



(Yet another Bulletin Board)

YaBB License, General Information, and Installation Guide

Software Provided By:

YaBB <www.yabbforum.com>

Yet another Bulletin Board

Project Sponsored By:

XIMinc <www.ximinc.com>

web hosting, web design, domain registration

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How to Install a YaBB Forum on Your Website

YaBB (Yet another Bulletin Board) is the original *FREE*, open-source forum written in perl! While chat programs allow people to talk "live," you must be logged into a chat room 24-7 to talk to everyone. With forum software like YaBB, you can talk at any time, and everyone can join the conversation at his/her leisure by reading and replying. Get visitors coming back for interesting discussions, fun chit chat, or support without having to spend thousands of dollars! **YaBB is FREE. All we ask is that you leave our copyright visible on the bottom of the forum!**

Many forums can be difficult to install due to lack of sufficient documentation, insufficient knowledge by the person installing the software, or simply due to configuration problems with some web hosts. *These instructions explain how to install YaBB and bypass any problems one may encounter in the process.* Never again can one say an open-source project is not worthy of commercial ranks!

WARNING: This installation guide is only intended for webmasters with at least basic Perl, HTML, and FTP knowledge. See the section below and the glossary at the end of this document for help with these terms.

The installation, which should take approximately **ten minutes** for an advanced webmaster **or up to one hour** for a novice, consists of four major stages: **1) Prepare, 2) Create Directories, 3) Upload Files, and 4) Run, Login, and Test.**

Figure 1: Sample initial look of a YaBB forum after installation

The screenshot shows the initial look of a YaBB forum. At the top, there's a header with the YaBB logo (SP 1.3.2) and a welcome message: "Welcome, Guest. Please Login or Register. Aug 9th, 2004, 9:05pm". Below this is a navigation bar with links: Home, Help, Search, Members, Login, Register. A red warning message is displayed: "Now that you have installed YaBB, you should secure it! Please click here to read how to make your YaBB secure! To remove this message, go into the Admin Center and choose the template editor. From there you can remove the <yabb security> tag." Below the warning is a table showing forum statistics. The table has columns: Forum name, Topics, Posts, Last post. The first row is "General" with 0 topics and 0 posts. Below the table is an "Info Center" section with "Forum Statistics" showing "Total Topics: 0", "Total Posts: 0", "Last Updated Topic: ()", and "View the 10 most recent posts of this forum." Below this is "Users online" showing "1 Guests, 0 Users". At the bottom is a "Login" section with fields for "Username:", "Password:", "Minutes to stay logged in:" (set to 360), and "Always stay logged in:" (checked). There is a "Login" button and a "Forgot password?" link. At the very bottom, it says "Powered by YaBB 1 Gold - SP 1.3.2!" and "Forum software copyright © 2000-2004 Yet another Bulletin Board".

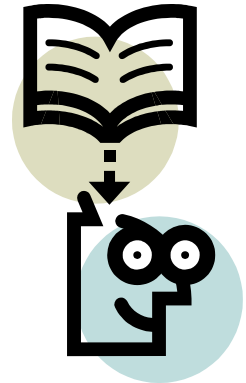
Forum name	Topics	Posts	Last post
General			
News Read about the latest happenings of our site! Moderator: Forum Admin	0	0	N/A by N/A

Info Center	
Forum Statistics	
Total Topics: 0	Total Members: 1
Last Updated Topic: ()	Newest Member: Forum Admin
View the 10 most recent posts of this forum.	
Users online	
1 Guests, 0 Users	
Login (Forgot password?)	
Username:	Minutes to stay logged in: 360
Password:	Always stay logged in: ☒ Login Forgot password?

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What You Need to Know

Before you can begin a YaBB installation there are a few basic things you must know, such as usage of the `chmod` command (for UNIX and Linux servers only) or using an FTP (file transfer protocol) client. If you think you already know these things, you can skip to the next section. Otherwise, let's start here. *For an explanation of the terms used in this guide, please read the glossary at the end of this document.*



1. The first thing you need is a web host that supports the Perl language. Hosts like *Tripod*, *AngelFire*, and *Geocities* do not have this software installed. For a list of hosts that do, check the Official YaBB Community (http://www.yabbforum.com/community/YaBB.pl?board=mods_admins). Most hosts' FAQ pages will say if they do or do not support Perl (or CGI) scripts. You also need to determine the location of the Perl program on your host's server (such as `/usr/bin/perl` or `D:/perl/perl.exe`). A good web host to try is YaBB's sponsor company, www.ximinc.com.
2. Now that you've got a host, you'll need to get an FTP client. FTP clients allow you to connect to the FTP server that your host provides. Through the FTP server, you will install YaBB. For *MS Windows* users, we recommend *SmartFTP* or *WS_FTP*. For others, visit www.download.com or similar sites to download a client for your system. If you build your website with *MS Frontpage* or *Macromedia Dreamweaver*, you may upload the files from that program, but it is not recommended!
3. The next key thing to understand is `chmod`'ing. `Chmod`'ing is a process that only UNIX- and Linux-based web hosts support. If your host doesn't say it's a *Windows* host, then it's probably one of those. `Chmod`'ing a file sets permissions on it, including reading, writing, and executing. You use your FTP client to `chmod`; how you do so in every client is different. In many of them, all you have to do is right-click on a file, select "`Chmod`" or "`Set Permissions`," then input the `chmod` number. If you are on a *Windows*-based host, you must give the folder read/write permissions through your server software.
4. You must also understand how to upload files in ASCII and Binary mode through your FTP client. These are different methods of transferring the data. Usually text documents are uploaded in ASCII and images in Binary.
5. Lastly, it is recommended that you have basic knowledge of HTML code. This will allow you to edit your forum's template. This knowledge is not required but your forum will get more traffic if you customize its appearance.

