



Creating a Patient Engagement community on Mastodon

Step-by-step Instructions

Declaration from the author: I am not a Mastodon expert, and these are not comprehensive instructions. I'm just someone wanting to be part of a community that listens with respect and wants to make positive change.

Mastodon seemed intimidating to me because there was so much information out there. So, I'm sat here setting up my account while my son is in his swimming lesson my aim is to share with you a step-by-step guide as to what happened so that you can follow each step to do the same. Getting set up is the hardest bit, then it's okay. The instructions here are simple, but long because I've shared every screenshot you need to set up so that you can't get lost.

See you there!

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1. Background

1.1 Reason for joining Mastodon

Patient engagement is a collaborative activity and it's only through working together, listening, and learning from each other, that we will advance the field. We are trying to create a friendly, safe and welcoming environment where anyone interested in patient engagement can join in discussion as an equal member and help shape the future. Mastodon is a platform that allows this to happen through independent moderation according to a strong code of conduct (see below).

1.2 About Mastodon

Mastodon is a social media platform that runs on different 'Instances'/servers. Each Instance has its own culture and is moderated to uphold the code-of-conduct underpinning behaviours of participants signing up.

Instances are a decentralised way to help people with similar interests find each other easier and a way for communities to be empowered to manage behaviour. The Instance you join doesn't limit who you can follow and be followed by – you can link with anyone. If someone's behaviour is not appropriate, you report it, and this goes back to the moderators of their Instance. If a particular instance becomes a hot spot of inappropriate behaviour then it is possible for the whole of that instance to be banned from the wider community. This means that community members and moderators are all invested in the supportive behavioural code-of-conduct that they sign up to.

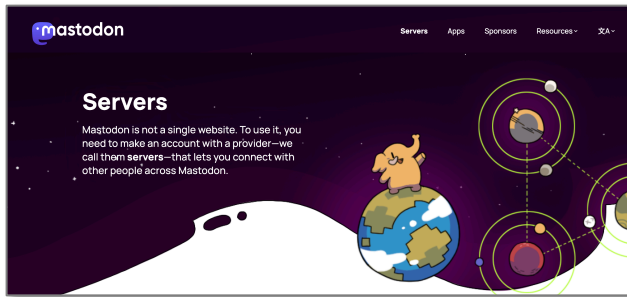
1.3 Code of conduct on Mastodon.world

The instance we have joined is Mastodon.world because it welcomes all, is values-driven, and is moderated according to a defined code summarised in the screenshot to the right.

You will have chance to read the full code-of-conduct for Mastodon.world when you join.

2. Creating your account

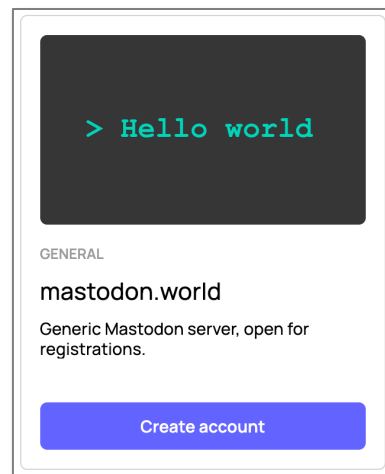
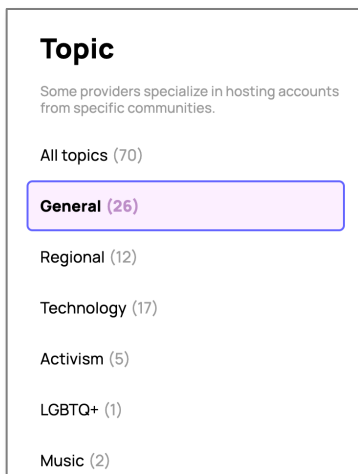
2.1 Finding Mastodon.world



The first thing that you need to do is find Mastodon.world in the list of potential servers to join. Start by clicking here:

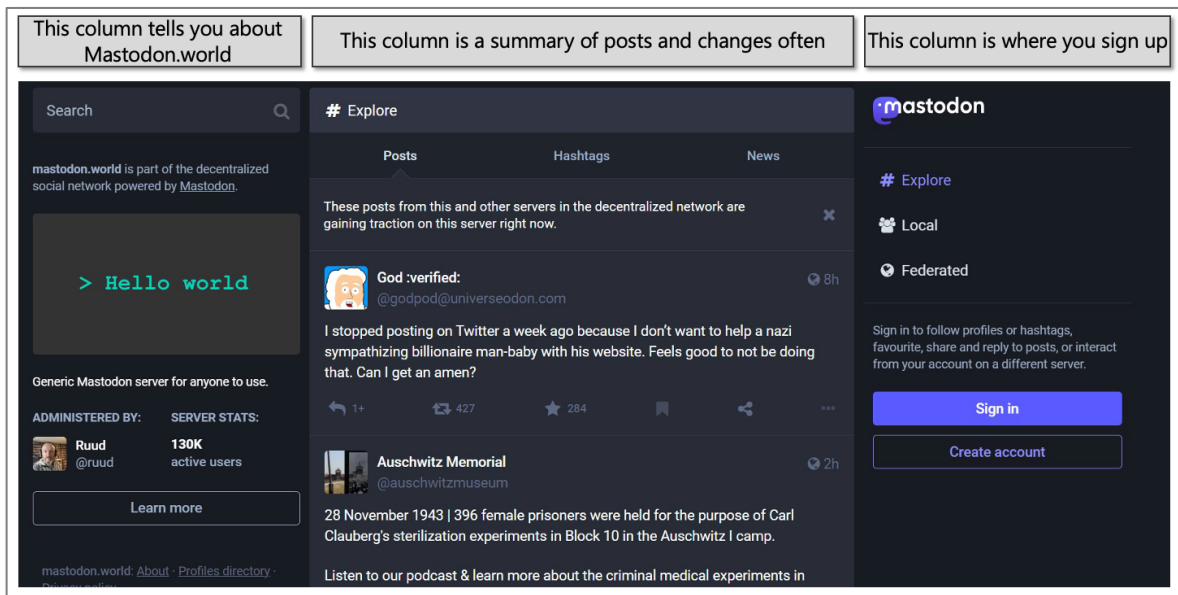
<https://joinmastodon.org/servers>.

This takes you to a page where an elephant is riding a wave on an inflatable world ... and there is a huge list of servers. There is no easy search function. Instead, scroll down and on the left, (see that you have 'All regions' selected, and) under the header 'Topic', click 'General'. Look through the cards shown. Mastodon.world is usually towards the bottom on the right-hand side. Screenshots to help are below. Click 'Create account' on the Mastodon.world card.

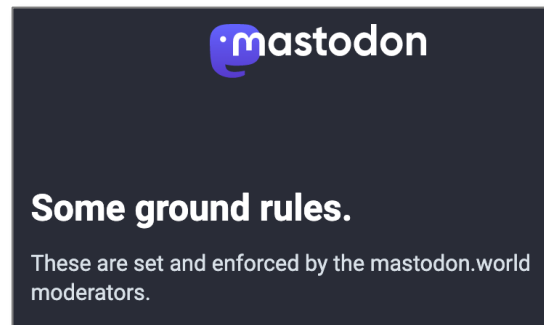


A window with 3 columns opens (shown below). It's the one on the right that is most relevant in this process. Click 'Create account'.

2.2 Signing up



The code of conduct that is expected of anyone wishing to join is then shown. Please take the time to read through this and ensure that you are happy to support the inclusive environment. If you are, accept the ground rules to move on.



The screenshot shows the Mastodon sign-up form. It includes the Mastodon logo, the heading 'Let's get you set up on mastodon.world.', and a paragraph explaining account benefits. The form fields are: 'MediPaCe' (username), 'MediPaCe @mastodon.world' (handle), 'E-mail address', 'Password', and 'Confirm password'. There is a checkbox for 'I have read and agree to the privacy policy *' and a 'SIGN UP' button.

The next window is where you enter your information and create your Mastodon 'handle'.

Please pick something that is recognisable and relevant for you. For ours, our name is MediPaCe, and our handle is:

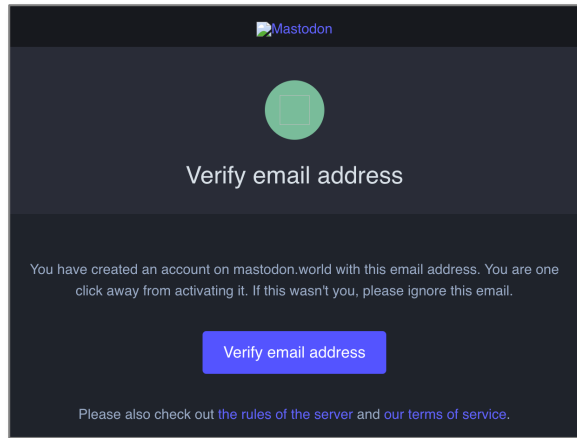
[MediPaCe@mastodon.world](https://mastodon.world/@MediPaCe).

