

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [Removing Hidden Characters in Username](#)

Omniscient - August 25, 2016, 2:13 pm

I'm trying to work on removing some of the hidden characters that aren't already removed by MyBB functions. Such as the LTR and RTL characters.

Currently the RTL and LTR are now disallowed. They are simply removed from the username so if it's being used to impersonate a member it will instead say that the username is taken.

What I'd like to know from members is if there are other blank or hidden characters I'm not aware of that are not removed by MyBB.

If you see any user with a hidden character you can enter their name here:

<http://unicodelookup.com/>

That will tell you which hex/dec code it is. If you see a new code that's not removed so far (list below) please PM me the HEX or DEC code. Let's see if we can eliminate this problem over time.

Newly Removed Characters (dec codes shown)

8206 LTR Mark

8207 RTL Mark

8303 Nominal digit shapes

2063 Undefined u+0080f

0020 DLE data link escape ctrl-p

151 EPA end of guarded area

127 Delete

8299 Activate symmetric swapping

Thanks.

? **[(1000)]** ? - August 25, 2016, 2:15 pm

Nice brother. This will stop those damn impersonators that have been going around here on the forums.

Thank you.

Source: <https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=5385047>

Cryptic™ - August 25, 2016, 2:16 pm

This is great to see.

It'll cut down on the number of scams that happen from impersonators.

SIM-1729678 - August 25, 2016, 2:18 pm

Thanks for the heads up, I actually totally forgot it was even possible to add these to your username. I'll look out for them.

Granny Bacon - August 25, 2016, 2:19 pm

I will make sure to look who's impersonating or not.
See if I can find something new.

Soulmate~?? - August 25, 2016, 2:21 pm

Are you going to be removing the Cyrillic alphabet as well? If I have Quote: ? cyrillic small letter ie 02065 1077 0x435 ? will I have to change it or face consequences?

Frankey - August 25, 2016, 2:21 pm

Yes! I hope we will get rid of a lot of scammers/impersonator shere on Hackforums. This is atleast a start to make HF a safer place to buy/sell and trade stuff on.

NinjaLeaks - August 25, 2016, 2:22 pm

Thanks for the update omni! It will definitely cut down the number of impersonators now.

Jimmie - August 25, 2016, 2:22 pm

You could also add something like a weekly name change time limit this would stop most imposters as they wouldn't be able to name change back instantly.

Mr. Robot - August 25, 2016, 2:23 pm

Does that user whos name was in another language count? His whole username+rep was flipped due to ltr

Never mind, seems this may have been inspired by that thread.

<https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=5383278>

J?son - August 25, 2016, 2:23 pm

Are you also going to ban the invisible character?

Source: <https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=4951229>

minimalist - August 25, 2016, 2:23 pm

Sent you two of (probably) the most commonly used invisible characters, hope you can slow down the scamming impostors.

Confound - August 25, 2016, 2:24 pm

Thanks for the solid edits. I will keep a look out for other hidden characters that might be still working.

Target™ - August 25, 2016, 2:27 pm

Glad to see you taking action regarding this, I appreciate it

LastSession - August 25, 2016, 2:30 pm

Awesome how hard you try to protect your members. Glad you are back.

Inkie - August 25, 2016, 2:33 pm

I've been waiting for this

Demonstrate - August 25, 2016, 2:35 pm

Thanks Omni for keeping our site safe. After seeing the incident with Target, having such prompt action is great.

Omniscient - August 25, 2016, 2:42 pm

Quote:Are you going to be removing the Cyrillic alphabet as well?

The focus is only on hidden characters which don't display in browsers. These hidden characters are used to impersonate other members. I know that many Cyrillic characters can also be used for that purpose but what I'm going to do is focus first on hidden characters being removed. Next I'm going to add something to Trust Scan to show if a username has characters beyond the normal ASCII table. So it's 2 steps I'm taking.

Aura - August 25, 2016, 2:44 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 02:42 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The focus is only on hidden characters which don't display in browsers. These hidden characters are used to impersonate other members. I know that many Cyrillic characters can also be used for that purpose but what I'm going to do is focus first on hidden characters being removed. Next I'm going to add something to Trust Scan to show if a username has characters beyond the normal ASCII table. So it's 2 steps I'm taking. Will you let us know in advance if you are to remove the Cyrillic characters?

SIM-403479 - August 25, 2016, 2:45 pm

This is brilliant news. Time to crack down.

Omniscient - August 25, 2016, 2:45 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 02:44 PM)Aur? Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Will you let us know in advance if you are to remove the Cyrillic characters?

