

# Reddit goes to war with its volunteer moderators | Columbia Journalism Review

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**If you use the internet**, you may think of [Reddit](#)—if you think of it at all—as a largely harmless repository of discussion forums about nerdy topics like *Star Wars*. Last week, however, even those who don't follow news about the platform may have seen [a blizzard of articles](#) about a “[moderator revolt](#)” that caused [thousands](#) of its most popular forums, or “subreddits,” to go offline by changing their status to private, a process the moderators referred to as “going dark.” The unlikely-sounding catalyst for this uprising was [a change to](#) the company's application programming interface, or API, a set of software instructions that allow third-party apps to access Reddit's data. Reddit had announced plans to start charging for access to its API, which used to be free. On June 8, Christian Selig, the creator of Apollo, a popular app used for browsing Reddit, said that the [new rates would cost him](#) at least twenty million dollars a year. He had no choice, he said, but to shut down his app.

[...]

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