Materials and Tools Needed

All materials and tools can be acquired for free if you use freeware software or already have some of the needed tools installed on your computer.

Hosting Account Requirements

1. A web server or web hosting account for your website (such as from XIMinc, <http://www.ximinc.com>)
2. Perl (version 5 or higher) installed on your web host or server
3. At least 1MB free disk space on your web hosting account (3MB or more recommended)
4. Sendmail (for UNIX/Linux hosts) or SMTP (for *Windows* hosts) email server

Installation Software

5. The latest copy of YaBB from <http://www.yabbforum.com/downloads.php> (YaBB 1 Gold - SP 1.3.2, at the time this manual was written, is the latest version.)
6. An FTP client (such as *WS_FTP*)
7. A text editor (such as *MS Notepad* or *Nedit*)
8. A compression utility for extracting .zip files (such as *Winzip*, *Winrar* or the built-in tool in *Windows*)
9. A web browser (such as *MS Internet Explorer*)

NOTE: Throughout this guide, wherever “YaBB.pl” is referred to, you may need to reference “YaBB.cgi” if you downloaded the alternate package format. Both versions are the same except the filename of the main executable. Some prefer one filename over the other, and some web hosts only allow a certain extension to be used (either “.pl” or “.cgi”).

Stage 1: Prepare

- Step 1** This guide assumes you have downloaded the latest release of YaBB from <http://www.yabbforum.com/downloads.php> or a mirror site as outlined above.
- Step 2** Make sure you meet the qualifications listed in the “What You Need to Know” section of this guide. You must also gather the required tools and materials listed in the above section.
- Step 3** Extract the .zip YaBB package to any location of your choice on your computer using your compression utility (such as *Winzip*). Just remember where you extracted the files! Chances are, you have already extracted these files if you are reading this installation guide.
- Step 4** First open “YaBB.pl”, which is in the “/cgi-bin/yabb” folder of the package you downloaded, in a text editor such as *MS Notepad* or *Nedit*. The first line of this file contains the path to your server's Perl location. Generally, the default setting (“/usr/bin/perl”) is correct, but Perl can be installed in different locations. For example on a *Windows* or *WinNT* hosting server, your Perl path should probably be set to “#!C:/Perl/Bin/perl.exe”. Check your server for the proper path, and change it accordingly.
- Step 5** Next open “Settings.pl” in your text editor and set the required variables in it as shown in Table 1. The remaining settings in Settings.pl are not required; they are additional feature and layout settings that may improve your forum.

WARNING: It is recommended that you DO NOT change the advanced settings in Settings.pl until you have a successfully running YaBB forum!

Table 1: Recommended and required settings needed for a first-time installation

\$mbname	Name of your YaBB forum
\$boardurl	URL to your forum's containing folder (without trailing “/”), where YaBB.pl is located (such as http://www.mysite.com/cgi-bin/yabb)
\$cookieusername	Name of the username cookie (no change necessary, unless you are installing multiple forums)
\$cookiepassword	Name of the password cookie (no change necessary, unless you are installing multiple forums)
\$mailprog	Location to your web host's sendmail program (generally “/usr/sbin/sendmail” or similar)
\$webmaster_email	Your e-mail address, such as q^webmaster@mysite.com^

\$boarddir	Absolute path to your forum's containing folder (usually can be left as ".")
\$datadir	Directory with message files (can be left alone unless you wish to move the directory elsewhere)
\$memberdir	Directory with member files (can be left alone unless you wish to move the directory elsewhere)
\$boardsdir	Directory with board data files (can be left alone unless you wish to move the directory elsewhere)
\$sourcedir	Directory with YaBB source files (can be left alone unless you wish to move the directory elsewhere)
\$varidir	Directory with variable files (can be left alone unless you wish to move elsewhere)
\$facesurl	URL to your user avatar images folder (without trailing "/")
\$facesdir	Absolute Path to your avatars directory (this MUST be correct for profile page to display)
\$imagesdir	URL to your images folder (without trailing "/")
\$helpfile	URL to your help index file (such as "http://www.mysite.com/yabb/help/index.html")

Step 6 It is recommended that you skip this step until you get YaBB forum working, unless you are an advanced webmaster! Open "template.html" in an HTML editor or your text editor and modify the layout as you wish (to make the forum look like your website). An explanation of each tag's purpose is explained in Table 2 below. You may also edit it from YaBB's Admin Center.

WARNING: The tags beginning with "<yabb " **MUST REMAIN** in the template.html file. You may move them around as you wish, but leave them somewhere in the file, or things will not show up in your forum.

