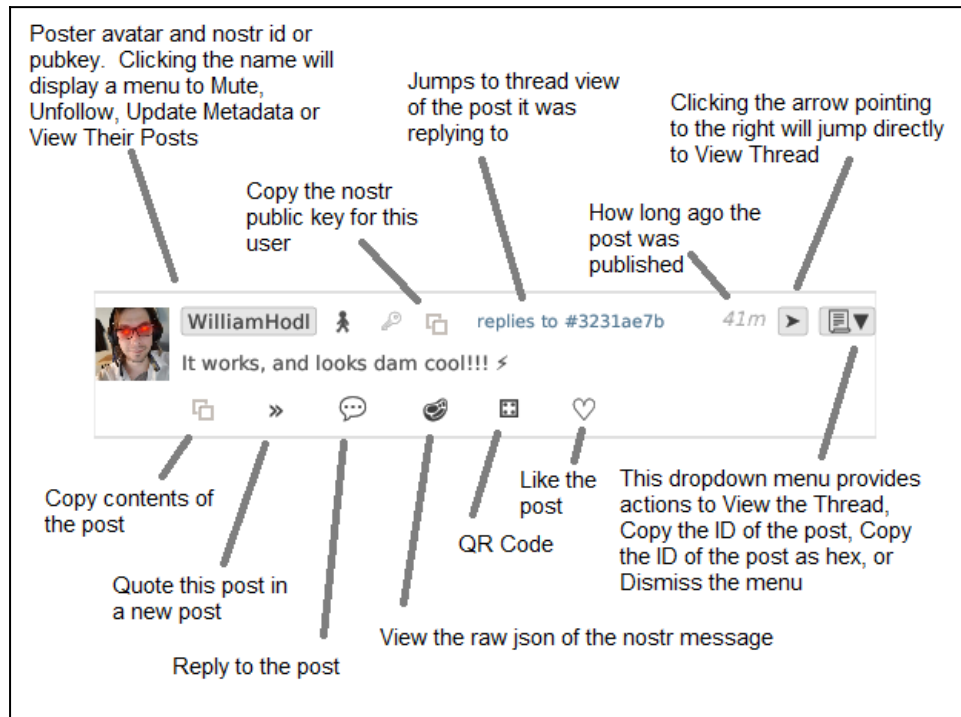


Here's an example of my feed now with some accounts having metadata, and some not

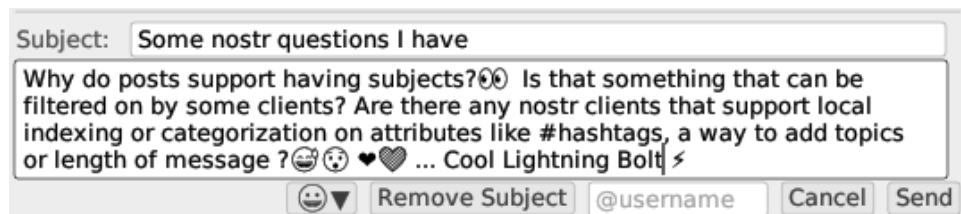


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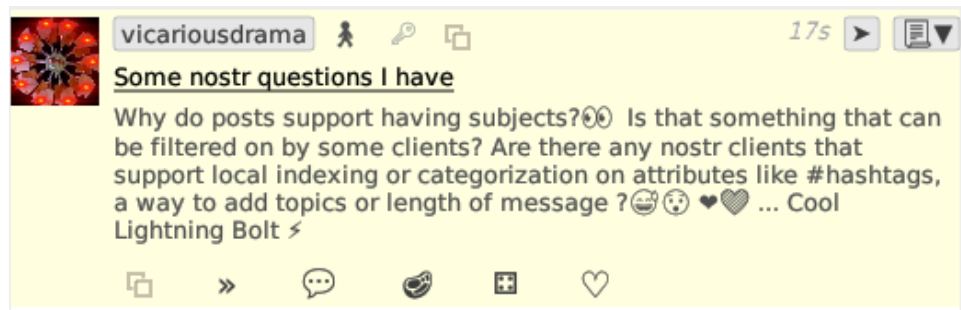
A quick overview of the parts of a message appearing in your feed



When you make a post, you have the option of setting a Subject, and including some basic emojis



Once posted, the message was rendered in Gossip as follows



## Exporting Private Key

If you want to use your nostr public and private key in another application such as a mobile client, you'll need to first export the private key.

But you'll need to close the program first as we have to launch it a little differently.

Open a command prompt (WINKEY+R, type **cmd**, and press <enter>)

Navigate to where Gossip is installed

```
cd "C:\Program Files (x86)\Gossip\Gossip"
```

And then start the program like this

```
gossip > %USERPROFILE%\Downloads\tempoutput.txt
```

This will cause the tempoutput.txt file to capture any data written to the standard output from that program. Next, with gossip open, from the **You** menu, choose the **Keys** option on the secondary menu. Unlock your private key and then scroll down to the bottom of the page and find **Raw Export**. Note the warnings about exporting will make the security of the key weak. Only do this if you really want to export the key. You can export as hex or bech32 format, whichever you need for loading into an alternate client. The status bar will indicate "Exported key has been printed to the console standard output."

Back in the command prompt window, view the output

```
type %USERPROFILE%\Downloads\tempoutput.txt | findstr Exported
```

Make note of the private key information and then delete the output file

```
del %USERPROFILE%\Downloads\tempoutput.txt
```

## Additional Resources

Other clients to consider: Amethyst (Android), Damus (iOS), Nostrgram.co (Web), Astral.Ninja (Web)

Relays: <https://nostr.watch/relays/find>


NIP-05 Identity services: <https://nostrcheck.me/> and <https://nostrplebs.com/>

A ridiculously good curated list of nostr projects and resources: <https://www.nostr.net/>

## Conclusion

Gossip is still rather nascent, but quite functional. It's simplified interface may not be for everyone, but its focus on text output and links over inline rendering of images and other content can be easier on the eyes and safer from a security standpoint.

If you found this guide helpful, please consider supporting myself or others involved in Bitcoin and related projects

To myself, just trying to help people use more cool tools	On chain: <code>bc1qddh13kp41dp943kqpqzapa18j1gk4vjp2xs8vr</code> Lightning Address: <code>0xe09838d5e4075773@ln.tips</code>
To Michael Dilger, developer and maintainer of Gossip	On chain: <code>bc1qx2a4qmuczvmcqr8wauty66gkh2k1ywckd5wn8</code> Lightning Address: <code>decentbun13@walletofsatoshi.com</code> <code>1nur11dp68gurn8ghj7ampd3kx2ar0veekzar0wd5xjtnrdakj7tnhv4kxctttdehhwm30d3h82unvwqhkggetrv4h8gcn4dccnxv563ep</code> 
To Open Source Projects	<a href="https://opensats.org/projects/">https://opensats.org/projects/</a>