

This blog dives into the social media platform Bluesky, what it is and how churches could make use of it.

# What is Bluesky? What makes it different from other platforms?

Bluesky is a social media app that functions similarly to X (formerly Twitter) and Threads but with its own ethos and some unique features.

The Bluesky company was founded by original Twitter creator Jack Dorsey and its appeal to many lies in the promise of capturing how Twitter used to feel and giving more freedom to users over how the platform works for them. The app aspires to feature less toxicity and polarisation, and more emphasis on fun conversation, community and creativity. A growing number of people and brands have come to view X as a toxic environment no longer worth investing in, whether that's due to algorithm changes, explicit content, bots, or owner Elon Musk's overtly stated political preferences. For many, Bluesky has become the go-to alternative.

It was initially an invite-only service but opened to the public in 2024, and since then has seen rapid growth. In late October 2024 Bluesky had 13 million users, and has gained an additional 12 million since then.

## Who uses it?

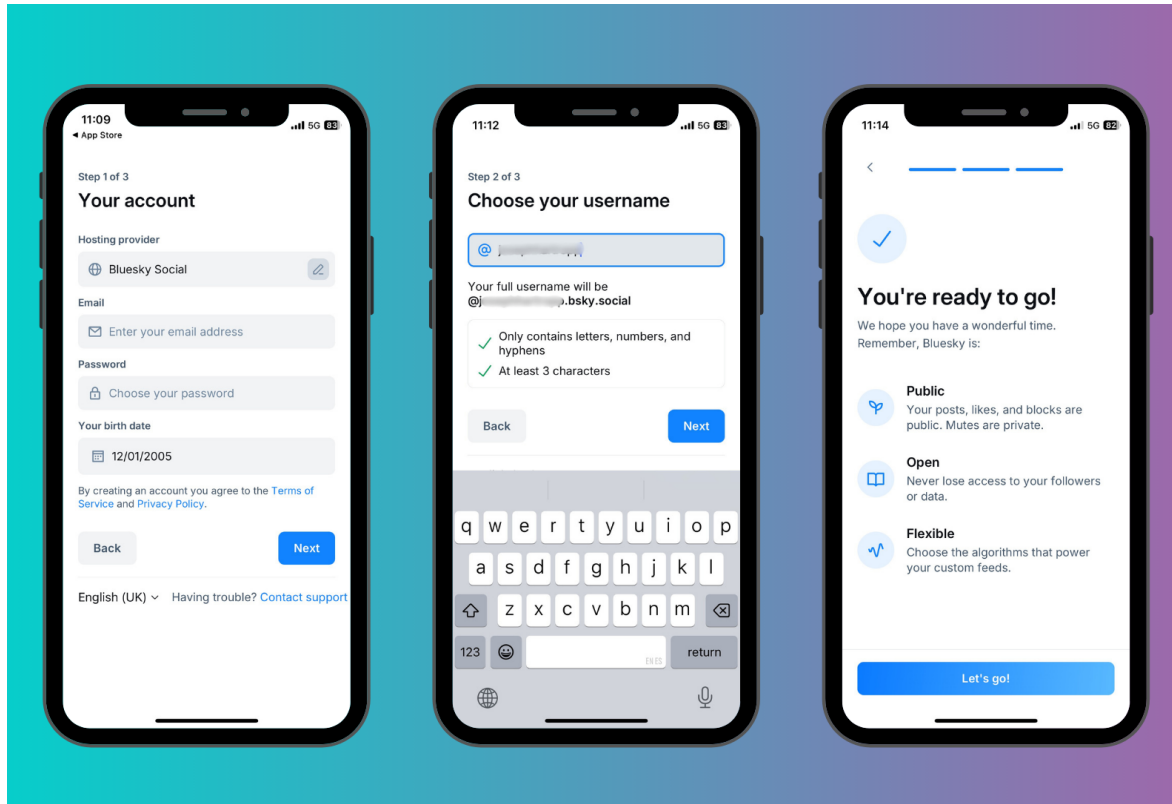
At the latest count there are over 25 million Bluesky users. It skews younger: most users (62.64%) are under 34, and over a third of users are aged 18-24. Those in older brackets are fewer but still present: those aged 35-54 represent 24.7% of users. Most users (62.64%) are male (most social apps are male dominated but this one is more so than others such as X, Facebook, Instagram or TikTok).