Then enter the rest of your details, tick the box to agree to the privacy policy if you are happy to do so, and click 'Sign up'.

Note: your profile is editable later too if you change your mind.

Click 'Verify email address' in the window that opens and then go to your email to find the message as it pops in (please remember to check your junk folder).

Click on the link in the email and you're in!



2.3 Editing your profile

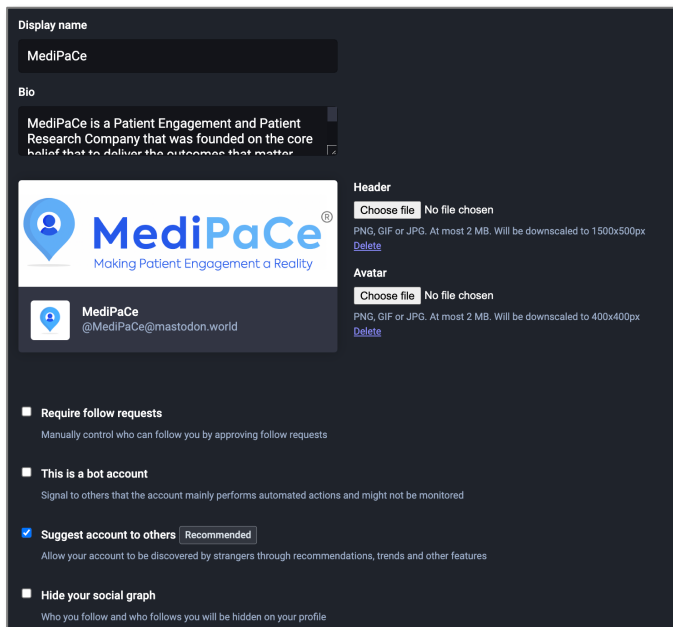


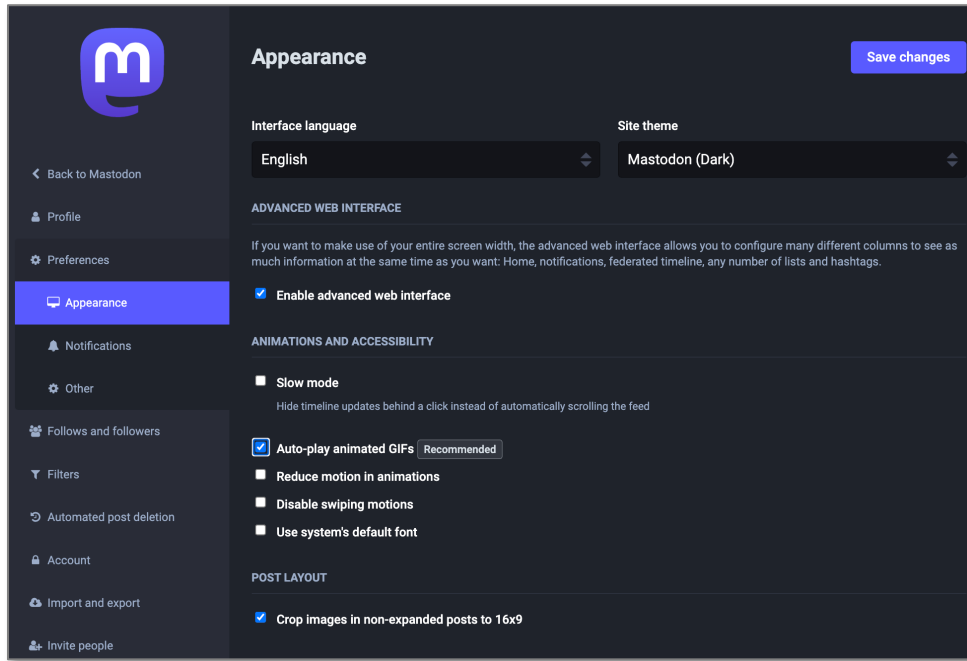
Before messaging it's important to set up your profile.

Click on the 'Edit profile' text as shown in the screenshot to the left (note – this is only showing a small part of the full screen so that it is big enough for you to see).

There are many settings listed on the left of the screen that you may want to browse through. For now, we're just doing the basics to get going. Go to 'Profile' to add your Bio, a landscape picture that will go across the top of your account information, and your avatar that will go next to your name.

