



## **WEBSITE IMPLEMENTATION REPORT**

### **Electronic Intra-Port Community Discussion Groups Pilot Project**

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Attn: Arnold Miranda

**28 March 2004**



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This document describes the implementation of the Website component of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Transportation Working Group's ("APEC TPT-WG") project on "Electronic Intra-Port Community Discussion Groups" Pilot Project (TPT 01/2003T).

This project is being conducted under the guidance and oversight of the APEC Transportation Working Group (TPT-WG) with Mr Peter Siripol of the Department of Transport and Regional Services, Canberra, Australia as Project Overseer.

## 1.1 Objective

The purpose of this project is to improve the information exchange in two selected port communities by establishing pilot intra-port discussion groups (involving key port stakeholders such as port authorities, stevedores, container terminal operators, freight forwarders and customs agencies). It is expected that these groups will evolve into working committees dedicated to the ongoing improvement of the ports' operating efficiency. The project will include the provision of model websites tailored to suit each of the two selected port communities to enable the exchange and dissemination of information.

## 1.2 Document Structure

This document is structured as follows:

### **Chapter 2: Methodology**

Describes the requirements, philosophy and methodology used to develop the websites for this project.

### **Chapter 3: Website Specification**

Describes the website in detail.

### **Chapter 4: Port Community Online Forum**

Describes how to use the online forum



## 2 METHODOLOGY

The two main components of this project are:

1. The establishment of two active Intra-port Discussion Groups (IDG)
2. The development and maintenance of two websites that support the activities of the Intra-port Discussion Group

The diagram below illustrates Tranztechnik's proposed methodology diagrammatically to complete both these components. However this report is primarily concerned with the second component, that is, the development of the two websites.

The methodology used by Tranztechnik to fulfil this part of the project is based on the philosophies and requirements expressed in the RFP document issued by APEC TPT-WG. These factors were also discussed in detail at the initial stages of this project with various stakeholders to ensure that the development and maintenance of the websites are aligned with the goals and objectives of the Intra-port Discussion Groups which it supports.

Each of the two websites developed were created to be bi-lingual resulting in a total of four websites for this project. The links to each of these websites are:

<a href="http://portcommunity.callao.info">http://portcommunity.callao.info</a>	Callao Spanish Site
<a href="http://portcommunity.callao.info/en">http://portcommunity.callao.info/en</a>	Callao English Site
<a href="http://portcommunity.saigon.info">http://portcommunity.saigon.info</a>	Saigon Vietnamese Site
<a href="http://portcommunity.saigon.info/en">http://portcommunity.saigon.info/en</a>	Saigon English Site

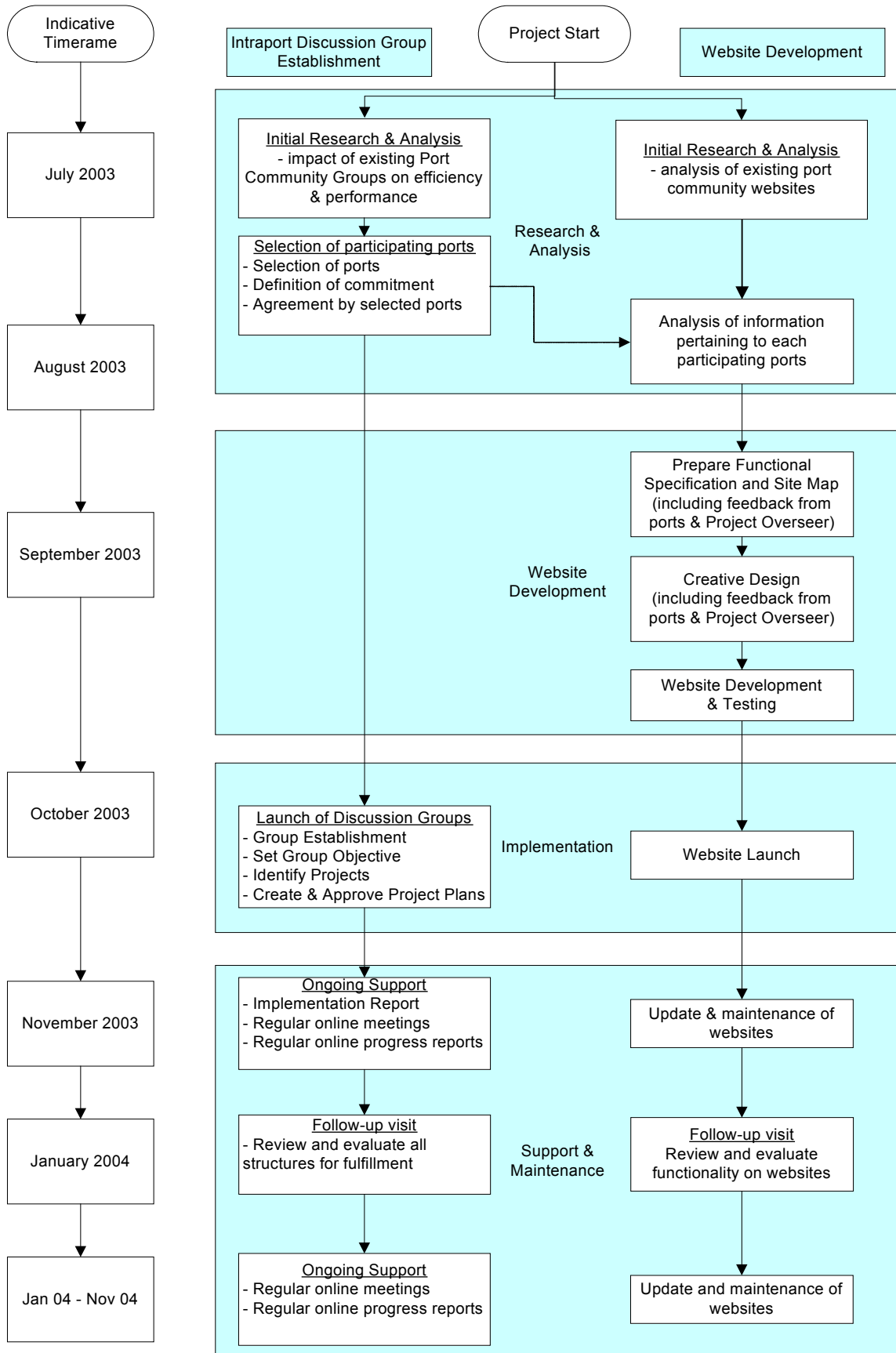


Figure 1: Methodology for Port Discussion Group and Website Development



## 2.1 Key Requirements

The RFP document issued by APEC TPT-WG listed the following requirements

- The development of two websites with very similar function and structure
- Each website is to be a resource/portal that supports the Intra-port Discussion Group for the ports concerned
- The website are to be designed and constructed to enable low-cost replication for other ports in future i.e. the websites will be easily transferable to other ports if required
- Key features of the website will be its strong emphasis on collaborative facilities for the Intra-port Discussion Group and its online content management systems
- The websites will be distinguished by the ease of which the community can participate and its collaborative flavour rather than centrally controlled downward push of information.