If I do it then I do and I won't give advance notice. Why would I do that?

Pew ? - August 25, 2016, 2:46 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 02:42 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The focus is only on hidden characters which don't display in browsers. These hidden characters are used to impersonate other members. I know that many Cyrillic characters can also be used for that purpose but what I'm going to do is focus first on hidden characters being removed. Next I'm going to add something to Trust Scan to show if a username has characters beyond the normal ASCII table. So it's 2 steps I'm taking. I use a hidden character because the person with the name I have currently is closed or something. However, here's the code for it.

```
space 040 32 0x20
?activate arabic form shaping 020155 8301 0x206D ?
```

Stashy - August 25, 2016, 2:47 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 02:45 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) If I do it then I do and I won't give advance notice. Why would I do that?

Maybe people want time to pick out a new username or something.

What's going to happen to people who already have these strange characters in their names? Will a name change be forced?

Aura - August 25, 2016, 2:50 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 02:45 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) If I do it then I do and I won't give advance notice. Why would I do that?

Because some of us probably have cyrillic characters in their name for good/harmless reasons. My last "a" is one. Someone gave it to me a long time ago (it's the only name change I ever did, to switch from Aura.) so I can have the "Aura" name in display. The original "Aura" account was closed in like 2011 and have 4 posts so it's not like I'm impersonating anyone too.

Daddy???????????? - August 25, 2016, 2:53 pm

With the removal of these hidden characters, will people who have or used one for the current username be forced to change their username or how will this work?

Also, I had/have a hidden character for my username at the start, but I am not sure if I still do or not as I remember when purchasing awards in the past you told me it wasn't really possible at the time to add it to my account having the unique character without doing something else which obviously you did, but I am not sure if you said you removed the character or not.

Omniscient - August 25, 2016, 2:57 pm

No one is forced to change an existing username. I wouldn't do that.

Stashy - August 25, 2016, 2:58 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 02:57 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) No one is forced to change an existing username. I wouldn't do that.

So if there are two users with the name Bob and Bob, neither of them would have to change? Even if they had special characters?

Aura - August 25, 2016, 2:59 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 02:57 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) No one is forced to change an existing username. I wouldn't do that.

Nah but you removing the cyrillic characters would force a name change no? My Aura would become Aur, unless I'm misunderstanding something. Unless existing usernames aren't affected, only new ones are.

SIM-403479 - August 25, 2016, 3:00 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 02:58 PM)Hubba Bubba Gum Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) So if there are two users with the name Bob and Bob, neither of them would have to change? Even if they had special characters?

If there is anyone with names like this they're probably impersonating. If they're not then leave them be it's their choice.

Daddy???????????? - August 25, 2016, 3:00 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 02:57 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) No one is forced to change an existing username. I wouldn't do that.

Okay, thanks for clearing that up.

FiftyTwo - August 25, 2016, 3:05 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 02:57 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) No one is forced to change an existing username. I wouldn't do that.

Phew, I have an invisible character at the end of my name so that I can have "52" which would then fail if I had to change it lol.

A great way to crack down on scammers and imposters though definitely.

J?son - August 25, 2016, 3:13 pm

You actually might have to ban the Cyrillic letters next.

Omniscient - August 25, 2016, 3:15 pm

Quote:Unless existing usernames aren't affected, only new ones are.

Yes, that's what I'm saying. Changes do not effect existing usernames. Function operates during the username change. I'm not going to alter the database. It would be incredibly time consuming and resource intensive. I'd literally have to take HF offline for maybe a full day for the queries to run.

You may notice that a username change might take 10-30 seconds, that's because it alters all the rows in the posts table of the database to reflect your new username. Since the posts table is over 30Gb of data it takes a while to run.

I should add a captcha to username change anyways. Currently MyBB requires your password to

change username which imho is stupid.

LastSession - August 25, 2016, 3:41 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 03:15 PM)Omniscient Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Yes, that's what I'm saying. Changes do not effect existing usernames. Function operates during the username change. I'm not going to alter the database. It would be incredibly time consuming and resource intensive. I'd literally have to take HF offline for maybe a full day for the queries to run. You may notice that a username change might take 10-30 seconds, that's because it alters all the rows in the posts table of the database to reflect your new username. Since the posts table is over 30Gb of data it takes a while to run.

I should add a captcha to username change anyways. Currently MyBB requires your password to change username which imho is stupid.

Will Gauth/2FA validation some day become mandatory to apply for Ub3r?