The tag "<yabb news>" is not in the template of this version of YaBB, as it has been replaced by the NewsFader script. You may insert this tag if you would like the old text news format back in your YaBB forum. (But be sure to set \$ShowNewsFader in Settings.pl to "0" before you put that tag back in, or the news will show in two places on the Board Index.)

Table 2: Template tag definitions

<yabb title>	Title of forum appended with current location
<yabb charset>	Character set to use for page text
<yabb uname>	Display name of the current logged in user (or guest)
<yabb im>	Instant message count for the current logged in user
<yabb time>	Time and date string
<yabb menu>	Forum navigation menu for main items (such as home, search, profile, etc.)
<yabb boardname>	Name of the current board of the forum being looked at
<yabb position>	Current location in the forum (such as index, profile, etc.)
<yabb main>	Main table where the forum's content and tables are inserted (the guts)
<yabb copyright>	Required copyright notice for YaBB
<yabb news>	Static news tag if used in replace of the NewsFader script
<yabb security>	Security notice for initial installation (REMOVE THIS TAG)

Stage 2: Create Directories

- Step 1** In the “cgi-bin” folder (or proper folder designated by your web host for containing Perl scripts) of your web hosting account, create a directory called “yabb” (or whatever name you wish to use). If you do not have a cgi-bin or another folder designated for use by Perl scripts, then first create a directory called “cgi-bin” and then inside that create the “yabb” directory. An example structure is provided in the YaBB package you've downloaded. The cgi-bin may have to be in your “public_html” folder or in the home root of your account, depending on your web host's setup.
- Step 2** Model the folder hierarchy in the YaBB package you downloaded to create the remaining folders. You should have a folder structure similar to the following:

WARNING: It is recommended that you put the Boards, Members, Messages, and Variables folders in a non-web-accessible folder of your web hosting account. This will ensure that your data is secure and cannot be accessed from the Internet. Do not forget to change the folder paths in Settings.pl if you make this change, however (see Stage 1::Step 5).

```
/cgi-bin/yabb/  
/cgi-bin/yabb/Boards  
/cgi-bin/yabb/Members  
/cgi-bin/yabb/Messages  
/cgi-bin/yabb/Sources  
/cgi-bin/yabb/Variables
```

- Step 3** Then, in a section of your web space (outside the cgi-bin, generally in a “public_html” or “web” folder as suggested in the package's folder hierarchy), create another directory called “yabb” or something similar:

```
/public_html/yabb/
```

- Step 4** Inside that folder, create another directory called “help” and another called “images”:

```
/public_html/yabb/help/  
/public_html/yabb/images
```

NOTE: A shortcut to following all of Stages 2 and 3 is to upload the folders directly to your hosting account, including all files and subdirectories contained within them. By doing this, you will not have to create each folder separately, and then upload the contents into each folder separately. If you attempt this method, ensure that your FTP program is properly setup to upload files in ASCII or Binary mode as specified in Table 3 of Stage 3.

Stage 3: Upload Files

- Step 1** Upload the files from the downloaded .zip you extracted in Stage 1::Step 3 into the directories as shown below in Table 3. You must upload ALL .pl, .cgi, .dat, .cat, .txt, .html, and .htaccess files in ASCII mode. All images must be uploaded in Binary mode. Many FTP clients will select the upload mode automatically, but you might have to first set some of the file types' upload methods in the program's options for them to upload properly. It is recommended that you DO NOT let the FTP client select the upload mode automatically, unless you are 100% certain that you have configured it correctly. It will save you potential troubles if you just make

sure to set it manually to ASCII mode instead before uploading the contents of the “cgi-bin/yabb” directory and all of its contents.

Step 2 Make sure you chmod the files as shown in Table 3. IIS Permissions are listed below. You may need to ask your web host to do this for you if on a *Windows* server.

WARNING: If you are upgrading, take note of the files you should not upload! Doing so will damage your forum data. These files are denoted by the image:  in Table 3.

Table 3: File locations, file permissions, and upload modes

YABB WEB FILES Section (no chmod necessary) - these files are located in the public_html folder of the YaBB package -		
/yabb/ubbc.js		(Upload in Ascii mode)
/yabb/fader.js		(Upload in Ascii mode)
/yabb/help/	.*	(Upload in Ascii mode)
/yabb/help/images/	.*	(Upload in Binary mode)
/yabb/images/	*.gif - all files	(Upload in Binary mode)
/yabb/images/avatars/	*.* - all files	(Upload in Binary mode)
YABB SOURCE Section (upload all files in ASCII mode) - these files are located in the cgi-bin folder of the YaBB package -		
/yabb/	-rwxr-xr-x	(chmod 755)
/yabb/YaBB.pl (or YaBB.cgi)	-rwxr-xr-x	(chmod 755)
/yabb/Settings.pl	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)
/yabb/template.html	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)
/yabb/english.lng	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources	-rwxr-xr-x	(chmod 755)
/yabb/Sources/Admin.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/AdminEdit.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/BoardIndex.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Display.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/ICQPager.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/InstantMessage.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Load.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/LockThread.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/LogInOut.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Maintenance.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/ManageBoards.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/ManageCats.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Memberlist.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/MessageIndex.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/ModifyMessage.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/MoveThread.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Notify.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Post.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Printpage.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Profile.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Recent.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Register.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/RemoveOldThreads.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/RemoveThread.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Search.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Security.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/SendTopic.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Subs.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/YaBBC.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)

