

Using Disqus comments on a Mosaic site

Disqus is a web service which facilitates online discussion. It can be used to allow comments on Mosaic sites. It has free and paid versions: you'll need to select what's right for your project, but the free service may well be sufficient for a straightforward comment feature.

Adding Disqus commenting function to an individual Mosaic page

Step 1 – Sign up with Disqus

Go to <https://disqus.com/> and follow the instructions to sign up.

Step 2 – Create a Disqus site

A Disqus site is a discussion forum. Once you've set this up, you'll be able to add individual comment threads to pages on your Mosaic site.

To create a Disqus site, click **Admin** (towards the top right-hand corner of the screen), then **Installing Disqus**, then **Create a Site**.

Pick a name for your site and enter it in the **Website Name** field. The Disqus site name will be displayed at the top of each comment thread, so pick something that you're happy to have displayed there. You may find it convenient to make the Disqus site name the same as your Mosaic domain name.

Pick a category (unfortunately, the list doesn't include anything that's obviously appropriate for academic sites), and click **Create Site**.

Step 3 – Get the code to add Disqus to your Mosaic site

You should now be taken to a page which asks you which platform your site is on. While Drupal (which is used by Mosaic) is one of the options listed, if you click this, you'll find that you're invited to install a Drupal module – something which Mosaic users aren't able to do.

Instead, scroll to the bottom of the page, and click **I don't see my platform listed, install manually with Universal Code**.

You should see a page featuring a block of code, beginning `<div id="disqus_thread"></div>`. Keep this page open.

Note

If you reach the page featuring the Universal Code by a route other than the one described above (because, for example, you have previously created a Disqus site and now want to get the code to add commenting function to a new page), it's worth checking that the version of the code you're looking at is tailored to your site. If it is, then towards the bottom of the code block, you'll see a line which says `s.src = 'https://sitename.disqus.com/embed.js';` (where **sitename** is your Disqus site name). If it isn't, then it will instead say `s.src = 'https://EXAMPLE.disqus.com/embed.js';`

If you have the generic version, you can replace **EXAMPLE** with your site name, or you can click **Pick a Site** (you should see this option in the left hand sidebar) and select the appropriate site from the list to get a new version of the code.

Step 4 – Add the code to your Mosaic site

In another tab or window, go to your Mosaic site and log in. Navigate to the page where you want the comment function to appear, and in Edit view, add a new WYSIWYG widget in the appropriate region. For example, if you want the commenting function to appear at the bottom of the page, add the WYSIWYG widget underneath the widgets that hold the main page content.

Click **Source** to switch the WYSIWYG widget to HTML view. Copy and paste the Disqus code into the widget.

Step 5 – Configure the Disqus code

You now need to edit a couple of things in the code to connect the Disqus comment thread to the page where it appears.

The Disqus code is written in Javascript, and certain sections of it are commented out – i.e. marked with special characters to tell the machine running the code to ignore those sections. There is one section you need to uncomment: it looks like this:

```
/*  
  
var Disqus_config = function () {  
  
    this.page.url = PAGE_URL; // Replace PAGE_URL with your page's canonical URL variable  
  
    this.page.identifier = PAGE_IDENTIFIER; // Replace PAGE_IDENTIFIER with your page's  
unique identifier variable  
  
};  
  
*/
```

`/*` indicates the start of a multi-line comment, and `*/` the end of one – so delete those four characters to uncomment this section, taking care to leave the rest of the code intact. (There is another commented section immediately above this one: that contains user instructions, so should be left commented out.)

Now replace the first occurrence of **PAGE_URL** with the URL of the page on which the commenting function is located. Enclose the URL in single quotation marks. (Disqus doesn't specifically ask you to do this, but problems can arise if the quotation marks are omitted.)

The first occurrence of **PAGE_IDENTIFIER** needs to be replaced with something that will identify the page uniquely. Fortunately, all Mosaic pages have a node number (visible in the URL when editing) which works well for this purpose – so replace **PAGE_IDENTIFIER** with the node number.

Once again, you need to be careful to leave the surrounding code intact – note that **PAGE_URL** and **PAGE_IDENTIFIER** are both followed by semi-colons, which shouldn't be overwritten.

After these edits, this section of the code should look something like this:

```
var Disqus_config = function () {  
  
    this.page.url = 'https://mosaicdomain.web.ox.ac.uk/article/article-title'; // Replace  
PAGE_URL with your page's canonical URL variable  
  
    this.page.identifier = 123456; // Replace PAGE_IDENTIFIER with your page's unique  
identifier variable  
  
};
```

Once you've finished configuring the code, click **Save**. You should now see the Disqus commenting function on your Mosaic page.

Note that if you now return to the **Edit** view, the WYSIWYG widget containing the commenting function code will initially appear empty. Click **Source** to see the code.

