


Discussion Forums for Students

June 8, 2009

A discussion forum is a threaded discussion area within a course. Its icon depicts a folder with a thumbtack . Basic courtesy is expected in your course communication. See <http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/etips/stuguide.html> to learn helpful guidelines for electronic communication.

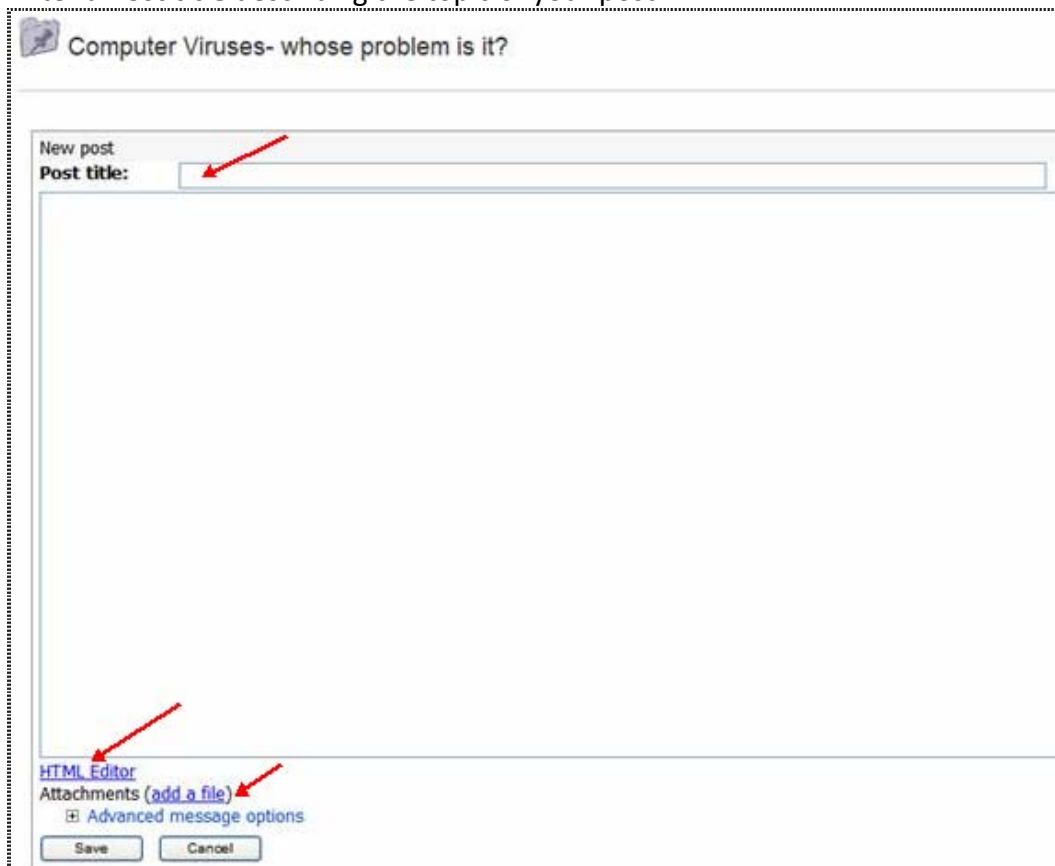
Note: Be aware that your instructor may rate individual posts to a discussion forum and/or assign a grade to each student for participation in the discussion forum as a whole.

Post a New Message /Start a New Thread

1. Click the **New Post** button on the left side of the toolbar.



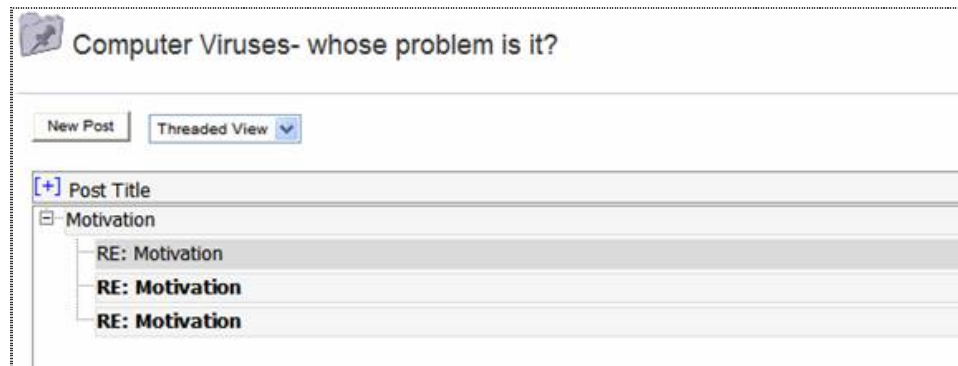
2. Enter a **Post title** describing the topic of your post.



