ScareCrow Message Board
Administrator/Moderator Distinctions

It is the intent of this guide to provide some general guidelines specific to the separation of powers between a user considered an "Administrator" and one considered a "Moderator." These are general guidelines. Your message board may or may not operate under such divisions.

Moderators

In general, moderators are responsible for enforcing the message board's rules. The tools they have at their disposal tend to be those used to act upon a message rather than a user, although some tools may overlap in those areas. Specifically, moderators are generally responsible for and able to perform the following tasks:

• Editing offensive material from users' posts,
• Removing posts or threads that are in violation of the rules,
• Locking topics that have ceased to be useful or that have ventured, or are in risk of venturing, into territory they were not meant to or are not permitted to cover,
• Choosing or creating topics of particular importance to give sticky status to, thereby placing them at the top of the forum list, and to remove such sticky status when the information contained within the thread has become stale,
• In select message board atmospheres, moderators may be asked to validate user accounts previous to use, or to validate messages prior to their public display,
• To move threads between forums to ensure they are placed in the area most appropriate to their topic, and to remove posts unrelated to a thread from that thread and creating a new thread for the post or appending it to an existing thread,
• Merging threads of like conversation into a single thread,
• Suspend posts prior to further action or review,
• Issue warnings for posts that violate board rules, according to the policy on warnings set out by the Administrators,

Administrators

Administrators, by whatever title they go, are in charge of creating and maintaining the message board. Depending on the size of the website and the number of moderators, an administrator may or may not participate in moderation tasks as outlined above. Their specific and unique powers and responsibilities include:

• Editing user accounts in the user editor to grant or revoke forum access, adjust user permissions or group settings, restrict or un-restrict accounts, correct errors in profile data, or remove inactive users or users who are to be removed from the message board,
• Configure all message board options including the creation, modification, maintenance and organization of all categories and forums, creating and maintaining message board color schemes and default fonts, choosing specific configuration options that they feel are most appropriate to the atmosphere they are attempting to create and preserve, setting the basic, required configuration

options for the message board software to operate properly, and ensuring the security of the message board,

- To create, modify and remove rules and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs),
- Posting forum or board-wide announcements regarding the status of the message board and/or website, important policy chances or other announcements of such importance to warrant such a visible means of notification,
- Prune forums to delete posts older than a specific number of days,
- Send messages to groups of users at a time,
- Rebuilding the forum list in the event that a thread is lost,
- View and clear the administrator security logs,
- Adding, maintaining and enforcing all bans and ensuring such bans are as difficult to circumvent as possible; and, in the event they are circumvented, to correct the situation and remove the user,
- Making all final decisions regarding who may or may not use the message board before a ban is issued or a user's account is deleted.

In addition to the software-specific tasks listed above, Administrators are also generally responsible for:

- Appointing, evaluating and removing moderators,
- Ensuring that the message board rules are followed and are enforced fairly,
- Handling all matters of legality that may arise including but not limited to, copyright infringements, libelous comments, intellectual property and other forms of theft, fair use, and complying with the COPA (Children's Online Protection Act) [if applicable],
- Liasoning with other websites, professional entities, and persons involved with the purpose of the message board,
- Creating, maintaining and enforcing all policies from the user level up to the moderators,
- Upgrading message board or other server software.

Once again, these guidelines are general and may or may not apply in this fashion to your specific message board. They are intended to serve as a guideline of conduct. It is always advisable to discuss with your message board administrator(s) your specific level of power and realm of authority if you are unsure whether an action is best handled by a moderator or administrator; stepping on toes will never do!

Thank you for choosing ScareCrow!