7.51% of users are visiting from the UK, the third most popular country after the USA and Brazil.

## How do you make an account?

Account setup is short and simple. You can create an account by downloading the app for your mobile device, or just creating an account on a desktop. There's a three-step process:

1. Choose your email, password, and birthdate
2. Choose your public username e.g. allsaintswatford.bsky.social
3. Add a profile picture/ avatar/ church logo, and select your topic interests to customise what you see on your feed (you can change these later)



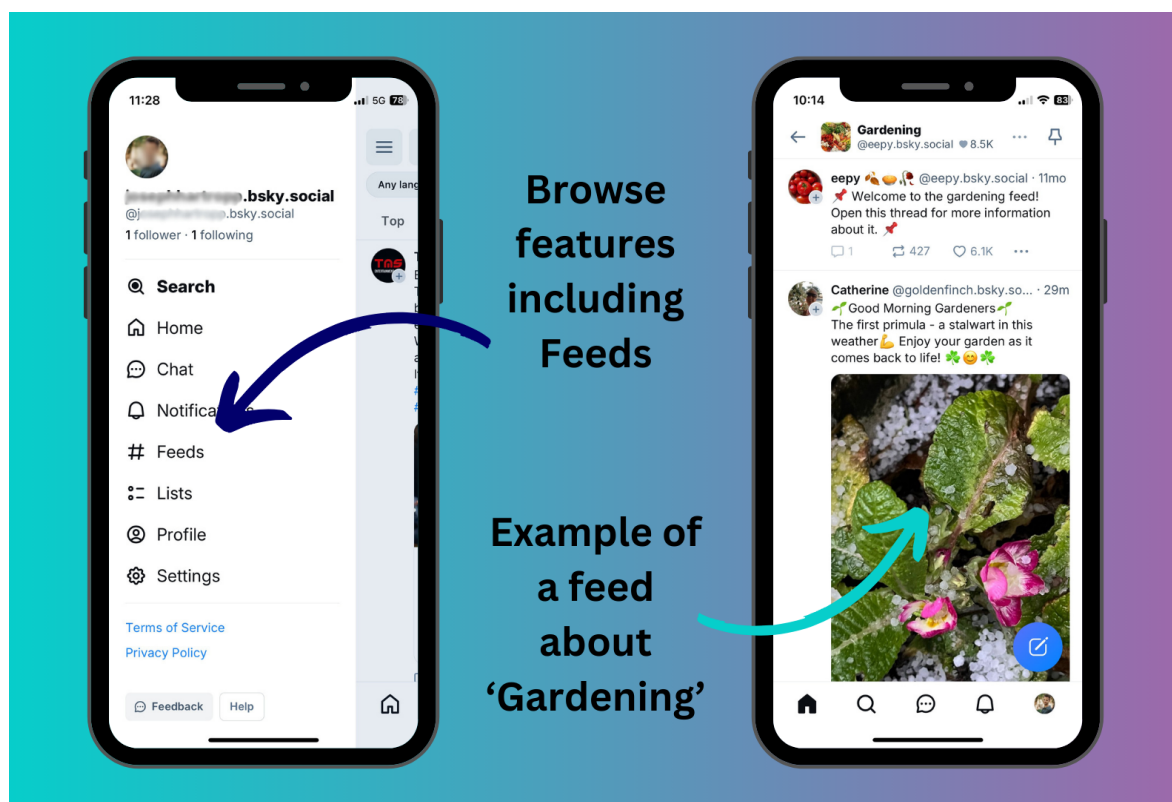
## How does it work?

Navigation and user experience on Bluesky is similar to what you see on X and Threads. You have a **Home** section divided into Discover (recommended content based on your preferences) and Following (only posts from those who follow). When you see a post, you can comment on it (speech bubble icon), repost it (two arrows icon), or like it (heart icon). You can also click the three dots icon to see more options, such as Share (e.g. in other apps), Send via direct message (within Bluesky), Show more/less like this, Hide, Block and more. When you create a post (tap the pen icon), you can write text, and share a photo, a video or a GIF – posts are limited to 300 characters.

