

Help:How to add content

Adding content in Discourse DB is easy, but it is slightly different from Wikipedia and other wiki sites. This page should help explain things.

Remember, **you do not have to register in order to contribute**. You can add pages and edit all content on the site even without being registered. Still, we recommend registering (a very quick process) if you're planning to do any significant editing; it's easier for everyone to see your editing history, and to communicate with you if need be.

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Contents

- [1 Items](#)
 - [1.1 Adding an item](#)
 - [1.2 Establishing notability](#)
 - [1.3 The fields](#)
- [2 Refreshing data](#)

Items

Adding an item

Let's say you're reading your favorite newspaper, *The United States Times* (this is not a real newspaper), and you spot the following column:

Free ice cream? No thanks
By Christopher D. Example
January 10, 2007

Of all the bad ideas coming out of our nation's leadership lately, the Free Ice Cream Fridays Act has to be among the worst. The bill, which is right now being voted on in the House, would organize the handing-out of free ice cream every Friday at 5. Sure, it sounds appealing: who doesn't want a nice dessert after a hard week at the office, or at school? But what doesn't get mentioned is the cost to the economy, and the lost productivity. I know at 5, I'll be running out the door to get my scoop, instead of working on whatever column I should be writing. This refreshing but unnecessary work-break brought to you by the American taxpayer.

That's not to mention all the logistical problems: I'm envisioning trucks that couldn't get to their destinations fast enough showing up with melted ice cream to a disappointed crowd. And what about lactose-intolerant people? As always, they get the worst deal of all. Calling it the "Free Frozen Desserts Friday Act" would have gone a long way to creating some basic fairness, but of course the geniuses in Washington would never have that much sense.

...

To add this item, you should first make sure it is appropriate for the site, then make sure it has not been added before. You can read more about those steps below. To simply add the new item, click on the '[Add an item](#)' link here or on the left side of the page, and enter into the form the following values:

Title: Free ice cream? No thanks

Author: Christopher D. Example

Source: The United States Times

Date: January 10, 2007

URL: <http://www.theunitedstatestimes.com/opinions/example/9DJF7OO1.html>

Quote: But what doesn't get mentioned is the cost to the economy, and the lost productivity. I know at 5, I'll be running out the door to get my scoop, instead of working on whatever column I should be writing.

Opinion:

Topic: Free Ice Cream Fridays Act

Position: Act should be passed

Against

When you click 'Preview', you'll be taken to the preview page for that item. If everything looks alright, just hit "Save page" to enter that item in the database. That's it! For more details on what's going on, continue reading below.

Establishing notability

OK, you have found an editorial you would like to include, as described above. The first thing to ask is, is this a notable opinion item? In order to be included in Discourse DB, the column has to pass two criteria: (1) it has to comment on some policy matter, and (2) it has to have been published in a notable source; you can find the full requirements for a notable source at [Help:Sources](#), but basically that currently means that it has to have a circulation of at least 50,000, if it's a print publication, or get at least 50,000 unique visitors a month, if it's an online publication. The example column above certainly fits the criterion of subject matter, since it takes a strong stand on a proposed government action. You do a web search on *The United States Times* and you see that it was recently audited as having a daily circulation of 90,000, so this item fits the notable-source criterion as well.

The next step is to make sure that this item hasn't already been included in Discourse DB. The easiest way is to search the site for the author or publication name (using the search form in the sidebar), and look through the search results. You can also search by the column title, though sometimes columns are syndicated and will show up in more than one publication, under different titles.

The fields

For more information, see [Help:Items](#)

For more information, see [Help:Opinions](#)

For more information, see [Help:Topics](#)

For more information, see [Help:Positions](#)

The "URL" and "date" fields are fairly straightforward. For the quote, you should pick a one-to-five-sentence snippet, from the body of the column itself, that captures the point of view and tone of the column. Feel free to look through other items in Discourse DB for a sense of quoting style. As to source and author, there may be some ambiguity here - should it be "United States Times" or "The United States Times"? Should the author be "Christopher D. Example" or "Christopher Example" ? Or "Chris Example"? Thankfully, the auto-complete feature in the "Add item" form will help fill in values that already appear in the database. If there are no previous entries for this author or source, you should look on [Wikipedia](#) to see how they are referred to there; general Discourse DB style is to copy Wikipedia's naming conventions whenever possible. If the author and/or source don't appear in either Discourse DB or Wikipedia, go with whatever name you think makes the most sense.

The "topic" and "position" fields are both optional, but to add them in, see [Help:Topics](#) and [Help:Positions](#) for an explanation of these two concepts. To decide on the topic name, you should use the same methodology described for sources and authors: first, see if the auto-complete feature offers a reasonable possibility, then, if that fails, on Wikipedia. For the position name, if it doesn't already exist in Discourse DB, try to match the style of existing position names.

Thanks to the use of forms, all of which (except for "Add item") are enabled by the [Semantic Forms](#) extension, actually adding and editing these pages simply involves filling out form inputs.

Refreshing data

You may notice, after adding or modifying an opinion item, that the new item or modified data do not appear where they should appear, in a topic page, position page, author page, etc. That's most likely because the data that appears in that page is cached from before. You can make the new data appear by hitting the "refresh" tab at the top of this page.