Everything is optional, but it's a good idea to tick the 'Suggest account to others' so that we can all find each other.





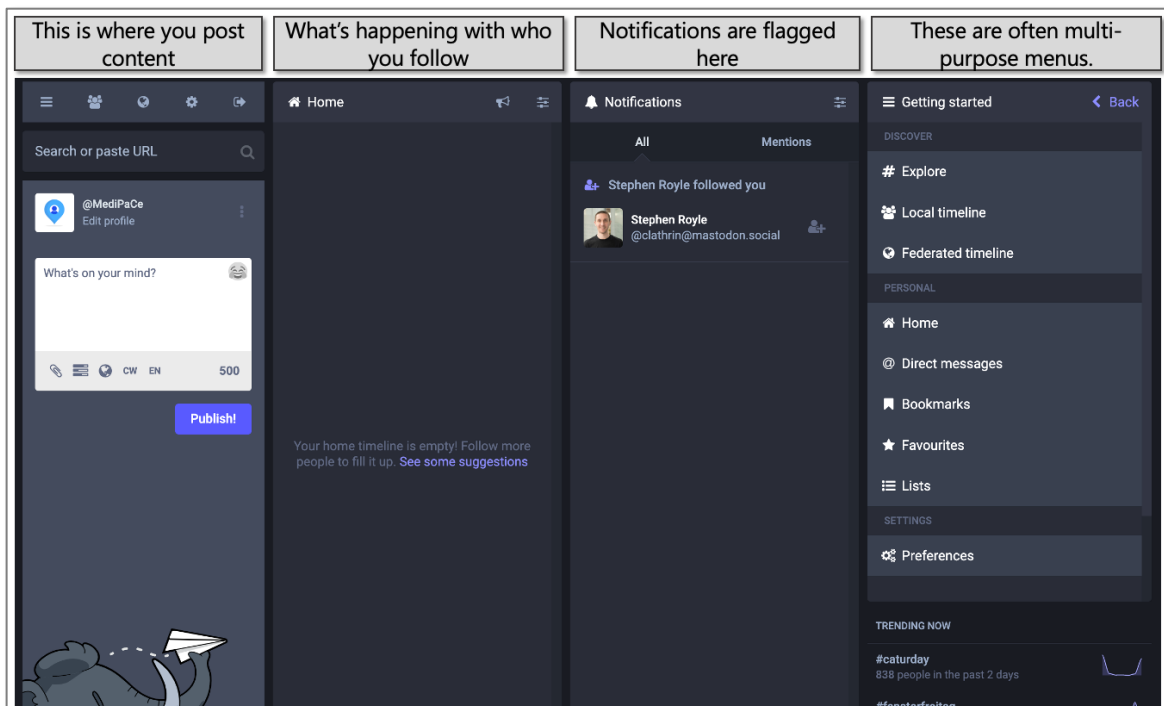
Under 'Preferences' there is an 'Appearance' option. It's strongly recommended that you tick the 'Enable advanced web interface' on this page.

This means that when using Mastodon you can have a column for people you follow/are followed by and a separate column for everything else. This will make it easier to follow threads and catch-up on what's happening within the community.

3. Basics of using Mastodon

Mastodon is a social media platform, but there's no larger algorithm running that means one voice can dominate over another because of a computer system promoting content. We need to find each other, we need to talk to each other, and we need to re-post to keep the conversation going.

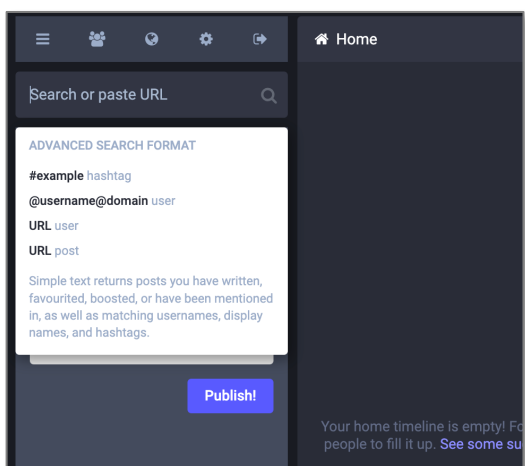
If you enabled the 'Advanced web interface' (above) then your screen is likely to look similar to this. Each column has a purpose and you can begin to make this your own once you've started.



Note: the multipurpose column is also where a federated timeline (all posts on this Instance) can be seen if wanted.