Creating a template

If you are likely to be creating a series of pages featuring commenting function (e.g. blog posts), it's worth creating a template. You can save the code as part of this, so you don't have to go and copy it from the Disqus site every time you want to add the commenting function.

Step 1 – Create the template

In the Mosaic interface, click **Manage Content** and then **Templates**. Find the content sub-type you want to create the template for (or add a new one if you need to), and click the green **+ Create** button next to it.

Step 2 – Set up the template

Add widgets to the template as desired. In the region where you wish the commenting function to appear, add a WYSIWYG widget, click **Source** to switch to HTML view, and paste in the Disqus code (see Step 3 above).

You can make some tweaks to the comments in the block of code, to make it more user-friendly. Remember that anything between `/*` and `*/` is a comment. Within an individual line, anything to the right of `//` is also a comment. You can edit (or even delete) comments as desired.

For example, you may wish to remove the initial comment about recommended configuration variables, and to edit the later comments to make them more helpful for Mosaic users.

There is also a change you can make to the line of code giving the page URL to make things easier for people using the template. Each Mosaic page has two versions of the URL: one that gets used on public-facing pages (e.g. `https://mosaicdomain.web.ox.ac.uk/article/article-title`) and one that gets used behind the scenes, featuring the node number (e.g. `https://mosaicdomain.web.ox.ac.uk/node/123456/`). Either of these will work as the page URL in the Disqus code, but there are some advantages to using the version that uses the node number. First of all, this URL won't change, whereas the public-facing version sometimes may do (if, for example, the page title is edited). Secondly, other than the node number, this URL is the same for all pages on your Mosaic site, so you can replace **PAGE_URL** in the template code with something like `https://mosaicdomain.web.ox.ac.uk/node/NODE_NUMBER/`. People using the template can then simply replace **NODE_NUMBER** with the Mosaic node number for the page, rather than needing to add the whole URL.

PAGE_IDENTIFIER in the code can also be replaced with **NODE_NUMBER**, to make it clearer that the node number needs to be added in two separate places.

Finally, it's worth including the single quotation marks around the URL in the template code, so these don't need to be added every time.

The code might end up looking something like this (**mosaicdomain** and **sitename** represent your Mosaic domain name and your Disqus site name, respectively):

```

<div id="disqus_thread"></div>

<script>

var disqus_config = function () {

this.page.url = 'https://mosaicdomain.web.ox.ac.uk/node/NODE_NUMBER/';

this.page.identifier = NODE_NUMBER; // In this line of code and the one above, replace
NODE_NUMBER with the Mosaic node number for this page.

};

(function() { // DON'T EDIT BELOW THIS LINE
var d = document, s = d.createElement('script');

s.src = 'https://sitename.disqus.com/embed.js';

s.setAttribute('data-timestamp', +new Date());

(d.head || d.body).appendChild(s);

})();

</script>

<noscript>Please enable JavaScript to view the <a
href="https://disqus.com/?ref_noscript">comments powered by Disqus.</a></noscript>

```

Step 3 – Add some guidance

Tweaking the code is well worth doing. However, as the code is only visible once the **Source** button has been clicked, it may not be immediately obvious what needs to be done. It's therefore helpful to add some guidance – either as a reminder for yourself, or as instructions for other people using the template.

There are two possible ways to do this. If you click the Template tab in the left-hand sidebar, you can complete the **Template guidance** field. Users will see whatever appears here when they start creating a new content item using the template. However, this text isn't visible once they click into the various regions of the page, so it won't actually be on the screen at the same time as the comment code. It may nevertheless be helpful to use this field to provide a reminder to go and edit the comment code.

Secondly, you can add the guidance text to a WYSIWYG widget on the same page as the widget that contains the comment code. As you probably don't want the guidance text to appear in live content items, this requires trusting your content creators to delete this text before they publish the item. However, this approach can work well in some cases. For example, if you're creating a template for a blog post, you might have one WYSIWYG widget for the post itself, and another underneath it for the comment code. You can put instructions about what to do with the comment code in the widget intended to hold the post text. Your content creators will then overwrite this – hopefully after having followed the instructions!

Step 4 – Save the template

Once you're happy with your template and any guidance text, click **Save**. The new template will be created. You can now use these each time you want to create a new content item with the commenting function.

Note

Disqus is a third-party service, and you'll need to assess whether it meets your requirements before adding the functionality to your Mosaic site. In particular, you should bear in mind that Disqus comments will be visible via both the Mosaic site and the Disqus site. In most cases, this shouldn't present a problem, but if the Disqus comment function is used on an Oxford-only page, it is good practice to make commenters aware that the comment data is being stored on a third-party server, and is accessible by people who are not logged in to the Oxford-only site section.