## 2.2 Philosophy

Given that the website's key function is to support the goals and objectives of the Intra-port discussion group, the following principles were considered in its design.

- Simplicity, clarity and user-friendliness were the guiding principals in the design of the website.
- The website differs from the *status quo* by the incorporation of features that encourage the Intra-port Discussion Groups members to participate in its activities. These include the online forum, port directory and event directory.
- The website always provides current information about the activities of the Group through its online forum and event directory.
- The websites allows both general access for information relevant to the whole port community as well as closed-user groups for information an discussions pertaining to specific sub-committees. This is a feature of the online forum (See section 4).
- The website is easily maintainable by non-technical staff. Local administrators will be given access and training to manage the website's content. This will ensure that the website's life expectancy extends well beyond the life of this project. Local coordinators at both locations have been provided access to administrative features of the site.



- Security on the website is managed at two levels – All users of the online forum require login id and password verification. The system administrator has a separate panel for getting access to administrative features which also requires login id and password verification.
- The website design can be duplicated for other ports relatively easily. The expertise and functionality implemented in the first two website is transferable to other ports in a simple and affordable manner.

## **2.3 Features and services available on each site**

- Introductory information pages about the Intra-port Discussion Group.

This will provide all new visitors to the site with information about its background, objectives and activities of the Group.

- Links to events and meetings calendar on root page.

Members can easily review this calendar and be certain about activities that require their participation.

- Online discussion/forums

The online forum facility encourages members to interact with each other because it allows members to participate in discussions from their own offices. They cause minimal disruption and because each contribution has to be thought through and posted online, contributors tend to express themselves more clearly. Members can create forums on the website covering any specific topic and participate by posting their views on threaded discussions.

- E-Learning services

The online forum includes facilities to upload presentations and training on topics that the members feel would benefit its members.

- Member alerts (based on user preferences)

Members participating in online forums may elect to have automatic reminders sent to them via email to either alert them about upcoming meetings or to inform them that someone has updated a particular discussion thread.

- Language customisation

Users can chose to view each website in either of two languages, English being one of them.

- 'Knowledge Base' style information



All past discussions are stored in an easily searchable format. This will enable members to retrieve all the information pertaining to a subject ensuring full access to relevant information is available. Contributions from members as well as information from external sources will be stored indefinitely in the website's database.

- Latest news

A link to the latest transport and related news is available on the home page.

## **2.4 Methodology**

Tranztechnik will complete the Intra-port Discussion Website using the following methodology. This methodology is depicted graphically in Fig. 1 in the previous chapter.

### **2.4.1 Analysis existing port community websites**

To ensure that the development of the websites are founded on known best practice, Tranztechnik conducted a systematic review of existing port community websites to see how these websites are used and what impact they have had on the ports efficiency and performance. This exercise also identified appropriate features that could be included in this project's websites.

The outcome from this analysis was presented in the Preliminary Report which was submitted to the Project Overseer in December 2003.

### **2.4.2 Analysis and review of information pertaining to each port community**

Once the participating ports were selected, Tranztechnik presented the analysis from Preliminary Report to the local coordinator to solicit the views and feedback from the port community. An important aspect of this exercise was understanding what the port-specific eCommerce issues were and whether these issues could be addressed through the website once it is completed. Where possible (and where it is consistent with the projects objectives) the port community's contributions will be collated for inclusion in the website to encourage the community to take ownership.

The outcomes from this analysis, the feedback from the local community on the proposed website feature list and an understanding of port specific issues pertaining to this project were considered as influences to the design and implementation of these websites.



### 2.4.3 Functional Specification document and site map

Based on the analysis conducted, Tranztechnik prepared a functional specification and site map document. The document was submitted to the local port coordinator for approval. This process will ensure that the document is aligned with the framework and objectives of APEC, TPT-WG and the Electronic Intra-port discussion Group Project.

### 2.4.4 Creative Design

Once approval for the Functional Specification and Site Map document was achieved, Tranztechnik developed the creative design of all pages. These were submitted to the APEC Secretariat, Project Overseer and local port coordinator for approval.

The outcome of this stage of the project was the website page designs.

### 2.4.5 Websites development

Website development was then started in line with the agreed specification and design documents. The website development will included:

Design – graphic design, information architecture, layout and style

Content – incorporate required textual and graphical content

Tools/Features - include features and services from proposed list above and feedback from group members

Self-service component – build a self-service system that allows the system administrator to maintain and update the contents of the system with no further development

Security – allows the system administrator to maintain login/password security, create closed-user group privileges and implement procedures to ensure responsible use of the system.

The outcome of this stage was the prototype Intra-port Discussion Group website.

### 2.4.6 Testing

Once system testing by Tranztechnik was completed successfully, the local port coordinators from each participating ports were requested to nominate several participating port community members to test the functionality of the site. Tranztechnik provided training and support during this testing phase. The test was gradually rolled out to a larger user-base to simulate 'live' environments. While the system is user-friendly and intuitive, training will also be available to encourage Group members to utilise the functionalities of the website.



A critical part of the testing phase was training the local coordinator to co-administer the system with Tranztechnik.

The outcome of this stage was the completed Intra-port Discussion Group website.

### **2.4.7 Website Launch**

Once testing was satisfactorily completed, Tranztechnik visited the ports to formally launch the Intra-port Discussion Group and launch the website. These visits included a training workshop where community members were given an opportunity to use the various features of the website.

The visits to participating ports were conducted on:

Saigon Port, Vietnam: 1 March, 2004

Callao Port, Peru: 7 – 9 March 2004

### **2.4.8 Maintenance**

Tranztechnik's understands that all good websites evolve. To address this a periodic review of the information provided on the website and its features will be implemented. All key updates to the website will be discussed with the APEC Project Overseer before commencement

Tranztechnik's website design will incorporate easy maintenance procedures so that the local coordinator can perform most administrative functions independently. Administrative functions include updating website content, maintaining the Group's calendar, scheduling and inviting members to meetings and facilitating online conferences. These systems will be designed using wizard-driven or flow-controlled processes where options to make procedural mistakes will be eliminated. This approach will ensure that the local administrators are empowered and have maximum flexibility to perform their duties. Tranztechnik will be responsible for the smooth maintenance of the websites by ensuring the website is used to forward the objectives of the community's objectives.



### 3 WEBSITE SPECIFICATION

This section describes the layout and functionality of the websites.

Each participating port's websites was created in two languages to support the predominant local language as well as English. The addresses to the websites are:

<a href="http://portcommunity.callao.info">http://portcommunity.callao.info</a>	Callao Spanish Site
<a href="http://portcommunity.callao.info/en">http://portcommunity.callao.info/en</a>	Callao English Site
<a href="http://portcommunity.saigon.info">http://portcommunity.saigon.info</a>	Saigon Vietnamese Site
<a href="http://portcommunity.saigon.info/en">http://portcommunity.saigon.info/en</a>	Saigon English Site

*As all the sites are identical in layout, contents and functionality only the Callao Port English version website will be described here.*

The general layout of Callao Port Community website's homepage consists 4 frames:

- Header Banner
- Left Panel
- Right Panel
- Centre Body

The design of the home page allows all the features and functional areas to be accessed from the home page with a single click.