A post is called a 'Toot' instead of a 'Tweet' in Twitter, and if you get the app there may even be a little mastodon character that appears when you Toot.

3.1 Finding people in Mastodon



The easiest way to begin finding people is to type their handle into the search box on the far left. For us type:

[MediPaCe@mastodon.world](#), or
[@MediPaCe](#)

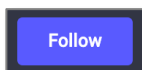
Then press return on your keyboard. A list of options, click the symbol next to us to follow us.



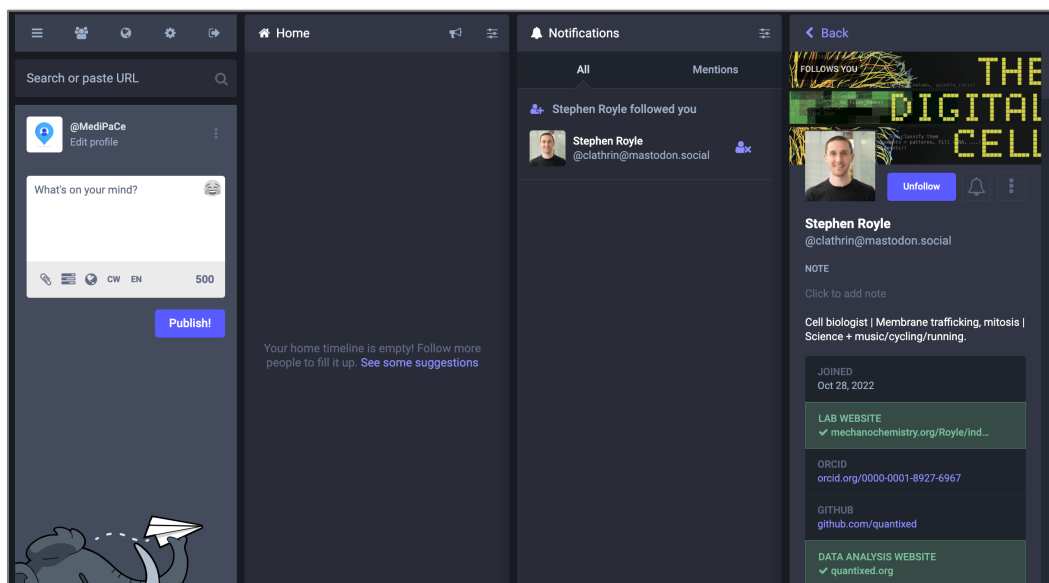
Note: once you get going, this is also the same search box you can use to look for '#' hashtag's and filter information by them.

3.2 Finding out more information about people

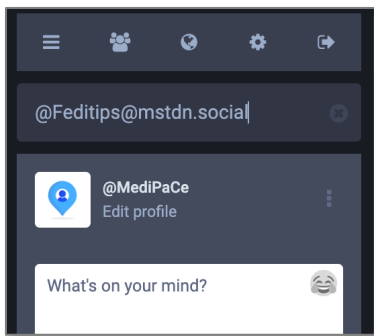
Once you've got going, you'll be able to see in your 'Home' column your Toots, everything from people you've followed, plus anything that the community have actively re-Tooted. Re-Toots are a great way of finding new contacts because the original person/group who posted the material is still there. Click on their icon or name to bring up their full information in the multi-purpose menu on the right. If you would like to follow them too, click



Note: after following, this is also where to unfollow as shown in the screenshot below

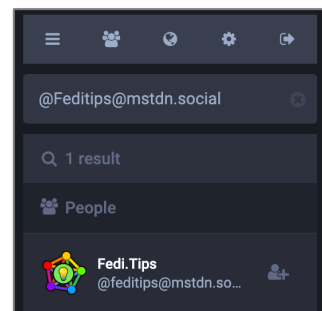


3.3 Keeping up to date with useful hints and tips on how to use Mastodon

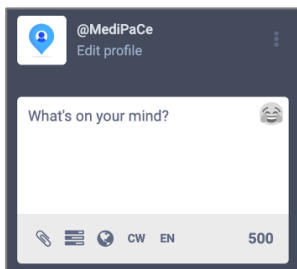


It was recommended to me that I follow @Feditips@mstdn.social as they share very useful information on how to do things in Mastodon and can help us all get to grips with it quicker. To do this, I followed the process described above. Searched for them as shown here.

And followed them by clicking on the  icon in the list.



