

# Disqus Notes

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# Adding Disqus to Github Pages

## Part 1: Setting things up with Disqus (generating an account)

1) Sign up for a Disqus account that you'll use as the admin account for the website. You can do so for free, by going to <https://disqus.com/>. You will have to verify the account via email you use to set up the account.

2) Log into Disqus with what you want to use as the Admin account, and register your website with Disqus. You just sign up for a new account (**Get Started -> I want to install Disqus on my Site**), and then put in the following:

1. Make sure the correct Disqus USER is set for the administrator. (You may need to log in as a different account and start again)
2. OPTIONAL : Set an organization name (used if you have a group of different websites)
3. Choose the name you want to use for the website. There is initially only a "Website name" field; this is going to set your **shortcode** - what essentially is your website's username. Once you enter something in the field, it will show an address below : XXX.disqus.com. XXX is your actual shortcode. (If your choice is taken, characters will be added, so pay attention to the actual shortcode that is generated!) **IMPORTANT: Once you choose a short name, it cannot be changed! So choose carefully.**

If you find this confusing, you can click on the **customize url** link to open up two different fields: one to write in your website's name and one to directly type in the short name you would like to use. It will let you know if your choice is taken.

4. Choose a category for your website

3) Get the javascript code to call the Disqus thread. Go to START -> Installing Disqus -> Choose the platform for your site to get tailored code / instructions (**We use jekyll**). (Many of these directions are explained or modified below, as well)

4) Once your Disqus website account is active, set some more details up (this is optional, but recommended).

1. Log in to your Disqus account. Select Admin, and then select your website.
2. Go to the Settings tab (at the top of the page), and fill in additional information about the website, such as changing the name, setting the url, and other settings such as whether commenters need to have a Disqus account to comment, or can do so anonymously.

## Part 2: Changing your website code (For Jekyll / Github pages)

### The Disqus Javascript (a.k.a. "Universal Code")

If you haven't, you'll need to get your hands on the Universal Code, which is the javascript that calls the Disqus thread. You can get it here:

<https://disqus.com/admin/install/platforms/universalcode>

It looks like this:

```
<div id="disqus_thread"></div>
<script>

/**
 * RECOMMENDED CONFIGURATION VARIABLES: EDIT AND UNCOMMENT THE
 SECTION BELOW TO INSERT DYNAMIC VALUES FROM YOUR PLATFORM OR CMS.
 * LEARN WHY DEFINING THESE VARIABLES IS IMPORTANT:
 https://disqus.com/admin/universalcode/#configuration-variables*/
/**
var disqus_config = function () {
this.page.url = PAGE_URL; // Replace PAGE_URL with your page's canonical URL
variable
this.page.identifier = PAGE_IDENTIFIER; // Replace PAGE_IDENTIFIER with your page's
unique identifier variable
};
*/
(function() { // DON'T EDIT BELOW THIS LINE
var d = document, s = d.createElement('script');
s.src = '//EXAMPLE.disqus.com/embed.js';
s.setAttribute('data-timestamp', +new Date());
(d.head || d.body).appendChild(s);
})();
</script>
<noscript>Please enable JavaScript to view the <a
href="https://disqus.com/?ref_noscript">comments powered by Disqus.</a></noscript>
```

There are 3 parts.

1) The first part (red) is a <div> that will go onto the page wherever you want the comment thread to be loaded.

2) The second is a javascript function (in blue; `var disqus_config = function () {...}`) is the function that sets up a particular thread for your comments. To call a particular thread, you have to set the `PAGE_IDENTIFIER`. (Note that you can call the same thread on multiple pages. However, you cannot call multiple threads on the same page.). You will also want to set the `PAGE_URL`. Note that in Jekyll/Github pages it is possible to use the liquid markup to set these using yml tags and variables. (See my section on the pages I made below).

Note that if this function is missing, commented out, or for some reason the url or page identifier cannot be read, Disqus will call a new thread that is unique to that particular page. (By default, Disqus will set a thread id that matches the exact url of the site. This means that <https://www.somesite.com> and <http://www.somesite.com> will NOT have the same thread. This is why setting the page and thread are important.)

