



**Center for Scholarship in Teaching and Learning  
Southeast Missouri State University**



# ***Online Instructor Suite***

## **Forum Intermediate**



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Last Revised Monday, May 24, 2004

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## Overview

In *Forum Basic*, you learned how to set up your Class Forum and complete basic tasks such as reading and posting messages. In this manual, you will learn common tasks that can be completed from the OIS interface—deleting and moving messages as well as setting Forum properties—and from the student view—searching for messages, editing messages, and formatting the text of your messages.

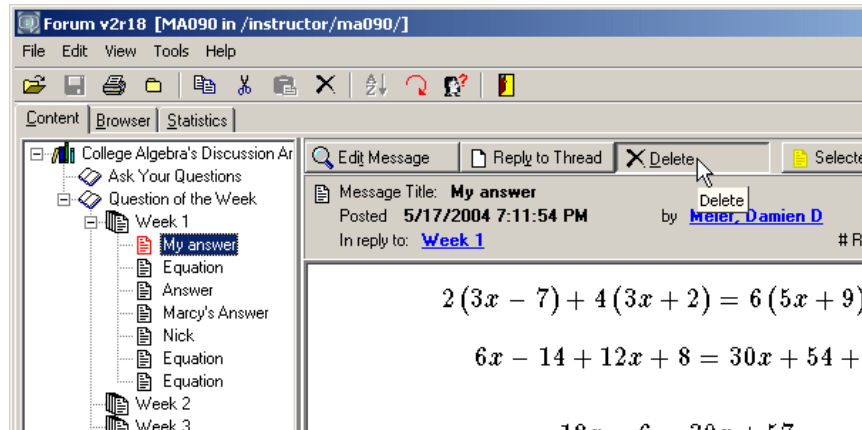
# The Forum Client

## Deleting Messages, Topics and Discussions

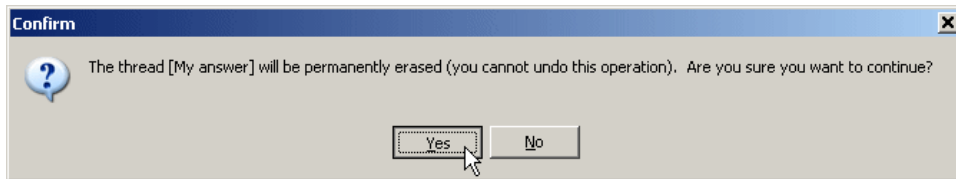
You can easily delete messages, Topics, or Discussion from Forum using the OIS interface. Note that if you delete a Topic or Discussion, all of the messages within that Topic or Discussion will be deleted as well. In this example, we will be deleting a message.

To delete a message, click on the message in the navigation pane to select it.

Then, click "Delete".

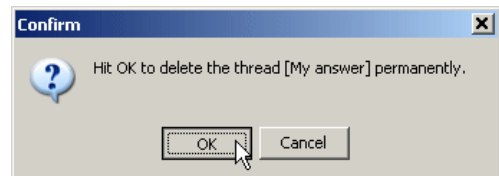


You will see the following confirmation message. Click "Yes".



You will see a second confirmation message. Remember that deleting a message permanently removes it from Forum.

Click "OK" to delete the message.



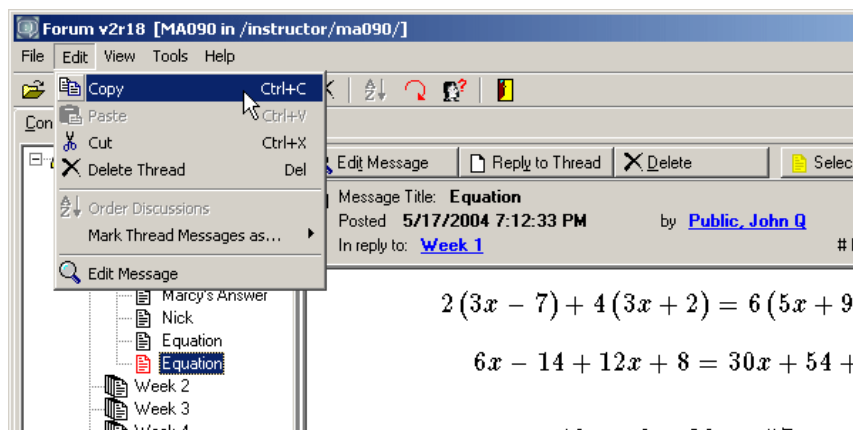
Deleting a Discussion or Topic is very similar. You just have to select the area you want to delete in the left pane, then click the "Delete" button as shown above.