4. If your instructor has set the discussion forum to allow anonymous posts, an **Author** pull-down menu will display. If so, select either your name or **Anonymous** from the menu.
5. Enter your message in the message text box. If you wish to add formatting to the message, select the **HTML Editor** link.
6. If you wish to add an attachment to the message:
 - 1) Select the **add a file** link.
 - 2) In the **Add attachment** window that appears, click the **Select** button. Locate the file on your local drive, then double-click its name. You may add as many attachments as necessary by clicking the **Add** button.
 - 3) Click the **Upload File** button. The file name(s) will appear in the list below **Attachments**. You can still add more attachments by using the **add a file link**. If you decide to not to attach an uploaded file, click on the file and then click on the **Remove** link after the file name.
9. Click the **Save** button.

Read a Message

Click on the title to enter the discussion forum. A list of posted messages will display in the top section of the screen. Unread messages appear in boldface. Select the subject for the message you wish to read, and then click on a post. The content of the message will be displayed on the screen.



To read another message, select it from the list. You may also progress through the list of messages using the **Previous Post** or **Next Post** buttons in the top right menu.



There are three different ways to view messages in a discussion forum.

- **Threaded View** presents messages as a hierarchical list of message topic lines. The post lines can be expanded or collapsed to show or hide replies. Users can sort, flag, score, or rate posts in this view.

- **Nested View** functions in the same manner as Threaded View, but every message's body text is displayed in-line in the same window. This view allows you to see the body text of all messages in context of the other message bodies.
- **Search View** functions in the same manner as Nested View, but displays only messages that meet the specified search criteria. Search View displays messages in a "flat" (non-hierarchical) manner.

Reply to a Message

1. Click on the post you'd like to reply to and select the **Reply** link in the bottom left menu.

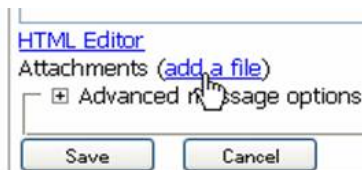


2. Edit the title of the thread in **Post title** field if necessary.
3. Enter your reply in the message text box.
4. If you wish to include the text of the original post in your reply, select the **Quote Original Message** link in the top right corner of the message area. Each click will give you one copy of the original quote.

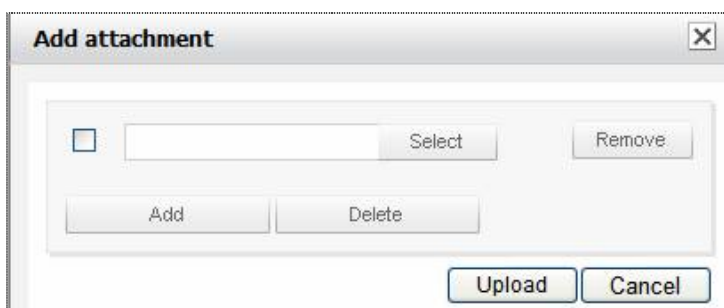


If you wish to add formatting to the message, select the **HTML Editor** link beneath the message area. You may need to use the scroll bar of the message area to scroll up and down.

5. If you wish to add an attachment to the message:
 - A. Select the **add a file** link at the bottom of the message area.



- B. In the **Add attachment** window that appears, click the **Select** button. Locate the file on your local drive, then double-click its name.



C. Click the **Upload** button.

If you need to attach multiple files, click the **Add** button followed by **Select**, once for each file you need to upload.

If you decide you do not want to attach an uploaded file, click the **Remove** button after the file's name.

Once you have clicked **Upload**, a link to the file will appear in the main window beneath the **Attachments** subheading.

6. Click the **Save** button.