All the other pages of the website (except the online forum) follow a similar layout but without the right panel.

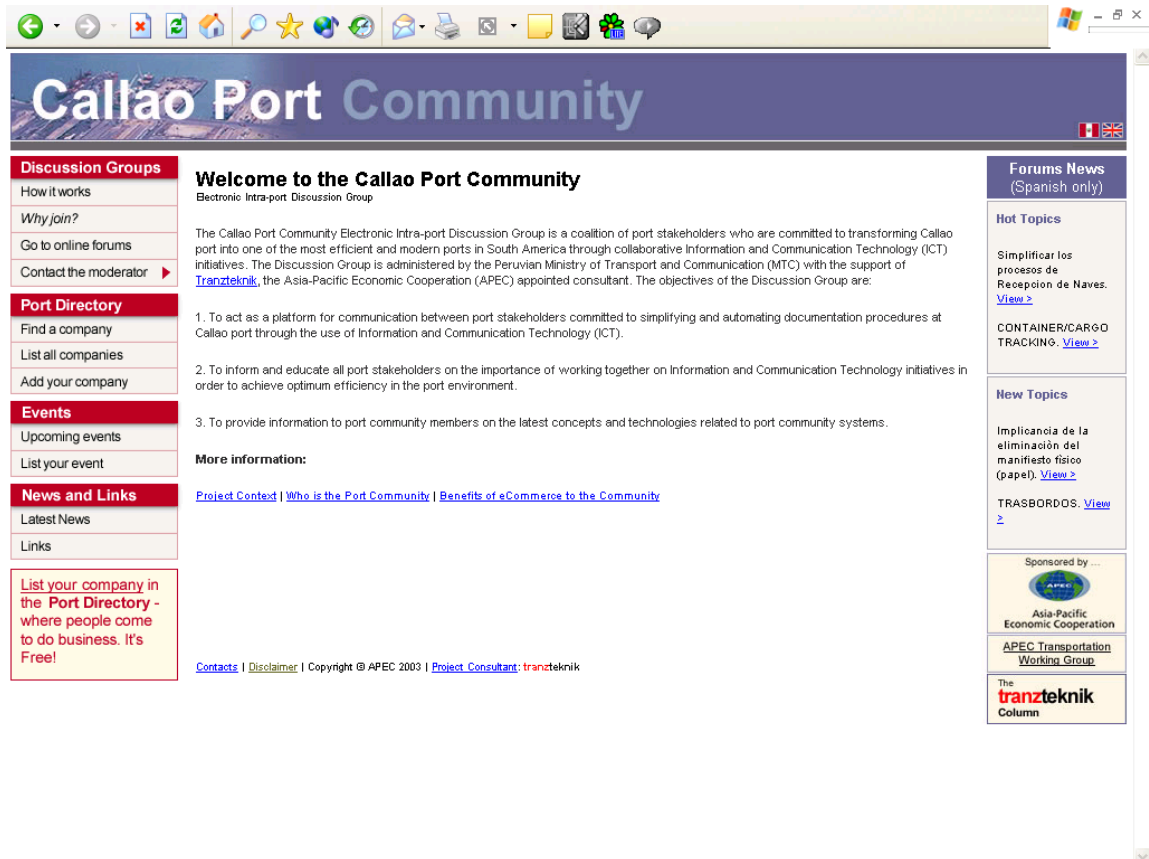


Figure 2: Callao Port Community English language website

### 3.1 Header Banner

The header banner contains the name of the community that the website represents. The photographs used in the banner were chosen by the Local Coordinator because it symbolised an aspect of the port which a majority of the community could identify with.

The header also contains links that allow the user to toggle between English and the local language (Vietnamese for Saigon port and Spanish for Callao).

It was considered very important to have the website in both languages in order to encourage full participation from the local community while also allowing interaction with the international community. Online Forum discussions are available only in the language in which messages were posted.

### 3.2 Centre Body

The central section of the home page is the main area containing information pertaining to the page being viewed. For the home page, this section contains a welcome message to community members and a brief overview of the purpose of the Port Community website and APEC's Intra-port Discussion Group project.



The information used in this home page and its links provides community members a clear description about the Discussion Group project, how they can benefit from it and how they can participate in the discussions.

The bottom of this page also contains links to related sub-topics about the project. These subtopics include:

### **3.2.1 Project Context**

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/projectcontext.htm>

This section explains the rationale behind setting up the Intra-port Discussion Group. The key rationale is based on earlier APEC TPT-WG research that found the lack of suitable forums for port stakeholders to interact, communicate their views and discuss issues with each other was a key factor inhibiting the development and uptake of e-business and associated business processes in many port communities.

### **3.2.2 Who Is the Port Community**

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/whoistheportcommunity.htm>

To make it easier for various stakeholders to identify with this project, this section provides a comprehensive but non-exhaustive list of stakeholder that this Discussion Group is intended to include. The list will be expanded periodically and does not limit participation to those listed.

### **3.2.3 Benefits of eCommerce to the community**

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/benefits.htm>

As the primary aim of this project is to use the Discussion Group to promote the uptake of eCommerce in the port community, this section lists some of the known benefits of adopting eCommerce in the port environment. It also describes how these benefits are reflected in real terms, that is, in terms of moving cargo through the transport chain in the most efficient and effective manner.

### **3.2.4 Contacts**

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/contacts.htm>

Provides contact details for the Moderator of the Website and Online Forum.



### 3.2.5 Disclaimer

This displays the disclaimer message. The message explains the rules which users are required to abide with in order to conduct meaningful and constructive discussion. It also reminds users that they are responsible for the contents of their contributions to the website (for example through the online forum) and specifically indemnifies APEC and Tranztechnik from contribution by users of the website. The precise text for the disclaimer message was reviewed by APEC Secretariat prior to the website being published.

## 3.3 Left panel

There are four groups of buttons in the left panel.

- Discussion Groups buttons
- Port Directory
- Events
- News and Links

### 3.3.1 Discussion Groups Buttons

#### 3.3.1.1 How it works

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/howitworks.htm>

This section explains how the Intra-port Discussion Group works and what the key components of the group are. It also provides explanation on how to join the Discussion Group, how to take part in Online Forum discussions, including initiating new discussions and posting messages on existing discussion threads. Communities are encouraged to conduct periodic face-to-face meetings to complement online discussions.

#### 3.3.1.2 Why Join

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/whyjoin.htm>

This section explains what stakeholders stand to gain by participating in the Discussion Group. The Discussion Group allows stakeholders to:

- Work with other stakeholders to develop solutions that will benefit the whole community
- Ensure their own organisation's interest are considered when solutions are being formulated
- Contribute leadership and impact the future of their community.



### 3.3.1.3 Go to Online Forums

[http://callao.portcommunity.info/forums\\_es/](http://callao.portcommunity.info/forums_es/)

This is a link to the online forum. See section 4.

### 3.3.1.4 Contact the Moderator

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/contacts.htm>

Provides contact details for the Moderator of the Website and Online Forum.

