

Bluesky is starting to feel like Twitter

Bluesky might be the Twitter-like we've been waiting for.

Yes, I know it's still invite-only. Yes, I know there are only thousands of people on the platform right now. Yes, I know that it's still missing table-stakes features like video uploads and DMs.

Still, I'm starting to feel that Bluesky is where it's at.

It happened over the last few days. Bluesky – the decentralized Twitter alternative spun up by Twitter itself – has suddenly filled up with tech media and other people I follow on Twitter. Over and over again, I would check Twitter for one thing or another and see somebody begging for a Bluesky invite, then just a little while later, that person would be in my Bluesky skyline (timeline) and skeeting (tweeting). While that means I might be able to use Bluesky for actual newsgathering, which is what I rely on Twitter most for, I was most happy to see the vast majority of those news hounds and former Twitter obsessives posting with a raw, deranged energy that I haven't seen in a very long time.

In one day, Bluesky hit viral escape velocity

Then on Thursday, the service hit the viral escape velocity that every new social platform searches for as some of the internet's biggest names hopped on board. Dril joined. Then, AOC. WeRateDogs, the dog-rating service. Darth, the Sith Lord red panda. Hell, I even found a "Thursday! What a concept!" account and *Hard Drive*, the satirical video game publication.

In the midst of that busy day, Bluesky even survived a

downtime. Shortly before 5:30PM ET on Thursday, the official Bluesky account said the service needed to upgrade databases after seeing “our biggest single-day jump in new users that we’ve experienced.” The downtime took a worrying 20 or so minutes longer than the expected five minutes, but the skyline eventually returned, with everyone posting a collective sigh of relief. Twitter’s fail whale from the platform’s early days is still legendary, so it’s a good sign that people couldn’t wait for it to return.

I’ve already written about how much fun I’ve been having on Bluesky. But I thought the platform, at least in the near term, would remain its niche little thing where only super dorks like me would hang out and post pictures of cats. It’s clearly unfinished – for example, to use the service on the web, Bluesky recommends a link with “staging” in the URL – and I figured the small team of developers would keep tinkering away before opening the floodgates.

I didn’t expect Darth, Dril, and AOC to join Bluesky *on the same day* less than two weeks after I published that. There’s a real energy about Bluesky right now.

I can’t fully quit Twitter yet. I still rely a lot on the bird app to see up-to-the-minute news. Not everybody I want to follow is on Bluesky. I really wish there were things like DMs and video.

And the vibes aren’t quite as good as when I first joined up a couple weeks ago – which is perhaps the most telling signal yet that this could be Twitter 2.0. I’m seeing a lot more performative posts than I used to, as people are chasing clout. Some of the posts have been downright mean – users were threatening to beat writer Matthew Yglesias to death with hammers. Not great!

But I’m hopeful that things mellow over time and necessary features get added soon. That all could help Bluesky keep up

its recent momentum and not turn into another flash-in-the-pan app like Peach or Ello. The promised decentralized features like account portability could make Bluesky enticing for more people.

I'm also encouraged by how active the Bluesky team is on the platform itself, and I appreciate hearing directly from the people actually building the product as issues have come up. They said Friday that "we cleared our calendars" to get blocking, which had been highly requested over the course of the week, shipped on the web that day, for example. (Blocking is expected to come to the mobile apps soon, if it hasn't already by the time you read this.)

I started Thursday by posting a picture of a cat on Bluesky. I didn't expect to end it pondering the nature of skeets. Bluesky has a long way to go to fully replace Twitter for me, but right now, I think it actually could.

<https://www.theverge.com/2023/4/29/23701500/bluesky-twitter-replacement>