# Copying and Pasting

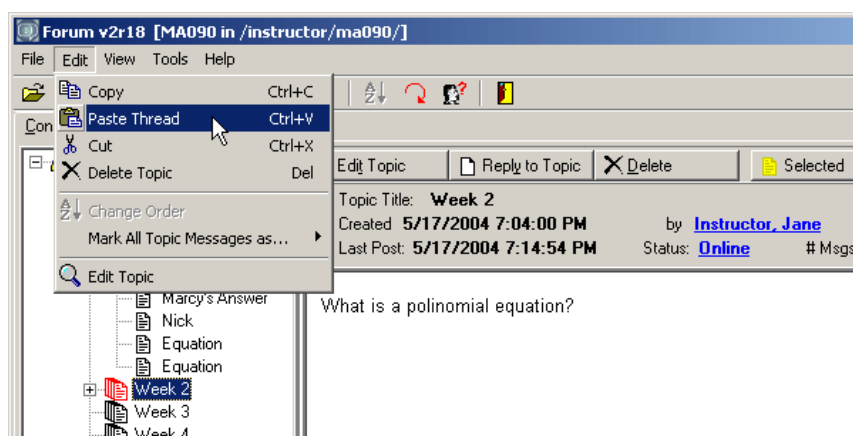
You can use the OIS interface to easily move or copy messages from one Discussion, Topic, or thread to another.

To copy a message to another area, first click on the message name in the navigation pane to select it.

Then choose **Edit | Copy**. (The keyboard shortcut is **CTRL+C**).

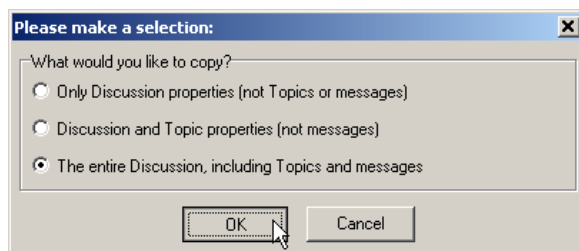


Next, click the Topic or thread that is the destination for the message you are moving to select it (you cannot paste a message into a Discussion). In this example, we are copying the message into the thread started by the message "Yes."



Then, choose **Edit | Paste Thread**. (The keyboard shortcut is **CTRL+V**.)

Likewise, you can make a copy of a Topic or Discussion by selecting it in the left pane and clicking on **Edit | Paste**. When you copy a Discussion or Topic, Forum will ask you what do you want to copy (see picture).



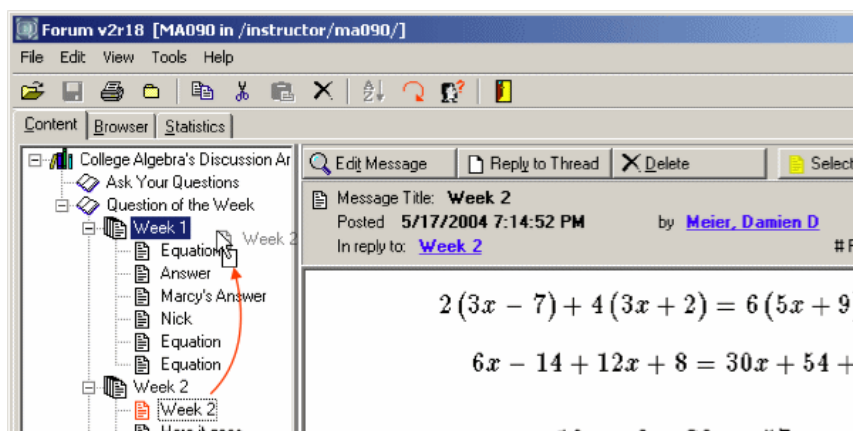
This way, it is possible to copy only the hierarchical structure of a Discussion or Topic without duplicating the messages.

