

Mastodon & the Fediverse

Florida Drupal Camp 2024

Saturday, February 24th, 2024

Adam Varn

Senior Front-End Developer

Who Am I?



Adam Varn

Senior Front-End Developer @ Lullabot

- Worked in Drupal since 2009.
- Hot Sauce Design & Development from 2010-2021.
- Love working on accessibility and front-end design challenges!
- Live in Tampa.
- Co-organizer of FLDC.
- Only missed FLDC 2008 and 2017!

Mastodon - drupal.community/@hotsauce

What is the Fediverse?

The fediverse (a portmanteau of "federation" and "universe") is an ensemble of social networks, which, while independently hosted, can communicate with each other. ActivityPub, a W3C standard, is the most widely used protocol that powers the fediverse. Users on different websites can send and receive updates from others across the network.

Nearly all fediverse platforms are free and open-source software.



ActivityPub

A decentralized social networking protocol, developed by the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) that provides a client/server API for adding, editing and deleting content as well as a “federated” server-to-server API for delivering notifications, content, etc.

- **Federated:** Group of servers that share the same operating protocols (i.e. stand alone vs. one company).
- Open standard, widely used since 2018. Can be anything from microblog to photos to music sharing to videos.
- Offers greater control over “unwanted” interactions for users and administrators.
- Used by tools like Mastodon, PixelFed, etc. and supported by Flipboard, Firefox, Medium.
- Integrates with WordPress and Drupal, among other CMS tools.
- Future integration planned by Tumblr, Gitlab, Threads, Flickr and others.

Benefits of Federation

There are already too many social networks, why should I care about “federated” ones?



Benefits of Federation

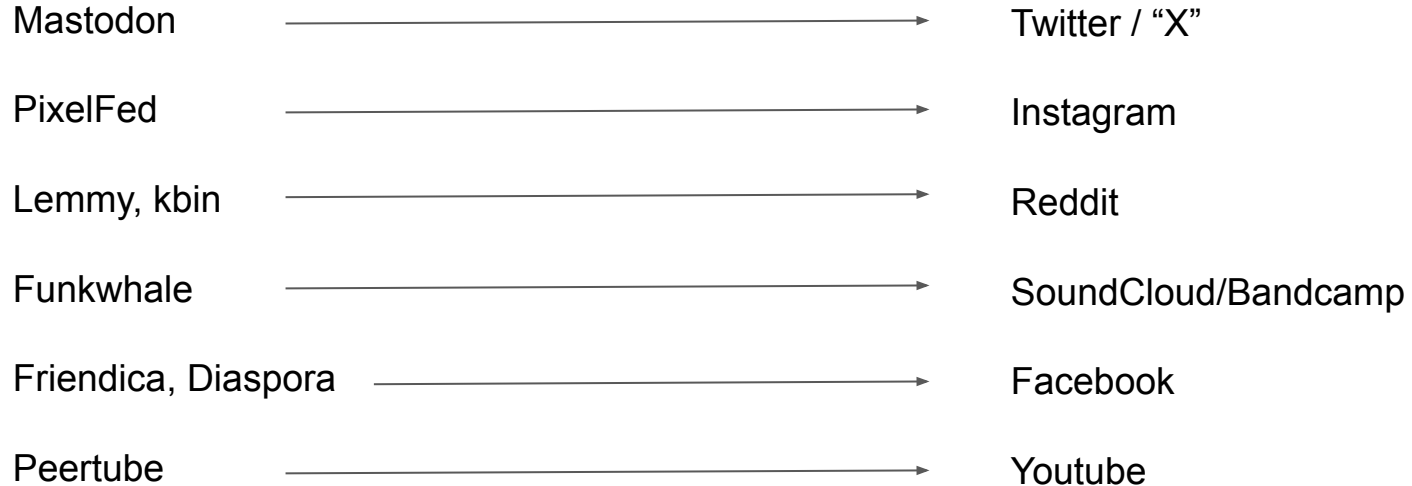
- No single owner!
- No ads!
- No algorithms!
- No data collection!
- Smaller communities centered on interests!
- Crosspost to your heart's content!
- Own your profile – don't like where you are? Leave and take your followers with you!

