

# ScareCrow Message Board Moderation Guide

## Document Scope

It is the intention of this guide to provide information about how to use the various moderation features that exist within the ScareCrow message board software and to increase awareness of those features. This document does *not* attempt to provide guidance in how to moderate a website, nor does it intend to serve as a guide of proper and improper uses of a feature. Additionally, this guide does *not* include features that the author considers to be administrative rather than moderative in nature; that is, no features that are part of the Administrator Control Panel or User Editor are discussed in this document. Such information may be found in the Administration Guide.

## Applicability

This document is accurate for ScareCrow Message Board version 2.12. No guarantee is made that the information will be accurate for versions before 2.12, and while an honest attempt will be made to keep this document up-to-date with future versions, no guarantee is made that such will be the case.

### 1.Editing a Post

Editing another user's post is identical to editing your own posts. Locate the post you wish to edit and click the "Edit" icon, which is the first icon on the left at the top of the specific post. On the following form, ensure your user name and password are entered into the appropriate boxes and edit the message as you wish. If you have

the proper authority level, you may click the "Hide edited tag" check box to make the edit transparent; if you do not have that authority, a message stating that you edited the post and at what date/time the edit was made will be attached to the message regardless of the status of the check box.

## **2.Suspend a Post**

Suspending a post places the post in a state where it can not be viewed by the average user. Specifically, nobody can view the post who does not have the authority to revoke the suspension. Instead, most users will get a message which reads, "The administration has suspended this post pending review. Check back later for updates." If the user's account is restricted, the message will vary. While a post is suspended, it cannot be viewed, edited or quoted (subject to the restriction above), so you can be sure that the content will not be seen.

New to version 2.12, if the first post in a thread is suspended, new options become available. The administrator may choose to set that nothing will change about the post, that a note will be placed in the description so that people can see in advance that the first post is suspended, or even that the suspended thread will not be seen by users without the authority to remove the suspension. However, those features are beyond the scope of this document.

To suspend a post, first find the post you wish to suspend. Click the "Edit" icon, which is the first icon from the left at the top of the post. Ensure your user name and password are in the appropriate boxes. Click the "Suspend this post?" check box and press the "Submit" button.

To unsuspend a post, you may use the post validation queue in the Administrator

Control Panel (if applicable), or you may follow the steps above but *uncheck* the "Suspend this post?" check box before submitting.

### 3. Deleting a Single Post

To delete a single post, first locate the post you wish to delete. Click the "Edit" icon, which is the first from the left at the top of the post. Ensure your user name and password are in the appropriate boxes. Click the "Delete this post?" check box and submit the form.

**Warning:** Removing a post is *irreversible*. If you are not sure if a post should be removed, it is advisable to suspend the post instead.

**Note:** You can *not* delete the first post in a thread under any circumstances. Since the first post in a thread sets the topic for the entire thread, it cannot be removed independent of removing the entire thread. If you wish to remove an entire thread, please read option #5 below.

### 4. Locking a Thread

Locking a thread prevents any user from adding a post to the thread without first unlocking that thread, but it does not alter the content of the posts in any way. To lock a thread, scroll to the bottom of the thread view for the specific topic you wish to lock. Click the link that reads "Lock topic." Ensure your user name and password are entered in the appropriate boxes and submit the form.

**Note:** To unlock a thread, click the "Unlock topic" link instead. The other steps are identical.

## 5.Deleting a Thread

Deleting a thread removes *every post* in the thread and removes the thread itself from all forum lists. To delete a thread, scroll to the bottom of the thread view for the topic you wish to remove. Click the "Delete thread" link. Ensure your user name and password are entered into the appropriate boxes and submit the form.

**Warning:** Deleting a thread is *irreversible*. Only proceed with the deletion if you are sure you wish to remove it.

## 6.Adding/Removing Sticky Status to/from a Topic

A "sticky" topic is one that appears at the top of every page of the specific forum, regardless of when the last post made to it was. In the event that multiple posts are sticky in a forum at one time, they appear in the order of their last modified time, newest to oldest.

To add or remove sticky status from a thread, scroll to the bottom of the thread view. Click the "Make Topic Sticky" or "Remove Sticky" link, as appropriate. Ensure your user name and password are entered into the appropriate boxes and submit the form.

## 7.Moving a Thread

To move a thread from one forum to another, first scroll to the bottom of the thread view. Click the "Move thread" link. Ensure your user name and password are entered into the appropriate boxes. At this time, you have a number of options. First, you can decide whether or not you wish to keep a copy (locked) in its original location or simply delete the original. You may also choose whether or not moving a

thread will update the last modified time. By default, the modified time is updated; this has the effect of ensuring that the thread appears at the top of the list in the new forum regardless of when it was edited. Disabling that update will place the thread in chronological order within the forum list, wherever that may be. If you choose to keep a locked copy of the message, you may choose to add a final post to the thread. If you are deleting the original topic, the "Message" input box has no effect. Finally, select the forum you want to move the thread to from the drop-down list and submit the form.

## 8.Merging a Thread

To merge a thread onto an existing thread, you must be viewing the thread *that will be attached to another thread*. Click the "Merge thread" link. Ensure your user name and password are entered in the appropriate boxes. In the "Merge Thread" box should be the ID number of the thread that will be merged. In the next box will be the ID number of the thread to merge onto the end of. You may either type the ID in that box, if you know it, or you can use the "Locate Thread" link to find the ID. By clicking that link, a new window will open listing the titles and ID numbers of the threads in that forum. Clicking on the thread title in the new window should add the ID number to the box on the original form; if not, you may enter it yourself. Submit the form when you are done.

