

Why we run Author Q As

Written by Cory Zaroni, Community Manager, The Conversation

The Conversation exists, in part, to share the expertise and research of academics. But an article mightn't be able to do that alone. That's why we have comments on our article – we want people to continue the discussion, our authors included.

Having the author involved in an article's comment section is a vital part of that. It means readers can ask questions, authors can expand on their ideas and everyone can learn something they mightn't have otherwise.

That's where Author Q&As come in.

What are Author Q&As?

[Author Q&As](#) are set one-hour periods where our authors get online and reply to comments on their article, be they questions, ideas or otherwise.

We ran our [first Author Q&A](#) in March 2014. Since then, we've run over over 200 of them, covering a wide variety of topics from welfare policy, cat cafes, religion and Kanye West.

The role of Author Q&As

Author Q&As are a way for us to get those benefits in a simple way. Reading comments on an article can be intimidating and commenting yourself even more so. We have a lot of great commenters here at The Conversation but there's no denying that comments on the internet have a bad reputation.

Author Q&As provide our authors with a straightforward way to start commenting on their articles. They can dip in for an hour, reply to a few comments any they think might violate our community standards. It makes the comment section seem a little bit less intimidating.

The end result is a comments section that's better overall: we've found that discussions on our articles are more constructive when authors are involved. The more we can do to get our

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authors involved, the better.

We've been running Author Q&As for over two years now and they've been a great success. We've received positive feedback from both readers and authors.

If you're publishing a story with us in the future and want to run an Author Q&A, [let me know](#) . And, if you're reading an article and see that we're running a Q&A, feel free to get involved.

The more the merrier.

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