Interchange + Forum/Blog HOWTO
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1. Introduction

1.1. Preamble

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1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to expose how to use Interchange 5.0’s forum and blog capability, enabled with the [forum ...] tag and a few ancilliary files.

1.3. Audience

Anyone who is using an Interchange catalog. This is not rocket science.

1.4. Contact the authors

If you find any spelling errors, technical slip−ups, mistakes, subliminal messages, or if you wish to send feedback, critique, remarks, comments, or if you wish to contribute examples, instructions for alternative platforms, chapters, or other material, please do so.

The preferred method of submitting changes is in the form of a context diff against the SDF source file (ic_howto_forum.sdf). Please address your correspondence to:

Michael Wilk mwilk@steppenwolf.com

Mike Heins mike.heins@perusion.net

1.5. What it does

Interchange forums allow your customers to comment on your products, or allow you to sponsor discussion threads on an interchange catalog. They maintain their content in a single database table named forum.
2. Component files of the forums

There are two directories to add to your foundation catalog --- include/forum and pages/forum. You must add a database table definition, as well as a database source file. You should add Variable support to the variable.txt database, and supporting metadata with help. Finally, you need to add the forum.tag file which contains the forum code.

If you build a foundation catalog from the latest Interchange source, all of these will be done already.

The files that are needed in the catalog directory:

```
dbconf/default_db/forum.dbm
dbconf/mysql/forum.mysql
dbconf/pgsql/forum.pgsql
include/forum/reply_form
include/forum/submit_form
pages/forum/reply.html
pages/forum/display.html
pages/forum/submit.html
products/forum.txt
```

The files that are needed in the Interchange software directory:

```
code/UserTag/forum.tag
```

Add the following lines to products/variable.txt (change | to TAB):

```
FORUM_ANON_NAME|Anonymous Coward|Forums
FORUM_PRODUCTS|1|Forums
FORUM_EMAIL_NOTIFY|sales@yourcompany.com|Forums
```

Add the following records to products/mv_metadata.asc (shown in key: value format, edit file to match with "te" or some other tool):

```
#
# This is a temporary file, automatically generated from the
# database file:
#
# /tmp/what.txt
#
# If you change anything in it, it will be converted back into the
# original format and will replace the original file.
#
# code:variable::Variable::FORUM_EMAIL_NOTIFY
type:text
width:50
height:
field:
db:
name:
outboard:
options:
attribute:
label:Forum notify email
help:An email address to send copies of user comments on products.
lookup:
```
Add the following block to pages/flypage.html:

```html
[if variable FORUM_PRODUCTS]
<tr>
<td>
```

2. Component files of the forums
This would normally go at the end of the table displaying the product, but you can place and edit to suit.

Again, all of this is provided if you have installed from the latest Interchange 4.9.4 or higher.
2. Component files of the forums
3. The [forum] ITL Tag

The [forum] tag is what provides the capability. It uses the forum table and follows tree-like threads in that table.

It has one required parameter, `top`. That gives the id of the message that is the top of the thread to display.

This is a complete forum display for a product:

```
[forum top="[item-code]" />
```

You will see something like that in the snip from `pages/flypage.html` above.

You can pass many more parameters to the [forum] tag. Some of them are:

**display-page**

By default, the [forum ...] tag uses the current page to link to to re-display the forum at another level. Normally this works fine, but on a product flypage it will not work. You must pass in a different page.

```
[forum top="[item-code]" display-page="forum/display" />
```

**show-level**

By default, [forum] only displays the text of top-level replies to the current thread. If you want to display more levels, set the `show-level` parameter to 1 or higher:

```
[forum top="[data session arg]" show-level=3 />
```

The above will show the first four levels of replies, with links to any further down the tree.

**scrub-score**

If you want to moderate certain comments so that their text won't be shown, you can set the `scrub-score` parameter to -1 and then set the `score` field in the message's database record to -1. By default, it is linked to with a message:

```
<A HREF="{DISPLAY_URL}">One message beneath your threshold</A>
```

If you want to totally disable the appearance of the link and message, set the `scrub-template` to something:

```
[forum top=THREAD
   scrub-score="-1"
   scrub-template="<!−− killed! −−>"
]
```

**show-score**

By default, if a message has a score of two or higher, it's text will be shown no matter what level of display it is on. You can set that threshold with this parameter.
template

You can set the template that displays replies with this parameter. You can also pass this as the container text for the [forum] tag, i.e.:

```
[forum top="[data session arg]"
<table cellspacing=0 cellpadding=2 width="65%">
  <tr>
    <td class=contentbar1>
      <A HREF="{DISPLAY_URL}"><b>{SUBJECT}</b></A>
      by <b>{USERINFO}</b>
      on {DATE}
    </td>
    <td class=contentbar1 align=right>
      #91;
      <A HREF="{REPLY_URL}"><b>Reply</b></A>
      #93;
    </td>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <td colspan=2>
      {COMMENT}
    </td>
  </tr>
</table>
[/forum]
```

See pages/forum/display.html for an example.

header−template

You can set the header template that displays the top−level message with this parameter. See pages/forum/display.html for an example.

link−template

You can set the template that displays the links to messages that are not shown with this parameter. See pages/forum/display.html for an example.

scrub−template

The template for a message that has a score lower than scrub−score. See pages/forum/display.html for an example.

threshold−message

The message displayed in the default scrub−template when a message is scrubbed. If you set the scrub−template yourself, it is ignored.

display−page

The page linked to with {DISPLAY_URL}. Default is the current page. See Templating below.

reply−page
The page linked to with {REPLY_URL}. Default is forum/reply.html. See Templating below.

submit−page

The page linked to with {SUBMIT_URL}. Default is forum/submit.html. See Templating below.

date−format

The format for the date provided with {DATE}. Default is %B %e, %Y @%H:%M, which provides a date like October 5, 2002 @21:19.
3. The [forum] ITL Tag
4. Templating

All of the [forum] display mechanisms are templated. You can pass four templates — template, header-template, link-template, and scrub-template.

They use the substitution style found in Interchange's attr-list ITL tag.

The following values are available for templating:

- ADDITIONAL: Additional text normally only used at the top level
- COMMENT: Text of the message
- CREATED: Created date in ISO format
- DATE: Date the comment was made
- DISPLAY_URL: URL to display the forum with a new starting point
- FORUM_APPEND: End indent </UL> tags for item (automatic, don't use)
- FORUM_PREPEND: Begin indent <UL> tags for item (automatic, don't use)
- MOD_TIME: Modified date in ISO format
- PARENT_URL: URL to call the parent of the comment
- REASON: Text indicating reason for scoring
- REPLY_URL: URL to reply to the comment
- SCORE: Score of the article
- SUBJECT: Subject of the message
- SUBMIT_URL: URL to submit a new top-level thread
- TOP_URL: URL to call the top level of the thread (if not at top)
- USERINFO: User information based on login status and anonymity

You can see how the above are used by examining the file pages/forum/display.html and playing around with the provided templates.

4.1. Templating rules

4.1.1. {KEY}

Inserts the value of the KEY for the reference. In a database query, this is the column name.

4.1.2. {KEY|fallback string}

Displays the value of {KEY} or if it is zero or blank, the fallback string (i.e., default).

4.1.3. {KEY true string}

Displays true string if the value of {KEY} is non-blank, non-zero, or displays nothing if the key is false.

4.1.4. {KEY?} true text {/KEY?}

Displays true text if the value of {KEY} is non-blank, non-zero, and nothing otherwise.
4.1.5. {KEY:} false text {/KEY:}

Displays *false text* if the value of {KEY} is blank or zero, and nothing otherwise.

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