YABB DATA Section (upload all files in ASCII mode)

- these files are located in the cgi-bin folder of the YaBB package -

- these should be placed in a non-web-accessible folder of your hosting account if possible -

/yabb/Variables	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 777 or 755)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/.htaccess	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/index.html	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/agreement.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/ban.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/ban_email.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/ban_log.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/ban_memname.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/cat.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/censor.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/clicklog.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/flood.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/log.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/memborgroups.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/news.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/oldestmes.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/reserve.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Variables/reservecfg.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Boards	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 777 or 755)	⊗
/yabb/Boards/.htaccess	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)	⊗
/yabb/Boards/index.html	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)	⊗
/yabb/Boards/general_cat.cat	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Boards/news.dat	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Boards/news.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Boards/sticky.stk	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Members	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 777 or 755)	⊗
/yabb/Members/.htaccess	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)	⊗
/yabb/Members/index.html	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)	⊗
/yabb/Members/admin.dat	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Members/memberlist.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Members/profiles.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666)	⊗
/yabb/Messages	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 777 or 755)	⊗
/yabb/Messages/.htaccess	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 777 or 755)	⊗
/yabb/Messages/index.html	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)	⊗

The permissions required to run a secured YaBB forum on a *Windows* (typically using IIS) server is as follows:

IIS/Webserver permissions:

Directories:

yabb - Read, Script Execute, No List Directory Contents

Sources, Members, Messages, Boards, Variables - No Read, No Write, No Execute, No List Directory Contents

NTFS/Filesystem Permissions (Granted to the user IUSR_servername):

Directories:

yabb - Read & Execute

Sources - Read & Execute

Members, Messages, Boards, Variables - Modify

Files:

Settings.pl, template.html - Modify

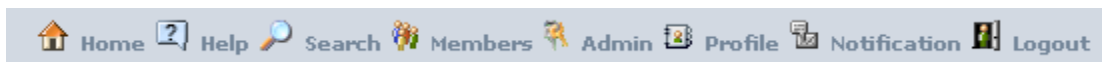
Stage 4: Run, Login, and Test

- Step 1** Try to execute your YaBB forum now! In your web browser, go to the URL that you specified in \$boardurl of Settings.pl (see Stage 1::Step 5) with /YaBB.pl (or /YaBB.cgi) on the end (such as "http://www.mysite.com/cgi-bin/yabb/YaBB.pl"). Remember most servers are case-sensitive, so type in the URL exactly as the folders and files are named.
- Step 2** If your forum doesn't run, first check that you visited the proper URL. If you did and your forum doesn't appear properly (an example would be a page that says "500 Internal Server Error"), please repeat the above 3 stages and consult <http://faq.yabbforum.com>. You should also look at the "Installation Troubleshooting" section on page 13 of this manual.
- Step 3** After you have successfully run your YaBB forum from the web, you need to try logging in. The default administration username is "admin" with a default password of "admin". Log in with that information by entering the text in the login boxes at the bottom of the main page of your forum (the "Board Index").

NOTE: A successful test run of your forum should initially look like the example in Figure 1 at the beginning of this manual.

- Step 4** After a successful login (no errors have been reported), you should see an "Admin" icon in the menu of the forum (see Figure 2). This indicates that you are logged in as administrator. Clicking it will take you to the "Admin Center" where you can change forum preferences, edit your template, run maintenance routines, or manipulate users and categories. Please consult the "Administration Guide" for more information on this section of the forum.

Figure 2: Sample menu with the admin icon



- Step 5** Test everything (that you know exists), such as posting, registering a new member, and modifying messages. One category with one board in it exists in all new YaBB installations, allowing you to start using your forum right away!

How to Upgrade an Existing YaBB Forum

Below is an outline explaining how to upgrade your YaBB forum from a version prior to this release. You may follow the full installation instructions above should you wish, as long as you take note of the files you should not upload.

Any prior version of YaBB can be upgraded to this version of YaBB as long as all of the steps below are followed.

- Step 1** It is imperative that you backup your YaBB forum data before proceeding with an upgrade. You can do this several ways. One such method for Linux and Unix servers is to “tarball” your YaBB data folders. This is not possible on *Windows* servers; you must ask your web host to zip the data for you if you do not have direct access to the data. You may also simply download the data folders (in ASCII mode) with your FTP client. A backup provides you with all of your forum’s data before the upgrade should you need to reinstall the forum or return to a previous version of YaBB.

NOTE: It is highly recommended that you make a backup of your YaBB data (the boards, members, messages, and variables folders) before proceeding with an upgrade. This allows you to restore your data should the upgrade cause problems.

- Step 2** Delete all files in your “YaBBHelp” folder then upload the files in the “yabb/help” folder of the files you extracted for this release into that folder. This will update your online help so it no longer includes the installation and upgrade sections and is XHTML compliant. This step is not required, but it is recommended.
- Step 3** Upload ALL of the YaBB source files as described in Stage 3::Step 1 (namely the files in the /Sources folder, YaBB.pl/cgi, and english.lng). It is not necessary to upload the files in the “yabb/images” folder, as they have not been changed in this release. You *must* upload all .pl, .cgi, and .js files, however, replacing the copies already in your installed YaBB.

