

Reddit censorship results in mass exodus to Voat.co

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Reddit is dead like Aaron Swartz

Why was one founder found dead, another leaves in the middle of the night and John Doerr's fingerprints are on everything?



[Eye on Open](#)

By [Jim Lynch](#)

MASS EXODUS FROM REDDIT. WORDPRESS.COM AND VIMEO NEXT? THE PUBLIC MAKES BIG TECH PAY FOR CENSORSHIP!

In today's open source roundup: Reddit members rebel against censorship and decamp to Voat.co. Plus: Voat.co welcomes Reddit users with open arms. And angry redditors protest in the official censorship announcement thread

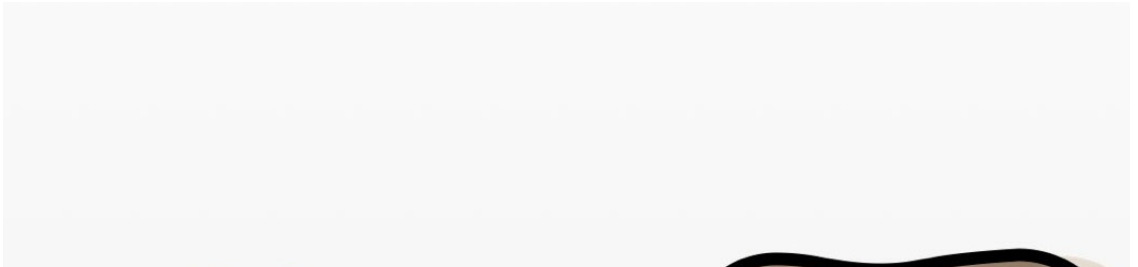
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A massive anti-censorship revolt begins on Reddit

Reddit, which has long billed itself as "the front page of the Internet" is facing a massive revolt by its members due to perceived censorship. The folks running Reddit have removed a number of subreddits and that's what sparked the revolt and the mass exodus to [Voat.co](#).



When failed discrimination plaintiff Ellen Pao was appointed CEO of Reddit last January, many predicted that it would herald a new age of censorship on the link-sharing and discussion site. Those predictions appear to have come true, as a number of communities on the site (known as "subreddits") have just been unilaterally shut down. The sudden move resulted in the removal of one popular subreddit, */r/fatpeoplehate*, which until its closure was the 13th-most active community on Reddit. The subreddit was dedicated to mocking fat people and the "fat acceptance" movement, although it was not known for engaging in any off-site harassment. Other Redditors have cited the subreddit as an important source of motivation to maintain a healthier lifestyle. The crackdown came after a week of censorship on Reddit, including the mass deletions of links to media stories and even satirical cartoons concerning CEO Ellen Pao. There was also a bizarre incident in which a moderator of a gaming community demanded a user write a 500-word essay on trans acceptance before being unbanned. The user's crime was using the word "trap": a common, but not derogatory, term of Internet slang to describe crossdressers. Despite protestations from transwomen who said they were not offended, the moderator refused to relent. There are early indications that the Reddit admins may have finally crossed the Rubicon on the road to alienating their user base. User activity on their main competitor, Voat.co had been rising steadily since social media censorship became an issue during the #GamerGate controversy, but in the past few hours their figures have skyrocketed. At the time of writing, there are over 3,700 active users on Voat's alternative to */r/fatpeoplehate* —almost double its number of subscribers. [More at Breitbart](#)

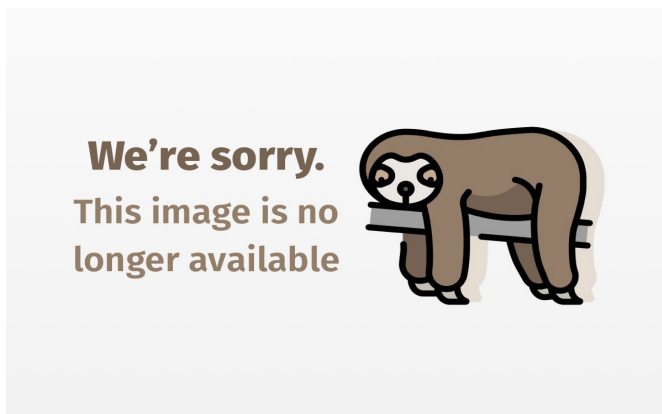


Image credit: [LuminiferousPen](#)

Censorship on Reddit resulted in a massive exodus of users to [Voat.co](#).

The owner of Voat.co welcomed Reddit users with this message:

We are sorry to see reddit change like this, in this way, in such an accelerated fashion. We would have never anticipated such events. We are not ready for such a huge influx of new users and haven't prepared for such a large and sudden increase either. But we welcome each and every person and are working hard to catch up in order to handle this. Welcome to Voat! We'll have things straightened out soon.

[More at Voat](#)

The official Voat account on Twitter [posted this update](#) about adding new servers to accommodate the thousands and thousands of Reddit users that are hitting the [Voat.co](#) site right now:

Thank you all for amazing support, patience and donations! We're working on launching new servers in order to handle the new users...

The [Voat subreddit](#) is also getting a big influx of new subscribers as more redditors discover the alternative site, and prepare to make the jump to Voat. New Voat.co users seemed eager to support the site:

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Go

Lindeed: "Atko, please, please - set up paypal/parteon/skrill way to support you guys. I don't have a way to buy bitcoins (need ID, passport, bank verification in my country) and i'd like to support your work."

Imabigplayer: "Voat does have an official Paypal in the main page it's hello@voat.co I donated money that could've been used for steam to help with Atko's server."

Mokum: "...let's all remember reddit in these dying moments. RIP in piece, old friend."