## 3.3.2 Port Directory Buttons

The port directory function is one of the functions available to encourage participation in the Intra-port Discussion group. It allows stakeholders to register their business in the Port Community website and provide a brief description of their business. Registration with the Port Directory is free and as the number of registered companies grow, this database will be a very useful tool for anyone wanting to do business through the port. It also provides an opportunity for both small and large companies with equal access to potential customers.

### 3.3.2.1 Find a company

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/portindexsearch.php>

This function enables a companies seeking to do business through the port to search for service providers and/or partners registered in the Port Community database. Searches can be done using the company name (part or full name) or business category.

### 3.3.2.2 List all companies

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/portindex.php>

This function lists all companies registered in the database.

### 3.3.2.3 Add your company

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/portindexadd.php>

This function allows companies to enter their company details into the port community database. Once a company registers into the database, the moderator will be notified to verify the details before the company is actually listed on the database. This will prevent rogue entries into the database and also avoid companies from listing multiple entries.

## 3.3.3 Events Directory

The Event function is a community calendar designed to enable community members to inform other members about upcoming events that relevant to the port community.



### 3.3.3.1 Upcoming events

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/events.php>

This page lists all events entered in the database up to 90 days in advance.

### 3.3.3.2 List your events

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/eventadd.php>

This function allows community members to list any event that is relevant to the port community. Each new event listed will trigger a notification to the administrator who can either allow or disallow the event to be included in the Port Community database.

## 3.3.4 News and Links buttons

### 3.3.4.1 News buttons

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/news.htm>

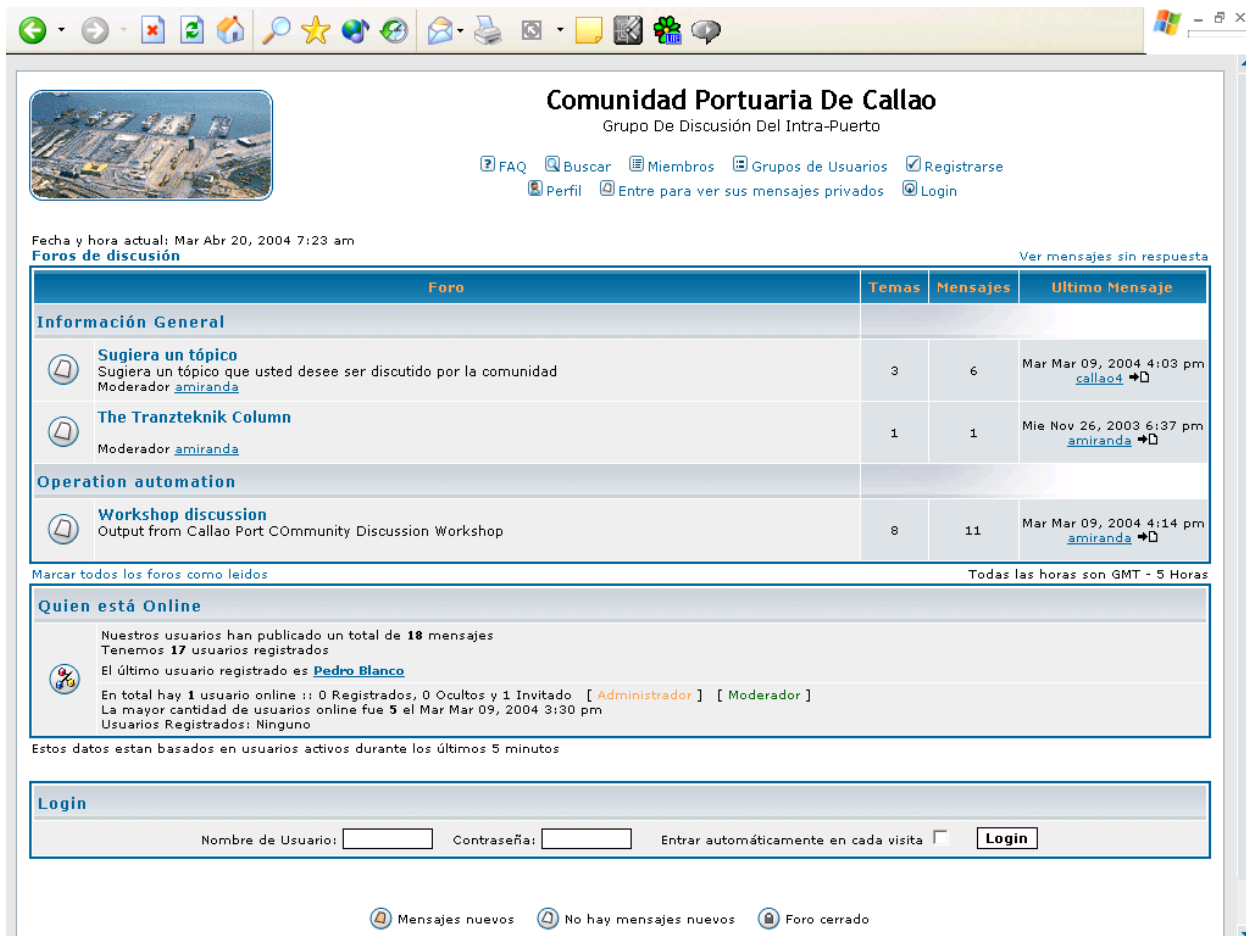
This page takes news feeds on topics relevant to the port community from [www.eyefortransport.com](http://www.eyefortransport.com), a leading industry specific news provider. The news items are categorised under Sea, Intermediaries, Shippers, Inter-modal, Logistics, Solution Providers.

### 3.3.4.2 Links button

<http://callao.portcommunity.info/en/links.htm>

The page lists links to commonly used websites. These links will be updated periodically.

## 4 PORT COMMUNITY ONLINE FORUM<sup>1</sup>






**Comunidad Portuaria De Callao**  
Grupo De Discusión Del Intra-Puerto

[FAQ](#)
[Buscar](#)
[Miembros](#)
[Grupos de Usuarios](#)
[Registrarse](#)  
[Perfil](#)
[Entre para ver sus mensajes privados](#)
[Login](#)

Fecha y hora actual: Mar Abr 20, 2004 7:23 am

**Foros de discusión** Ver mensajes sin respuesta

Foro	Temas	Mensajes	Ultimo Mensaje
<b>Información General</b>			
 <b>Sugiera un tópico</b> Sugiera un tópico que usted desee ser discutido por la comunidad Moderador <a href="#">amiranda</a>	3	6	Mar Mar 09, 2004 4:03 pm <a href="#">callao4</a> →
 <b>The Tranztechnik Column</b> Moderador <a href="#">amiranda</a>	1	1	Mie Nov 26, 2003 6:37 pm <a href="#">amiranda</a> →
<b>Operation automation</b>			
 <b>Workshop discussion</b> Output from Callao Port COmmunity Discussion Workshop	8	11	Mar Mar 09, 2004 4:14 pm <a href="#">amiranda</a> →

[Marcar todos los foros como leídos](#)
Todas las horas son GMT - 5 Horas

**Quien está Online**




Nuestros usuarios han publicado un total de **18** mensajes  
 Tenemos **17** usuarios registrados  
 El último usuario registrado es [Pedro Blanco](#)

En total hay **1** usuario online :: 0 Registrados, 0 Ocultos y 1 Invitado [ [Administrador](#) ] [ [Moderador](#) ]  
 La mayor cantidad de usuarios online fue **5** el Mar Mar 09, 2004 3:30 pm  
 Usuarios Registrados: Ninguno

Estos datos están basados en usuarios activos durante los últimos 5 minutos

**Login**

Nombre de Usuario:  Contraseña:  Entrar automáticamente en cada visita

 Mensajes nuevos
  No hay mensajes nuevos
  Foro cerrado

**Figure 3: Callao Port Community Online Forum**

The Callao Port Community forum software is based on the phpBB ([www.phpBB.com](http://www.phpBB.com)) platform and it allows participants to post ideas, opinions, and information in an organized way. Posts are organized in a way that makes it easy for people to find the information they are interested in, but without having to wade through unrelated information.

