

# Understanding Topics and Messages

A topic, also referred to as a “thread”, is a subject of discussion that appears in a category. Topics consist of the originating message and all its replies. Multiple topics can be created within a category.

A message is a form of written communication sent by one person to another user or multiple users. It can be the originating message that starts a new topic or it can be a response within an existing message in a topic. A message is also called a post.

## Creating a New Topic

To create a topic, enter the category in which the new topic will reside. In the main navigational bar, click on the “new topic” button. A new window will appear that requests for specific information to be provided, including the title, topic summary, and the message that will appear in the new topic. All required fields are marked with an asterisk.

There is an option to insert emoticons to the text of a message. It can be done through the drop-down menu indicated as SELECT EMOTION or done manually by typing it in. To manually insert the emoticons, click on the SYMBOLS link, located to the left of the text box, which will provide a list of emotions including the graphic with description and the text equivalency.

When the necessary information has been provided, click on the “Preview” button to preview your message before it is published, “Cancel” to cancel the operation, or “Post Message” to create the topic and post the message. If enabled by the

administrator, users can also create a poll in their topic by clicking on the "Add Poll" prior to clicking on "Post Message".

To create a poll, enter the question to be answered by the users, and click on "Add Question". Click on the "Answers" link that corresponds to the question to enter the suggested answers for the poll. To delete a question in a poll before it is live, click on the "Delete" link. To learn more about topic polls, refer to "[Topic Polls](#)".

If the feature has been enabled by the forum administrator, users can rate topics by clicking on a corresponding topic/message rating icon before posting a new message. To learn more about topic and/or message rating, refer to "[Rating Topics/Messages](#)".

If attachments are permissible in the category, the user will have the option of attaching a file. To attach a file, click on the ATTACH FILE button. A new window will appear. Click on the BROWSE button to choose the file(s) to be attached. Once the file(s) has been chosen, click on UPLOAD FILE, which will upload the selected file(s) to the forum repository or attachment directory. The file(s) will appear in the file listing when this process has been completed. From this file listing, select the files to be attached and click on the ATTACH FILE button.

The image shows a screenshot of a forum's "Post Message" form. On the left side, there are labels for "Message Title:", "Topic Summary", "Message Text:", "Options:", and "Attachments:". The "Message Text:" label has a red asterisk and a note below it stating "HTML code is not permitted. Special symbols permit some HTML functionality." The main form area contains a rich text editor with a toolbar featuring icons for Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), Link (http), Unlink (https), FTP, Mail, Horizontal Rule (hr), Highlight, and Quote. Below the toolbar is a "Select Emotion" dropdown menu. At the bottom of the form, there are buttons for "Post Message", "Preview", "Cancel", and "Add Poll". Under the "Options:" section, there are two checkboxes: "Subscribe to this topic" and "Do not parse emoticons". At the bottom, there is an "Attachments:" label, a text input field, and two buttons: "Attach File(s)" and "Clear File(s)".

*Posting a New Topic*

## Replying to a Topic/ Message

Enter the category in which the topic resides. Click on a topic thread and locate the message navigations (reply, quote, top, bottom, edit) at the bottom right of the message. Select the REPLY link. Enter the message title with a brief summary of the topic and enter the message in the text box. Click on REPLY TO TOPIC, which will post the message.

To post a quick reply to a message, a user can use the Quick Reply text field, which appears at the end of the thread (i.e. last position in the thread), or through the Topic Tools menu. This feature is used to send a response to the last posted message within a topic.

However, a user can reply to any message that is viewable in the topic or thread. The user can use the "Reply" button, which appears at the right of the message. Or, the user can click on the "Quote" link and the body of the reply message will quote the message of that which you are replying. A "Replying to a Message" window will appear. Simply enter the text of the message and click the Reply to Topic button. If the user hasn't subscribed to the topic, he/she can click on the checkbox to do so. To learn more about subscriptions, refer to "[Subscribing to a Topic](#)".