WARNING: Take note of the files you should not upload! Doing so will damage your forum data. These files are denoted by the image:  in Table 3.

- Step 4** If they do not exist already, add “a.” before each of the “nav” style tag classes in template.html so they all begin with “a.nav” instead of “nav.”
- Step 5** Please note that your existing language file may be slightly outdated if it is from older versions of YaBB. You may want to look for a new language file marked suitable for YaBB 1 Gold - SP 1.3.2, or translate “english.lng” yourself.
- Step 6** Login to your forum after completing the above 5 steps that pertain to you. Enter the “Admin Center” of your forum and choose the menu option to “rebuild memberlist.” This is a very important step – *without it, members cannot modify their profiles and guests cannot register.*
- Step 7** Navigate through your forum and test everything (including posting, saving settings, and browsing) to ensure that the upgrade was completed successfully.

Installation Troubleshooting

Consider this the "informal" section of the *YaBB Manual*. Here we will attempt to answer some of the more common questions during a YaBB installation.

I am getting "500 Internal Server Error" when I load the forum!

Did you upload the source files in ASCII? Also make sure you chmod the executable file, YaBB.pl/cgi, 755. Sometimes when the server your YaBB is installed on is busy, it may decide to choke like this for no reason; however, this is NOT a YaBB bug. One last resort is that this file-extension version of YaBB doesn't work on your server. Most servers will allow .cgi files and some require .pl files. In this case, please download the other file version of YaBB from www.yabbforum.com.

Sometimes I or my users get an "Invalid Password" error through YaBB....

Perhaps it isn't reading your member files properly? Be sure the directory/files exist and are chmodded correctly (or given the proper folder permissions if on a *Windows* server). A solution that almost always works is to click the "log out" menu item then try logging back in. Also be sure that you are putting in the correct password!

I get this error "Can't open directory (.../yabb/images/avatars). No such file or directory!"

If you get an error similar to that, it means one of the following: You did not set the \$facesdir variable in Settings.pl or you incorrectly set this variable. \$facesdir is the "absolute path" to your avatars (user pictures) folder. It must be the absolute path to (not a relative path and especially not a URL).

The JavaScript functions when posting do not work!

Be sure that you uploaded ubbc.js in ASCII to the web space of your web hosting account. Then look in your Settings.pl to see if the path is properly set to that file.

Why does my browser ask me to download the script files when I tried to go to my YaBB forum? (i.e. the infamous "Download Bug" that people think exists)

You can be completely assured that this isn't a bug in YaBB. This is your own mistake or a server problem. First make sure the chmod permissions (or folder permissions on *Windows* servers) are properly set, especially on YaBB.pl. Next, be sure that you uploaded the files to your account's cgi-bin. As a last resort, you may have to modify YaBB and rename the .pl's to .cgi's because your server may not support executing .pl files. If none of these suggestions work, you'll need to contact your web host administrator for help. Perhaps they don't even support Perl scripts!

When I post things, the message doesn't show up but the board shows that there is a post.

Sounds like you correctly chmod your /boards folder for write access, but YaBB isn't writing to the /posts folder. Check your chmod settings again. You may also want to check the path to your /posts folder in Settings.pl.

I keep getting "Incorrect Password" errors when I try to modify my settings through the Admin Center!

It may do this the first time you modify your settings online (and probably will if you have upgraded from an old version). If you chmodded your Settings.pl file correctly to give it write access, settings will be saved and you shouldn't get this password error again. When you do, just click "logout", and then log back in.

Some of my images aren't showing and some are not displaying right.

Make sure that your images directory URL is properly set in Settings.pl to where your images actually are. Also be sure that you uploaded the images in Binary mode, or they will look funny. ASCII mode is used for everything else (because they are text files).

Why are the colors funny in browsers that don't support CSS?

Because they don't support CSS, the color settings in Settings.pl will control the colors in those browsers. Be sure that you set the colors in template.html equivalent to those in Settings.pl.

Ok, people are telling me the news screws up in their browser!!!

You have the option of turning the NewsFader off in Settings.pl. Some browsers don't like the JavaScript associated with this news ticker. If you do this and still wish to have news, you'll need to put the tag "<yabbnews>" back into template.html where you want it.

How can I turn off some of those bloat-fish features?

Many of the features/add-ons in YaBB can be turned off or modified in Settings.pl. We try to add only the most popular ones, but we have to try to please a wide audience.

When I try to post or change my profile, nothing changes?

Did you forget to chmod 666 (or 777) the files and folders as specified in the installation section of this manual? That makes them "writeable."

What the hell is chmod?

Chmod is a Unix command - for "change mode." It sets permissions to files such as "writeable", "readable", "user-writeable," etc. You can do this on some servers in your FTP client. On others you may have to telnet (or SSH) to the server and type something such as "chmod # filename". An example is: "chmod 777 Settings.pl." On Windows servers, you cannot chmod. The server administrator must give folders and files the proper permissions through the server administration program. For more information, see *Appendix B* and *Appendix C* of this manual.

