

Doctorate of Commissioner Science
Thesis on Starting an Online Commissioner
Forum



Jim Gray

Abstract

This Paper is on how to start a Commissioner Forum. The steps I include in here are the ones I used.

I started both a District and Council Forum. They are essentially the Same thing. The People You will Speak to will probably be different. It wasn't hard to do. As I'm sure You will see. It does take some time, planning, and research.

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This paper is on starting a District and Council Commissioners forum. The purpose of having a forum is to share information and ideas. It gives Commissioners another way to communicate. Also, if a District Executive and a Commissioner need to talk about a Leader or Unit they could be fairly certain no one will be able to accidentally over hear them. It could be an easy and effective way for a District Commissioner to talk to his/her staff. There is no cost involved if a person uses one of the free Forum sites available on the internet. No cost and extreme ease of Communication are two of the biggest advantages. Starting a forum your first step must be to talk to the Key 3 personnel^(3,4). It doesn't matter whether it is District or Council. Run it past them, tell them what you are planning to do, why you want to do it. I would run it past the District Commissioner⁽⁴⁾, explain the why's and how's and advantages of this. Next if the DC is on board I would go to the District Executive⁽³⁾ to explain the same thing. Then you could go to the District Chair if needed. After the Key 3 are ok with it my next step would be the District Webmaster⁽¹⁾. This person has a lot of experience in dealing with this kind of stuff. I would recommend doing a little research beforehand and have an idea of which websites will work best.

The type of Forum you want to use is important. The modern Forum⁽⁷⁾ originated from bulletin boards and are a technological evolution of the dial up bulletin board system. The first type of forum is the Chat Room. The Chat Room⁽⁷⁾ is defined as a site on a computer network where online conversations are held in real time by a number of users. Where users have discussions by email usually about 1 subject. Another type of forum would be a blog. Blog⁽⁷⁾ is described as an online personal Journal with reflections, comments and hyperlinks provided by the writer. Blogs are displayed in reverse chronological order. Most blogs are interactive allowing visitors to leave comments and even message each other with widgets. This interactivity distinguishes them from other static websites .Over 156 million public blogs are in existence. The last type of forum is the message board⁽⁷⁾. It is defined as an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. They differ from chat rooms in that messages are at least temporarily archived. Also depending on the access

level of the user and/or the forum setup a posted message might need to be approved by a moderator before it becomes visible. A single conversation in a forum is called a “thread”⁽⁷⁾. Forums are hierarchal or tree like in structure. A forum can contain sub forums each of which can have several topics. There are three types of message boards. First is the public board which is available to everyone, registered users and guests. The next is Premium which is available to certain groups. The last is Private which is available by invite only.

If you were to type in “Free Message Boards” and search the web many sites will come up. If you go to www.freecenter.com/forums you will see approximately 85 different sites available to you. I would take a few days and look around to see if one site offered something that you wanted in your forum. All of the sites I checked were free and all said it would take under one minute. Upon specific recommendation of the District Webmaster⁽¹⁾ the Lewis and Clark District went with proboards.com. He said this site had all of the features we were looking for in a forum. There are a lot of great forums out there.

When I spoke to the District Commissioner⁽⁴⁾ he said he liked the idea. That was the first person I spoke with. I explained it would be another avenue of communication for the Commissioner staff. It could be a more secure way to confer about Units or Leaders if there were problems. Most of us spend some time on the internet each week and this might help with communication between us. And a nice way to communicate with the District Executive. I would think that would be a great selling point is to have access to all of your Commissioner Staff or at least who ever has internet.

After you choose which forum to go with you will need to set it up. Follow the prompts in the Website you are on. It doesn't take all that long. After that is done you will want to pick a moderator. A moderator is defined as the Person who monitors the conversations in an online chatroom for bad language or inappropriate content. One who presides over a meeting, forum, or debate. Also you will have an Administrator.⁽⁷⁾ This is defined as “the “person of the forum. They can do

anything. They can use the Ban Hammer⁽⁷⁾ on members. They are a Global Moderator. They can edit User profiles They set the discussions, welcome new members. You will also want to have staff members. They will assist the Administrator and Moderator. Once the Chat room is up and running you will want to put your Monitors in place. Proper staffing will help your chat room be a success. A lack Of regulation in the chatroom might render your chat sessions useless and people will go elsewhere. For a District Forum I would think two will work. For a Council Forum I would look at between 4 and 6. These will be people who will be interested in the theme and want the Chat Room to succeed. Create A schedule during peak hours or set up shifts on certain days. For each person to cover and see how it Will work. I would also have a private chatroom or at least a private thread in the chatroom. In the Event you to about someone or something you don't want overheard. For example a Commissioner was Having a problem with a Unit Leader and wanted to discuss the situation with the District Commissioner. It would be nice to know nobody will be able to read it.

