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# How NOSTR Will Change the World of Privacy

*Fabian Ommar*

10-12 minutes

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**By the author of [Street Survivalism: A Practical Training Guide To Life In The City](#) and [The Ultimate Survival Gear Handbook](#)**

Bitcoin users have already flocked to it *en masse*. It has been the subject of constant raving from [Edward Snowden](#). The former CEO and founder of Twitter, Jack Dorsey, is participating. It's being heralded as the replacement for Twitter and Instagram, but some industry insiders predict it'll destroy both.

Although it's too early to tell if NOSTR can achieve all of that, one thing it won't be is *another social networking* platform (if only because it's not even a platform). Read on to learn more and find out what NOSTR is and why has the potential to transform

interpersonal relationships and communication.

## What's NOSTR?

It's short for "Notes and Other Stuff Transmitted by Relays." It's [officially described](#) as "a decentralized network built on cryptographic keypairs that is not peer-to-peer." None of that soup of words does much to describe NOSTR, and the concept may take some time to sink in for those used to traditional social media.

However, once you do, NOSTR's potential is obvious.

It is not a platform. It doesn't have a server, a fancy glass office building full of nerds playing ping-pong and bingeing on free chai lattes, slick marketers, or even a CEO. You don't really sign up for a NOSTR account and don't look for a NOSTR app because there isn't one available in the stores.

NOSTR is a protocol, or more precisely, a decentralized base-level protocol, that allows anyone to build nearly whatever they like, including a chat room, a social media platform, an interactive game, and a news site.

A developer by the name of *fiatjaf* designed and coded NOSTR in 2020 as a discrete, open-source, niche substitute for both Twitter and Mastodon. NOSTR is powered and distributed through decentralized platforms and apps, or "clients," in contrast to conventional social media.

**The excitement and expectations that followed [Elon Musk](#)'s acquisition of Twitter are gradually fading.**

Even if the blue bird's platform may now function better, users are beginning to realize the fact that it's still largely the same Twitter.

This is due to the fact that centralized, server-based social media is always open to outside manipulation. It can be hacked, compromised, suppressed, tampered with, co-opted, or censored. Or purchased, as the Twitter transaction has demonstrated.

When Twitter changed hands, [Mastodon](#), a social network made up of autonomous servers arranged around particular themes, subjects, or interests, started to grow quickly on the promise of decentralization. However, Mastodon is still based on servers whose administrators can censor or shadow-ban users' material or manage their usernames and identity. That's the crux of the matter.

## **There is a top-to-bottom movement that favors decentralization.**

Geopolitically, this happens through the realignment of allegiances and partnerships of nations. Individuals, on the other hand, need to figure out how to keep their money, savings, and voices out of the reach of governments, bureaucrats, and technocrats.

Nobody is pleased with the scramble for power that's taking place everywhere, and decentralizing technology may offer the common person a way out of the rat cage.

As big tech and legacy media collude with governments to control the narratives and [censor dissent](#), people are searching for alternative locations and social media platforms where they can exchange and propagate ideas and their creations without running the risk of being [de-platformed](#), [censored](#), or [canceled](#) without much in the way of appeal.

## **Against this background comes NOSTR.**

Although the mainstream media hasn't yet taken notice of NOSTR by large, it's been making the rounds in the digital underworld for some time and beginning to surface and gain some traction. The final push was given by none other than Twitter by adding NOSTR to the list of items/services forbidden from being advertised on its platform. All this did was put NOSTR square in the spotlight.

After everything that transpired with [COVID](#), [lockdowns](#), [vaccines](#), and everything else during the previous two years or so, what better way to put something squarely in the spotlight than to make it *verboden*?

(Want to starve the beast through means other than just NOSTR? Then check out our free [QUICKSTART Guide](#) on the subject.)

## How do people use NOSTR?

In NOSTR, you can create an “account” by using an operating app (more on this soon). However, the decentralized architecture means that users control their pubkey (username) and private key (password) instead of the server owner/host (because neither exists). In other words, you own your full profile and can use it across all “clients” or apps and platforms as they're called.