If the user wishes to prevent parsing of emoticons, he/she will need to check the box "Do not parse emoticons. If enabled by the Administrator, a user can also rate the topic by clicking on an icon that appropriately expresses his/her sentiment. To learn more about rating, refer to "[Rating Topics/Messages](#)".

### **Editing a Topic/Message**

Only the Administrator, Moderator and person who created the topic can perform any changes to the topic. To edit a topic, enter the category where the topic/message resides, and click on the topic to be edited. Select the EDIT link associated with the originating message. Edit the message and/or topic title and then select the EDIT MESSAGE button. The message will display a comment directly below the message, indicating that it had been changed on a specific date and time by a named individual.

Users may have the ability to edit their own messages, if granted by the Administrator. To edit your own message, locate the message to be changed, and click on the Edit link in the message navigational links to the right of the message. The message as it had been posted will be displayed for the user to modify. Click on the Edit Message button to save the changes.

### **Viewing a Topic/Message**

To view topics, click on a category. A listing of all topics created within that category will be presented. Scroll through the list or enter a keyword in the search bar beside the category name to locate the topic of interest. The topic interface consists of the category name, the topic titles within that category and its summary, the number of replies and views within the topic, the originator of the topic, and details about the last post to the thread (date, time and username).

To view messages, navigate to a category and click on a topic that is of interest. All messages that have been posted in that topic will be displayed (the number of messages displayed per page is set by the Administrator as a default, but can be changed by the user within the Profile, if granted by the Administrator). Messages can be viewed in four different methods: linear, threading, single or branch.

**Linear** - displays topics in the standard format (chronological order)

The screenshot shows a forum thread in linear view. At the top, the forum navigation bar includes 'FORUMS', 'Discussion', and 'What's New?'. The topic title is 'What's New?' and the topic summary is empty. The thread was created on 10/02/2006 at 03:14:24 PM. Navigation options include 'Linear', 'Threading', 'Single', and 'Branch'. There are buttons for 'Search Topic' and 'Topic Tools'.

The first post is by Bill Smith, dated 10/02/2006 at 03:14:24 PM. The post content is 'Testing approval process in this category'. Bill Smith has 12 posts and joined on 09/01/2006. Below the post are links for 'Report this to a Moderator' and 'Reply : Quote : Top : Bottom'.

The second post is by Tracy Roberts, dated 10/02/2006 at 03:17:24 PM. The post content is 'Testing approval process in this category'. Tracy Roberts has 2 posts and joined on 09/06/2006. Below the post are links for 'Report this to a Moderator' and 'Reply : Quote : Top : Bottom'.

The third post is by Nancy Jones, dated 10/02/2006 at 03:18:36 PM. The post content is 'Testing approval process in this category'. Nancy Jones has 5 posts and joined on 10/02/2006. Below the post are links for 'Report this to a Moderator' and 'Reply : Quote : Top : Bottom : Edit'.

*Linear Viewing*




**Threading** - adds a display of the parent-child relationship at the top of the topic, indicating the relationship of each message in the thread to its parent.


Note: The messages themselves will sort by date/insert date, in ascending or descending order depending on the user's choice within his/her profile. The tree area will sort in accordance to how users reply.

Topic Title: What's New? [Linear](#) : [Threading](#) : [Single](#) : [Branch](#)  
 Topic Summary:  
 Created On: 10/02/2006 03:14:24 PM

[What's New?](#) - **Bill Smith** - 10/02/2006 03:14:24 PM  
[What's New?](#) - **Tracy Roberts** - 10/02/2006 03:17:24 PM  
[What's New?](#) - **Nancy Jones** - 10/02/2006 03:18:36 PM




[Search Topic](#) [Topic Tools](#)


10/02/2006 03:14:24 PM   

 **Bill Smith**  
 Posts: 12  
 Joined: 09/01/2006

Testing approval process in this category




[Report this to a Moderator](#) [Reply](#) : [Quote](#) : [Top](#) : [Bottom](#)