3) The second javascript function actually calls the Disqus thread. Despite the DO NOT EDIT message, you will need to make one edit. Where the function has **EXAMPLE**, (`EXAMPLE.disqus.com`) you will need to put in your website's **shortname**. (i.e. `EXAMPLE.disqus.com` -> `cassie-stearns-github-io.disqus.com`)

## Setting up comments in the code (Jekyll / Github Pages)

The “best” way

The most powerful method of setting up Disqus is to change the universal code so that the page identifier is set with variables and then set up the javascript in an `_include` file and change layout pages so that it is automatically loaded into pages. This will make is so loading a chosen comment thread onto a page is controlled by simply adding two lines to the yml of a page, which sets that specific comment thread to load. Omitting these lines will simply result in a page not having a comments section.

You will need to do the following things:

1) Create a page in `_layouts` (`comments.html`) that has modified universal code.

You will want to have the (modified) universal code wrapped inside of liquid if statement tags so the page content is as follows:

```
{% if page.comments %} [Modified Universal Code] {% endif %}
```

When you modify the code, change the universal codes' setup function (part 2, in blue, above) so that it sets up using liquid variables (the values of which will be set in yml lines - see below). The new function looks like this:

```

var DisqusConfig = function () {

var DisqusIdentifier = '{% if page.DisqusIdentifier %}{{ page.DisqusIdentifier }}{% else %}{{ site.url }}{{ page.url }}{% endif %}';

var DisqusUrl = '{ { site.url } } { { page.url } }';
};

```

These changes will make it so that the loading of the javascript is dependent on a comments line being added to a page's yml. The name of the comments variable will be the name of the thread (more on that below). If the line isn't added, then the comments will not load for that page.

2) In `_layouts/default.html` (or whatever layout pages you use)- make sure to include the new `comments.html` code.

Where ever you want the comments to appear in the page (preferably just before the footer), just add the line:

```
{% include comments.html %}
```

3) Set up the yml on your pages.

Inside the top section of the page you want comments (the part off set by ---), add the following:

- If you want to have ANY comment thread, add: **comments: true**
- If you want a specific thread to be loaded, in addition to the above, add: **DisqusIdentifier: XXX** (where XXX is the name of the thread to add)

Keep in mind that you can add the same thread to multiple pages, so long as they all share the same `DisqusIdentifier`. (However, you cannot add multiple threads to a single page)

If you set `comments:true` but do not set the `DisqusIdentifier`, then Disqus will default to a unique thread for that page. If you do not set `comments: true`, no comments will load for that page.

Example

If you want to see examples of this code, you can look in my personal github repository: <https://github.com/cassie-stearns/cassie-stearns.github.io>

The results of the pages can be seen in the following webpages:

These two pages share the thread “test1”

- <https://cassie-stearns.github.io/test/test1>
- <https://cassie-stearns.github.io/test/test>

This page has the thread “test2”

- <https://cassie-stearns.github.io/test/test2>

## Alternative Methods

If you don't want to do all of the above, you can always just put the universal code into any page you wish to add a comment thread. Just remember you will have to modify the code on each page. In this case, if you want to share threads across pages, you will just need to modify the code for the thread (page\_idenfifer). Make sure each page has the same identifier.

Also be careful not to put the universal code directly on a page if you have the above method set up for your website. Printing the code twice can make for less than ideal results.

# Disqus Information and Moderation

There are three ways to interact with the Disqus comment threads: at the website, through a Disqus user account, and through the Admin controls

## User Account

Users can keep track of their own comments and replies to their comments through their own disqus account. I will not go into that information here, as it pertains to the use and reference of individual users, not setup and maintenance of a website.

However, moderators for a disqus thread should get information mailed to them via their personal accounts, so long as that is configured in the site options (see Settings below).

## Admin Controls - Disqus.com

To look at information about the site and conduct modertion, you will need to log in to <https://disqus.com/> using the moderator account you used to set up the disqus site.

Once logged in, there will be a bar of options at the top of the page. On the left side, there are links to general Disqus features and information (Features, How Disqus Works, Company, Blog); if you are on mobile device, this is reached by tapping a menu icon.

