OVERVIEW OF WEBBOARD

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This documentation is largely adapted from the WebBoard help screens within the program.

WebBoard Basics

WebBoard is a tool for online conferencing. Sometimes referred to as forums or discussion groups, online conferencing allows you to share information with others quickly and easily.

You can share information by posting messages directly to WebBoard conferences (and reading responses). When you need to make a file available to your conference-mates, simply attach the file to a message. If you or others in your group travel, WebBoard lets you participate by email, both reading and responding to posted messages. And, if you need or want to discuss something in real time, WebBoard's chat (if enabled) provides instant interaction.

Since WebBoard is a Web-based application, you work with it through a browser-an interface with which you are already familiar. For email participation, your favorite email client is your interface.

This documentation walks you through all the steps you need to get started with WebBoard. First it provides an overview of the WebBoard structure. Then it shows you how to establish an account, navigate, and find information. With these basics in hand, you will be prepared to jump right into the conversation.

What is WebBoard?

WebBoard is a collection of messages posted by various participants. In Dominican's case, the boards are usually course-related and have been established by the instructor. To keep track of those messages and foster meaningful information exchange, WebBoard messages are organized in a hierarchy with four levels:

- Board (also called virtual board)
- Conference
- Topic
- Message (new topic or response)

You can liken this hierarchy to the relationship of pages in books to the bookcase that houses the book. The bookcase is the board, which houses multiple books, or conferences, on similar or varying subjects. Each book contains chapters with numbers or titles, just as conferences contain topics, with more focused subjects.
Each chapter in a book has specific content that relates to the chapter title, just as topics have messages discussing that topic.

WebBoards at Dominican are set up by the WebBoard administrator while conferences within each WebBoard are set up by the board managers--usually the instructor of a class. The manager decides how to arrange the subject matter of conferences within a board. However, you create the topics and messages by posting and replying in conferences that interest you. You can start a new topic in a conference any time you want to change the subject. Your instructor will provide directions regarding which conference is relevant for which topic(s).

Dominican's WebBoard can have different types of boards and conferences for different purposes. Some boards may be closed to you and some conferences may let you read, but not post, messages. The WebBoard administrator and board managers configure the settings that control board and conference types. You don't need to know about the settings, but you do need to understand how your work with WebBoard may vary depending on those settings.

**Getting Started**

WebBoard is a web-based application. Your instructor will provide the exact address (URL) of the WebBoard for a class. You can reach it by entering the board's URL (or web address) directly in your browser. At Dominican, the address will typically look like this:

http://dom172.dom.edu/~[number of course]

To get to a WebBoard for your English 200 class, the URL will be:

http://dom172.dom.edu/~engl200

When classes have more than one section, or if the instructor wishes to keep a Board up for more than the usual one semester, the Board may be followed by a section number and/or semester:

http://dom172.dom.edu/~engl200sec3sp99

**Browser Requirements**

Some of WebBoard’s features such as frames, file attachments, Cookie Authentication, and Chat have certain browser requirements. At minimum you should use a level 3 browser such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer. Note that Internet Explorer 3.0 does not support file attachments without an additional plug-in, which is available from Microsoft. In general, we recommend you use a level 4 browser such as Netscape Communicator or Internet Explorer 4.0, both of which are available from their respective vendors. If you are using a WebBoard from home, you must set your browser to accept cookies. Accepting
cookies is necessary for WebBoard to authenticate you. The proprietary browser that once came bundled with AOL with not work.

If you are using Internet Explorer, go to the View pull-down menu, then select Internet Options. Next, click the Advanced tab. Scroll down to the section on Security, where you will see options on cookies. Click Always accept cookies. If you are using Netscape Communicator, go to the Edit pull-down menu, then select Preferences. Click the Advanced category in the window, where you will see on the right options for cookies. Click Accept all cookies.

Logging in to WebBoard

After entering the WebBoard address you wish to access, you will be greeted by the following screen:

If you are accessing WebBoard on campus, you should not click the box labeled Remember my password. This will enable any following users at your terminal access to a WebBoard logged in as you! From home, however, you can have WebBoard remember your login name and password (with a cookie, a bit of information stored safely on your own computer) to make subsequent logins quicker by bypassing the login page by clicking the box. The cookie is valid for up to six months.

Logging in as an Existing User

If you already have an account, you simply enter your login name and password in the textbox on the login page. Click Enter to complete the login. If you are already a member of any active Dominican WebBoard, you do not have to log in
as a new user (see below). It is also important that you keep the **same Name and Password** you have already used on other WebBoards. Note that an administrator can choose to limit access to any board (called a closed board) and unless you are an authorized user, you will be denied access to the board.

