

Deepening connections and tightening communities for Reddit



Increase in 30-day
User Retention



Monthly Active
Chat Users



Safer
Conversations



Global Scale

“With Reddit chat, redditors really feel like they’re talking to another human being, even though they don’t know who that person is.”

- Jason Lee, lead product manager at Reddit

Reddit

Reddit offers a network of thousands of communities for hundreds of millions of people around the world to join and connect with each other, depending on their interests. Whether they’re into news, sports, TV shows, animals, technology, or any of countless other topics, redditors can engage in authentic conversation about these interests by posting, voting, and commenting within their communities.

To deepen the conversation and increase user engagement, Reddit offers a real-time chat experience with Reddit chat. Reflecting other messaging solutions that users are already in the habit of using every day, Reddit chat was launched to complement Reddit’s already-popular community posting and commenting format.

Reddit chat provides in-community real-time chat functionality that supports the users’ dynamic discussions. Rich with community-fo-



cused features, the chat capability garners high, ongoing engagement with the platform in general chat rooms, in subreddit-specific chat rooms, and one-on-one.

A need for chat functionality

Reddit is a community-centric network by its very nature. So the “front page of the internet” company was looking for chat functionality that could strengthen its communities—specifically, by connecting its users in real time. While they’re following international headlines, watching TV shows, or following the latest gaming news, they could talk about what’s going on with however many other users they wanted. And it would feature a modern look and feel that its then-outdated private messaging system wasn’t.

To pursue the experience, Reddit opted to use a chat API vs. build it in-house. “We were seeking the fastest way to test our ideas,” said Reddit Lead Product Manager Jason Lee. “Knowing how important it was to get the user experience right for large, community-based chat rooms, we wanted to use our time to focus on that, rather than on building the nuts and bolts of the chat messaging technology itself.”

To achieve these objectives, the team chose Sendbird to provide their backend chat API.

A more-human digitized solution

Reddit partnered with Sendbird to roll out the intuitive real-time messaging solution. Powering millions of concurrent connections for Reddit users across the globe, the solution enables basic chat and modern messenger experiences with various features—for general groups of up to 1,000 members, in-community Subreddit groups, and private spaces.

The general chat room isn’t necessarily for discussing a certain topic, but it’s more for redditors to gather together and talk about whatever they wish—beyond posting traditional board-style comments. Within a topic-focused community, users can select the Chat tab to connect,

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share, ask questions, follow live events, and collaborate with other users in the moment. “Real-time communication overcomes what’s a lot harder to do when you need to refresh the page,” remarks Lee. “Redditors can also easily connect one-on-one if desired. “The real-time conversations can spur individual conversations, which enhances the overall experience,” notes Reddit Senior Manager of Business Development Tom Beattie. Users just hover over a username and click on the Start Chat button to initiate the chat. The other user can preview the message before responding, and then accept or decline the invite.

Creating a safe environment for hundreds of millions of users

Whether it’s in a community of two or 2 million, engagement happens and connections develop when everyone feels safe and comfortable. From spam to downright-hostile messages, unwanted activity from inactive moderation that doesn’t keep the conversation healthy can cause even the most successful communities to lose their vigor. This problem becomes all the more challenging at Reddit’s scale. Any third-party chat API needed to be absolutely world-class to fit Reddit’s needs.

The Sendbird solution enables moderation features that support the great lengths Reddit goes to ensure its communities are safe. The solution enables users to easily report messages, bugs, and other issues; prevents spam; and thwarts abuse to deliver the premium level of safety Reddit demands for its users.

