

# Linux Forum Mini-HOWTO

Version 1.0, 8 August 2004

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This document is intended as a simple guide to familiarize new members of the Forum with the basic layout of the forum and tools available to you to help you make use of the resources here. Please send suggestions for improvement to this document to:

[Dyriart@compuserve.com](mailto:Dyriart@compuserve.com). This document is not guaranteed to be free from typos or errors. It is a work in progress.

When you first arrive in the Forum you are on the "Forum Home Page", which we'll call the FHP.

The FHP is divided into several areas to give you access to tools to manage your interaction with the forum; highlight current discussions, chats and events; and help you locate information in our various areas.

## FHP AREAS

- **Tool Bar:** Across the top of the page, under the forum title you'll find a menu to help you navigate to the various areas of the forum. The choices, which we'll discuss in more detail later, are "Forum Home Page", "Messages", "Chat", "Files" and "My Stuff".
- **"Dashboard":** across the center of the page, under the Tool Bar, you'll see a highlighted area you'll find a list of the most recent discussions, and links to quickly start posting messages, and access new messages to you.
- **Chat Center:** On the left side of the page, below the "Search" box. There may be one or more chat areas available at any time. They'll appear here, showing the topic active in each one.
- **Board Folders:** This area, just below the Chat Center, is the meat of the forum. Here you will find folders for messages on the various topics we discuss in Linux Forum. If you're a long time member of CompuServe you'll recognize "Board Folders" as Forum Sections. You can dive right into the discussions from the Board Folders.
- **"Promotion" Area:** To the right of the Board Folders, below our "Dashboard", you'll see an area we use to promote Featured Messages, Hot Topics, upcoming Chats, and an occasional poll. There's also a list of the the most recent visitors to the forum; you can send them e-mail or private messages by clicking on their nicknames.

## OTHER AREAS OF THE FORUM

### My Stuff

This is the control panel through which you manage your interaction with all CompuServe forums you belong to, not just Linux Forum. Many of the choices you make in "My Stuff" are global, they affect all forums in which you participate. Some of the choices can be made unique on a forum by forum basis.

**My Recent Forums** – This is the list of all forums in which you participate. The list is

sorted in order of your most recent visits. Use this list to navigate from one forum to another. As you join forums they will appear in "My Recent Forums". The list shows the number of new messages in each forum since your last visit. If there are any messages addressed to you in a forum, the number will appear here. You can jump directly to the messages to you in any forum by clicking on the number in the "Messages" column.

***Chats Active in My Forums*** – If there are chats currently active in forums you are a member of, they'll show up here.

***My Subscriptions*** – In the message areas you can subscribe to discussions that interest you. Any subscriptions you have active will appear in this list. You'll see the forum name, topic, and number of new messages for each of your subscribed discussions.

***My Preferences*** – we' won't cover all the options here as the explanatory text for each option is quite comprehensive. Look carefully at **all** the options here, as many affect how you appear to other members. Others affect the behavior of the system, and may help you to improve performance if you have a slow connection, or turn features like the rich editor on and off.

Here in Linux Forum we have a long tradition of using real names as this is a professional forum. Please remember this when you set the "My Nickname" feature. You can have different nicknames in different forums.

New to most of us, you can have a picture of yourself that appears on each message you post. These little images are often known as "Avatars". There is a library of ready made Avatars. You can also upload other images of your own. See the instructions for the size and types of images you can use.

If you use an Avatar, *please pick one that is tasteful and won't offend other members!*

You can create a fancy, or plain, signature for yourself. This signature is appended to every message you post, in all forums you belong to. The fancy signature editor may not work in browsers running on Linux. This problem has been reported. In the mean time, try putting the HTML code for your fancy sig in the box and see what happens.

## **Messages**

This is the area of the forum where most of the action takes place.

Below the forum tool bar you'll see another menu bar with a "Show Discussions" drop down list, and a "New" button.

The "**Show Discussions**" button is the magic key to the message kingdom. Among the many choices are "Today", "With Unread Msgs" and "With Unread Msgs to Me". Each choice from the "Show Discussions" list brings up messages filtered in accordance with your choice. The entire message base is available if you desire. It is possible to search the message base by topics.

The message list that appears when you select an option is divided by Board Folders, and sorted by date in the board folders. Each entry has lots of information about the topic. Note that the order of Board Folders floats. The folders you show the most interest in tend to rise to the top of the list over time.

When you open a **Discussion Topic**, the message in the topic will appear. You can control how many messages you see on a page. At the top and bottom of the page are controls that let you move forward and back through the discussion a page of messages at a time.

At the bottom of each message are buttons to **Reply**, right side, and perform actions on individual message message, icon like two little text bullets, left side. When you hover your mouse over the "bullet" icon a menu of actions appears. You can print individual messages if you desire.

At the bottom of each page of the discussion are buttons that allow you to **Subscribe** to the discussion and **Print the Discussion**.

Below this is a selection box that allows you to rate your **Interest Level** in the discussion. This will help the forum software to sort and filter messages to you.

## **Chat**

This area of the forum allows you to see what chats are under way, and also see high interest discussions that are available.

## **Files**

You can find files that have been contributed to the forum, and upload files for submission here.