**Logging in as a New User**

If you want to participate in a board either by posting messages or chatting, you must be a registered user and have your own WebBoard account. In some instances, the WebBoard administrator has already set up an account for you with a login name and password. If so, go to the section above on "Logging in as an Existing User." If you do not yet have an account, you can self-register and create your own account by selecting a login name and password and providing some additional information such as your real name and email address.

When selecting your login name and password, keep in mind the following:

- Your login name should be the same as your Dominican email account name (usually first four letters of the last name followed by first four letters of the first name).
- Your password **does not** have to be the same as your Dominican email account password, and should not be the same as your login name.

To log in as a new user, follow these steps:

1. On the WebBoard login page, click New User. The New User Information form appears, as shown below:

```
New User Information

Please fill out this form to create a new user profile for yourself. Once this information is gathered you will not need to enter it again and you will be able to change it later.

Use the button at the bottom of this page to continue when you are finished. For security reasons it is best to keep your login name different from your real name.

A red dot indicates the field is required.

Login name: 
First name: 
Last name: 
Password: 
Phone: 
Email address: 
City/Town: 
State/Province: 
Country: 
Home page: 
Use frames: [ ] Yes [ ] No

Create: Click the "Create" button to the left to create your profile.
```
2. Follow the directions on this page and fill in the required blanks (marked with red dots). You can later change or add to this information by editing your user profile by clicking the MORE button on the WebBoard menubar and choosing Edit Your Profile.

3. At the end the form, select whether to view WebBoard in frames or non-frames mode. The default is frames, which enables you to view the Conferences list while reading and posting messages. To use frames, you must be using a level 3 or higher browser. If your browser does not support frames or you prefer to not use frames, select the No frames mode. However, it is strongly recommended you enable frames.

4. When you have completed entering information on the form, click Create. If your login name is unique, WebBoard creates the account and displays the main WebBoard page. If your login name was already being used or some other information was missing, you must complete the form again and resubmit it.

Logging in as a Guest

Some boards allow guest access. To login as a guest, click Guest. WebBoard displays the board's main page with the conference list. You may browse conferences and read messages but not post messages or participate in chat sessions. If there is no Guest button, you must create a new account to work with this board.

Working with WebBoard

Before you start posting messages and participating in chat sessions, you'll want to take a few minutes to become familiar with WebBoard's layout and basic operation, including navigation and functionality. Once you've successfully logged in, either as an existing user, new user, or guest, you will see the board's main page, where most WebBoard activity occurs.

If you selected frames mode (recommended), you will see a page similar to that shown in Figure 1 below. Typically, a board's main page has three main activity areas, which are listed below and described in the next sections:

- The conference list (left frame) displays the conferences, topics, and messages. This list can toggle between displaying the conference list and the list of new messages.

- The menubar (top frame) has buttons for using WebBoard's commands and features.

- The message window (right frame) is the working area where information and forms are displayed. For example, the message window is where you read and post messages, complete user profile information, and execute searches.
In non-frames mode, you will see the menubar and either the conference list or message window, but not both at the same time. You can switch between modes by editing your WebBoard user profile.

**Using the Menubar**

You can accomplish many WebBoard tasks quickly by using WebBoard's menubar, located at the top of your browser window. This section describes each of the functions you can perform from the menubar. The menubar is at the top of your WebBoard screen and looks like this:

- **Post**
  opens a form in the message window to compose and post a new topic to a conference (note, you must select a conference first).

- **Refresh**
  updates the Conferences list. In general, WebBoard refreshes the list when new messages are posted, but you may want to manually refresh the list on occasion.

- **Chat**
  displays the Available Chat Rooms list, which gives links to each chat room and tells how many active users are in each. If chat is not available for this board (the WebBoard administrator's prerogative), this button does not appear.
**Search**
opens the Message Search form for finding specific content in topics and/or messages (see "Searching Messages" later in this document).

**Mark All Read**
displays a list of all conferences and allows you to mark messages as read in one or all of them. Marking messages as read eliminates the NEW icon next to the message and changes the title of the message from italic to regular font. WebBoard does not automatically mark messages read; you must do it manually.

**More**
opens the More Options menu, pictured below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Edit Your Profile</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email Notify</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mailing Lists</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Users</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Today's Users</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Search Users</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Top 10 Users</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Top 10 Posters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Messages</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Today's Messages</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conference Profiles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>List Boards</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Login Again</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From here, you can select the features and functions listed below.

- **Edit Your Profile**
displays your user profile information and allows you update it, including changing your password.