Postings in the online forum are organized into three subdivisions:

**Post** - A post is a piece of information submitted by a single user. It may be a new post, which starts a new topic, or a reply to an existing post. Posts are typically a sentence, paragraph, or a few paragraphs.

<sup>1</sup> Information in this section relating to the workings of the online forum are copyright of phpBB.



**Topic** - A topic is a collection of posts. The posts are organized in chronological order. The idea of a topic is that there is a single post that contains the topic of discussion. The rest of the posts in the topic are replies to this first post and to other replies. Topics are sort of like conversations, allowing many people to state their opinions about an idea, or debate an issue.

**Forum** - A forum is a container for topics. Forums often have a general subject that the topics within are about. For instance, you might have a *Movie Reviews* forum, which would contain topics in which people would discuss movies and their opinions about them.

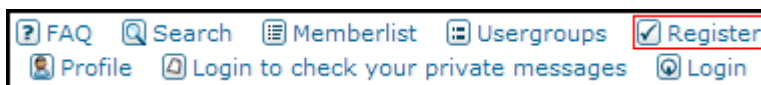
Navigating through posts in the Callao Port Community Forum is based on the idea of posts, topics and forums. Generally, a user will start at the **Forum Index** ([http://callao.portcommunity.info/forums\\_es/](http://callao.portcommunity.info/forums_es/)). The **Forum Index** shows a list of forums. If you click on one of the forums, you will be shown the **View Forum** page, which is a listing of the topics in the forum. By default they are sorted in chronological order by the most recent post in each topic. If you click on a topic, you will be shown the **View Topic** page, which is a listing of the posts in that topic. The posts in a topic are organized chronologically, with the oldest post first.

## 4.1 User Accounts

The Callao Port Community Forum is based on a user system. When a user is logged in, his/her username will be shown with each post he/she makes. Each user may also have some custom settings that allow them to control the look and feel of the board as they use it.

### 4.1.1 Registration

In order to log into the board as a user, you must register a username. To do this, click the small Register link at the top of any page.



You will be taken to the **Registration Agreement Terms**, which you must agree to in order to register.

You will then be taken to the registration information form. Fill out each of the required fields, and any of the optional fields you like. The settings on the registration form are identical to those in the **Profile Settings** form, for more details see [4.7 Profile Settings](#).

When you register, you must specify an email address. All email from the board to you will be sent to that address. If the board is set to **User Activation**, you must check your email and click the activation link there before you may log in.



## 4.1.2 Logging In

In order to post using your username and use your custom settings on the board, you must log in. To log in, you must use the small login form at the bottom of the **Forum Index** page.

A small, rectangular login form with a light blue header containing the word 'Login'. Below the header, there are two input fields for 'Username:' and 'Password:'. To the right of these fields is a checkbox labeled 'Log me on automatically each visit' and a 'Login' button.

Alternatively you may click the small Login link at the top of any page to be taken to the **Login Page**.

Enter your user name and password, and click Login. You will be taken to the page you were previously using, but will now be able to post with your username, change your profile, check private messages, etc. To log out of the board, click the small Logout [`<your username>`] link at the top of any page.

If you are not logged in and attempt to do anything that requires a login, you will be taken to the login screen. After you log in, you will be taken to the page you were attempting to go to before logging in. Things that require login include changing your profile, checking your private messages, posting to forums (if they require it), etc.

If you forget your password, go to the **Login Page**. Click I forgot my password.

A larger login form with a light gray background. It contains two input fields for 'Username:' and 'Password:'. Below these is a checkbox labeled 'Log me on automatically each visit:'. A 'Login' button is centered below the checkbox. At the bottom of the form, there is a red-bordered link that says 'I forgot my password'.

You will be taken to a form to enter your username and email address. A new password will be created, and sent in an email to you. When you receive the email, you need to click the new password activation link. The new password activation link exists so that if someone else enters your information into the **Forgotten Password** form, your current password will remain intact. After you have activated your new password, you may log in with it. You may change your password to what you like in your profile. For more information, see [4.7 Profile Settings](#).



## 4.2 Posting

There are two primary ways to create a post. In the **View Forum** and **View Topic** pages, you may click New Topic. This will take you to the posting form, and, when you have posted, will create a new topic with your post as the first one in the topic. In the **View Topic** page, you may also click Reply. This will take you to the posting form, and, when you have posted, it will add your post to the topic you replied to. To reply to a specific post, you may also click the Quote button in the upper right corner of that post. For more information, see [4.2.6 Quoting Messages](#).

### 4.2.1 Posting Form

When you post a new topic or post a reply, you are taken to the posting form, where to enter your post.

**Subject** - The subject of your post. If this is a new post, the subject is required, and it will be the name of the topic. If the post is replying to another post, the subject is not required, but may be added, and will be shown at the top of the post.

**Message Body** - The Message body is a large text area where the body of your post is input. Plain text is the only thing allowed in this text area, but special formatting, links, images, etc. may be added through the use of **BBCode** and/or **HTML** (if they are enabled).

**BBCode** - BBCode allows you to add special formatting to your posts. You may only use BBCode in your post if it is enabled on the board you are using. To see if BBCode is enabled, look in the lower left corner of the posting form, you should see "BBCode is ON/OFF". If BBCode is enabled and you would like to disable it in your post, check the box next to Disable BBCode in this Post. For more information, see [4.2.5 BBCode](#).

**HTML** - You may use HTML to format your posts. The HTML tags allowed may be configured in the administration panel (for more information, see [3.2.2 General Configuration](#)). You may only use HTML in your post if it is enabled on the board you are using. To see if HTML is enabled, look in the lower left corner of the posting form, you should see "HTML is ON/OFF". If HTML is enabled and you would like to disable it in your post, check the box next to Disable HTML in this Post.

A screenshot of the 'Options' section of a forum's posting form. On the left, a box contains the status: 'Options', 'HTML is ON', 'BBCode is ON', and 'Smilies are ON'. On the right, there are several checkboxes: 'Disable HTML in this post' (checked), 'Disable BBCode in this post' (unchecked), 'Disable Smilies in this post' (unchecked), 'Attach signature (signatures can be changed in profile)' (checked), and 'Notify me when a reply is posted' (unchecked). At the bottom, there is a 'Post topic as:' label followed by three radio buttons: 'Normal' (selected), 'Sticky', and 'Announcement'.



