

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [\[Tut\] Ultimate Forum Management, Protection and SEO Guide \[Tut\]](#)

Antigen - May 31, 2014, 1:45 am

Preamble:

This is a collection of Forum administrating tips, tricks and methods for those who wanted to create/administer forums. I've seen tons of threads asking questions such as "how to get members for my forum?", "How to make members stay engaged in my forum", "How to protect my forum from hackers" etc so I decided to write one guide about this, I've personally administered numerous forums for years. This thread is for those who wanted to start a forum and be a good admin, if you don't yet have the basic idea about forum software's and administration options then read up on it, Google is your friend, then comeback and read this. I wrote this guide/tutorial/handbook insight of MyBB as the default forum software but methods and strategies can be used in any forum software, I hope you do enjoy reading this guide.

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Requirements

[*] Interest in Entrepreneurship, management, monetizing and web development.

[*] Knowledge in forum management systems like mybb, coding and internet.

[*] Willing to spend a lot of time in Internet.

[*] Motivated and very hardworking.

[*] Willingness to invest and spend \$\$.

[*] General leadership qualities,

Communication skills

Confidence

Patience

Positive Attitude

Creativity

Ability to Inspire

Forum Subject

Concentrate on a specific theme like Sports or Gaming other than general categories such as technology or everyday life in the initial stages.

Make sure you do have good knowledge in your chosen theme.

If you are planning to add illegal sections like leaking, cracks, serials and malware, be ready to get in to legal battles and DMCA bans(In a case of DMCA report/Chilling effect report your forum links will be removed from almost all search engines).

Make sure your selected forum topic has a good number of visitors/traffic.
Search for competitive forums with same topic and make strategies to stand out and unique from them.

Choosing domain and Hosting

Make sure you get a domain name that fits within your forum content, that'll help you extensively in SEO.

If possible take a domain with the keyword "forum" keyword in it, that'll increase your SEO visibility as a forum.

Choosing a TLD of .com/.net is always recommended.

Think twice and thrice before purchasing hosting, look for reviews of selected hosting companies and decide the best from it.

If possible go with a DDOS protected hosting and enable CloudFlare for it, even though CF free is not that effective against DDOS attacks, but it's still a great firewall for bots/spam and for optimization.

Always go with a hosting company with 24/7 phone support.

Creation of forum

You'll have to select a forum management system to create your forum, there are a handful of forum management systems such as MyBB, phpbb, vBulletin and SMF. Although Each have it's own merits and demerits, I personally recommend MyBB since it's much more popular and easy to work with(personal opinion).

I won't walk you through technical steps/installing mybb, it's very easy and look for mybb documentation for guidance.

Download MyBB from official source, [link](#)

Extract it in your public_html or wherever you want.

Follow this MyBB installation guide and documentation, [link](#).

Get a unique/custom theme, there are many mybb custom coders in HF.

Install essential plugins such as Awards, spoiler etc.

Look for protection tips to make your forum protected.

SEO

Create an official Twitter and Facebook page for your forum so members wont miss a thing and will keep in touch. It'll do very good for SEO too.

Make sure search engine bots can crawl your forum content and threads.

Use Google SEO plugin for MyBB, [link](#).

Get backlinks from popular forums, put your website link in signature and stuff like that.

Get as many as backlinks possible from related blogs/sites/forums.

Add a youtube award for those who make a youtube video about your forum with link gets an award, that'll drive you some traffic.

Advertise your forum in popular ad services.

How to get new members & make them active*

Before the deployment of your forum make sure you have minimum 10 active users to start with (invite your friends and stuff).

Offer new members "exclusive" perks like Free VIP for the first 100 members with 100 posts, Femail forwarders etc.

AWARDS - Yes it's a golden opportunity to get members, let it be your forum has 10 members or 100, but offering a award like founder award for the first 100 members will always lust new members, yes they all love pixels in profile.

Create a some proxy users by yourself and make them very active only then other new members

will think this forum has actual activity or active users. (Very first multiaccounters of a forum happens to be the admins most of the times :Hehe: lol)

Create some free groups and let those who deem worthy make leaders.