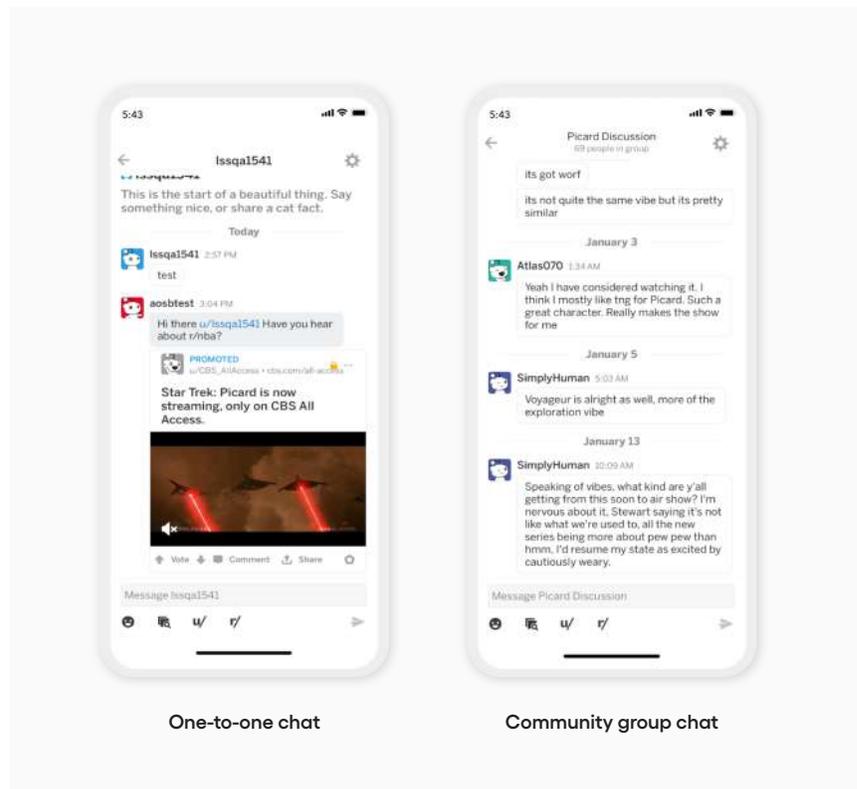
Key features of Reddit chat include:

- One-on-one and group chats, with:
 - Channel and friend lists
 - Group invitations, letting users invite other users to a private group channel
- Chat fundamentals, including:
 - Typing indicators, letting users see when another user is typing
 - Read receipts, showing users when their messages have been read

- Cross-platform synchronization, syncing messaging data across all devices in real time
- Safety and moderation features, such as:
 - Profanity filters
 - Spam flood protection, controlling the number of messages users can send in succession on any channel
 - User blocking, enabling users to block other users

During the implementation, Reddit and Sendbird collaborated to ensure the experience would be additive. It would not only need to fit into Reddit’s existing and mature communication style, but it would also need to bring additional value to the experience to heighten loyalty and engagement.

“The Reddit implementation required custom support, and Sendbird has never blinked at that,” notes Beattie. “The team there has been willing and able to work with us at every turn; and in response to any challenges, help us figure out the right path to a solution.”



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- Prashant Singh,
Senior engineering manager

Empowering results through powerful messaging

Reddit chat connects people in a personal way that brings the platform to life, inspiring them to frequently return for rewarding discussion among acquaintances and friends. As they grow more and more familiar with each other, they feel like they belong with a sense of purpose. “Whether they’re talking about serious things or the latest distraction,” comments Reddit Senior Engineering Manager Prashant Singh, “it seems like it’s helping people find greater connectedness.”

Further, there’s no fear of downvotes or upvotes, or pressure to write the perfect post. Everyone can participate openly, while a Reddit moderation team leverages the built-in safety features to ensure an enjoyable experience.

The outcomes from Reddit chat have been higher user engagement, conversion, and retention, even of those who were once passive. “If you have a conversation with someone, and the next day, they message you again, that’s a really compelling reason to return to Reddit and reengage with another user,” asserts Singh. “That translates to a boost in retention that’s valuable for the business because it’s valuable for our users.”

Redditors look forward to reconnecting with other users—passive users become active, and active users even more invested, leading to greater engagement and constant demand. In turn, deeper connections are made, while a tighter sense of community forms.

As the chat evolution propels forward, Reddit’s dedication to maintaining a sense of “here and now” is evident, as Reddit chat drives an environment—and experience—that invites everyone to communicate freely with positive response.

Digitizing human interactions

Sendbird is focused on bringing the freedom, accessibility, and value that digitizing human interactions can offer to all people. Learn how you can build deeper connections between your users through our fully customizable, quick-to-implement, and scalable chat, voice, and video platform—at sendbird.com