**Signature** - You may add a signature to your post. To do this, check the box next to **Attach Signature**. You may change your signature by editing your profile. For more information, see [4.7 Profile Settings](#).

**Reply Notification** - When you post, you may be interested in knowing when that topic is replied to. If so, you may check **Notify me when a reply is posted**. For more information, see [4.6 Watching Topics](#).

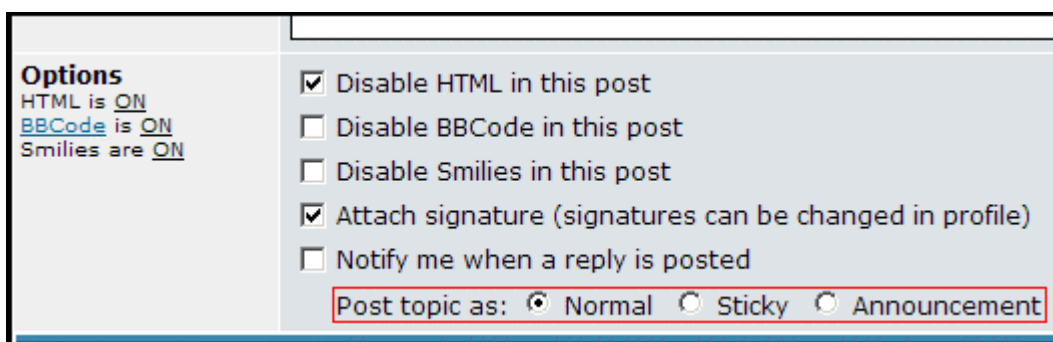
**Sticky/Announcement** - To make a post into an **Announcement** or a **Sticky Topic**, look to the bottom of the posting form. There are radio buttons at the bottom that will allow you to set the post as **Normal**, **Sticky** or **Announcement**. These options will only be visible to a user for the top post in a topic, and only if they have permission to make Announcements and Sticky topics. For more information, see [4.2.2 Announcements](#), [4.2.3 Sticky Topics](#) and [3.1.2 Forum Permissions](#)

**Polls** - To add a poll, look to the bottom of the posting form. These options will only be visible to a user if they have permission to make Polls. For more information, see [4.2.4 Polls](#).

## 4.2.2 Announcements

Announcements are a special type of topic. In the **View Forum** page, Announcements appear above all other topics (at the top of the forum). Announcements will also appear on every **View Forum** page. For instance, if you had 75 topics in a forum and 50 on each page, announcements would appear on the page with the first 50 topics **and** on the page with the last 25 topics.

To make a topic into an announcement, simply select the **Announcement** radio button on the posting form. The top post of a topic must be specified as **Announcement** for the topic to be an Announcement. For more information, see [4.1.1 Posting Form](#).



The image shows a screenshot of a forum's posting options panel. On the left, under the heading "Options", there are three status indicators: "HTML is ON", "BBCode is ON", and "Smilies are ON". The main area contains five checkboxes: "Disable HTML in this post" (checked), "Disable BBCode in this post" (unchecked), "Disable Smilies in this post" (unchecked), "Attach signature (signatures can be changed in profile)" (checked), and "Notify me when a reply is posted" (unchecked). At the bottom, there is a "Post topic as:" label followed by three radio buttons: "Normal" (selected), "Sticky", and "Announcement". A red rectangular box highlights the "Post topic as:" label and the three radio buttons.

## 4.2.3 Sticky Topics

Sticky topics are a special type of topic. In the **View Forum** page, Sticky topics appear above all other topics except for Announcements. Sticky topics only appear on the first **View Forum** page.



To make a topic sticky, simply select the **Sticky** radio button on the posting form. For more information, see [4.2.1 Posting Form](#).

#### 4.2.4 Polls

Polls are a special type of that allow community members to vote on an idea or issue. Polls can only be made from the top post in a topic.

**Poll Question** - This is the subject of the Poll, the question that is being *answered* by the poll. The poll question appears at the top of the topic, above the poll options. This is required for the poll.

**Poll Option** - Poll Options are the possible answers to the poll question. To add poll options, type the option into the text field and click Add Option. To have a valid poll, at least two options must be offered.

**Run Poll for** - Number of days to run the poll for. After the specified time has passed, the results of the poll are displayed in the topic, and no one else may vote.

#### 4.2.5 BBCode

BBCode is a system that will allow you to format your posts in special ways. The BBCode system uses tags in a way nearly identical to HTML. The primary difference between BBCode and HTML is that BBCode uses square brackets [ and ] instead of angle brackets < and >. For a more detailed description of how BBCode works, click the small BBCode link on the lower left corner of the **Posting Form**. You may also go to <http://www.phpbb.com/phpBB/faq.php?mode=bbcode>.

**Options**  
HTML is ON  
BBCode is ON  
Smilies are ON

- Disable HTML in this post
- Disable BBCode in this post
- Disable Smilies in this post
- Attach signature (signatures can be changed in profile)
- Notify me when a reply is posted

Post topic as:  Normal  Sticky  Announcement

Here is a list of sample BBCode and its output:

[b]Bolded Text[/b]: **Bolded Text**

[i]Italicized Text[/i]: *Italicized Text*

[u]Underlined Text[/u]: Underlined Text

[color=red]Red Text[/color] or [color=#FF0000]Red Text[/color]: **Red Text**



[size=24]Bigger Text[/size]: Bigger Text

[quote]This cheese is delicious[/quote]: 

Quote:  
This cheese is delicious

[quote="The Cheese Man"]This cheese is delicious. [/quote]:  

**The Cheese Man wrote:**  
This cheese is delicious

[code]if (\$cheese == "tasty") { return true; }[/code]:  

**Code:**  

```
if ($cheese == "tasty") { return true; }
```

[list][\*]Cheddar Cheese[\*]Limburger Cheese[\*]Cottage Cheese[/list]:

Cheddar Cheese

Limburger Cheese

Cottage Cheese

[list=1][\*]Cheddar Cheese[\*]Limburger Cheese[\*]Cottage Cheese[/list]:

Cheddar Cheese

Limburger Cheese

Cottage Cheese

[list=a][\*]Cheddar Cheese[\*]Limburger Cheese[\*]Cottage Cheese[/list]:

Cheddar Cheese

Limburger Cheese

Cottage Cheese

[url=http://www.phpbb.com/]Visit phpBB! [/url]: [Visit phpBB!](http://www.phpbb.com/) (Link URL: http://www.phpbb.com)

[url]http://www.phpbb.com/[/url]: <http://www.phpbb.com/> (Link URL: http://www.phpbb.com)

[email]no.one@domain.adr[/email]: [no.one@domain.adr](mailto:no.one@domain.adr)

[img]http://www.phpbb.com/images/phpBB\_88a.gif[/img]: 



Again, for more info, see <http://www.phpbb.com/phpBB/faq.php?mode=bbcode>.