Advertise on popular forums about your forum with above promo offers. (By advertising I meant in proper sections and if and only if rules of that forum permit it else you are buying a BAN.)

Don't open up too many subforums, only sections where you think does have traffic because forums with no or less posts will make your forum looks dead.

Be very active on forum, make sure you do attend to every suggestions and bugs.

Never show partiality.

Never let any member harass you or threaten you, I've seen some skid members with booters make admins beg(See protection and security section to know how to prevent booters).

Always offer new features, upcoming changes and great things because giving hope is a great idea to make them stay.

Forum Security and Protection

Buy a VPS/Dediserver if possible.

Use a paid/free DDOS mitigation service like ClouFlare and set it up to prevent resolver, [link](#).

Always use most updated version and check for updates/patches of forum management system.

Change default table prefix.

Change admin directory name, [link](#).

Change default captcha of forum to ReCaptcha.

Add a additional PIN to admin login, [link](#).

Use whitelist for admin login by creating .htaccess file with

Quote:Order Allow,Deny

Allow from Your.static.ip.adress (Don't use this if you have Dynamic IP)

Add a fake/honeypot login page if needed, [link](#).

Admin password should be strong and shouldn't be written anywhere especially in your personal computer.

Automated database backups will give you piece of mind.

Use a anti-bot plugin like random question on registration, [link](#).

/inc/ directory shouldn't be accessible to the public. It's merely a collection of classes and functions.

It also houses sensitive information such as database configurations and settings, [link](#).

Deny access to following directories by creating a .htaccess file in the root of those directory with "deny from all".{root}/inc

{root}/install (whenever not needed)

{root}/{admincpdir}/inc

{root}/{admincpdir}/modules

Run MyBB with a database user that is not used with anything else on your website to prevent one failure leading to another.

Restrict the database user that MyBB uses to only be able to do what it needs and nothing more.

Remove any features you don't need (don't use the portal?. then remove it, don't use the calendar? then disable it etc)

Search through forums/exploit DB's for potential exploits often

If you are starting a forum from scratch change how passwords are salted and hashed for some extra obscurity in the event your DB is leaked.

Stop anyone browsing folders without an index by creating .htaccess with "Options -Indexes" in forum root.

Read comments and reviews before using a plugin, if possible look through code.

If you are financially sound, hire a pentester and pentest your forum.

Resources (MyBB based)

A good service to compare different forum softwares with features and such, [link](#).

MyBB Plugin gallery have hundreds of free plugins, [link](#).

Mybbcentral is a great place to get premium plugins like myawards and tabbedmenu etc, [link](#).

MyBB protection tips, [link](#).

This is not complete dummy or bible for Forum Management, there are some skills and knowledge that can't taught but to learn from experience.

I wrote this tutorial with my limited knowledge and experience , if you find any mistakes, feel free to PM me. Thank you for reading my tut/guide/handbook.

Kudos to the most skilled forum admin I ever seen, happens to be the admin of largest mybb forum, Omnicient.

I'll be updating this thread in time, if you have something that's worthy of adding feel free to PM.

Updates

Updated How to get members section

JumpWar - May 31, 2014, 3:04 am

Well written guide.

Never started a Forum except fro friends, will save this for the case I ever do.

Antigen - May 31, 2014, 5:19 am

(May 31, 2014 03:04 AM)JumpWar Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Well written guide.

Never started a Forum except fro friends, will save this for the case I ever do.Thank you, now is the best time to start one if you are interested in the field.

ImpureRatchetHoe - May 31, 2014, 6:01 am

I like how you added the "how to get members" section. Nice guide!

Antigen - May 31, 2014, 8:15 am

(May 31, 2014 06:01 AM)ImpureRatchetHoe Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I like how you added the "how to get members" section. Nice guide!

Thank you, "How to get member" is based on my experience ?

Novo - May 31, 2014, 11:15 am

Nicely written tutorial, Very helpful information. I will be using this so I have bookmarked the thread.