Omniscient - August 25, 2016, 4:15 pm

(Aug 25, 2016 03:41 PM)LastSession Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Will Gauth/2FA validation some day become mandatory to apply for Ub3r?

Stay on-topic.

Armada - August 25, 2016, 7:32 pm

I think robot covered the only real consideration and thats off language character support.

Otherwise I think this is a good idea.

Frankly, Id hate to see someone else pretending to be me on the site scamming members using my reputation. I again diverse back to the Trust scan and general user appeal, however Its happened to some poor thai chick by a skype imposter, whoever it was took them for \$250 Amazon funds, and they were spent before they could be refunded.

Had to be one of the most confusing PMs I ever got on here as well.

100% back this idea.

Redwall - August 25, 2016, 7:36 pm

Glad to see this happening man

skelly76 - August 25, 2016, 11:08 pm

Great solution to this problem, but guys if you were smart enough not to get scammed by a damn impersonator Omni wouldn't have to do all this. Stop being stupid.

Revenge - August 26, 2016, 4:30 am

I'm glad that action is being taken against these. They are nothing other than annoying really.

ZuGgY - August 26, 2016, 8:03 pm

Good to see this. About time, actually. Thanks.

Description - August 26, 2016, 8:05 pm

I think this was really needed i'm glad it's getting removed

Evanescent - August 27, 2016, 4:50 am

Very good move but in the meantime have increased your work load.

minimalist - August 27, 2016, 4:51 am

The main post only contains the characters that you discovered, Omniscient :\$

Positive - August 27, 2016, 9:38 am

I'm glad you're removing the characters. This will surely make searching easier.

ShNuG - August 27, 2016, 9:48 am

Maybe you should include username change in trust scan..

Like if the username change is like less than 2-3 days old it will show in red..

also,

Limit the time one can change usernames. I saw a impersonator when exposed, just changed the damn username in like 5 mins and went again on some scamming spree which was unsuccessful I guess.

Br?ndon - August 27, 2016, 4:18 pm

Is it still allowed for people to have them in there usernames? I will have to change my name if not.

minimalist - August 27, 2016, 4:24 pm

(Aug 27, 2016 04:18 PM)Br?ndon Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Is it still allowed for people to have them in there usernames? I will have to change my name if not.

You're allowed to keep your existing name, this is just to prevent "new" impostors.

Essence - August 27, 2016, 4:29 pm

I am currently using a special character in my name because the original user with the name "Essence" on this forum has had his account closed. The user had 0 posts, rep, etc.

<https://hackforums.net/member.php?action=profile&uid=753016>

J?son - August 27, 2016, 4:32 pm

(Aug 27, 2016 04:29 PM)Essence Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I am currently using a special character in my name because the original user with the name "Essence" on this forum has had his account closed. The user had 0 posts, rep, etc.

<https://hackforums.net/member.php?action=profile&uid=753016>

That E looks funny.

Essenc? looks better, using a Cyrillic e at the end

VeloCityMods - August 27, 2016, 8:55 pm

Wow just say this thread , this is great.

Im gone brah - August 29, 2016, 8:46 am

(Aug 25, 2016 02:15 PM)? [\$(1000)\$] ? Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Nice brother. This will stop those damn impersonators that have been going around here on the forums.

Thank you.

Source: <https://hackforums.net/showthread.php?tid=5385047>

Should probably block names like this guy too.

@Jupiter - August 29, 2016, 8:53 am

I got sad because my name contains Cyrillic e in my name since the original Leo is nowhere to be found...

But glad it doesn't affect current names.

I'm glad this is being implemented, I almost fell for this once.

Dude had the same rep as the real guy ahha

Cheers Omni. Keep going at it

Cammy - August 29, 2016, 9:37 am

Say I were to change my username to one with a not yet banned invisible character / Cyrillic alphabet in it, is that a warnable/bannable offense now?

Obviously I'd report the used character in question afterwards and only change my name to that of an account that's been long gone and forgotten such as

<https://hackforums.net/member.php?action=profile&uid=96047>

Neeeeeeeeeeel.- - August 29, 2016, 9:55 am

(Aug 29, 2016 09:37 AM)Cammy. Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Say I were to change my username to one with a not yet banned invisible character / Cyrillic alphabet in it, is that a warnable/bannable offense now?

Obviously I'd report the used character in question afterwards and only change my name to that of an account that's been long gone and forgotten such as

<https://hackforums.net/member.php?action=profile&uid=96047> You must report them. I don't think it's a banneable action, but you should report them since Omni is asking for that.