

# Bluesky, the X rival boosted by EU's tech enforcer

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Since Elon Musk hollowed out Twitter's staffing, pushed services behind a paywall and renamed it X, many users have been thrashing around for an alternative social media platform.

So far none has emerged as a clear winner, but EU commissioner Thierry Breton, alarmed at the disinformation on X, [has just made](#) a very public choice to switch to Bluesky—one of the lesser-known X rivals.

## **What is Bluesky?**

The platform was created by Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey as a side project in 2019.

Dorsey put five engineers aside to build a decentralized alternative to Twitter.

He said at the time that centralized attempts to police abuse and misinformation on a platform like Twitter were unlikely to work, and wanted to give users more control of personal data and content moderation.

But Bluesky did not see the light of day until earlier this year.

The current version looks and feels incredibly similar to the Musk-owned site.

But the platform is keeping itself exclusive—you need an invite from another user or you have to sign up to a "waitlist" that can take weeks to get an account.

## **Who is using it?**

The more that Musk has set about transforming X into a realm of paywalls and petty gripes, the more popular the alternatives have become.

Bluesky is still in its experimental phase but said last month that it had already passed the landmark of one million users.

Sign-ups have spiked each time Musk has made a controversial change to his platform, according to the company's data.

High-profile [early adopters](#) include US politician Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and fashion model Chrissy Teigen.

And journalists and [media organizations](#), frequent targets of Musk's ire on X, are moving over in numbers.

US outlets like the Washington Post and New York Times already post their stories on Bluesky.

However, the platform has not yet achieved a huge network effect and discussion of current events is limited.

Its "what's hot" function provides users with a list of the main topics at any given time, which on Wednesday featured a lot of cat pictures and very little discussion of Israel-Hamas conflict.

## **Can it rival X?**

The field is getting crowded, with small operators battling it out with juggernauts like Meta, which launched its Threads service in July.

The numbers don't look great for the upstarts.

Threads had more than 100 million sign-ups within days of its launch, and Musk claims X has 550 million users—though his figures are disputed.

But Bluesky is pushing a very different model.

It wants [users](#) and developers to be free to interact with the platform, including via third-party applications.

It also insists it will not rely on advertising or monetising user data, rolling out a paid service for those who want their names attached to a domain name.

Early reviews of the [platform](#) have been broadly positive, with Silicon Valley tech commentator Casey Newton praising its focus on decentralization, writing on his Platformer site it was "a near one-for-one replica of Twitter in its early days".

An editorial on the tech news site The Verge in May was equally positive.

"Bluesky has a long way to go to fully replace Twitter for me, but right now, I think it actually could," it said.

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