Antigen - June 1, 2014, 4:00 am

(May 31, 2014 11:15 AM)Novo Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Nicely written tutorial, Very helpful information. I will be using this so I have bookmarked the thread.Thank you, I'll update it in time with new resources.

The GRim - June 1, 2014, 4:42 am

Awesome tutorial mate. Really helped me out :).

Motix - June 2, 2014, 12:55 pm

This is a brilliant tutorial which is well written. This has also been bookmarked to help me out in the near future with some projects I may start! Thank you! :)

Arcady - June 2, 2014, 1:01 pm

(May 31, 2014 05:19 AM)Antigen Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Thank you, now is the best time to start one if you

are interested in the field.

Why is it the best time to start one? 99% of niches are saturated. It takes a UNIQUE idea to get anywhere. And most importantly SEO.

SIM-1947090 - June 2, 2014, 1:16 pm

This goes to my bookmarks list.

Thanks for the spent time!

POLY MATH - June 2, 2014, 4:04 pm

Great Tutorial. Summarizes the basics of starting an online community and provides a few key examples.

Antigen - June 4, 2014, 2:31 am

(Jun 2, 2014 01:01 PM)Arcady Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Why is it the best time to start one? 99% of niches are saturated. It takes a UNIQUE idea to get anywhere. And most importantly SEO.

If you are NOT starting a forum then it's only going to get harder for establishment, so ideally the best time was yesterday ?

Also establishing a forum and making it successful is only a matter of research, handwork and dedication. Think research think that's the key to finding a good niche for forum.

Updated a bit.

Thank you

Arcady - June 4, 2014, 7:12 am

(Jun 4, 2014 02:31 AM)Antigen Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) If you are NOT starting a forum then it's only going to get harder for establishment, so ideally the best time was yesterday ?

Also establishing a forum and making it successful is only a matter of research, handwork and dedication. Think research think that's the key to finding a good niche for forum.

Updated a bit.

Thank you

What makes or breaks forums these days are the content and SEO. No reason someone is going to join your forum when there is already 100+ other forums with active members, unless you have unique content. And you are not going to get your forum out without SEO. Start forums is pretty much saturated due to everything has been done. Find any forum started from a HF member that is successful and let me know. I only say out of the HF members because everyday someone here is starting a new forum. 75% of them are HF clones. IMO forums are only good for something like clans/guilds/groups where you can get on and help each other and just share. If you are looking at it as a business perspective then you might want to save your money. Good tutorial though.

express21 - June 4, 2014, 10:42 am

Op this is a wonderful tut! +1 ?

Antigen - June 5, 2014, 2:00 pm

(Jun 4, 2014 07:12 AM)Arcady Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) What makes or breaks forums these days are the content and SEO. No reason someone is going to join your forum when there is already 100+ other forums with active members, unless you have unique content. And you are not going to get your forum out without SEO. Start forums is pretty much saturated due to everything has been done. Find any forum started from a HF member that is successful and let me know. I only say out of the HF

members because everyday someone here is starting a new forum. 75% of them are HF clones. IMO forums are only good for something like clans/guilds/groups where you can get on and help each other and just share. If you are looking at it as a business perspective then you might want to save your money. Good tutorial though.

I don't think anyone will run a forum for sake of helping the world to become a better place ! ? , Everyone wants money. If you input enough handwork+investment+research then you can profit a lot from forums. I've made quite a lot of money from forums.

Thanks for reading.

teengt - June 6, 2014, 6:32 am

Well written guide.

Never started a Forum except fro friends, will save this for the case I ever do.

Thank you very much.

turkish-hacker - July 25, 2014, 6:53 pm

Really helpful tutorial, thanks for the share ?

Antigen - July 30, 2014, 2:52 am

(Jun 6, 2014 06:32 AM)teengt Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Well written guide.

Never started a Forum except fro friends, will save this for the case I ever do.

Thank you very much.

Thank you, good luck with forum if you ever start.

(Jul 25, 2014 06:53 PM)turkish-hacker Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Really helpful tutorial, thanks for the share ?

No problem, much appreciated. I'll update the thread once I get some free time.