When I try to post I get "Unable to write file" and reading a post I get "Unable to open file"!!!

Make sure you chmod your /posts folder to 777 or 666. This error means that you have improper permissions to write to the files in that folder. Then when it tries to open that file, it gives an error because the file doesn't exist.

When logged in as an admin, it always shows 127.0.0.1 on each message as the poster's IP address.

This is just a problem with some odd hosts that don't use standard cgi environment variables (i.e. things like \$ENV{'REMOTE_ADDR'}). You can go into YaBB.pl and Post.pl and change this variable to whatever your server uses. An example is F2S, which uses HTTP_X_FORWARDED_FOR for IP addresses.

I want to add avatars for people to choose or remove some of the existing ones. Do I change any code?

The nice thing about YaBB is that it automatically lists ALL the avatars that are in your avatars folder on the profile page. You can delete avatars out of your avatar folder if you wish not to allow them, or you can upload your own avatars to the folder. YaBB will automatically list those images in the folder. Just remember, if any members of your forum have already selected an avatar, then you delete it, a bad image will show up (so modify his/her profile afterwards).

Can we modify the copyright at all?

You may do a few small modifications to it. At a minimum, it must contain the YaBB copyright notice, YaBB version, and a link to www.yabbforum.com. This is all we ask so that we may keep YaBB free by receiving credit for our work. You may remove the image at the top of the default template. If you wish to do more, please consult YaBB's license in this manual (YPL) or visit <http://www.yabbforum.com/licenses.php>.

What's the difference between the cgi and pl versions?

There is really no difference. Some web hosts do not support .pl as a perl extension, so the .cgi must be used. The .pl extension is becoming more popular and just looks nicer than .cgi to many people, which is why it is used.

I log in and then try to do something on the forum, and it says I am a "Guest"....

Some servers do not properly convert to GMT time, which cookies use for their dates. If this is the case, you can try to check the "Always Stay Logged In" box when you login or set the minutes higher to stay logged in for a longer period.

I have followed the instructions, and I still have this error: "Software Error! Can't locate ./Sources/Subs.pl in @INC (@INC contains: /usr/lib/perl5/5.00503/i386-linux /usr/lib/perl5/5.00503 /usr/lib/perl5/site_perl/5.005/i386-linux /usr/lib/perl5/site_perl/5.005) at YaBB.cgi line 35."

First suggestion is make sure your \$boarddir and \$sourcesdir variables are set to the proper absolute path in Settings.pl. Next make sure you indeed uploaded Subs.pl in ASCII to the source folder. The final and most likely solution is often that the one forgets to change the path to Perl at the top of YaBB.pl/cgi!

Appendix A: YaBB Security

Due to the way web servers operate, it is not possible for a script such as YaBB to come fully secured out of the box. Some manual configuration, or at least verification by the administrator, is always required. Servers can be grouped into three types:

- Those that support .htaccess files (Like Apache)
- Microsoft Internet Information Services
- Everything else

No matter what server your account is on, the basic principle is to prevent access to YaBB's data directories (boards, members, posts, and vars) from the web. These directories should only be accessible by the YaBB script itself and not available to view and browse using a web browser.

Please remember that failing to secure your forum properly is an invitation for a hacker to mess it up. You should NEVER run a forum unless you are sure you have done what is possible on your end to secure access to the forum directories. The YaBB development team and support staff will do its best to keep the forum software secure and free from potential security holes, but directory security is handled by the server (not by the script) and must therefore be handled at that level.

Apache and Other Servers that Support .htaccess

As long as the server has support for .htaccess, YaBB comes with preconfigured security for these servers in the form of a .htaccess file in each of the important directories. This file will ensure that nobody is able to access these directories over the web, as long as it is properly uploaded. To verify that the protection works, try to access one of the directories via your web browser (<http://www.example.com/cgi-bin/yabb/Settings.pl>). If your server comes up with a 403: forbidden error, you know that the protection works, and that your data is safe. If you on the other hand can see the content of the file in your browser window (Or the browser downloads it), protection is not working. You should verify that you uploaded the .htaccess file, and that .htaccess files are allowed on this server. If you cannot get it to work, you'll have to follow the advice for 'everything else' below.

NOTE: .htaccess files are by default hidden on the server. This means that you won't normally see this file in the directory after you have uploaded it. You will need to configure your FTP client to see hidden files to make this work (normally by setting `-a` as a *remote* filter). If you are unsure on whether you have uploaded it or not, just upload it again, and verify that your FTP client tells you "Transfer OK."

Microsoft IIS

IIS is a *Windows*-based server and uses two different types of permissions, both IIS (the web server) and NTFS (the file system). Subsequently, both must be properly configured for the forum to work, but the important settings for over-the-web security is the IIS permissions. The catch with IIS is that most hosts don't let you control these permissions. Some hosts let you control one of them, but rarely both, and often you can't control either.

If you manage this server yourself, you can set the IIS permissions using the Internet Services Manager, while the NTFS permissions are usually set using Windows Explorer (right-click on file/directory -> properties -> Security tab). Note that IIS automatically creates a user named `IUSR_servername` when it is installed (*servername* being the actual name of the computer it is installed on.) It is to this user you need to grant NTFS rights. This user can be changed in the Internet Services Manager; if unsure, you can check

there exactly what the username of the anonymous internet user is. Unlike the NTFS rights, IIS rights are not user-based.