- **Email Notify**
displays a list of conferences from which you can select which conferences should let you know by email that a new message has been posted.
| • **Mailing Lists** | displays a list of conferences from which you can select which conferences you want to receive all postings via email. |
| • **Current Users** | lists the users who are currently logged on (updates every 60 seconds). |
| • **Today's Users** | lists the names of people who have logged in today. |
| • **Search Users** | displays a form for finding active WebBoard users by first or last name. From the search results you can look at any user's profile information. |
| • **Top 10 Users** | lists the top 10 users by the number of logins. |
| • **Top 10 Posters** | lists the top 10 message posters. |
| • **New Messages** | lists all messages that are marked New. The new messages are listed in the Conferences list frame. |
| • **Today's Messages** | lists conferences that have messages posted today. |
| • **Conference Profiles** | lists each conference with a brief description of its purpose. |
| • **List Boards** | lists each virtual board on this site that you have visited. Each board name is a link to that board, which lets you move easily among boards. |
| • **Login as a Different User** | lets you to log in as a different user to the current board. This is particularly important if you are at a terminal in the Lab where the previous user forgot to logoff of his/her WebBoard! |
| • **Help** | displays Help for WebBoard features. This documentation is based largely on WebBoard's very useful help files. |
| • **Logoff** | ends your WebBoard session and displays another page. Logging off provides a bit more security for WebBoard users. Note that after logging off in the Labs, you should also close your Web browser! |

If you have been designated as a WebBoard manager or moderator by the WebBoard administrator, you will see more items on this menu. Please consult our documentation on managing WebBoards.

**Browsing Conferences, Topics, and Messages**

Conferences are the idea starters for the board. Topics and messages provide the content for conferences. A conference is created by a WebBoard administrator or manager but the real discussion begins when someone posts a topic to it. Other
users can reply to the topic by posting reply messages at any time. All messages in a topic may have the same name as the original topic or a different name; however, reply messages are indented under the topic message—a visual clue to show the relationships.

WebBoard’s ability to let you browse by conference or topic from the Conferences list means you can either follow a subject exhaustively or pick and choose just the messages you want. The Conferences list shows all the conferences on this board. An expansion box (+ icon) to the left of a conference name indicates that the conference has topics and messages. The numbers in parentheses to the right of the conference name tells how many total and how many new messages are in it. Conferences with new messages have a NEW icon to the right of the conference name. Here is a typical listing of Conference names from a WebBoard used for a graduate school class at Dominican:

To display the topics in a conference, click the conference name or the expansion box. You can expand one conference at a time. When you expand another conference, the previous topic list collapses. Or, you can close the conference list by clicking the expansion box again.

An expansion box to the left of the topic name indicates that this topic contains more than one message. Topics and messages both have hyperlinks that you can click to open them in the right frame. To the right of each topic and message is the poster’s name and date. The poster’s name is also a hyperlink to that person’s profile.
**Reading Messages**

WebBoard’s messages are arranged logically with the earliest (original topic) message at the top of each topic list. You can follow a thread from its beginning if you desire, or jump in at a later point. When you click a message on the Conferences list, the message appears in the right frame (unless you are using non-frames mode). By default, all subsequent messages in the topic are displayed so you can read them in order. This viewing mode is called the Full topic view, which you can change to a one-message-at-a-time mode by editing your user profile. Note that you cannot see messages earlier in the list; however, you can click the Previous hyperlink in the Message menu.

Follow these steps to read specific messages:

1. From the Conferences list, select the conference you want to view and click its name or the expansion box (+ icon).
2. Locate the topic you want to read and click its name or the topic expansion box. If you click on the name, the message and replies are displayed in the message window. If you click the topic expansion box, the subsequent messages are displayed.
3. If you expanded the topic list in step 2 but did not display the message, locate the message you want to read and click its name. The message displays in the Message window. You may need to scroll to read the entire message(s).
4. When you have finished reading the message, you can select another message to read or you can post a new topic or reply.

