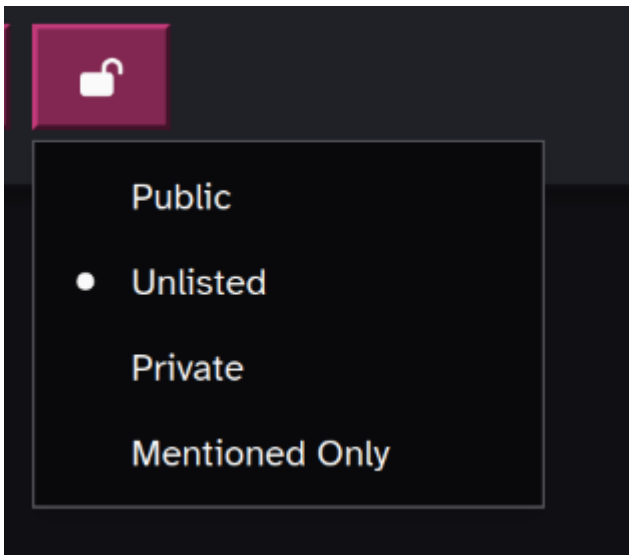


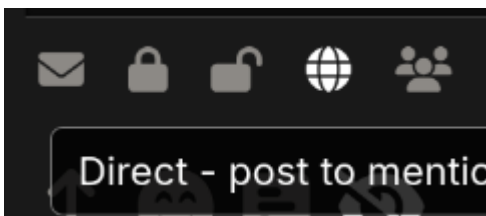
# Post Privacy Settings (or: what's the globe/lock icon next to a post mean?)

One of the unique architectural decisions mastodon made early on is to track "post privacy" or "post visibility" on a per-post basis.

This is represented in **pillbug** by this dropdown:



and in **Akkoma** by this row of icons:



The exact options available will depend on which backend your node runs on.

On [Akkoma](#):

- **"Direct/Mentioned Only"** - only allows people mentioned in the post to see it. this is effectively equivalent to "DMs", but these shouldn't be considered "really private": node operators can see them too, and they're unencrypted.
- **"Private/Followers Only"** - only allows followers to see the post, as well as anybody you tag in the post. You can emulate a twitter/Cohost-style locked account by enabling "Restrict your account to approved followers only" in the profile tab, and only posting in private mode
- **"Unlisted"** - Anybody can see this post, but it won't show up in "instance feed" or in tag searches.
- **"Public"** - Anybody can see this post, and it may show up via these other discovery mechanisms.

On [GoToSocial](#), the options are the same, with one addition:

- **"Mutuals Only"** - this post will only be visible if you follow the viewer, and the viewer follows you, or if someone is mentioned.

By default, most people may be leery of the "Public" choice, and for good reason: on larger social media platforms, do you really want random strangers finding you through some unknowable algorithm and leaving bizarre replies? Even on the Website League, the same logic sort of applies; but as a result of its smallness and invite-only registration, you can at least be a little confident that a Stranger will be the right kind of Strange. That, and, well, there's no magic discovery algorithm to push your post.

## Replies

Ok, so. Replies are a bit weird when it comes to privacy rules. By default, the post compose will **inherit** the privacy setting of the parent comment. this means, if it's unlisted, your reply will be unlisted, if it's a direct message, your reply will be direct too. But! you can set that yourself. so if you'd like to DM somebody about a post they made, you can make it a reply, but make it a "direct" visibility, and only they (and other tagged users) will see it.

This leads to a weird situation with private posts, specifically. you can reply to a private post, but your response will be "private", too. this means, only people who follow you can see it! It's common in practice to see one side of a conversation thread, because you follow one user in it and not the other. This is not the ideal behavior, we admit, but it is what we inherited from Mastodon.

If you want to privately reply to somebody who made a private post, but they don't follow you, fret not. the act of replying them counts as mentioning them, so they'll be included in the thread too. Just not any of their followers/people not mentioned.

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