The permissions required to run a secured YaBB on an IIS server is as follows:

IIS/Webserver permissions:

Directories:

yabb - Read, Script Execute, No List Directory Contents

source, members, posts, boards, vars - No Read, No Write, No Execute, No List Directory Contents

NTFS/Filesystem Permissions (Granted to the user IUSR_servername):

Directories:

yabb - Read & Execute

source - Read & Execute

members, posts, boards, vars - Modify

Files:

Settings.pl, template.html - Modify

Everything Else

If your web server doesn't support .htaccess and it is not an MS IIS server, use these steps to make sure your forum is secure. You do not have to follow every step here, as each step is a standalone security tip. Due to restrictions from your host or the operating system, it might not be possible to follow all of these, but it is recommended that you try as many as possible:

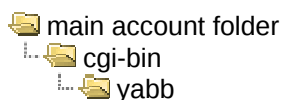
1. *Rename your data directories.*

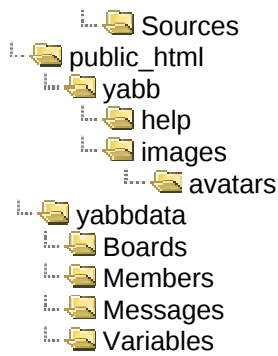
Give the directories boards/members/posts/Variables new names. Figure out something nobody would ever be able to guess. Use odd names, such as 'fr44w5ne.' Then edit Settings.pl to use the new names for these directories. This method will not protect your directories, but since YaBB does not display these directory names to anyone (except administrators), they will be fairly secure. One important detail about this method is that directory browsing must NOT be turned on in your YaBB data directory. If it is, people can go to this directory and have the names listed. If directory browsing is enabled, this can easily be prevented by creating a simple html file named index.html (or whatever name your server requires for index files) and putting it into this directory. Then, if people go directly to your yabb directory, they will just get this index file instead of a directory listing, preventing them from discovering the names of your renamed directories that way.

2. *Move your directories to non-public space.*

On every server, only certain directories are seen by the web server. On most servers, these are one web directory (often called html, www, public_html, or web), and one script directory (called cgi-bin, cgi, scripts, perl-bin, or perl). Everything placed INSIDE one of these directories becomes part of the files the web server can serve. However, by placing directories OUTSIDE these directories, you will ensure that the web server cannot access them. You will then need to edit Settings.pl to provide the correct path to these directories, as the default path is no longer valid.

Here is a sample directory structure, where we have created a directory called 'yabbdata' outside the web server's access area and placed the data directories inside this directory:





3. *Create index.html files:*

Creating an index.html file prevents the directory contents of the directory from being listed, since the server then will serve this simple html file instead of the contents of the directory. Just create a simple html file called index.html and upload it into each of the data directories (boards, members, posts, and vars).

NOTE: index.html is the correct name for an index file on most systems, but some will require it to be called default.htm, default.html, or index.htm. Other names may also exist.

Appendix B: Glossary of Related Terms

Below are some terms that you need to understand when installing a YaBB forum. If this glossary does not explain the terms well enough, you will need to learn more about them on your own before proceeding.

Administrator – In YaBB this is the person in the forum with “total control.” Each new installation comes with one member who has administrator rights. Additional administrators can be added later. Administrators can access all boards of the forum, edit or delete posts, and change any forum settings.

ASCII – This is an information exchange code using a set of specific characters. Many files (all text-based) must be uploaded in ASCII mode to retain their original format. Samples include Perl scripts, text documents, web pages, and code files.

Binary – This is an executable type of file, as opposed to an ASCII file. These files are usually programs and images. Certain files must be uploaded in Binary mode for them to function properly.

Chmod – Change Mode. This is a command on UNIX and Linux machines that is used to change file permissions. Chmod can usually be done from an FTP client or from a telnet or SSH session. Chmod is comparable to setting file permissions on a *MS Windows* server running *MS IIS*. There are a total of 9 permissions available.

File Permissions – These are permissions that one can set on any file or directory with most any operating system. Permissions include read, write, and execute. They can typically be set for the file owner, a user, or a group, providing a total of 9 possible permission sets. On UNIX and Linux systems, these can be set using the chmod command. They allow files to be secured or accessed from the web, and they tell the server if the files can be executed, read from, or written to.

FTP – File Transfer Protocol. This is an Internet protocol that allows one to transfer files from a local PC to a remote machine over a network. Typically a client, such as *WS_FTP*, is used to transfer the files from a PC to a remote machine. This is what is used to upload YaBB files.

HTML – Hypertext Markup Language. This is the original markup language created for writing web pages, typically with the file extension .htm or .html. These documents often contain hyperlinks to other Internet documents.

Package – A collection of files, often a tree of files for a software release, bundled together for distribution.

Perl – This is a high-level programming language based on the C language. It was originally created to write scripts for the UNIX operating system, but it has evolved to include CGI scripts for the World Wide Web, such as YaBB.

Tarball – This is an archive file containing myriad related files. Essentially, multiple files and folders can be packaged into one convenient file. This is related to a “zip.”

