

The Ultimate User Guide to Reddit: From Lurker to Power User

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Introduction: What is Reddit?

Reddit is a massive collection of online communities, known as "subreddits," where people can dive into their interests, hobbies, and passions. It's often called "The Front Page of the Internet" because it's where news, trends, and viral content often break first. Unlike social media platforms centered on individual profiles, Reddit is focused on the content and the communities around it. Your identity is your username, and your reputation is built through your contributions.

Core Concepts:

- Subreddits (r/): These are individual communities dedicated to specific topics. Everything has a subreddit, from broad topics like r/news or r/funny to hyper-specific ones like r/BreadStapledToTrees or r/WhatsWrongWithYourDog. They are created and managed by volunteer users called moderators.
- Posts (Submissions): These are the pieces of content shared within a subreddit. They can be text-based stories, links to external articles, images, videos, or polls.
- Comments: The discussion that happens under a post. Reddit's comment system is threaded, meaning you can reply directly to a comment, creating nested conversations.
- Karma: A rough metric of your contribution's value to the community. When users upvote your posts or comments, you gain karma. When they downvote, you lose some. It's a reputation score.

Understanding the Culture: "Lurk More"

Before you actively participate, spend time observing. Each subreddit has its own unique culture, inside jokes, and rules. Reading the sidebar (community information) and observing what kind of posts and comments are successful is crucial. This is often referred to as "lurking," and it's highly recommended. Also, familiarize yourself with Reddiquette, the informal code of conduct for the site, which encourages civility and discourages spam.

Chapter 1: Getting Started – Account Creation and Setup

Creating Your Account:

1. Go to www.reddit.com.
2. Click "Sign Up" in the top right corner.
3. You will be prompted to choose a unique username. Choose wisely! While you can create a new account later, your karma and history are tied to your username. Many users prefer anonymous, non-identifiable names.
4. Set a strong password.
5. Add an email address. This is crucial for account recovery and verification.
6. You will be asked to verify your email address by clicking a link sent to your inbox.

The Initial Experience:

After signing up, Reddit may prompt you to select topics you're interested in (e.g., Gaming, Sports, Art). This helps curate your initial homepage. You can skip this and manually find communities later.

Personalizing Your Profile:

Click on your username in the top right.

- Profile: You can add an avatar (Snoo, the Reddit alien, or upload an image), a profile banner, and a short bio.
- Settings: Here you can manage your email preferences, privacy settings, and feed preferences.

Interface Overview:

- New Reddit: The default modern interface at www.reddit.com. It's more visual and social-media-like.
- Old Reddit: The classic interface, preferred by many long-time users for its density and simplicity. Access it by going to old.reddit.com.
- Mobile App: Available on iOS and Android. Essential for browsing on the go. The experience is similar to New Reddit.
- Third-Party Apps: Many users prefer apps like Apollo (iOS) or Relay (Android) for a cleaner, ad-free experience. *(Note: As of mid-2023, changes to Reddit's API may affect these apps)*.

Chapter 2: Navigating the Reddit Universe

The Home Feed:

When you log in, you'll see a stream of posts. At the top, you can choose your feed:

- Home: A personalized feed of posts from all the subreddits you have joined.
- Popular: A generalized feed of what's trending across all of Reddit, excluding NSFW communities. You don't need to be subscribed.
- All: Similar to Popular but includes all communities, including NSFW ones (if you have them enabled in settings).

Discovering Communities:

The search bar at the top is your best tool. Type in a hobby, interest, or topic. Reddit will suggest relevant subreddits. You can also browse r/popular or r/all and click on subreddit names to

explore new ones. When you find one you like, click the "Join" button. Its posts will now appear in your "Home" feed.

The Algorithm:

Reddit's algorithm determines what you see. It prioritizes posts with a high upvote-to-downvote ratio that are gaining traction quickly. The "Hot" sorting is algorithm-based. "New" shows the latest posts, "Top" shows the highest voted posts in a time period, and "Rising" shows posts that are quickly gaining votes.

Menu and Sidebar:

- The top menu bar allows quick access to your feeds, chats, and notifications.
 - The Sidebar on the right side of a subreddit is its command center. It contains the rules, a description, related communities, moderator lists, and user flair options. **ALWAYS READ THE SIDEBAR BEFORE POSTING.**
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Chapter 3: The Heart of Reddit: Content Consumption

Types of Posts:

- Text Post: For sharing a story, asking a question, or starting a discussion.
- Image & Video Post: For sharing visual content directly to Reddit.
- Link Post: For sharing a URL to an external website, article, or video.
- Poll Post: To create a multiple-choice poll for the community.
- Live Chat Post: Creates a live, chat-room-like experience under a post (moderator-enabled feature).

