

How (and why) we lock accounts at The Conversation

Written by Molly Glassey, Audience Development Manager, The Conversation

In a perfect commenting community locking accounts would be unheard of. Unfortunately, the world contains trolls, agenda-pushers and people with vendettas. Moderation can only do so much, so to keep the community safe and constructive sometimes we lock commenting accounts.

I'm not a fan of locking accounts, so I only do it when I'm 100% sure it's for the greater good. Our goal is to have as many new, diverse voices as possible. If someone sets out to disrupt that community, chances are their account will be locked.

Read more: [How empathy can make or break a troll](#)

When you sign up for The Conversation you implicitly agree to commenting in accordance with our Community Standards - this is our ground, you play by our rules.

As part of those standards, we'll lock accounts that "breach them repeatedly". On top of that accounts may also be blocked for one of cases of harassment/abuse. If a comment is posted that is particularly out of line - say for example, it threatens an author or says something extremely offensive - we'll lock the commenter's account on the spot.

We can also lock your account manually if you no longer wish to be a part of The Conversation's commenting community - just flick me an email and I'll do that for you.

Violating our community standards

The commenters I find myself consistently moderating will receive a warning - perhaps two. I treat abusive or discriminatory comments (one warning approach) more seriously than comments that are simply off-topic or derail discussions (two warning approach). If the standards continue to be breached, the profile will be locked.

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If a commenter received a warning a year ago, goes dormant for a while, then reemerges with the same attitude, their account will be locked. Warnings are not voided after a period of time.

Furthermore, I won't put up with aggression in emails to me - harassment, threats or further abuse. If a commenter's response to their warning contains any of the above, the warning will most likely be retracted and the account will be locked. In saying that, you are welcome to dispute the warning - just keep it polite.

Read more: ['Don't feed the trolls' really is good advice – here's the evidence](#)

What happens when an account is locked?

When someone's account is locked their profile is removed from public view. That means their name on their comments will be black — the link to their profile has been removed. Comments posted on our articles will remain in place, however should you wish they be removed to wipe your presence from the site, I can do that, just ask.

User accounts are for The Conversation as a global platform. That encompasses all of our regions, current and future. This means commenters can't have an account locked for commenting on articles commissioned in Australia and then make an account for The Conversation US.

How long are accounts locked for?

Accounts that are locked for violating our standards are locked permanently. Commenters may, in rare cases, receive a temporary ban before being banned permanently but, thus far, this has been the exception rather than the rule.

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Read more: [The problem posed by agenda trolls](#)

User request

Users can request to have their accounts locked. This process is explained in our content removal policy:

If you no longer wish to use your account on The Conversation it will be locked so it's no longer viewable by the public. Your comments will remain on the site with your name attached to them – your name will no longer link to your profile. If you are an academic author your name will continue to appear on any articles you've previously published.

People are welcome to return at a later date. They can get in touch with us and ask to have their accounts unlocked.

This is an updated version of a [piece](#) written in July last year

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Read more <http://theconversation.com/how-and-why-we-lock-accounts-at-the-conversation-82211>