Here's to the new ones joining us - help us in building a new community, without the same old tired memes and manipulations of voting - something organic, beautiful, and nice. Where we can be free to disagree with each other, and enjoy seeing different points of view."

Gordam: "I feel the same way. I joined Reddit 8.5 years ago. It's sad seeing Reddit going from meaningful discussions to drama drama drama and banning users over voicing an unpopular opinion."

No_username: "Before they abandoned all their ideals yesterday, Reddit was fine."

3rdStrongestMole: "I don't know. It started to get fishy when they began hiding upvote and downvote numbers, and vote fuzzing always felt strange to me (why adjust the numbers when you can just use a hidden algorithm to move posts lower?). It felt like a way to hide vote manipulation."

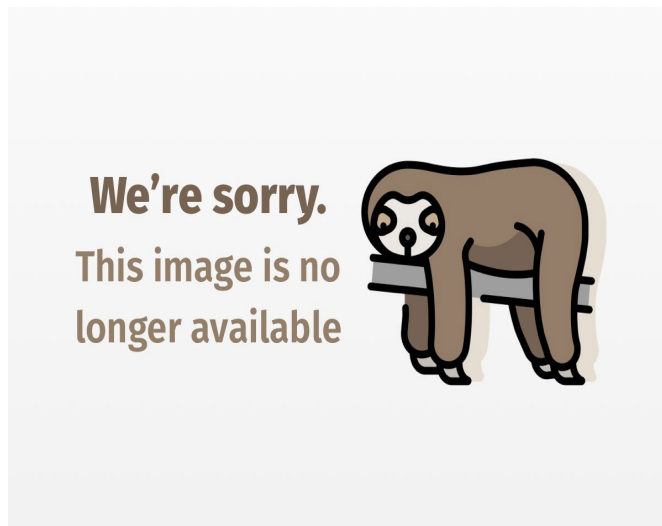
For something so monstrously huge, I'm still amazed at how free and open it is. But I'm not sure it's enough."

Stoic: "Having been active for 15 days I have witnessed many jokes about being 'inb4 the reddit exodus by Pao' and I always thought they were exaggerating. The lack of censorship didn't attract me to Voat; the mature discussions, the lack of both karmawhoring and hostility and the ability to build a community anew did."

Earwig: "Considering the massive influx you guys are getting right now, you're doing alright! The site might be slow, but it's still up and functioning, which is more than can be said about Reddit when it has a problem."

RazorThyOwn: "I hope you guys can keep up with the sudden influx! IMHO Reddit has been going downhill for awhile, and it has been such a relief to discover voat."

[More at Voat](#)

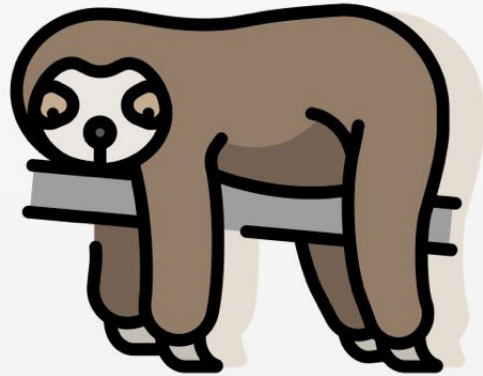


[Image credit: RanchFlavoredMayo](#)

The Voat site has been inundated with angry redditors looking for a new home.

The hit list

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Meanwhile, back on Reddit, users reacted to the official announcement about the censorship decision:

SilvanestheErudite: "Is there going to be transparency as to how subreddits are determined to be harrasing?"

TheCyberGlitch: "Seriously, since this "safe space" crap started, wildly upvoted posts have anticipated the banning of [/r/fatpeoplehate](#)[1] and the free pass to SRS, all of them very critical of this form of censorship and the dark path it'll lead Reddit down to."

Newtotheylte: "Silly admins. Don't you understand your userbase? You really think you're going to stop those people from having their sub? Now you've turned them against you and you've pissed them off. Now they will stop at nothing to have their message heard. There are now over 10 subs dedicated to fat people hate."

Duffman489585: "The idea is to monetize reddit into an unoffensive cash cow for native advertisers. It's been a steady march this direction. Ideals vs. big money is a hard...fight."

Sebas156: "I decided to turn adblock back on today for reddit."

Icemasta: "It's just the usual cycle. It was Digg, Digg was cool, then Digg 3.0 came and wasn't that great, but people stayed and it survived. Then Digg 4.0, which was targeted at advertising/marketing, and boom went the dynamite and everyone and their dogs left for Reddit. I was never a huge fan of digg, so I was on reddit mostly, and let's just say the influx changed things a lot, for better and worse."

So right now we're on the Reddit 3.0 phase, and when Reddit 4.0 hit, which should be within the next year at the pace of changes we're getting, reddit will be wrapped and ready for sale, and we'll all be jumping ship AGAIN. Every time a company things they know better about how their userbase should interact, you get people riled up, but we've be educated to be docile, so we support until we get pissed off. We're nearing that tipping edge of multiple social news site popping up to compete with Reddit and taking good chunks of the population."

xXNuclearTacoXx: "Turn on your adblock and stop buying gold."

DrZack: ""Front page of the internet" campaigning against internet censorship while simultaneously banning subreddits that offend you. SHAME ON YOU. If you find a subreddit offensive, don't go on it. I didn't like the subreddit, but that's no reason to ban it. Thought about buying gold/turning off adblock to support reddit but no more. I vote with my \$\$ and reddit does not get my vote."

Toomuchcringe: "Thanks for the reminder to turn adblock back on. Forgot about that."

Caribou16: "Just canceled my recurring gold membership."

[More at Reddit](#)

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