The **Search** section lets you see what topics are trending, or search for posts on a specific theme. You can exchange direct messages in the **Chat** section, while **Notifications** shows you mentions and new followers.

Something unique to Bluesky is the **Feeds** section which allows you to build your own timeline experience. As well as seeing posts from the Discover or Following sections, you can look at specific curated feeds built around topics and user types. For example, a feed for mutuals – those who follow you back, or those who speak a certain language, or a feed where people just post about Art, or Books, or Birdwatching. It takes some coding ability to create a feed, but you can search all existing feeds and add any you like to your timeline. Once added, they appear as an additional section on the Home page.

Another feature Bluesky offers to personalise your experience is **starter packs**. This is a list of up to 150 recommended accounts (and up to three feeds) to follow that you can share with others, who can then use these recommendations to build their own ‘following’ lists. They might follow all of the starter pack recommendations or just select some, but it’s a useful way to quickly build up a ‘following’ list particularly with a specific focus. There are starter packs for different topics, interests and organisations. However, unlike feeds these packs can’t be found directly via search, you have to receive them through a shared invite (either a private invitation or publicly shared link). [Read more about starter packs here.](#)



# What could churches use it for?

Like other apps, it's a place for churches to establish a presence, connect with existing followers and find/be found by others who aren't connected with your church.

Churches could use Bluesky to post:

- Daily Bible verses/ inspirational messages
- News/community updates
- Sharing upcoming events
- Questions to your audience to provoke conversation (you can't share a poll currently)
- Replies to and reposts of other account posts – so you're not just amplifying your own platform

See some example posts here:



# Should you use BlueSky?

Here's an overview of some potential benefits and drawbacks of using Bluesky.

## Potential benefits:

- **Engaged community:** Because it's a newer platform with a positive vision, those who are on it might be more likely to engage as they seek to cultivate the X-alternative.
- **Make it what you want:** There's space to curate a specific experience and build a community around specific areas of conversation. Depending on who you're trying to reach, that could be useful.
- **Potential for wholesome, less polarising content:** Perhaps no social media platform can be free from negativity or conflict, but Bluesky aspires to be a positive environment, so the potential for something wholesome may be appealing to you.
- **Algorithm and ad-free:** There are no ads, and your feed isn't determined by a mysterious/changing algorithm shaping what you see. This has made it particularly attractive to people who don't want to see ads, or got tired of seeing posts from people they did not follow on X.

## Possible drawbacks:

- **It is smaller:** Though it's growing, the overall base of followers is smaller than apps like Instagram or TikTok (which have billions of users), and if you're creating an account today it will take time to build an audience (not that follower count should necessarily be a priority)
- **You can't advertise:** While freedom from ads might be a positive from a user perspective, it could be a drawback if you were hoping to use ads to amplify your growth and reach.
- **'Another app':** It's a new social app to join, monitor and create posts for. If the potential gains aren't enough, for some it just might be one app too many when you could focus on doing better/more focused content for fewer platforms.

## Blue skies ahead?

Bluesky is a fast-growing alternative to X. While no one knows if it will ever become the most popular platform, it could be worth making time for it so that you're covered if it does. Like any platform it takes dedication and consistent posting to grow an audience, and you should only pursue it because it aligns with your goals.

To keep things simple and not too time-intensive, you could probably start by making a quick Bluesky account, and if you already post on X or Threads, sharing similar or the same posts on Bluesky just to get started. After all the purpose and functionality of the app is very similar to X and Threads. As you develop and grow an audience, you might wish to start posting content that's catered more specifically to your Bluesky community.

If you have a new year's resolution to try new platforms or tools, establishing a presence on Bluesky might be worth a look. You could make a commitment to post and engage for 3 months and then review after. Of course, if you try it and decide it's not for you, you can always delete your account later.

- Joseph Hartropp, Digital Labs Officer

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