# Moving (Dragging and Dropping)

If you want to move a thread or Topic into another area, you can simply drag its icon into the new Discussion, Topic or thread.

To drag-and-drop a thread, place your cursor over the name of the thread you wish to move.

Click and hold the left mouse button.



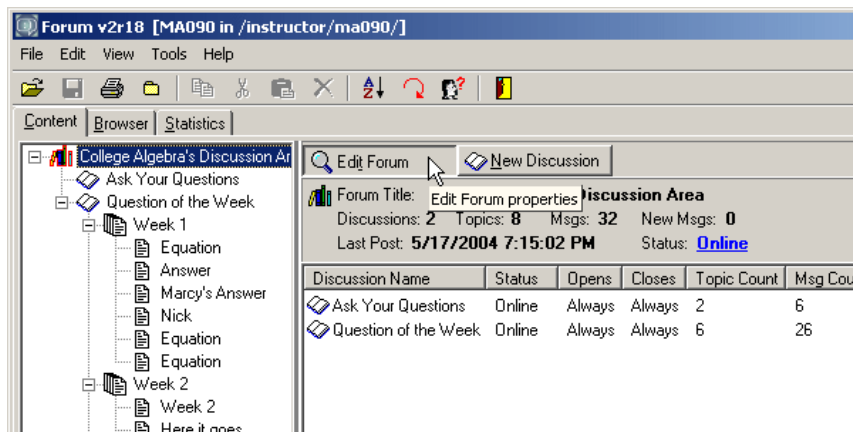
Then drag the cursor over the name of the thread's destination (either a Topic or another Thread). The name will become highlighted when the cursor is over it. Release the mouse button to move the message.

# Forum Properties

OIS Forum has a number of options you can set to customize your class discussion area. These options are available in the Properties box. Each Forum, Discussion, and Topic has its own Properties box, which are identical except where noted.

Note that properties at a lower level are inherited from a higher level. For instance, properties set for a Discussion will affect all Topics within that Discussion. Inherited properties are indicated by grayed out check boxes and empty text boxes in the Properties window.

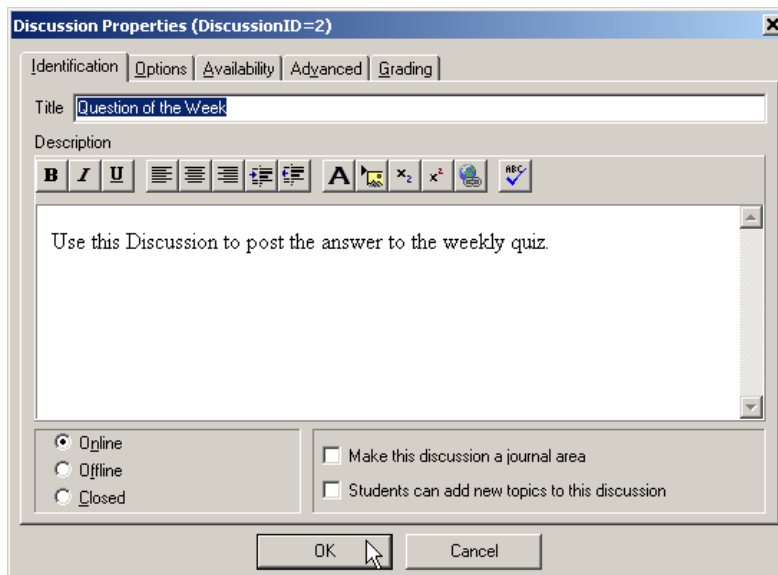
To open the Properties box, click on a Topic, Discussion or the Top Level to select it and then click the "Edit" button. You can also choose **Edit | Edit Forum/Discussion/Topic** from the menu.)