#### 4.2.6 Quoting Messages

Quoting messages allows you to include other's posts in your own. It is useful for showing that you are replying to a post, or part of a post.

To quote all of someone's post, look at the top right corner of their post and click Quote. This will take you to the posting form, and will allow you to reply to the post. It will also automatically add the appropriate **BBCode** to your post to quote the post you are replying to.

The proper syntax to quote a post is:

```
[quote="<name to quote>"]<text to quote>[/quote]
```

<name to quote> is the source of your quote, and <text to quote> is what you are quoting. So to quote the user *Cheese Man* saying "Power the behold of cheese."

```
[quote="Cheese Man"]Power the behold of cheese[/quote]
```

For more information, see [4.2.5 BBCode](#).

#### 4.2.7 Editing Posts

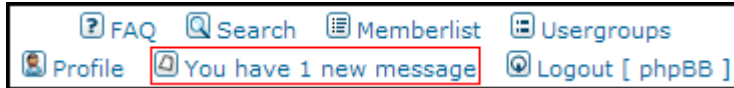
Editing posts allows you to go back and fix errors, remove incorrect information, or add new information to your posts. To edit a post, look at the top right corner of your post and click Edit. You will be taken to the posting form to edit your post, and then click Submit to enter it into the database. If you edit a post after it has been replied to, a small message will appear at the bottom of it indicating how many times it has been edited, and when and by whom the last edit occurred.

To delete a post, click Edit and check **Delete this Post**. Click Submit to finish deleting the post. You may not delete a post if it has been replied to (i.e. it is not the last post in the topic)

### 4.3 Private Messages

Private messages allow users on a board to contact each other out of the public eye. Private messages can be described as a cross between email, instant messaging, and online forum posting.

To use private messaging, you must be logged in to the board. Look at the top of any page, and click You have X new message(s). This will take you to your private messaging center.



### 4.3.1 Sending

There are three primary ways to send a private message. First, you may go your private messaging center and click New Post. Secondly, you may click Post Reply from a private message you are reading. Finally, you may click the Pmlink on any user's profile or post.

The posting form is identical to the normal posting form with a few exceptions:

**Username** - The username of the person you want to receive the message. If you are replying to a PM, or clicked the PM link in someone's profile, this field will be automatically filled for you.

Additionally, PMs may not be **Sticky Topics**, **Announcements**, or contain **Polls**.

### 4.3.2 Receiving

There are three ways that one may be notified of a new private message. Most obvious is the Private message link at the top of every page. It will display You have X new message(s), where X is the number of new messages you have. You may click this link to take you to your **Inbox**.

You may be informed of new PMs by an email sent to the email address your username is registered to. You may also be informed of a new PM by means of a small window that pops up while you are viewing the board. Email and pop-up notification will contain a link to your **Inbox**. Email and pop-up notification may be enabled/disabled in your **Profile** (for more information, see [4.7 Profile Settings](#))

Sometimes you may be informed of a new PM, but when you go to your Inbox, there is no new message. This is not a bug, it simply means that the sender must have deleted the PM before you read it. For more information, see [4.3.3 The Outbox](#).

You may delete messages by selecting them and clicking Delete Marked. Alternatively, you may delete all messages by clicking Delete All. You may also sort/display messages by age by using the dropdown list box in the upper right corner.

### 4.3.3 The Outbox

When you send a PM, the message goes to your **Outbox**. It remains in the Outbox until the recipient visits his/her Inbox, at which point it is moved from your Outbox to their Inbox. While the message remains in your Outbox you may edit or delete your post if you like. The message remains in your control until it is received.



### 4.3.4 The Savebox

The Savebox is provided as a place to keep important PMs. Often it is used to save valuable messages from the Inbox, and then you can use the Delete All function to discard the rest.

You may save messages in your Inbox by selecting the messages (with the checkboxes next to each message) and clicking Save Marked.

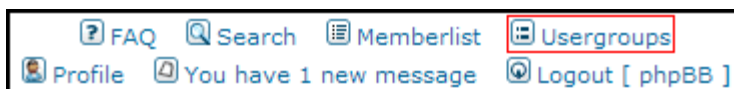
## 4.4 Usergroups

**Usergroups** are a powerful feature of the online forum. They allow moderator permissions, private permissions, and any other special user settings to be granted to multiple people. This makes it easy to change settings for a group that has things in common without having to edit each user's individual permissions. It is also possible to make the **Group Moderator** (controls group membership) someone who is not an administrator, granting power to users without leaving your board's administration panel vulnerable.

### 4.4.1 Joining a group

There are two ways to join a group. First, you may be added to the group by the group moderator. This is not controlled by the user, but by the group moderator through the group control panel. This is the only way to become a member of a **Closed** or **Hidden** group.

To join an open group, click the small Usergroups link at the top of any page.



Choose the group to join from the **Join a Group** dropdown list shown, and click View Information. This will take you to the **Group Control Panel**. Click Join Group to request membership in the group. The **Group Moderator** will receive an email informing them of the request, which they must approve before you become a member of the group. For more information, see [4.4.2 Moderating a Group](#).

### 4.4.2 Moderating a Group

For each group, there is one **Group Moderator**. The group moderator may control membership to the group by adding and removing members. They may also control the **Group Type**. The group moderator is specified in the admin panel. For more information, see [3.3 Group Administration](#).



#### 4.4.2.1 Adding Members

To add members to a group, go to the **Group Control Panel**. In the lower right corner, there is a text field. Enter the username to add, and click Add Member. Additionally, you may use Find a username if you are not sure of the name of the user to add.

#### 4.4.2.2 Approving Members

To approve a user's membership to a group, go to the **Group Control Panel**. Look at the bottom of the page at the **Pending Members** section. Check the box next to the member(s) to approve and click Approve Selected. You may similarly select and deny a user's membership to the group.

When a user requests to join a group, email will be sent to the group moderator with a link to the **Group Control Panel**. This allows the group moderator to be notified, speeding the approval process.

#### 4.4.2.3 Removing Members

To remove members from a group, go to the **Group Control Panel**. Check the boxes next to the names of members to remove, and click Remove Selected.

#### 4.4.2.4 Group Types (Open, Hidden, Closed)

Group types may be changed by the group moderator or a board administrator in the **Group Control Panel**. They may also be changed by board administrators in the **Group Management** section of the admin panel. For more information, see [3.3 Group Administration](#).

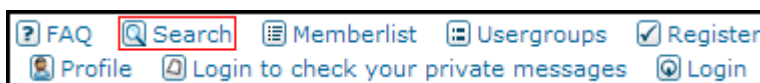
**Open** - All users may see the group and group members. Users may request membership to this group. For more information, see [4.4.1 Joining a Group](#).

**Closed** - All users may see the group and group members. Users may not request membership to the group, but may be added by the group moderator.

**Hidden** - The group and its members are not visible to normal users. Users may be added by the group moderator. If a hidden group is moderator of a forum, the group **will** show up in the **Moderators** list.

### 4.5 Searching

The online forum has a search system that will allow you to find topics you are interested in. To get to the search page, click the small Search link at the top of any page.





