

## Getting started with the STARScience Forum

The STARScience International/UK Forum is a conferencing area that will allow you to participate in text based discussions, sharing ideas and experiences with other participants who share similar interests. The introductory guide covered a variety of simple skills that allow users to view and respond to previously started discussions. This guide is intended to assist users who wish to further develop the use of the forum resource.

This guide is provided to assist you in extending your skills for using the STARScience International/UK Forum (referred to as Forum from now on). It will cover the following topics:

- View new messages only
- Viewing attached files
- Saving attached files
- Posting a New Topic

### Organizing messages

Each time a new message is posted into a conference it is added to a running count that identifies how many new messages have been posted on the web board. Each time you login you are presented with the welcome screen in the right-hand frame of your web browser. The welcome screen tells you how many new messages have been posted to the conference. You can use the welcome screen to hide all the old content and quickly and easily view only new messages posted.

### View new messages only

- Open your web browsing software
- Go to and log in to the Forum

The web board window will be divided into three frames (a toolbar running along the top, a navigation window on the left and main information window on the right).

In the left-hand frame you will see a list of all the current conferences. A 'new' label will be beside any conference that contains new messages.

In the right-hand frame you will see the 'welcome' message where you can see how many new messages have been posted onto the web board.



- Click on: *a new message hyperlink*, to view only conferences that contain new Messages

The content of the left-hand frame will change.



Where previously you could view all conferences and identify which contained new messages. Now you can only view conferences that contain new messages.

- Click on:  next to a conference title, alternatively,
- Click on: the conference title itself

This will expand the conference thread where you will be able to see the new messages.



- Click on: any new message to view its content

To return to the 'normal' Forum and view all the available conferences and messages

- Click on: [All Messages](#)



For the 'new message' function to work properly you now need to identify to the web board that you have read all the current messages. If you do not identify which messages you have read they will continue to be listed as new messages. For example;

*If you login, see that there are ten new messages, proceed to read them and then log out. The messages that you have just read will still be listed as new messages the next time you login.*

In order to view only new messages the next time you login you need to 'mark as read', messages that you have seen, before you logoff.

As the number of people subscribing to and using the web board increases, the number of new messages that you appear to have will increase enormously and the web board will become difficult to use for finding information. To keep up to date with, and follow all the new and developing conferences and discussions mark messages as 'read' regularly when you use the web board.

## Viewing attached files

### Opening a file attachment in your browser

Messages posted to the Forum can contain file attachments, these might be resources that a participant wishes to make available to and share with other STARScience Forum users. There are two ways to view the contents of any file attachment posted with a message on the web board. Firstly you can open the file from its current location without downloading it to your own computer. Secondly you can download a file to your computer and then open it using a software program. Whichever way you choose, you will need software that recognizes the particular file type. For example, if you want to open a Word document you will need Microsoft Word or an alternative word processor that can recognize Word document files.

Go to the conference that contains the message and attachment you wish to view.

- Scroll down the message thread until you can view the attached file.
- Position your arrow cursor over the attachment, it will turn into a hand pointer



Depending on your Internet browsing software you should now be able to view the attached file by simply clicking on it once.

Alternatively, using the right-hand mouse button,

- Click on: *the attachment*, a short-cut menu will appear on your screen



- Click on: Open

The file will open in your browser.

You may be prompted to confirm that you really do wish to open the file attachment, if so,

- Click on: Open



*You may prefer to edit or modify the particular file in which case a better solution would be to download the attachment and save it onto your computer's hard disk.*

## Saving attached files

### Downloading an attached file

- Go to the conference that contains the message and attachment you wish to download.
- Scroll down the message thread until you can view the attached file.
- Position your arrow cursor over the attachment, it will turn into a hand pointer

### Using the right-hand mouse button

- Click on: *the attached file*

A short –cut menu will appear on your screen

- Select: **Save Target As...**

The 'Save As' window will open on your screen. You can now navigate to the folder in which you want to save the file

Click on: **Save**



Below are a number of word documents v with a brief overview on understanding hu



### Caution:

*Downloading files can lead to the spread of computer viruses. It is always advisable to scan any file you download before attempting to open or use it.*

### Posting a New Topic

As well as replying to existing messages within a conference topic it is also possible for you to start a new topic for discussion. In order to do this you will need to become familiar with posting new messages.

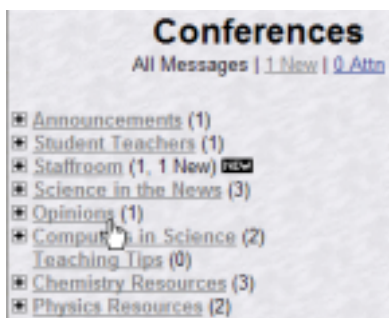
To start a new topic you need to post a message, rather than replying to an existing message. The process is very similar to replying to a message. Choose the conference that best fits what you want to talk about, or who you want to talk to.

Posting a message is similar to replying to an existing message.

In this example a new message is being posted to the 'Opinions' conference.

- Click on: **Opinions**

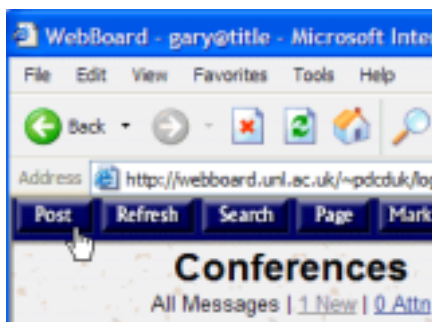
This will expand the 'Opinions' conference.



On the Forum toolbar within your main browser window

- Click on: **Post**

The form to enter your message will appear indicating at the top the name of the conference your message will be posted to.



**Note:** *If no topics have previously been added to a conference you will automatically be presented with the form to enter your message when you select the conference. If you wish to continue adding a message follow the steps below. If however, you decide that you do not wish to add a message either select another conference by clicking on the conference title or use the back button on your browser.*

- Click in: the **Topic box**
- Type: *your topic title*
- Click in: the **message window**
- Type: *your message*

When you have finished typing your message

- Click on: **Post** either at the top or bottom of the form



Having selected to post your message you will now be able to preview and check the spelling. Where there are possible spelling mistakes, these will be in red type and underlined. Click on a spelling mistake to view and choose suggested alternatives as appropriate.

If you decide that you would like to re-write your message:

- Click on: your browser's back button.

This will return you to the message form screen where you can edit your text, otherwise

When you are happy with the content of your message

- Click on: **Post** and your new topic will be added to your chosen conference



When you have finished using the Forum, mark conferences and messages as read before ending your session.