Here is an example of what a message window looks like when opened. In this case, the user clicked on the hyperlink in the Exercises conference to display the message content for *Copy of Exercise Four in Word and ASCII*:

```
**Conferences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conferences</th>
<th>1 New Messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Class Lectures (16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Exercises (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Exercise One in Word and ASCII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Exercise Two in Word and ASCII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Exercise Three in Word and ASCII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Exercise Four in Word and ASCII</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Five in Word and ASCII Format</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Exercise Six in Word and ASCII Format</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* General Class Discussions (17, 1 New)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Introductions (31)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WebBoard**

- Post | Reply | Reply:Quote | Report Reply | Reply:Email | Edit
- Previous | Next | Previous Topic | Next Topic

Topic: Copy of Exercise Four in Word and ASCII (1 of 1), Read 49 times, 2 File Attachments
Conf: Exercises
From: Ken Black (Kblack@email.doe.edu)
Date: Friday, October 30, 1998 11:49 AM

Here are copies of Exercise 4 in both Microsoft Word97 and plain ASCII format.

- L5704EXERCISE4(1).DOC (24KB): Exercise Four in Word97 format
- L5704EXERCISE4(1).TXT (26KB): Exercise Four in ASCII format

Post New Topic | Reply to "Copy of Exercise Four in Word and ASCII"
Displaying New Messages

WebBoard gives you several ways to see and read new messages quickly. Conferences that have new messages are marked with a **NEW** icon to the right of the conference name. The numbers in parentheses following a conference name tell you how many total messages there are in the conference as well as how many new messages. When you expand a conference, you can quickly identify new topics and messages by their italic titles.

However, looking for **NEW** icons and italic titles can be a bit tedious, especially in a large conference. Instead, WebBoard has three ways you can get to new messages instantly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>New Messages Link: Welcome Page</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each time you log in to WebBoard, the Welcome page in the right frame includes a link indicating how many new messages you have. Click on the link and a list of conferences with new messages appears in the Conferences list frame (to the left). Expanding any conference listed displays only the new messages in that conference.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>New Messages Link: Conferences List</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the top of the Conferences list are two links: Conferences and New Messages. Clicking on these two links toggles between the full conference list and a list of conferences with new messages. To see the new messages, click the New Messages link and expand any conference listed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>New Messages Link: More Options Menu</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The More Options menu (available from the More button on the menu bar) includes a link labeled New Messages. Click on this link and a list of conferences with new messages appears in the Conferences list frame (to the left). Expanding any conference listed displays only the new messages in that conference.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first time you log in to WebBoard, you will have no new messages. You will still want to read through several messages, but only once you are a registered WebBoard user, do messages appear as new.

Updating Message Status

WebBoard considers all messages to be new until you update their status. That means even if you have read a message, WebBoard thinks it is new until you manually mark it as read. Although probably more desirable from a user perspective, automatically updating message status adds huge computing overhead and has not been practical for a Web-based application like WebBoard. Automatic updates are on the list to implement when feasible.

To manually update message status from new to read, select **Mark All Read** from the menu bar. A page opens listing the conference names. Select the conferences that you want to have marked read. WebBoard instantly updates the information
and refreshes the Conferences list. +To update all conferences at once (for example, if you've been away from WebBoard for a period of time or have been reading messages by email), select Mark All Conferences Read.

**Searching for Messages**

Sometimes you may need to find messages with specific content or titles from one or more conferences. WebBoard lets you search for content in topic titles or in both titles and message bodies. You can also request varying counts of search results and whether search results are shown in a detailed or short (standard) format. When WebBoard finds messages that match your search criteria, it lists them by date order, grouped by conference. Each entry in the list is a hyperlink, so you can click on any message and view it.

Your search request can be for a single word, part of a word, or a group of words. So, if you search for the word "boil" in topics only and standard format results, you enter the word boil and WebBoard returns the match of How to Boil Water from the Cooking conference. If you search for "spring flowers" in topics and messages detailed format results, WebBoard find matches including "lovely pink spring flowers," "buying small spring flowers," "daffodils are spring flowers," and so forth.

To search for words within topics and/or message bodies, follow these steps:

1. From the WebBoard menubar, select **Search**. The Message Search form opens.

2. Enter the word(s) you want to search for in the textbox field, for example, coffee. For a phrase, you may want to enclose the words in quotation marks.

3. Select how many matches should be displayed (Display count). For example, if you know that the word coffee is used often, specify 120. Of course, the higher the display count, the longer the search takes.

4. Select how the matches should be displayed (Display detail). Standard results shows the topic/message title for the matched word. Detailed results shows the matched word in partial-sentence context of the match. If the word you want to find is frequently used, specify Detailed results to see the context. For example, to find "Bring coffee to the meeting," specify Detailed results so that you can see the context of the word coffee.

