

5 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMENT SECTION

1 Reduce Incivility

- Focus on reducing incivility in the whole comment stream, not just in the first few comments
- Acknowledge – rather than dismiss – a commenter’s emotions when redirecting behavior

2 Support Your Moderators

- Encourage journalists to help out by engaging in comment sections
- Give moderators other tasks along with moderation
- Give moderators a mix of civil and uncivil comments, rather than having them focus exclusively on uncivil content

3 Guide Journalist Engagement

- Answer legitimate questions from commenters
- Ask commenters to weigh in on questions related to the post topic
- Encourage and highlight good discussions
- Provide additional information, like a link to a news story

4 Delete Comments Thoughtfully

- Focus on deleting hate speech more than on deleting profanity
- Explain in detail why content was removed
- Avoid general explanations like “this did not meet the rules for our website”

5 Consider Your Comment Platform

- Platforms can make a big difference for users and for newsrooms
- The platform can affect the number of toxic comments
- Turning off comments completely can reduce time people spend on the site and make the experience worse for users