3.4 Posting a message (Tooting): What the buttons do



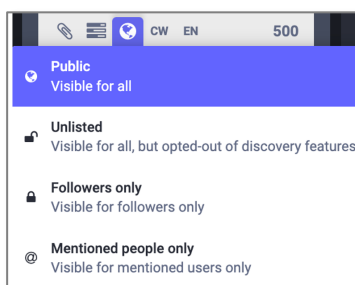
To post a message, the text goes into the box on the left column and the buttons around to ensure it is presented in the best way for others in the community to access and find. A description of each button is below.



Adding attachments



Including polls



The world symbol represents the distribution options.

The aim is to focus messaging on those it's most relevant for rather than clutter everyone's timeline.



Content warning: This is used differently in Mastodon compared with elsewhere. All it means is that your content will be obscured until someone clicks to see it. It is a way of being considerate to the audience who will receive your message and the reason for the content warning should be mentioned in the text so that people know to click through if they wish to. For example, a highly emotional message, or picture. There

may be others in the community where this is 'close to home' and it is polite to give warning.



Language used



Number of characters left in the text allowance

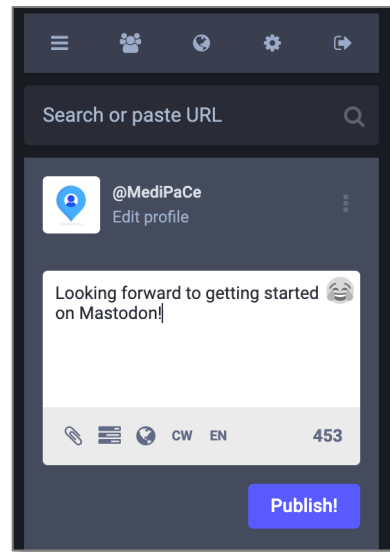


Emoji's

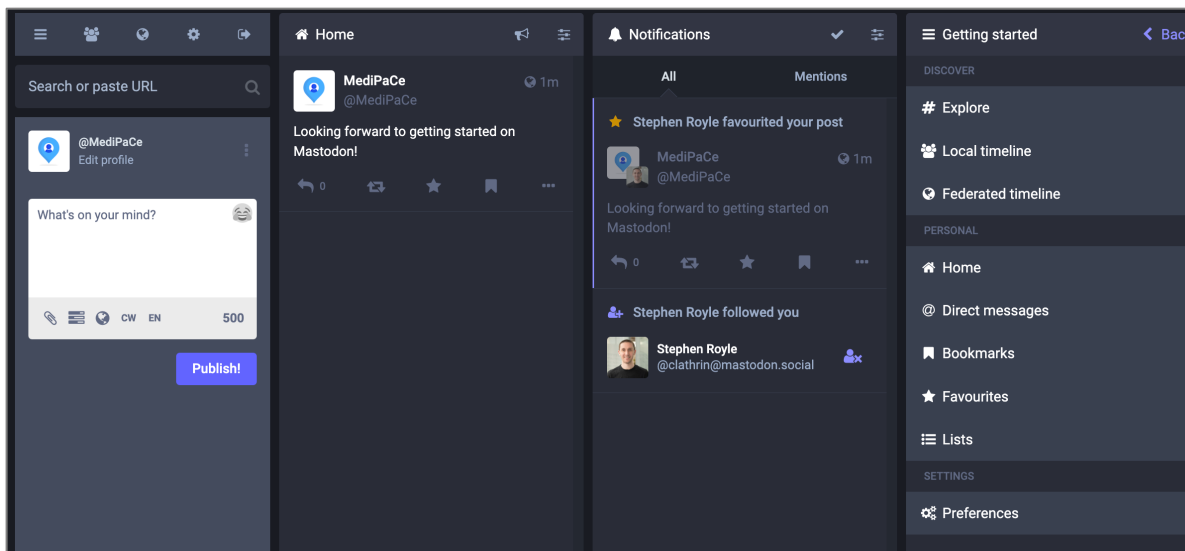
3.5 Your first Toot

Now you know what all the buttons do, simply type your message into the box, select options as needed.

You can reference accounts by typing @ and hashtags by typing #., and press 'Publish'.



When someone acts on your Toot, you get to see it in you Notifications column as shown below.



3.6 *Introducing yourself*

I have been told that it is considered the done, and polite, thing to write a short message after you join to introduce yourself to the community – who you are, what you're interested in etc.

That's it, you're on your way. I'm sure we'll figure out and share learnings as we go.

See you there!