In this manual, we will look at the first two tabs of the Properties box: the "Identification" tab and the "Options" tab.

# Identification Tab

Click on the “Identification” tab to make it active.



Here you will be able to edit the title and description of your Forum, Discussion or Topic. The other options in this tab are listed below:

## Status

You have three options:

- **Online:** The discussion is visible to students, and they can create, edit, and read threads.
- **Offline:** The discussion is not visible to students.
- **Closed:** The discussion is visible to students, but they cannot create or edit threads (read-only).

## Make This Discussion a Journal Area

**NOTE:** This option is available as part of the Discussion Properties only.

A “journal” discussion contains one Topic per student (created when the student first creates a Topic within the journal) and can be read only by the student and the instructor. You can set up a journal Discussion by checking this box—make sure the Discussion is empty (without Topics) before creating a journal in order to prevent errors.

## Allow Students to Add Topics

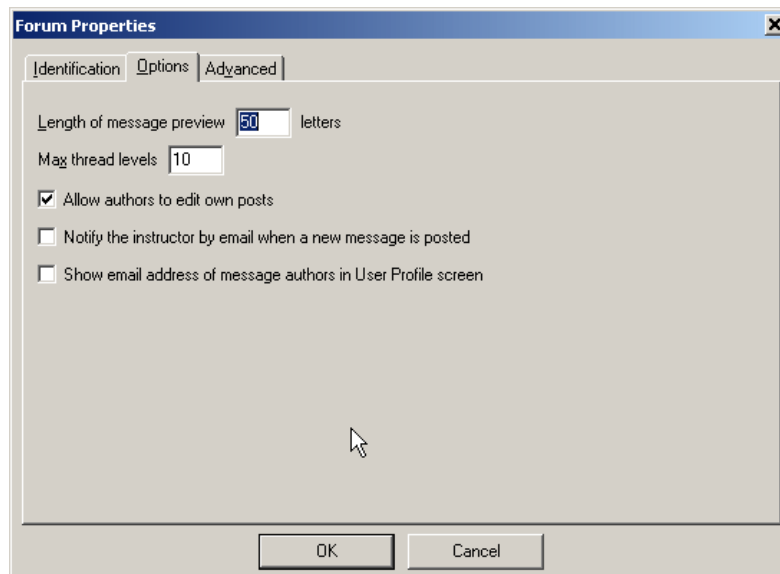
**NOTE:** This option is available as part of the Discussion Properties only.

Depending on how your class Forum is organized, you may wish that students be able to add topics to a discussion. To enable this option, click the check box in the lower right section of the “Identification” window. If this box is unchecked, the

instructor will be responsible for creating new Topics where students can post messages to.

## Options Tab

Click the “Options” tab in the Properties window to make the tab active.



The following options can be set differently at the Forum, Discussion, and Topic levels. Remember that blank or grayed-out options indicate properties inherited from a higher level.

### Length of Message Preview

This option sets the length in characters of the message preview users see when they are at the level above the message. A small number of message preview letters will make students click on the message in order to read it entirely—this, in turn, marks the message as “viewed” in Forum. If this number is large, the entire message will show and students will not need to click on its link to read it entirely.

Even if a small number is used, students will be able to click on the “Expand All” button in order to see all messages at once.

### Max Thread Levels

This option sets the maximum number of levels within a thread. The default setting of ten allows ten levels (reply to replies) in a Topic.

### Allow Authors to Edit Own Posts

If enabled, this option allows authors to change their messages after they have been posted. Note that edited messages are marked with the date, time, and author of the editing. Graded posts cannot be edited by students.