To the right side, there will be options linked to your account: your icon with a dropdown menu (home, view profile, settings, help, logout). There will be a bubble symbol (notifications) - this brings you to the account's comments and replies. Finally, there is an "Admin" option.

## The Admin Panel Options

Choose the Admin option, and then choose "select a specific site", and select the site you want to moderate.

Under the Admin panel, there is a top menu-bar with the following options:

- Start
- Analytics
- Community
- Settings
- Learn

## Start

There are panels with the following for control:

- **Moderate comments** - (located under "Community") - this allows you to approve/deny comments pending moderation, and to see the history of comments you have approved, marked as spam, or deleted.
- **Analyze Engagement** - this brings up the basic statistics for the the website (frequency of comments and votes over time in table and graph form.) More sophisticated analytics tools will be made available for a paid tier (these advanced analytics options are available until March in "preview" mode). (Note: currently, this comes up under "Community" when you click it, but there is no link to it from the Community tab.)

These panels are links to articles with information on using Disqus:

- Install
- Dealing with spam
- Moderating comments
- help

Additionally, you can choose "Edit Settings" - this brings you to the Settings menu

## Analytics

this brings up the basic statistics for the the website (frequency of comments and votes over time in table and graph form.) More sophisticated analytics tools will be made available for a paid tier (these advanced analytics options are available until March in “preview” mode).

## Community

Options under Community are the following:

- Moderate comments (see above)

### Settings:

- **Site configuration** (sometimes listed as **Community Rules**) - links to Settings: Community (see below)
- **Moderators** -
  - **Moderators** - You can add site moderators by thier Disqus username (you need a disqus account to be a moderator). The primary moderator is the account used to create disqus for the website. If you wish to change the primary moderator, you must contact disqus to do so.
  - **Admins** - this brings you to the Settings: Admins, where you can manage organization Admins. The disqus account used to create disqus for the website is always set as a “Super admin” and has full permissions.
- **Word filters** - if comments are posted containing restricted words, then they must get moderator approval before they will post. You can set the restricted words (which can include wild cards) here.
- **Banned Users** - this also includes *Trusted Users* (who can always post on the site). You can set banned/trusted users by name, email, IP address, or domains

### Tools:

- **Discussions** - you can edit the discussion location link, which moderator recieves notifications about that thread, change the category, and change whether the discussion is open or closed.
- **Migration Tools** - tools to change the discussion threads from one site to another. Includes a setup for redirects.
- **Import** - you can import other comment threads from other programs. Currently supports: WordPress, Blogger, MovableType, IntenseDebate, or a generic WXR file. Make sure all files are *uncompressed* (no .gz or .tar, etc.)
- **Export** - export threads for backup purposes. IMPORTANT: exported threads currently cannot be re-imported into disqus!

## Settings

**Installation** - get instructions and code to install Disqus on the website, based on platform

**General** - includes settings for the website name and url, language, category, and appearance. (You may have set these during your setup.) This is where what little color/look customization can take place (except for phrasing on number of comments). The customization is VERY limited, but the end result renders well on a variety of devices.

**Community** - Configure the technical details of your site both for views and permissions. Details include the following:

- Phrasing for number of comments
- Moderator ID phrase
- Default comment display order

Permissions include the following:

- Allow/disallow guest commenting (all guest comments must be moderator approved)
- Require moderator approval for all comments (or not) - both for comments in general and under certain circumstances (i.e. the comment is flagged, it contains a link, etc.)
- Set whether flags alert moderators and the number of flags required to hide a comment
- Allow/disallow media attachments
- Set a time limit (can be none) on the number of days a thread remains open
- Allow replies via Twitter

**Revenue** - controls for the Reveal code. We don't use this.

**Advanced** -

- Turn on cookies (tracking),
- affiliate links (for revenue; we won't use this)
- set trusted domains that are allowed to load your comment threads
- DELETE Disqus - THIS IS PERMANENT!

**Switch to Organization** - brings up the options for organization, which include:

- General -
  - Set name and contact info for the site along with basic info
  - set the member sites of the organization
- Sites - see/link to sites in the organization
- Admins - set the organization admins

## Learn

Brings you to the Disqus general pages (<https://disqus.com/features/>)