

Community standards and participation guidelines of DEMOS

First published on Thu 23 September 2019

Scope

This document covers all aspects of community interaction and moderation on the DEMOS website, including comments on blogs or articles.

Moderation aims

The DEMOS website provides a growing number of opportunities for readers who wish to discuss content we publish, or debate issues more generally. Our aim is to ensure this platform is inclusive and safe.

Community standards

The following guidelines we expect all participants in the community areas of the DEMOS website to abide by, which directly inform our approach to community moderation (detailed below). These apply across the site, while moderation decisions are also informed by the context in which comments are made.

1. **We welcome debate and dissent, but personal attacks (against authors or other users), persistent trolling and mindless abuse will not be tolerated.** The key to maintaining the DEMOS website as an inviting space is to focus on intelligent discussion of topics.
2. **We acknowledge criticism of the articles we publish, but will not allow misrepresentation of the DEMOS and our contributors to be published on our website.** For the sake of robust debate, we will distinguish between constructive, focused argument and smear tactics.
3. **We understand that people often feel strongly about issues debated on the site, but we will consider removing any content that others might find extremely offensive or threatening.** Please respect other people's views and beliefs and consider your impact on others when making your contribution.
4. **We reserve the right to redirect or curtail conversations which descend into "flame-wars" based on ingrained partisanship or generalisations.** We don't want to stop people discussing topics they are enthusiastic about, but we do ask users to find ways of sharing their views that do not feel divisive, threatening or toxic to others.
5. **We will not tolerate racism, sexism, homophobia or other forms of hate-speech, or contributions that could be interpreted as such.** We recognise the difference between criticising a particular government, organisation, community or belief and attacking people on the basis of their race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age.
6. **We will remove any content that may put us in legal jeopardy,** such as potentially libellous or defamatory postings, or material posted in potential breach of copyright.
7. **We will remove any posts that are obviously commercial or otherwise spam-like.** Our aim is that this site should provide a space for people to interact with our content and each other, and we actively discourage commercial entities passing themselves off as

individuals, in order to post advertising material or links. This may also apply to people or organisations who frequently post propaganda or external links without adding substantively to the quality of the discussion on the DEMOS website.

8. **Keep it relevant.** We know that some conversations can be wide-ranging, but if you post something which is unrelated to the original topic (“off-topic”) then it may be removed, in order to keep the thread on track. This also applies to queries or comments about moderation, which should not be posted as comments.
9. **Be aware that you may be misunderstood,** so try to be clear about what you are saying, and expect that people may understand your contribution differently than you intended. Remember that text isn’t always a great medium for conversation: tone of voice (sarcasm, humour and so on) doesn’t always come across when using words on a screen. **You can help to keep the DEMOS community areas open to all viewpoints by maintaining a reasonable tone, even in unreasonable circumstances.**
10. **The platform is ours, but the conversation belongs to everybody.** We want this to be a welcoming space for intelligent discussion, and we expect participants to help us achieve this by notifying us of potential problems and helping each other to keep conversations inviting and appropriate. If you spot something problematic in community interaction areas, please report it. **When we all take responsibility for maintaining an appropriate and constructive environment, the debate itself is improved and everyone benefits.**

Moderation approach

Participants who seriously, persistently or wilfully ignore the community standards, participation guidelines or terms and conditions will have their posting privileges for all the DEMOS community areas withdrawn.

This is not an action that we take lightly or arbitrarily. However, we are aiming to create and maintain an online experience consistent with DEMOS values, and we reserve the right to make decisions which we feel support that. Please be aware that moderators may contact you by email in relation to your participation, especially where an issue comes up in relation to these community standards. Any advice they give/request they make should be adhered to, as our moderators are employed to enforce these community standards and create a constructive environment for everyone who contributes to our site.

We will, when necessary, remove user postings or comments from our articles, and blog posts.

If a contribution to the DEMOS website is perceived as breaching the community guidelines set out above, then it will be removed by the community team, in the interests of keeping community areas of the site appropriate for the vast majority of the people who visit.

(NB: We will not edit user posts to change the meaning, spelling, or anything else intended by the user. Even if only part of a comment or posting is perceived as breaching the community guidelines, the whole thing may be removed. Also, when a comment or post is removed for any of the reasons above, it is sometimes necessary to delete subsequent messages which refer to explicitly or quote from the original (removed) comment, in order to preserve some notion of conversational thread. This may also happen because a later comment quotes directly the problematic bits of the original

comment, which just perpetuates the problem. In such cases not every deletion will be marked individually.)

We reserve the right to take steps or implement measures which we hope will benefit the whole community of the DEMOS community participants.

Because we are ultimately responsible for everything which appears on this site, all actions and decisions taken by our moderators are final. Unfortunately we can't enter into correspondence regarding specific moderation activity, although all correspondence will be read.

If you have suggestions or questions about any aspect of community participation on the DEMOS website, you can write to dpo (at) tk.mta.hu. Please mark all queries clearly in the subject line.

For queries about your user account, you should contact Vinicius Gorczeski at vinicius.gorczeski (at) tk.mta.hu

Note about community content

The views expressed in community areas of this site do not necessarily reflect or represent the views of DEMOS, its staff or contributors.

Further information and resources

Please remember that by registering for the DEMOS website you have also agreed to our Terms of Service