## Notify the Instructor by Email When a New Message is Posted

If enabled, Forum will send an email to the instructor's email address saved in OIS Manager every time a message is posted in this area. The email will also include the posted message.

## Show Email Address of Message Authors in User Profile Screen

If enabled, users will see the author's email address saved in OIS Manager when they view the message author's profile screen. Otherwise, they will still be able to send a private message to the author.

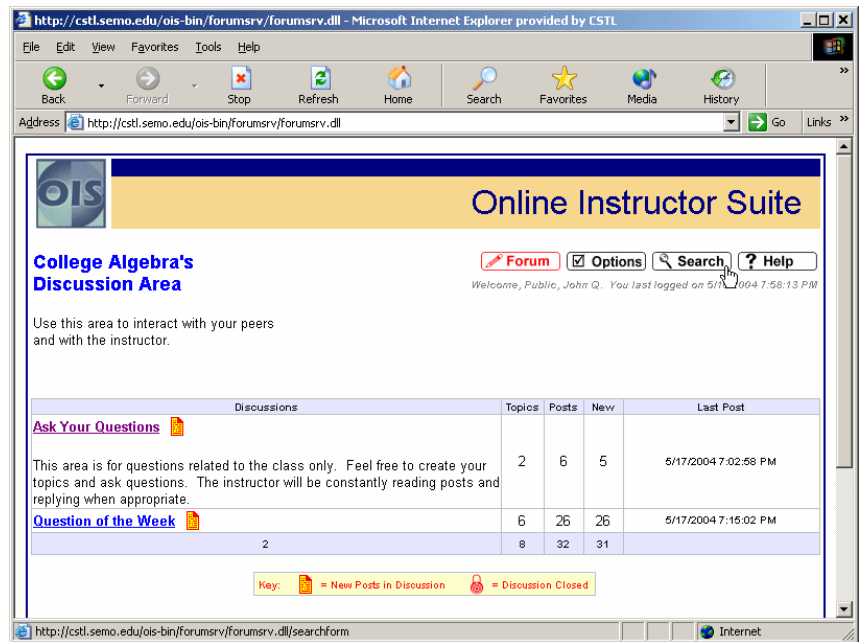
# The Student View

There are some common activities beyond reading and posting messages (see *Forum Basic*) that are done from the student side of Forum rather than from the OIS interface.

## Searching Posts

In OIS Forum, searching posts is context-sensitive; in other words, if you are within a Topic and click the "Search" button, you will search only the Topic you are in. To search an entire Discussion or the entire Class Forum, make sure you are viewing the Forum at that level before clicking the "Search" button.

To search for messages, click the "Search" button at the top of the Forum page.



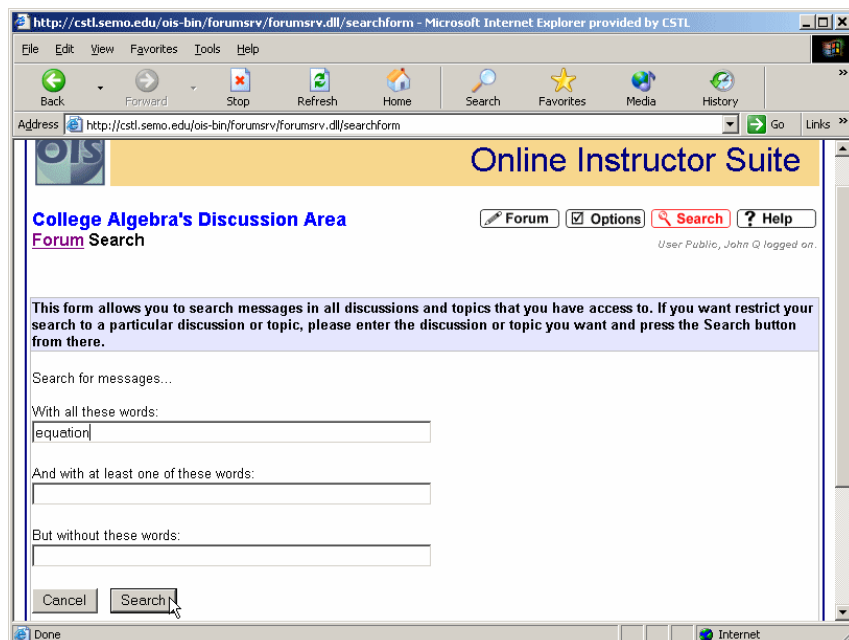
The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the OIS Forum interface. The address bar shows the URL: <http://cstl.semo.edu/ois-bin/forumsrv/forumsrv.dll>. The page title is "Online Instructor Suite". The main content area is titled "College Algebra's Discussion Area" and includes a "Search" button. Below the search button, there is a table with columns for "Discussions", "Topics", "Posts", "New", and "Last Post". The table contains two rows of data:

Discussions	Topics	Posts	New	Last Post
<a href="#">Ask Your Questions</a>	2	6	5	5/17/2004 7:02:58 PM
<a href="#">Question of the Week</a>	6	26	26	5/17/2004 7:15:02 PM

At the bottom of the page, there is a key indicating that a red icon represents "New Posts in Discussion" and a red lock icon represents "Discussion Closed".

You are given three textboxes in which you can enter search keywords.

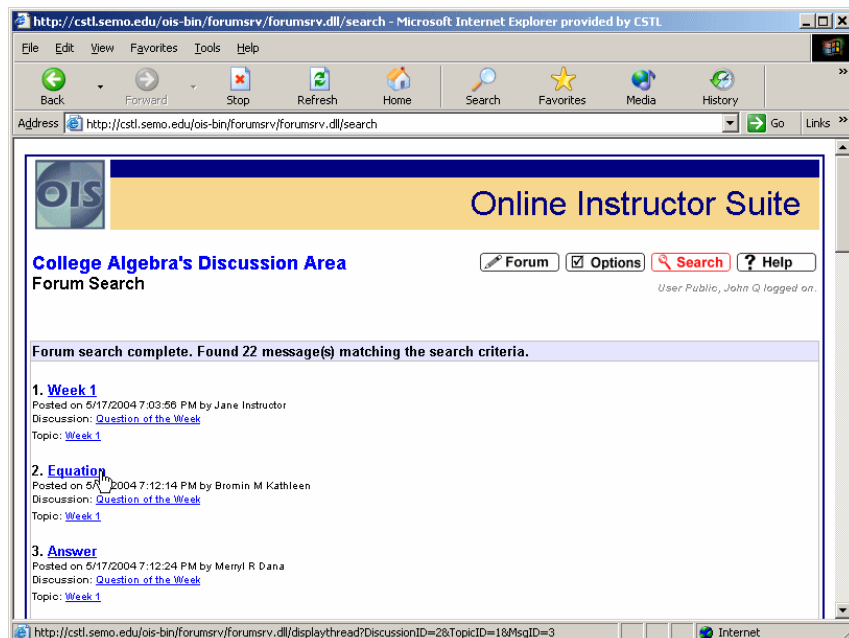
Entering “sample” in the first box will return all messages in the searched area containing the word “sample” in the message body.



Entering “sample” in the first box and “writing” in the second box will return only those messages that contain both “sample” and “writing.” (Entering text in the second box initiates use of the Boolean operator “and” in your search.)

Entering “sample” in the first box, and “writing” in the third box will return all messages containing the word “sample” except those that also contain the word “writing.” (Entering text in the third box initiates use of the Boolean operator “not” in your search.)

When you are finished selecting search keywords, click “Search”. The results page looks like this. To view one of the messages in your results list, click on the message title.



