

Making the Move to Medium

Is “Medium” the Right Medium for Your Organization’s Opinion Pieces?

Started by a co-founder of Twitter, Medium offers a way for nonprofits to share your opinions in more than 140 characters and **become conversation starters** in your issue areas.

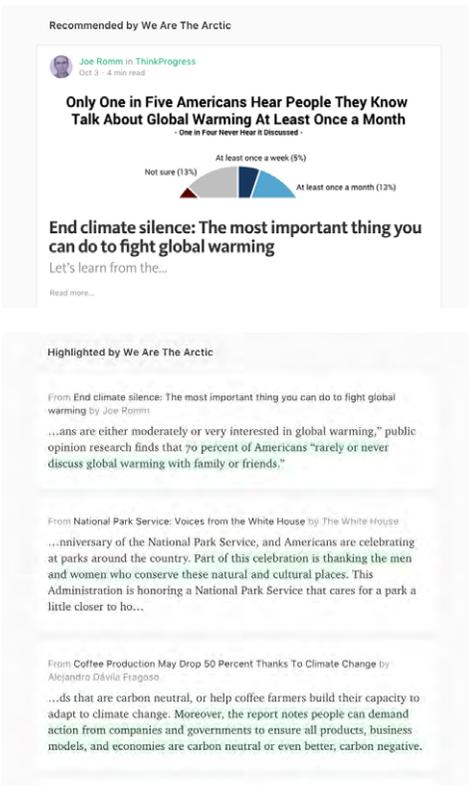
What is Medium?

Users describe Medium as a platform with all the benefits of a newspaper opinion page, reaching a large number of people, while effectively bypassing editorial hurdles. Influencers like policymakers also frequently use it, including President Obama who published his entire 2015 State of the Union address on Medium before his speech. With **30 million unique monthly visitors**, and the same ability to connect to conversations with issue tags as on Twitter, many nonprofits have started using it as their blog or as a way to promote their thought pieces.



Take for example, the Mozilla Foundation, which **uses Medium** to create a “global community dedicated to making the web better and open for all.” In addition to its standard user profile, which has more than 16,000 followers, the foundation created three Medium publications – **Mozilla Internet Citizen, Mozilla Festival, and Read, Write and Participate**. Publications in Medium are collections of articles from multiple writers that focus on a particular theme or issue. These contributors often come from different backgrounds and work together to draft stories and share unique perspectives that deepen ongoing conversations. While the Foundation acts as an editor to all its publications, it has more than 35 writers contributing to the three publications.

The **Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR)** also makes the most of Medium’s minimalist design to tell powerful stories. In 2014, CIR created a collection of personal stories to showcase how war affects children.



Why Publish on Medium?

Medium, which acts as both a communication platform and social network, is unlike a traditional blog in that users can share ideas or interact with influencers in the field through tools like “responses” and “highlights.”

Responses let people comment on a story. However, unlike replies to a blog post or Facebook status, responses appear as an individual story on the commenter’s profile. The screenshot to the left is of the stories “recommended” – the Medium equivalent of sharing – by the We Are The Arctic Medium account, which aims to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Highlighting lets someone show appreciation for another user’s story by highlighting text they find interesting. Medium notifies the author of the story when someone highlights a line of text.

Both tools encourage engagement and can help your organization get in front of important audiences. Medium is also an open platform, meaning any user can see another Medium page without following it. Users can see which of your stories others have viewed, engaged with or read the most – all factors that determine whether a Medium post receives more exposure. This means that a nonprofit with a small following can receive just as much – or more – traction and coverage than an organization with a large network of followers if it effectively promotes its content.

Get Started

If you're looking for a way to reach more audiences (who isn't?), then you should consider joining Medium, as the platform provides nonprofits with ample opportunity to engage with thought leaders and mission-driven organizations. But most importantly, make sure you have the staff time to devote to starting a new social media channel, which includes following and interacting with other pages and publishing quality content. If you decide you're ready, follow these steps to get started:



1. Create an account. You can **sign up** by connecting your Twitter, Facebook or Google account to Medium, or by creating a new account with an email address. We recommend registering with either a Facebook or Twitter account, which will automatically enroll your connections who use Medium in your new page's list of followers.

2. Build your page. You can choose between Medium's **story import tool**, **WordPress plugin** or **blog migration tool** to import and backdate posts from your organization's blog into your Medium account. If you have trouble backdating your posts, **contact a Medium representative**.



3. Follow other Medium accounts. Once your account has been set up, you can start following people, publications and tags that relate to your field or issues. Not only will this increase your chances of gaining more followers, but following influential people and organizations can help you determine what conversations currently exist and what conversations you can start.

4. Cultivate relationships. Begin building a relationship with your followers or prominent figures in your field by responding to their stories, highlighting text you agree with or sending them private notes.

The Basics

Once you've created your profile and started building it, here are the basics of how to begin driving conversations in your issue areas and reaching audiences.



- **Recommend content:** Recommendations are Medium's equivalent to a Facebook share or a Twitter retweet. Users can recommend an article by clicking the green heart icon at the bottom of a story. As a nonprofit on Medium, you can use recommendations to engage with people in your network. By recommending a post, you are not just letting the author know you liked their story, but also increasing the chances of receiving more views on your own profile.



- **Highlight text:** To elevate a particular part of someone else's story, highlight that text. A small black bar will appear over the highlighted text with these options from left to right:
 - **Highlight:** Clicking the highlighter button adds a highlighted background behind the selected text. Highlights are then posted on your profile page.
 - **Response:** Clicking the speech bubble icon allows you to create a response to the text you've highlighted. Responses are then posted on your profile page.
 - **Text Shot:** Clicking the Twitter icon creates a tweet of the text you've highlighted.
 - **Private Note:** Clicking the lock icon allows users to send a private note to the author.



- **Write a story:** Click the "Write a story" link at the top of the page. Once you've started writing your story, Medium provides you with limited formatting options like bolding or italicizing text, adding a hyperlink, minimizing or maximizing font size or pulling out important quotes.

- **Add images or videos:** Clicking on the plus icon in a story allows you to add an image or video to your content. If you have multiple pictures in your story, you can choose which to feature in the preview of the story by clicking on that photo and pressing CTRL + ALT + 8. The border around the photo will turn red, and a dialogue will appear at the top of the page telling you that your selected image just became your featured image.



- **Publish:** Sharing a draft allows individuals – including those without Medium accounts – to leave notes on your story before it is published. When you publish a story, you are allowed to choose up to five tags so that your story links to multiple conversations. Medium provides you with tag suggestions and shows you the number of times the tag has been used. Choose more frequently used tags for your story to gain more traction and reach more people.



- **Display your coverage:** If you received coverage in a traditional news source, ask that outlet for permission to “import” the story to Medium. If it does not give permission, you should still be able to share a link to the original report on your Medium page.

- **Mix up your posts:** Don't be afraid to sprinkle a short piece, or a link to a video or a photo essay, in with your longer pieces. Readers won't always have time to read a long-form essay, so giving them options when they arrive at your page can help get your message across regardless of the amount of time they have.



- **Measure results:** You can measure your stories' performance on Medium through the Stats page. Access your page analytics by clicking on your profile photo at the top right corner of your Medium feed and selecting 'Stats.' The page will first show you a graph with information on your views, reads and recommendations over a 30-day period. By going farther down the page, you will see stats for each of your stories. Check your Stats page on a regular basis to determine which of your stories or topics are most popular with readers, and base your next story on your results.