Drawbacks of Federation

- Only as good as your moderators.
- Server costs can unexpectedly grow, leading to abandonment.
- Smaller communities = less reach (for now).
- Development can be slow.
- Open source means *anyone* can use (TruthSocial, Gab).

Comparisons to other services

(Not always 1 to 1)



Joining the Fediverse

Or: WTF is an “instance”?

Instances & Accounts

- Simply put: An “instance” is the **server** your account is on.
- Accounts often follow [@username@instance.name](#).
- Think of your account like an email address.
- Even if you are on one instance, you can still interact with other accounts on other instances - even across different platforms using ActivityPub (i.e. you can post on Mastodon, PixelFed and micro.blog all in one post).
- Instance admins can “defederate” from other instances that are hateful, harmful or spammy.

Mastodon



Mastodon

<https://joinmastodon.org/>

- Released in 2016, created by Eugen Rochko. Run by German non-profit gGmbH
- “Tweets” = “Posts” (formerly Toots)
- Average ~ 8.2 million active users per day / 11k servers / 858 million posts per day - [Source](#)

Mastodon

<https://joinmastodon.org/servers>

- Find a server based on your interests, then click “Create account”
- Agree to terms of the server and enter your username and other info
- Mastodon.social = largest, original
- [Drupal.community](#) co-run by Mateu Aguiló Bosch (creator of Single Directory Components module)

Mastodon

The screenshot displays the Mastodon web interface. On the left is a sidebar with a search bar, a profile for @hotsauce, and a text input field for a new post. The main content area shows a 'Home' feed with posts from Ars Technica, Philip Bump, and Techmeme. On the right is a navigation menu with options like Home, Notifications, Explore, Local, Federated, Direct messages, Bookmarks, Favourites, Lists, News, and Preferences.

Search or paste URL 🔍

@hotsauce
Edit profile

What's on your mind? 📎

🔗 📄 🗨️ CW EN 500

Publish!

Home 🔊 📄

mastodon

🏠 Home

40 🔔 Notifications

Explore

🏠 Local

🌐 Federated

@ Direct messages

🔖 Bookmarks

★ Favourites

☰ Lists

📰 News


⚙️ Preferences

Ars Technica @arstechnica@mastodon.social 37s

Dealmaster: Coffee gear, iPhone 15 accessory discounts, and more

We have the usual tech stuff and some extras for making the day-to-day easier.

arstechnica.com/shopping/2023/...




🔗 📄 🗨️ 0

Philip Bump @pbump@journa.host 1m

A stark example of a problem the government chooses not to fix.

[washingtonpost.com/politics/20...](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/20...)



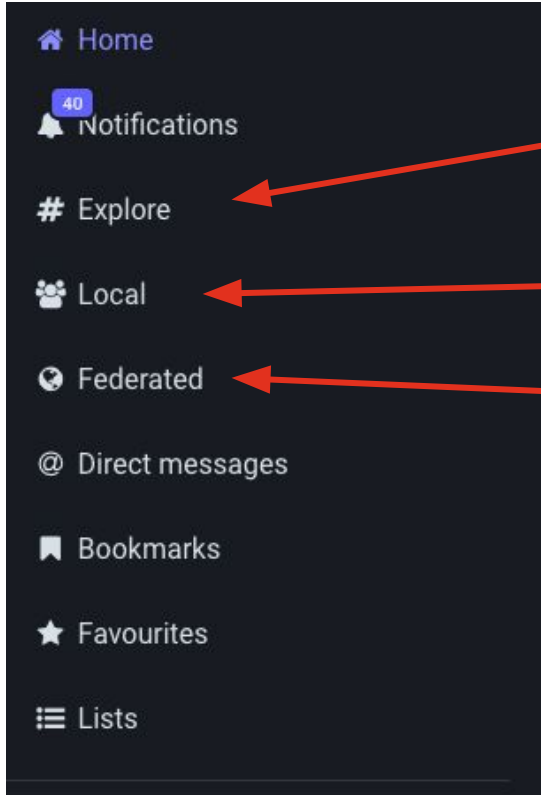
What government can do and what it won't do