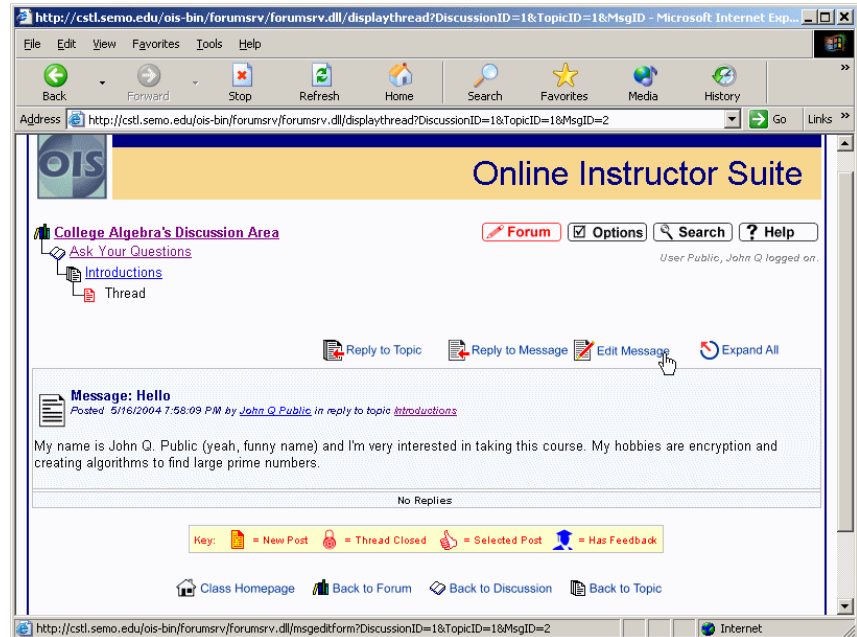
# Editing Posts

If you enabled author editing of messages (see “Options Tab,” above), users will be able to use the student view to change their message after it has been posted.

To edit a message, first navigate to the message screen.

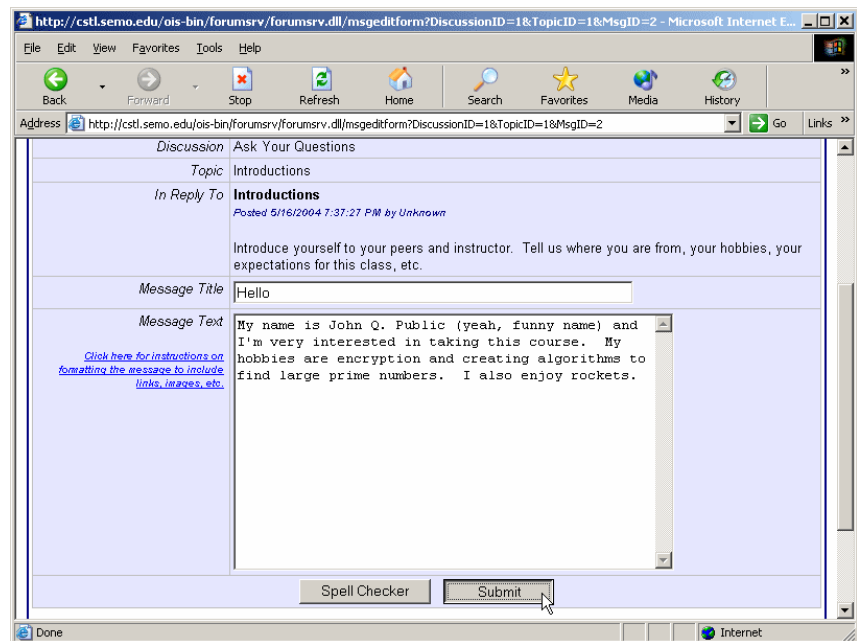
Then, click “Edit Message”.

NOTE: The “Edit Message” icon will only appear if the user is the author of the selected message.