Next we are going to look at ways to promote the forum. You will want to get the word out to all of The Commissioner staff. Try to get time to talk about it at Commissioner Meetings. This is a great Place to promote the forum. All of the Commissioner staff is there. You could talk about different Discussions going on and talk about how to sign up. Next if you have an email tree you could send out a mass Email. Letting all the Commissioner staff know about the forum and how to get started. If you Are Friends on Facebook with all of the Commissioner staff you could promote it that way as well. The District Key Three are another way to promote the forum. They can be a big help in letting all of the Commissioner staff knows about it.

We have four members right now there is not a lot of activity. I started a thread "ways to improve Attendance at roundtables." We also have a thread on "Unit and Leader Issues." And "who has been to Commissioner College."

This is on starting a Facebook page. I wanted to include this so here it is. First at facebook.com you click on the “create a page for a celebrity band or business”. Then you choose “Company organization or Institution”. Then name your page. You will have to agree to the terms and conditions of Facebook. Last you will have to enter a couple of security words to show you are human. Then import pics and have fun.

Definitions of Words Associated with Internet Forums⁽⁷⁾

Internet Forum: is an Online Discussion site where People can hold conversations in the Form of Posted Messages.

Forum Features: to be Considered a forum the application needs an ability to submit threads and replies. Threads post new to old, Replies post old to New.

Tripcodes and Capcodes: Secret Passwords added to the users Name following a separator Character Like a Number Sign (#). Moderators and Administrators will frequently assign themselves Capcodes Or Tripcodes where the guessable trip is replaced with a special notice.

Private Message: PM for short. Message sent in Private from a member to one or more Members.

Attachment: can be almost any file. Forums usually have a very strict limit on what can be attached And what cant.

BBCode and HTML: (Bulletin Board Code & Hyper Text Markup Language) usually discouraged or Severely filtered. Modern systems will have it disabled altogether or allow only Administrators to use It. Many Forums offer a Custom BBCode. For example embedding a YouTube or Google video Complete with viewer directly onto a post.

Emotion: or a smiley. A combination of symbols used to convey emotional content. Common Examples ☺,☹

Poll: Opinion poll system for threads. Single or Multi-Choice options or Private or Public also when To expire.

RSS & ATOM: (Rich Site Summary) aka Really Simple Syndication. Allow Minimal means of Subscribing to a forum. Uses a family of standard web feed formats to publish frequently updated info. ATOM is a syndicated format that uses an XML Language for web feeds.

Ignore List or Foe List: Hide posts of other Members they don't want to see or have a problem with.

Avatar: Image that appears beside all of a User's Posts.

Signature: Block of text possibly with a BBCode appearing at the bottom of a user Post.

Subscription: form of automated notification integrated into the software of most forums.

Troll (Internet Slang): A Person who starts trouble by starting arguments or upsetting People. They Deliberately provoke readers into an Emotional Response.

Spamming: Use of electronic messaging systems to send unsolicited messages.

Flame Wars aka Flaming: Hostile and Insulting interaction between internet users. Often involving Profanity. This is deliberate flaming as opposed to flaming as a result of emotional discussion. Carried Out by what are known as flammers. They specialize in targeting specific aspects of a controversial Conversation.

Ban Hammer: Avatar depicting a Club. Used to threaten banishment by anti-social bullies.

Sock Puppet: Online Identity used for purposes of deception. Differs from Pseudonym by Posing as An independent 3rd Party unaffiliated with the puppeteer.

Double Posting aka Cross Posting: when a user posts the same message or slightly edited version of The message more Than once or on more than one discussion thread .

Word Censor or Word Filter: Script typically used of Internet Forums or Chat Rooms that Automatically scan users posts or comments as they are submitted and changes particular words or Phrases.

Asynchronous Communication: Not Synchronized. Describing Communications where Data can be Transmitted intermittently rather than in a steady stream.

Bibliography

1 Dan Buck Lewis and Clark District Webmaster. I spoke with Him about Which kind of forum, How to design it, what We were going to do with it.

2 Second time I spoke with Dan Buck after spending time on the Forum I asked if He would put The Forum on the Main Page of the District Website.

3 Dan Sanderson Lewis and Clark District Executive. I spoke with Him about how to get started and Who to speak to.

4 Randy Yates Lewis and Clark District Commissioner. I told Him of My plans and He said it sounded good.

5 Mid America Council Commissioner Daniel Smith. I played Phone and Email tag with Him for awhile. He was very busy. He liked the Idea, He said to talk to the Council Public Relations.

6 Mid America Council Public Relations Katey Godbout. Katey and I talked for a while She liked the Idea.

7 Definitions from Online Dictionary