5. Select whether matches should be found in topics only or in topics and message bodies. Topics refers to the title of a topic or message, not just topic messages.

6. Select the conference(s) containing the search word. To select more than one conference, hold down the Control key as you select additional conference name(s) with the mouse. (The Shift key also works to select contiguous conferences.)
7. Click **Search**. The Message Search Results form appears displaying the conference name, the subject, and the date. If you have selected Detailed results, the details of each result appears below the conference name. Click Search Messages to return to the Message Search form.

**Editing Your User Profile**

Each user has a profile, which contains information WebBoard uses in various ways. The most important way is that it stores your login name and password which WebBoard uses to give you access to a board. It also contains personal information about you that other WebBoard users can view, such as your address, professional information, hobbies, and other interests.

Your user profile is also a place for selecting how you will work with WebBoard, such as using frames or non-frames mode. When you first log in as a new user, WebBoard asks you to fill out a New User Information form. This information is part of what makes up your user profile. This section tells you how to change that information and what else makes up your user profile.

You can edit your user profile at any time. In fact, you should review your user profile shortly after logging in the first time, to ensure that all the information is complete and correct. To edit your user profile, follow these steps:


2. Click **Edit Your Profile** from the More Options menu. The User Profile page appears, as shown below.

3. Make any changes necessary (see the rest of this section for descriptions of items on the profile). Note that you cannot leave a required field blank.

4. Click Save to update your profile. WebBoard responds with an **Edits Saved** message.

5. Continue with your WebBoard session.

A sample **User Profile** screen is shown below:
The information you can change in your user profile includes:

**Login Name (required)**
This name is your unique key for entering WebBoard. You were either assigned this name or created it when you registered on WebBoard the first time you logged in as
a new user. In general, this name is not displayed to other users unless the WebBoard administrator has chosen to use login names instead of real names. At Dominican, the login name should be the same as your email user name.

**Password (required)**
This entry is masked (shown as *s) for security. You can change your password to protect your postings and user information. If you do, you must enter it twice on the form to ensure you typed it correctly. The password is never shown to other users. Your password for WebBoard **does not** (and probably **should not**) be the same as your email password.

**Email Address (required)**
This address is used for WebBoard's email notification and mailing list features. It is also included with each message you post to make it easy for other board members to respond to you directly.

**Signature**
This field holds information that is attached to every message you post. Similar to an email signature, you may want to include your name, contact information, a quotation or vision statement, and so forth. Your signature can be up to 2,000 characters and contain HTML. Remember, however, that other users probably appreciate short signatures that don't take long to download over the Web.

The **Home Page** information can be filled in if you have a home page on the Internet. **Hobbies** is not necessary, since other users can't view it anyway!

**Use Frames**
This option allows you to switch between viewing WebBoard in frames mode or non-frames mode. The default is **Yes, use frames**, which means WebBoard displays both the Conferences list and the message window at the same time. **This is highly recommended.** If your browser does not support frames or you find frames too slow for your connection, choose No for this option.

**Full Topic View**
This option allows you switch between viewing messages in full topic mode or single message mode. The default is **Yes, full topic mode**, which means that all subsequent messages posted to a topic are displayed in the message window. In single message mode, only one message is shown at a time and you must click a link to show the next message in the topic. We recommend using full topic view.

**Mailing List Format**
This option allows you to choose which format WebBoard uses to send you mailing lists. Mailing lists allow you to keep track of WebBoard discussions at an email address of your choice. It does, however, somewhat defeat the purpose of WebBoard, since Conference threads of discussion are more difficult to follow in the mailing list format. The three mailing list formats are non-digest, messages sent individually when they are posted; digest, messages sent once a day in a single
email that is indexed by message; digest/zipped, messages put into digest format
and then zipped up to compress the size of the email. Depending on the traffic and
your need to respond to the conferences you participate in by email, you can select
the best delivery method. For example, if you want to respond to many messages
that are posted, you should select the non-digest form. If you simply need a record
of messages posted on a board, select the digest/zipped format. Selecting a
mailing list format does not subscribe you to any WebBoard mailing lists; you
complete that task from the More Options menu, then selecting Mailing Lists.
Mailing lists are described in more detail here. We recommend you read the
appropriate help screens on mailing lists before changing the mailing list format.

Logging Off
When you are finished with your WebBoard session, you can simply point your
browser at another site on the Web (if you're at home) or you can officially log off
WebBoard. The Logoff button in the menubar takes you to another page
designated by the WebBoard administrator (such as your instructor's syllabus or the
Dominican home page). Note that if you click the Back button in your browser, you
will be returned to WebBoard without having to log in again. This is why it is
important that you should close your browser or clear your browser's cache if in
the Lab. You should also not have WebBoard remember your password!

Ready to Start?
This documentation has probably provided you with sufficient information to begin
using WebBoard. If you would like more detailed documentation on using
Conferences (posting messages, replies, etc.), consult our separate documentation
Participating in WebBoard Conferences.

If you have questions about WebBoard, contact Dominican's WebBoard
Administrator, Ken Black, at ext. 6512.

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This documentation is largely adapted from the WebBoard help screens within the
program.