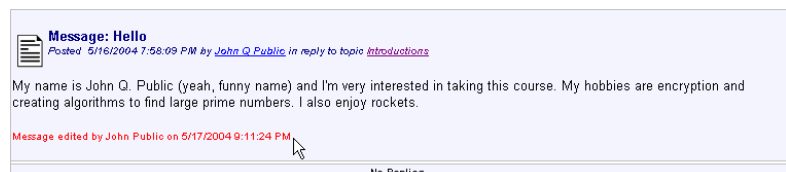


The message composition screen will load, with the message you wish to edit already loaded.

Make whatever changes to the message title or text you wish, and then click “Submit”.



When a message is edited, Forum automatically adds a “tag” saying the date and time it was changed and who changed it.



# Formatting Text

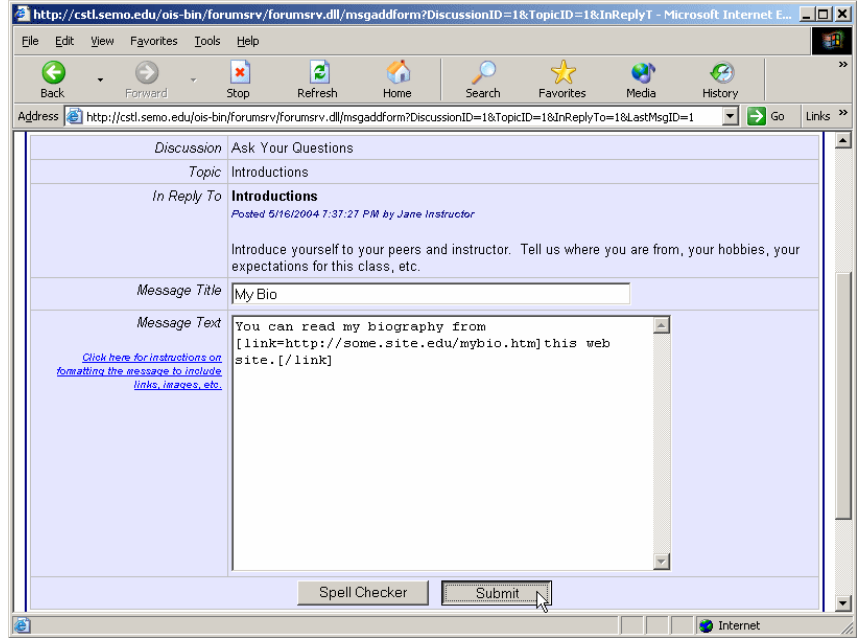
OIS Forum allows authors to format messages in several ways: for instance, the author can manipulate the font size, color, and style, or the author can add images and hyperlinks. The available formatting tags are listed on the next page.

To format text, include the appropriate tags in your message text. Tags in OIS Forum must be enclosed by square brackets.

In this example, we have formatted “Read more about it here” to be a hyperlink to a Web page.

When you are finished formatting your text and composing your message, click “Submit”.

When the message is viewed from the student view, the formatting appears as it would in a Web page.



The following formatting tags are available via the student interface:

Tag	Description	Example
[p]	Insert a new paragraph (same as ENTER)	[p]New paragraph.
[b] and [/b]	Bold	[b]This text is bold[/b]
[i] and [/i]	Italic	[i]This text is in italics[/i]
[u] and [/u]	Underline	[u]This text is underlined[/u]
[sup] and [/sup]	Superscript	E=MC[sup]2[/sup]
[sub] and [/sub]	Subscript	CO[sub]2[/sub]
[list], [/list] and [bullet]	Bulleted items	[list] [bullet]First item [bullet]Second item [/list]
[cite] and [/cite]	Citation	[cite]To be or not to be[/cite]
[code] and [/code]	Fixed-length text	[code] function TObjectStack.Peek: TObject; begin Result := TObject(inherited Peek); end; [/code]
[size] and [/size]	Font size	[size=10]Text in size 10[/size]
[color] and [/color]	Font color	[color=red]Text in red[/color]
[img] and [/img]	Image	[img=pretty.gif]
[link] and [/link]	Link	[link=http://www.yahoo.edu]Click here to go to Yahoo[/link]