Upload – This is the act of transferring data (files) from one computer to another, often remote, computer.

URL – Uniform Resource Locator. This is an Internet address to a resource, such as <http://www.yabbforum.com/community>.

Webmaster – This is the website administrator, a person responsible for the development and maintenance of the web pages at a website.

YaBB – Yet another Bulletin Board. This is a popular open-source forum for webmasters to install on their website. For more information, visit <http://www.yabbforum.com>.

Zip – This is a file extension for a collection of files or folders that have been compressed into one file, typically created on *Windows* computers. The filename will appear as “filename.zip.” This term is commonly used as a noun or a verb to denote compressed files or the action of compressing files.

Appendix C: Chmod Tutorial

While following the “How to Install a YaBB Forum on Your Website” section of this guide to install a YaBB forum, you will be asked to set permissions, known as “chmodding” on Unix and Linux servers. This does not apply if you are installing YaBB on a Windows or Macintosh server, for which you will have to set permissions another way or ask your web host to grant permissions as needed for you. The following steps explain how to chmod on Unix and Linux servers.

Setting permissions on files and folders will allow certain users access to those specific files and folders. This is critical to running an efficient and secure forum. It also grants the YaBB program to access certain functions on your web hosts’ server. Most important of these permissions is the write permission, which allows YaBB to modify or create files on the server, which is required for every access to your forum.

- Step 1** Chmods can be set by FTP’ing to your website or by logging into the shell via telnet or SSH. For this lesson, we’ll assume you have FTP access to your website and have logged in.
- Step 2** You must first understand the three categories (or levels of access) that can be given: owner, group, and other. These are the types of users on the server that you will be granting permissions to.
- Step 3** Each category can be given a combination of one or more of the following permissions: read, write, execute. Each of these has an equivalent numeric value: read = 4, write = 2, and execute = 1.
- Step 4** Once you have logged into your website with your FTP program, navigate to the “yabb” folder inside your cgi-bin where you installed YaBB.
- Step 5** Select the file(s) that you wish to chmod (as stated by the YaBB Installation section in this guide), right-click your selection, and choose the “chmod” or “set permissions” option in the menu that appears.

Appendix D: What's Changed in this Release

Below is a list of things that have changed to create this release, SP 1.3.2. Changes for this release were completed August 17, 2004. Note that some bugs and features may not be listed. This is because they weren't worthy enough of an entire line, or we forgot to add it to this list.

The bugs and features that are listed below are a summary of the things we have done since YaBB 1 Gold – SP 1.3.1. The author of the changes is listed to the right in italics.

Security Fixes:

YaBBC.pl javascript code execution disallowed with glow/shadow tags	<i>Carsten, James Bone</i>
Adminedit.pl fixed to not allow code execution in settings.pl	<i>Remy Monsen</i>
Remove line breaks from subject variable	<i>Ron Spikecity</i>

Bug Fixes:

Remaining notification bugs removed	<i>YaBB Staff</i>
"Mark All Read" while using text menu fixed	<i>LoonyPandora</i>
Messageindex.pl variable bug fixed	<i>Ron Spikecity</i>
Template.html couldn't be moved/opened because of open statement	<i>Monsen</i>
Wrong error reported with move thread file problem	<i>Monsen</i>
Path error function added to stop ../ error infinite loops	<i>LoonyPandora</i>
Fix for /me usage in post quotes	<i>LoonyPandora</i>
Board ID removed from registration link to prevent access errors	<i>Corey Chapman</i>

Layout Changes/Fixes:

Template.html installation security advisory added	<i>James Bone</i>
New default template	<i>Tim Ceuppens, Corey Chapman</i>
New Logo	<i>Tim Ceuppens</i>
Title tags added to critical images so proper browsers display tool tip	<i>Corey Chapman</i>

Manual:

Corrected several technical mistakes in the PDF manual	<i>Remy Monsen, Corey Chapman</i>
IIS/NT installation permissions added to PDF manual	<i>Remy Monsen</i>
Included YaBB Security FAQ in PDF manual	<i>Corey Chapman (written by YaBB team)</i>
Cleaned up HTML help manual and converted to XHTML	<i>Corey Chapman</i>
Re-included YPL in PDF manual and revised	<i>Corey Chapman</i>
Added troubleshooting section to PDF manual	<i>Corey Chapman</i>

Enhancements/Speedups:

Database for member info to speed up profile changes and registration	<i>Ron Spikecity</i>
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Friendliness Changes:

Copyrights and comment headers all updated	<i>Corey Chapman</i>
Auto-focus to form fields on post page removed	<i>Corey Chapman, D-BOY</i>

Appendix E: YaBB Public License (YPL) v. 2.0

Below is the license YaBB has adopted for the software.

Version 1.0, Adopted On April 17, 2001

Version 2.0, Adopted On April 13, 2004

Definitions

You: This is you, if you are considering distributing, modifying or using this Package.

Package: This refers to the collection of files distributed by YaBB and derivatives of that collection of files created through textual modification

Standard Version: This refers to such a Package if it has not been modified or has been modified in accordance with the wishes of YaBB as specified below.

Distribution fee: This is a fee you charge for providing a copy of this Package to another party.

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