Interacting with Posts:

- Upvote (▲): Click the up arrow if you think the post is good, relevant, and contributes to the subreddit.
- Downvote (▼): Click the down arrow if the post is off-topic, spam, or does not contribute. It is not a "dislike" button.
- Save: Click the bookmark icon to save a post to a private list you can access later from your profile.
- Hide: Click to remove a post from your feed.
- Report: To alert moderators to content that breaks the rules.

Viewing Videos and Images:

Reddit has its own video host (Reddit Video Player). Click on a video post to play it inline. Click on the post's title to go to the comments page, where the video will be larger. For images, they will often open in a lightbox overlay. Image galleries allow you to swipe through multiple images.

The Comments Section:

This is where Reddit comes alive.

- Threads: Comments can be replied to, creating nested threads. You can collapse a thread by clicking the vertical line next to it.
- Sorting: You can sort comments by:
 - Best: The algorithm's guess at the highest quality comments.
 - Top: The highest voted comments.
 - New: The latest comments.
 - Controversial: Comments with a mix of upvotes and downvotes.

- Q&A: Highlights comments from the original poster (OP).
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Chapter 4: Becoming a Contributor: Creating Posts and Comments

How to Submit a Post:

1. Navigate to the subreddit where you want to post.
2. Click the "Create Post" button.
3. Choose your post type (Text, Image, etc.).
4. Craft a compelling title. This is the most important part for getting attention.
5. Add your content (body text, image, or link).
6. Select a Flair. Many subreddits require you to "flair" your post with a category (e.g., [Help], [News], [Meme]). This is mandatory in some communities.
7. Click "Post."

Crafting a Great Post:

- Follow the Rules: This cannot be overstated. Breaking subreddit rules is the fastest way to have your post removed and potentially get banned.
- Use Proper Formatting: Reddit uses a simple system called Markdown.
 - ****Bold**** becomes Bold
 - ***Italics*** becomes Italics
 - > Quote becomes a blockquote.
 - Headings, lists, and code blocks are also supported.

Commenting Etiquette:

- Add Value: Don't just say "This." or "I agree." Explain why. Add a related anecdote or fact.
- Stay on Topic: Keep your comments relevant to the post and the parent comment you're replying to.
- Read the Room: Understand the subreddit's tone. A joke that works in r/funny might not work in r/science.
- AMAs (Ask Me Anything): A popular post type where a person (expert, celebrity) answers questions from the community. Sort by "Q&A" to see their answers.

Crossposting:

This allows you to share an existing post from one subreddit to another. Click "Crosspost" under a post, select a community you subscribe to, and add context if needed. Ensure the post is relevant to the new community.

Moderation:

If your post is removed, don't take it personally. Moderators are volunteers enforcing community rules. If you break rules repeatedly, you may be banned from a subreddit. A shadowban is a site-wide ban where your posts and comments are hidden from everyone but you; you must appeal to Reddit admins to have it lifted.

Chapter 5: Identity and Reputation: Karma, Awards, and Premium

What is Karma?

It's a points system reflecting your contribution's value. It's split into:

- Post Karma: From upvotes on your submissions.
- Comment Karma: From upvotes on your comments.

Some subreddits have minimum karma requirements to post to prevent spam. Karma is not a literal currency.

Reddit Awards:

Users can spend real money to buy "Coins" and give awards to posts or comments they find exceptional.

- Silver/Gold/Platinum: The classic awards. Gold and Platinum grant the receiver ad-free browsing and other perks for a period.
- Community Awards: Unique awards specific to a subreddit.
- Free Awards: Reddit occasionally gives users a free award to give out within 24 hours. Giving an award brings attention to a post and supports Reddit.

Reddit Premium:

A subscription service that:

- Removes all ads from your experience.
- Gives you a monthly allotment of coins to give awards.
- Grants access to r/lounge, an exclusive subreddit for Premium members.
- Highlights new comments since your last visit.

User Flair:

Small pieces of text or icons that appear next to your username in a specific subreddit. It can signify your expertise, team allegiance, or a funny in-joke. You can often set it yourself in the subreddit's sidebar, or it may be assigned by moderators.

Chapter 6: Communication and Community

Direct Chat and Private Messages:

You can initiate a one-on-one chat or a private message with another user by going to their profile. Use this sparingly; most conversation is meant to be public in the comments.

User Mentions:

To get another user's attention in a comment, type u/ followed by their username (e.g., u/Snoo). They will receive a notification. Don't abuse this to harass users.

Subreddit Mentions:

Typing r/ followed by a subreddit name (e.g., r/help) automatically creates a link to that community. It's a common way to suggest a different subreddit for a post.