## 4.5.1 Search Query

**Search for Keywords** - You may search for words in the content of topics. Enter the words to search for into the text field.

If you select **Search for any terms or use query as entered**, then topic containing ANY of the words you entered will be displayed. You may use the **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT** operators to indicate which words you want to search for. Use **AND** to indicate that multiple words MUST be found. Use **OR** to indicate that a word is optional/alternate. Use **NOT** to indicate that a word should not be present in the topics displayed.

If you select **Search for all terms**, only topics containing all of the words in the query will be displayed. Selecting this option has effects comparable to using **Search for any terms or use query as entered**, with the **AND** operator between each term.

You may use the asterisk(\*) wildcard character to broaden your search. The asterisk will match any number of characters. So *\*cheese\** will match *cheese*, *cheesewheel*, *wheelcheese*, or *wheelcheesewheel*. Likewise *cheese\*fudge* will match *cheesefudge*, *cheesyfudge*, or *cheese597fudge*.

To increase the speed and decrease the overhead of the search utility, only words may be searched for. Phrases (such as "cheese wheel") may not be searched for, except by their component words. The minimum size for words is four characters, and the maximum size is twenty characters. Any non-alphanumeric character (e.g. white space and punctuation) is a word boundary.

**Search for Author** - You may search for posts by post author. Simply enter the author's username into this text field. You may use the asterisk(\*) wildcard in author's names to broaden your search. Again, the asterisk will match any number of characters.

## 4.5.2 Search Options

**Forum** - Select the forum you wish to search in, or **All available**. To search multiple forums, search by **Category**.

**Category** - Select the category you wish to search in, or **All available**.

**Display Results as Posts** - Search results will be displayed as a list of the posts. Part of the post that matches the query will be displayed, and the search terms highlighted. For each post there is a link

**Display Results as Topics** - Search results will be displayed as a list of Topic titles. For each topic there is a link to the forum it is in, the topic itself, and the author of the topic.

**Search Previous** - This dropdown box will allow you to specify the maximum age of posts to display as results of the search. There are also radio buttons here that will allow you to search only the body of posts, or the subject(title) of the posts as well.

**Sort by** - This will allow you to specify how search results are organized. You may sort by Post Time, Post Subject, Topic Title, Author, or Forum. The sort may be in ascending or descending order alphabetically (or chronologically where appropriate)

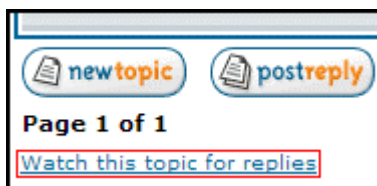
**Return first** - When **Display Results as** is set to **Posts**, this dropdown box will allow you to control how much of the post is displayed in the search result.

## 4.6 Watching Topics

You may subscribe to topics in the online forum. When a topic you are subscribed to is replied to, an email will be sent to the email address that your username is registered to. The email will contain a link to the topic that has been replied to. You will only receive one email per topic until the next time you log in to the board.

### 4.6.1 Subscribing to Topics

To subscribe to a topic, look at the lower left corner of the **Topic View** page. Click the small Watch this topic for replies link.



Additionally, if you post or reply to a topic, you may check **Notify me when a reply is posted** to subscribe to a topic.

### 4.6.2 Unsubscribing from Topics

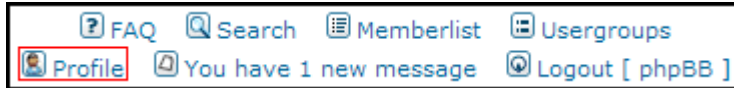
To unsubscribe from a topic, look at the lower left corner of the **Topic View** page. Click the small Stop watching this topic link.



Alternatively, you may look at your notification email. At the end of the email (right above the signature) there is a link that will unsubscribe you from the topic.

## 4.7 Profile Settings

To edit your profile, click the small Profile link at the top of any page.



You must be logged in to edit your profile. To make changes to your profile, change the values on the form and click Submit at the bottom of the page.

**Username** - Your username on the board, the name you use to log in. You may change this name if the board administrators allow it. For more info, see [3.2.2.4 User and Forum Basic Settings](#).

**Email** - The email address your account is registered to. All emails from the board to you will go to this email address. You may change the email address if you like. If you change your email address and the board is using **User** activation, then you will need to activate your changed email address. You will be sent an email (to the new address) with an activation link if this is the case.

**Password** - The password you use to log in. If you change your email address or password, you must enter your current password. If you are changing your password you will need to enter the new password twice to verify it.

Fields in the **Profile Information** are self-explanatory.

**Always show my Email Address** - If **Yes** a link to email you will appear in your profile. If set to **No**, the link will not appear.

**Hide your online status** - If **Yes** you will not be visible to normal users in the **Who is Online?** list at the bottom of the **Forum Index**.

**Always notify me of replies** - If **Yes** then the **Notify me when a reply is posted** checkbox on the posting form will be checked by default. You may still uncheck it each time you post.

**Notify on new Private Messages** - If **Yes** an email will be sent to your registered email address each time you receive a private message.

**Pop up window on new Private Messages** - If **Yes** you will see a pop up window notifying you of new Private Messages you receive while browsing the forums.

**Always attach my signature** - If **Yes** then the **Attach signature** checkbox on the posting form will be checked by default. You may still uncheck it each time you post.

**Always allow BBCode** - If **Yes** then the **Disable BBCode in this post** checkbox on the posting form will be unchecked by default. You may still check it each time you post.

**Always allow HTML** - If **Yes** then the **Disable HTML in this post** checkbox on the posting form will be unchecked by default. You may still check it each time you post.

**Always enable Smilies** - If **Yes** then the **Disable Smilies in this post** checkbox on the posting form will be unchecked by default. You may still check it each time you post.



**Board Language** - Selects the language of board messages/text. Any text from other users or administrators is unaffected.

**Board Style** - Selects the style that the board. This setting will not work if the administrator has turned on **Override user style** (for more information, see [3.2.2.1 General Board Settings](#))

### 4.7.1 Date Format

The online forum allows you to specify the date format that you see on the board. This is done by allowing you to specify the format using the PHP syntax. For full details on how this works, see <http://www.php.net/date>.

The date string is a series of letters and punctuation. Each letter will be replaced with a part of the current date and time, and the punctuation is used to organize this information in a way that makes sense to you.

The default string for this field is "D M d, Y g:i a" This will display your date in the form **Sat Apr 09, 2002 4:09 am**. All of the punctuation and spacing remains intact, and each letter is replaced with part of the date/time.

**D** is the first three letters of the day of the week. **M** is the first three letters of the month name. **d** is the numerical date, with leading zeroes. **Y** is the year, four-digit format. **g** is the hour, 12-hour format without leading zeroes. **i** is the minutes, with leading zeroes. **a** is am/pm, in lowercase letters.

To see the complete list of letter substitutions, go to <http://www.php.net/date>.

### 4.7.2 Time Zones

To have the board time show correctly, please select your time zone. The time in the online forum does not work with Daylight Savings Time, so if you have Daylight Savings Time, add 1 to your GMT modifier. So if you are in GMT-5 and have DST, you will need to set your time zone to GMT-4.