**Notes:** Merging a thread does not "shuffle" the posts into their chronological order, it appends the posts, in order, from one thread onto the end of the other. This may make posts made earlier in time appear after later posts in the topic view, depending on the way the threads are merged. **Also**, you may only merge topics that exist in the same forum. You may need to move one of the threads for a merge to work.

## 9.Relocating a Post

*Also known as: Removing a single post from one thread and adding it to another.*

Relocating a post removes a single post from a thread and appends it to the end of another thread. To relocate a post, find the post to relocate and press the "Edit" icon. Ensure your user name and password are entered in the appropriate fields and click the "Relocate post" check box. Submit the form and you will be redirected to yet another form. Once again, ensure your user name and password are entered. All of the information under "Current Post Information" will be supplied for you. Under "Relocate To," you must supply a forum and topic number. The forum number is a one-origin number derived from the order the forums were created. That is, the first forum created would be 1, the second would be 2, and so on. **This does not necessary correspond to the order the forums appear in the forum list!** If you are unsure of the number of a forum, you may determine it from the forum list. While viewing the forum list, hover your mouse over the link to enter the forum *but do not click*. The last number at the end of the link, which should appear at the bottom of your browser, is the forum number. If you cannot view the number for any reason, you can right click the link and choose "Copy link location." Paste the location into the address bar or a text editor and view it from there.

Once you have the forum ID number entered into the appropriate box, you need to enter the thread ID number. Once again, you may enter this number by hand or you may click the "Locate Thread" button to find it out. If you choose the latter, a new window should pop up listing the titles and IDs of all of the threads in the forum the specified in the previous box. Clicking the title should add the ID number into the appropriate box on the form; if not, you must enter it by hand. **You may leave this field blank** to relocate the post to a completely new thread; that is, to make the post its own thread.

If you choose to leave the ID blank above, you must enter at least a topic title for the new thread and may elect to also add a topic description. Both of these fields function identically to their counterparts in the "New Post" form, and the description is optional. If you specified a topic ID in the step above, this step is disregarded.

## 10. Pruning a Forum

To prune a forum means to delete *all threads* that have not been modified in a specified number of days. To do so, scroll down to near the bottom of the topic list for the forum you wish to prune and click the "Prune Forum" link. Ensure your user name and password are entered into the appropriate boxes. In the final box, enter a number of days. When you submit the form, all threads that have not been modified in the number of days you specified will be removed.

**Warning:** Pruning a forum is *irreversible*. It is also an extremely powerful, and thus dangerous, feature. True of all power, it can be used for ill or good. If you specify 0 or fewer days the *entire forum's contents* will be removed. Be extremely careful using this function.

## 11. Rebuilding a Forum Listing

Sometimes, posts become lost during a move or simply during normal operation of the message board. The reason for these losses are beyond the scope of this document. However, in the event that threads are lost from the forum list, they *may* be recoverable. Scroll down to near the bottom of the forum list for the forum you wish to rebuild and click the "Rebuild Forum List" link. **You must be logged in for this feature to work.**

## 12.Viewing a Post's IP Address

An IP address is a number that is unique throughout the Internet. No two users will have the same ID address at the same time. It is often a valuable tool to determine if a user is pretending to be somebody they are not or have registered multiple accounts. It can also be used by users with access to the Administrator Control Panel to ban users. However, if you do not have a clear grasp on what IP addresses mean, how they can be interpreted and how unique they truly are, it can lead to misunderstandings and misinformation. It is recommended that you review Internet tutorials on the topic before using this information in any way; such information is outside of the scope of this document.

To view the IP address used to make a post, locate the post and click the "IP" link. The form that comes up will list the IP addresses used. The first IP listed under "Message IP(s)" is the IP at the time the message was first made; subsequent IPs listed are for subsequent edits of the message and may or may not actually belong to the user who originally posted the message. The IP listed under "Originating IP" is the IP address of the user at the time they registered their account. **You must be logged in to use this feature.**

## 13.Warning a Post

The warning system was developed to provide a sort of "strike" policy to ensure even-handed and fair moderation throughout the message board. When combined with the "Report Queue" reporting option that may be specified by the board's Administrator, it is a powerful documentation tool.

To warn a post, find the post in question and click the "Warn Post" link at the bottom

of the post. Ensure your user name and password are entered into the appropriate boxes. If you are using the Report Queue option, specify a title for the report in the "Reason" field; otherwise, this box is ignored. You may also specify a more in-depth and personal reasoning behind the warning, or any other message you wish to convey to the warning recipient with the warning.

Finally, you must decide whether or not to raise the user's warning level. Doing so is simple: Just click the "Increase the user's warning level" link. However, deciding when to do so is more difficult.

A user's warning level is essentially a countdown to account restrictions. What the restriction is can be specified by the Administrator to be either automatic account deletion or automatic suspension of all of the user's posts. The restriction is enforced by the message board when a user's warning level reaches a count that the Administrator sets, defaulted to five (5). Warning levels *do not reduce themselves*, but can be reduced by those with access to the user editor.

To help aid the decision about raising a warning level, the user name of the user who will receive the warning is displayed along side of the total number of warnings they have received and the number of times their warning level has been increased. How to determine whether or not to raise the level is outside of the scope of this document.

## **Final Notes**

- You may need to be logged in use some of the board features.
- Since ScareCrow is a permission-based system, you may not have access to some of the features discussed here on your message board. If you feel

you should have access to them, discuss the possibility with your message board Administrator.

- Throughout the document, we have used the term "Administrator." Specifically, we mean the person or persons who are in full control of the message board, whether that is the webmaster, owner or others.

Hopefully this document has provided you some valuable information in how to use the various features that the ScareCrow message board software provides. Thank you for choosing ScareCrow!