The Washington Post

🔗 📄 🗨️ 0

Techmeme 2m

Mastodon

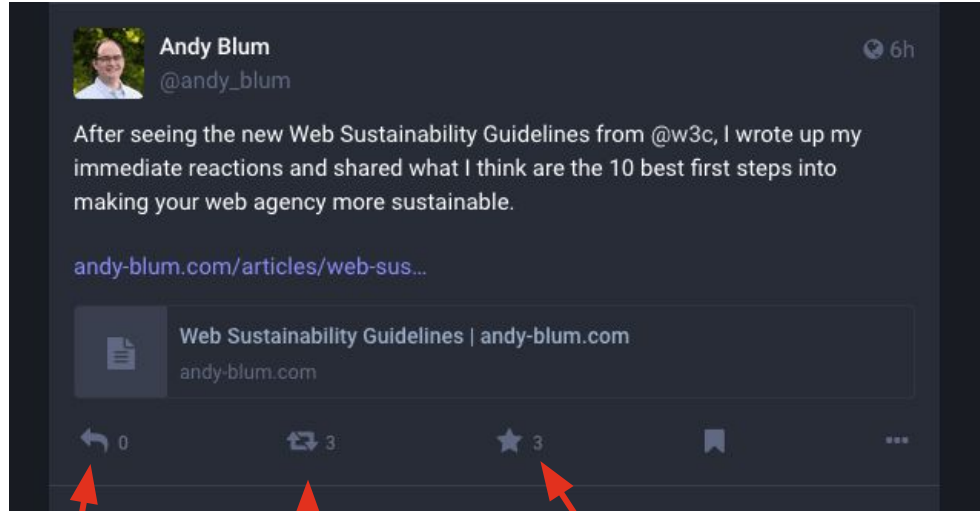


Popular posts based on interaction on your server - *NOT* from an algorithm

What people on your instance have posted recently.

Posts from all users from all instances that your instance admins have connected to. Can be a firehose!

Mastodon



Replies to this
post

“Re-posts” aka
“re-tweets”

“Favorited” aka Likes

Mastodon



Follows this hashtag

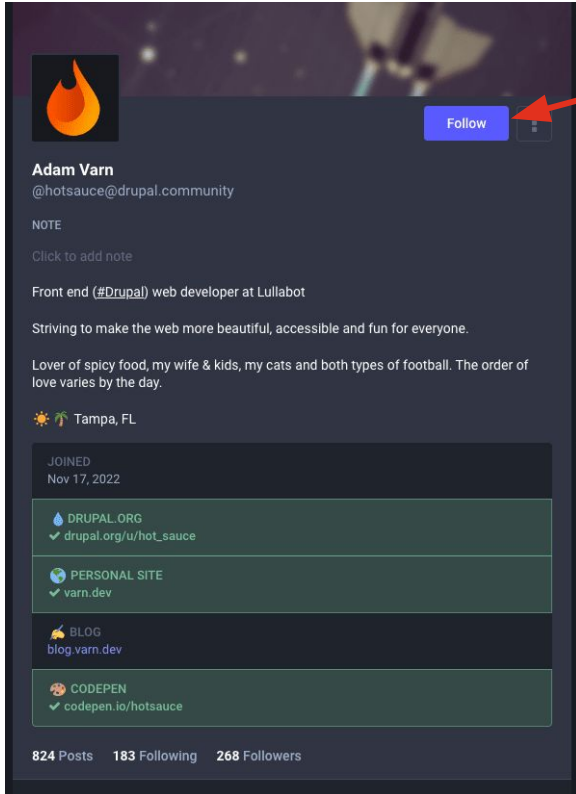
- Followed hashtags appear in your home feed
- You'll see new posts with this hashtag on your feed, as long as these posts are shared by people who are using a public instance on Mastodon and the instance you're on allows posts from their instance.

Finding People to Follow



Mastodon

Go to profile, click Follow



A screenshot of a Mastodon user profile for Adam Varn. The profile includes a profile picture of a flame, a bio, location (Tampa, FL), and a list of links. A red arrow points to the 'Follow' button in the top right corner of the profile header.

Adam Varn
@hotsauce@drupal.community

NOTE

Click to add note

Front end (#Drupal) web developer at Lullabot

Striving to make the web more beautiful, accessible and fun for everyone.