10/02/2006 03:17:24 PM   

 **Tracy Roberts**  
 Posts: 2  
 Joined: 09/06/2006

Testing approval process in this category

[Report this to a Moderator](#) [Reply](#) : [Quote](#) : [Top](#) : [Bottom](#)

10/02/2006 03:18:36 PM   

 **Nancy Jones**  
 Posts: 5  
 Joined: 10/02/2006

Testing approval process in this category

[Report this to a Moderator](#) [Reply](#) : [Quote](#) : [Top](#) : [Bottom](#) : [Edit](#)

### *Threading*

**Single (threading)** - adds a display of the parent-child relationship at the top of the topic, indicating the relationship of each message in the topic to its parent. One message at a time will be displayed for viewing.

FORUMS : Discussion : What's New?

Topic Title: What's New? [Linear](#) : [Threading](#) : [Single](#) : [Branch](#)

Topic Summary:  
Created On: 10/02/2006 03:14:24 PM

- What's New? - Bill Smith - 10/02/2006 03:14:24 PM
- What's New? - Tracy Roberts - 10/02/2006 03:17:24 PM
- What's New? - Nancy Jones - 10/02/2006 03:18:36 PM

10/02/2006 03:14:24 PM

 Testing approval process in this category.

**Bill Smith**  
Posts: 12  
Joined: 01/01/2006

[Report this to a Moderator](#) [Reply](#) : [Quote](#) : [Top](#) : [Bottom](#)

*Single Threading*

**Branch (threading)** - displays one parent-child relationship branch only


FORUMS : Discussion : What's New?

Topic Title: What's New? [Linear](#) : [Threading](#) : [Single](#) : [Branch](#)

Topic Summary:  
Created On: 10/02/2006 03:14:24 PM

- What's New? - Bill Smith - 10/02/2006 03:14:24 PM
- What's New? - Tracy Roberts - 10/02/2006 03:17:24 PM
- What's New? - Nancy Jones - 10/02/2006 03:18:36 PM


10/02/2006 03:17:24 PM

 Testing approval process in this category.

**Tracy Roberts**  
Posts: 2  
Joined: 09/05/2006

[Report this to a Moderator](#) [Reply](#) : [Quote](#) : [Top](#) : [Bottom](#)

10/02/2006 03:18:36 PM

 Testing approval process in this category.

**Nancy Jones**  
Posts: 5  
Joined: 10/02/2006

[Report this to a Moderator](#) [Reply](#) : [Quote](#) : [Top](#) : [Bottom](#) : [Edit](#)

*Branch Threading*

## Topic Polls

If made available by the Administrator, there may be an option for the user to create a topic poll. A topic poll is a survey consisting of one question that is asked of the forum community to acquire feedback. The polls do not permit the selection of multiple answers and free text answers cannot be entered. Additional comments for a poll can only be made when replying to the topic in which the poll is contained.

To create a poll, click on the NEW TOPIC tab where a window will appear requesting information regarding the message. Once the message has been constructed, and before posting the message, click on the ADD POLL tab. Type the question and click on the ADD QUESTION tab. It will appear in the list labeled "question" with corresponding answers, and the option to update or delete. Click on the ANSWERS icon, and list all the possible answers for which only one can be chosen by a member for that particular question. A poll cannot be created when replying to a topic.

This section lets you add polls.

Question:  \*

Question	Answers	Update	Delete
What is your favourite color?			

### *Creating a Poll*

Polls can be edited by the Administrator, moderator or the person who created the poll. If you have permissions to edit a poll, click on EDIT within the topic where the poll resides. Click on EDIT POLL, which is located under the message text box, where questions and answers can be modified by adding new ones or deleting them. Finally, click on EDIT MESSAGE to update the information. The results of a poll will appear in the topic viewing screen by voting on a poll or clicking on the link VIEW RESULTS.