

Announcing “A New Social”, a Non-profit Organization Supporting Cross-Protocol Innovations to Unite the Open Social Web

December 17, 2024—San Francisco, CA and Seattle, WA—Today the non-profit, [A New Social](#), is announcing its planned formation and intention to support the work of developers, researchers, and start-ups building tools and services to support cross-protocol projects that advance the open social web. With millions of people adopting protocols like ActivityPub and ATProto, there's an opportunity to truly realize the promise of an open social web by connecting people at the protocol level, separating people's networks from the platforms they choose. That is the focus of this new non-profit, A New Social.

Initiated by open source engineer and founder of Bridgy Fed [Ryan Barrett](#) (CTO) and engineering leader and writer [Anuj Ahooja](#) (CEO & Executive Director), this founding team will be recruiting a Board of Directors, identifying cross-protocol projects, and reaching out to developers to collaborate on tools and services needed for cross-protocol community building. The first project to be adopted by A New Social is Bridgy Fed, a service Mr. Barrett built to allow users of ActivityPub-based platforms like Mastodon, ATProto-based platforms like Bluesky, and websites to interact and engage across ecosystems. Already with over 60,000 users of the bridge, Bridgy Fed fills a clear need in the open social web.

“My passion lies in connecting social networks together. Open standard social protocols allow us to create those connections outside of monolithic walled gardens, which has tremendous benefits,” said Barrett. “I've spent a long time doing that individually, and in communities like the IndieWeb. Now, with communities growing on several protocols, [we need a real organization, governance, and public transparency](#) where everyone can benefit and contribute. That's why we established A New Social.”

Ahooja continued, “I believe that the social web should be centered around people, not platforms. To do that, we need to have what I believe is [The Last Network Effect](#), where users are on a combined network using platforms embracing open protocols. This enables people to choose platforms based on their needs rather than how many users are active on them, and Bridgy Fed is a centerpiece of this mission. We're excited to push it forward with A New Social.”

A New Social will work closely with existing organizations building on top of the open social web, with a focus on maintaining compatibility and collaborating on features and education. The non-profit has already begun discussions with industry partners like Flipboard, Bluesky, Meta, and Mastodon, and looks forward to continuing to work with them.

"I've been so impressed by how Bridgy Fed has expanded and supported so many new platforms and protocols in a really collaborative way," said Mike McCue, CEO of Flipboard. "With A New Social, I'm sure Ryan and Anuj will foster that same style of partnership and cross-protocol coordination that will help us all innovate faster together. We look forward to working with them."

"We're excited for Bridgy Fed to enter its next phase of maturity as it continues bridging across multiple open protocol-based networks," said Emily Liu, Growth & Partnerships at Bluesky. "Ultimately, this interoperability benefits the end user, and we're glad to see the open social web become a reality through the efforts of multiple parties across the ecosystem."

"Our goal at Threads is to help grow the Fediverse responsibly, prioritizing the success of a safe, diverse, content-rich, and interoperable community. We're excited to see A New Social join other non-profit organizations like IFTAS and The Social Web Foundation to collaborate with policy makers and other stakeholders to make progress on open standards like ActivityPub," said the Threads team at Meta. "We believe that making Threads interoperable will enable people to reach new audiences, expand their communities, and better discover and join public discussions on topics they care about"

"Bridgy Fed demonstrates the value of open, accessible social APIs: more choice for users, through interoperability." said Andy Piper, developer relations lead at Mastodon. "People using Mastodon can - if they wish - now communicate across an even greater range of the new generation of social platforms. Mastodon enables people to share via open protocols, and Bridgy Fed extends that reach. We look forward to working with A New Social in their mission to educate people about these new opportunities."

The organization will work across the industry to identify and foster projects that, like Bridgy Fed, serve all people regardless of protocol. Part of A New Social's charter will be to work with

other organizations like the [Social Web Foundation](#) and [IFTAS](#) that have been pioneering and advancing initiatives across the Fediverse.

"The social web is proving to be a viable alternative to standalone social networks. A New Social provides essential infrastructure that helps people connect across platform boundaries," said Evan Prodromou, Research Director at SWF. "To grow, the social web needs builders like Ryan and Anuj, and we look forward to partnering with them to deepen and improve cross-platform connectivity,"

"The creation of A New Social marks an important milestone in advancing innovation and responsibility on the open social web," said Jaz-Michael King, Executive Director at IFTAS. "Bridgy Fed has demonstrated a clear commitment to community safety allowing people to engage freely and securely, regardless of the platform or protocol they use. At IFTAS, we believe bridging platforms requires robust safety measures to protect vulnerable communities and we are encouraged by A New Social's approach to embedding trust and safety at the heart of its mission."

For its first year, A New Social's initiatives will be focused on improving Bridgy Fed, user advocacy, and providing services to platforms, people, and social apps. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Configuration of bridged accounts
- Bridged network discovery
- Portability of connections
- Educating the public about the open social web
- Working with platforms to ensure long-term compatibility

In the coming months A New Social will further shape the team, announce priority projects, share ways for the community to get involved, and create a funding strategy for new and emerging ideas. If you are interested in future communications and opportunities, you can comment on this post, on the open social web, or via email at letsbuild@anew.social.