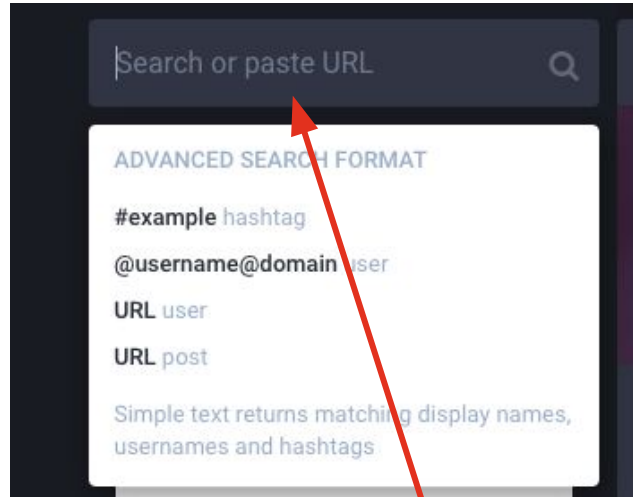
Lover of spicy food, my wife & kids, my cats and both types of football. The order of love varies by the day.

🌞🌴 Tampa, FL

JOINED
Nov 17, 2022

- DRUPAL.ORG
✓ drupal.org/u/hot_sauce
- PERSONAL SITE
✓ varn.dev
- BLOG
blog.varn.dev
- CODEPEN
✓ codepen.io/hotsauce

824 Posts 183 Following 268 Followers



A screenshot of the Mastodon search interface. A search bar at the top contains the text 'Search or paste URL'. Below the search bar, a dropdown menu shows 'ADVANCED SEARCH FORMAT' with examples: '#example hashtag', '@username@domain user', 'URL user', and 'URL post'. A red arrow points from the text 'Go to profile, click Follow' to the search bar.

Search or paste URL

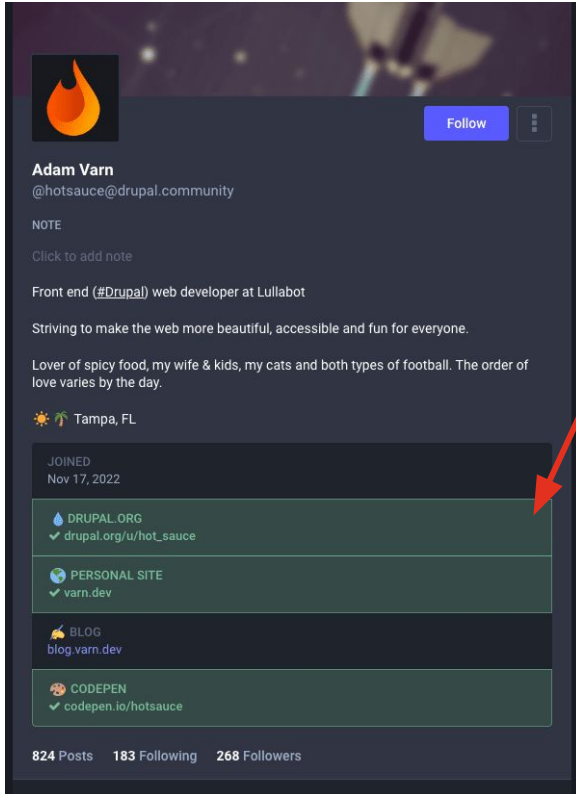
ADVANCED SEARCH FORMAT

- #example hashtag
- @username@domain user
- URL user
- URL post

Simple text returns matching display names, usernames and hashtags

Paste in full URL to user - i.e. <https://drupal.community/@hotsauce>

Mastodon



“Verified” user using `rel=me` attribute

- Follow anyone you want – expand your horizons by following different people!
- If you don’t like their posts, just unfollow.
- Favorite and re-post as much as you’d like

Remember: There is no algorithm!

Mastodon



- 500+ character post limits (for free)
- Future features: full text search, quote posts (both opt-in), and lots more!
- ALT text all the things!
- Don't like your instance? Move your account!
- Support your instance admins financially if you can

Resources

- <https://fediverse.party/> - Directory of different Fediverse projects & their usage stats
- [Mastodon app feature comparison](http://tinyurl.com/MastodonFLDC) - http://tinyurl.com/MastodonFLDC
- [Moving accounts on Mastodon](#)
- [ActivityPub module for Drupal](#)

Tada!