Making Friends:

Reddit isn't a traditional friend-making platform. Friendships organically develop through repeated positive interactions in niche communities. Following a user adds their posts to a special feed, but it's not a reciprocal "friendship" like on Facebook.

Chapter 7: Power User Tools and Features

Multireddits (Custom Feeds):

This allows you to group several subreddits together into one feed. For example, you could create a "Sports" multireddit with r/nfl, r/nba, and r/soccer. To create one, go to your subreddit list and click "Create Custom Feed."

Reddit Search:

Reddit's search can be finicky. Use these tips:

- Use keywords from the title you remember.
- Use site:reddit.com/r/[subreddit] [search term] on Google for better results.
- Use advanced search operators within Reddit: author:username, subreddit:name, flair:flairname, title:"key phrase".

Moderating a Community:

This is a guide in itself. It involves using a suite of tools (Mod Queue, Mod Mail, Mod Log) to enforce rules, manage user reports, design the subreddit, and appoint other moderators.

Chapter 8: For Businesses and Creators: Advertising on Reddit

Why Advertise on Reddit?

Reddit ads allow for incredibly targeted, authentic engagement within passionate communities. Users are in a mindset to discuss and discover, not just passively scroll.

Types of Reddit Ads:

- Promoted Posts: These look exactly like organic posts but are labeled "Promoted." They appear in users' feeds and can be upvoted, downvoted, and commented on.
- Display Ads: Traditional banner ads on the side of the page.
- Video Ads: Promoted video posts.

Setting Up a Campaign:

Businesses use Reddit's Ads Portal (ads.reddit.com).

1. Targeting: You can target by subreddit, interest category, demographics, and geography.
2. Budgeting: Set a daily or lifetime budget with a cost-per-click (CPC) or cost-per-impression (CPM) model.
3. Creative: The most important part. Your ad must feel native to Reddit. Don't use corporate jargon. Be humble, authentic, and even self-aware. Engage genuinely with comments on your ad.

Best Practices:

- Be a User First: Understand the culture of the subreddits you're targeting.
 - Transparency: Clearly state who you are and that it's an ad. Redditors respect honesty.
 - Engage: Have a community manager respond to comments—both positive and negative—in a human voice.
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Chapter 9: Safety, Privacy, and Security

Privacy Settings:

In your user settings, you can:

- Opt out of personalized ads based on your activity.
- Make your online status private.
- Decide who can send you chat requests and messages.

Blocking and Reporting:

If you are harassed, you can block a user from their profile. They can no longer contact you or see your content. Use the "Report" link under any content to report it to moderators (for rule-breaking) or to Reddit admins (for site-wide rule violations like threats).

Staying Safe:

- Be Anonymous: Never share personal information (doxxing) about yourself or others.
- Beware of Scams: Be wary of links to shady websites, phishing attempts, and crypto scams.
- Brigading: Do not participate in mass downvoting or commenting in a community you are not a part of, especially if linked from another subreddit. This is against site-wide rules.

Mental Health:

Reddit can be a wonderful place, but it can also be a source of anger, envy, or anxiety. Curate your feed. Leave toxic communities. Use the block button liberally. Take breaks. Remember, it's just a website.

Appendix: Glossary of Common Reddit Terms (Redditspeak)

- AMA: Ask Me Anything. A Q&A session.
- OP: Original Poster. The person who created the post.
- Repost: Content that has been posted before, often seen as low-effort.
- OC: Original Content. Content you created yourself.
- TIL: Today I Learned. A popular subreddit and phrase.
- /s: Denotes sarcasm in text.
- FTFY: Fixed That For You. A minor correction, often humorous.
- IMO/IMHO: In My Opinion / In My Humble Opinion.
- TL;DR: Too Long; Didn't Read. A short summary for a long post.
- Updoot: A playful term for an upvote.
- Cake Day: The anniversary of the day you created your Reddit account. A small cake icon appears next to your name.
- Reddit Gold: The classic award, now part of a broader system.
- The Narwhal Bacons at Midnight: An old, mostly retired secret handshake. You'll impress no one by using it now.
- IANAL: I Am Not A Lawyer. A common disclaimer in legal advice threads.
- NSFW: Not Safe For Work. Content that is sexual, violent, or otherwise inappropriate for a public setting.
- NSFL: Not Safe For Life. Extremely graphic or disturbing content.
- SO: Significant Other.

- Edit: Used to mark what you changed in a post or comment after posting it.
- This.: A low-effort comment that simply agrees with the post above. Generally frowned upon.
- Front Page: What you see when your post gets extremely popular and is seen by millions on the r/popular or r/all feed.