After logging in with your private key, you're then free to run a client, log into your account (with your public key), and share posts or create articles. If a post is shared with another client, the information is transmitted “trustlessly” around the network in a similar way to how Bitcoin and cryptocurrency transactions are dispersed to all nodes in the platform.

The foundation of the system's operation is the relay servers that send, receive, index, structure, and store events (or messages)

independently. It's quite geeky and technical, and I admit that I don't know nearly enough about programming, computers, or the internet to fully comprehend all of its intricacies. As a result, I recommend reading this article on [Bitcoin Magazine](#) if you truly want to go into the technical details of NOSTR.

**I'm more interested in NOSTR's potential to serve as a decentralized base protocol that would enable the free creation and growth of truly independent, uncensored news and content outlets and social media.**

With NOSTR, no one can restrict you or your content because it uses a decentralized protocol, and you own your login and key. You can choose who you communicate with, who you follow, and what you don't want to see, but you can't restrict other users' content in any manner or stop them from seeing your stuff. Nobody can.

It's a pretty straightforward protocol with lots of room for customization, ensuring that users can always communicate with one another regardless of what specific relay server operators decide to host or not to host.

## **How to NOSTR?**

Even though the group chat is still being constructed, the NOSTR webpage invites you to join them on Telegram. Yes, it has just recently begun to take shape.

On February 1st, Apple and Google approved and made accessible the first Twitter-like apps in their stores, DAMUS (iOS) and Amethyst (Android), respectively. With those, you may make your pubkey and begin dabbing with NOSTR on your smartphone (my pubkey is

npub1lv29xwmcxw3pnhsaet0ypahxetqdg2tpv74dptlvusmwu4938xsqrckncr / User: Musashi, if anyone is interested and joining in).

Both are similar to Twitter, but if you feel a little lost, don't worry or be intimidated because practically everyone there is still learning.

The projects ANIGMA (a Telegram-like conversation), BRANLE (similar to DAMUS), even a game (JESTER, a chess player), and others are already moving forward. Programmers are all over it, and everyone wants to be the next Twitter or Instagram or possibly something even more cutting-edge and ground-breaking than anything we now have. That is a huge incentive in and of itself for developers.

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## **The protocol is still limited in many ways.**

As I said, NOSTR is still being constructed. The apps themselves are rather crude and are largely copies of popular apps like Twitter right now. That's to say, it's not all roses, and NOSTR undoubtedly has certain problems and shortcomings that aren't yet obvious at this point because of its insufficient critical mass, track record, and database, among other limitations.

But it's stirring up some excitement and might be just what people need to get past restriction and toward actual freedom of expression and innovation. New clients (apps and platforms) will not only appear if it acquires traction and momentum, but they will also be designed to fully utilize NOSTR's capabilities.

Am I excited about NOSTR? You bet. You should be too.

Tell us your initial thoughts in the comment section. Have you heard

of this before? Do you think it will be beneficial? How long do you think it will be before the government will try to crack down on it? Let's discuss it.

## **About Fabian**

*Fabian Ommar is a 50-year-old middle-class worker living in São Paulo, Brazil. Far from being the super-tactical or highly trained military survivor type, he is the average joe who since his youth has been involved with self-reliance and outdoor activities and the practical side of balancing life between a big city and rural/wilderness settings. Since the 2008 world economic crisis, he has been training and helping others in his area to become better prepared for the “constant, slow-burning SHTF” of living in a 3rd world country.*

*Fabian's ebook, [Street Survivalism: A Practical Training Guide To Life In The City](#), is a practical training method for common city dwellers based on the lifestyle of the homeless (real-life survivors) to be more psychologically, mentally, and physically prepared to deal with the harsh reality of the streets during normal or difficult times. He's also the author of [The Ultimate Survival Gear Handbook](#).*

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