

Competencies

After reading this document, you will be able to:

- ▶ Create, navigate, and facilitate communication in private topics

Adding a Topic

The first step in establishing discussion teams is to add a topic.

To add a topic

- 1 From the *Discussions* screen, click **Designer Options**.
- 2 From the Actions Menu, select **Create Topic** and type the topic name in the text box.
- 3 Click **Create**. The new topic appears in the *Discussions* table.

Determining Topic Order

After you add topics, you can determine the order in which they display for the learners. You can change this order at any point without affecting the messages in the various topics.

To determine topic order

- 1 From the *Discussions* screen, click **Designer Options**.
- 2 Click the box to the left of the topic that you would like to move.
- 3 Under *Organize*, from the Actions Menu, click whether you would like to move the topic up or down. Select the appropriate number of spaces to move the topic from the drop-down box.
- 4 Click **Go**. The topic will display in the appropriate relationship to the other topics in the list.

Working with Private Topics

Setting Access for a Topic

When you add a topic to *Discussions*, it automatically becomes a public topic, accessible to all users. However, you also have the option of making it a private topic, and making it accessible only to specific *Discussions* participants.

To specify membership and access settings for a topic

- 1 In the *Topics Settings* table:
 - Check the *Private* checkbox next to any topics you want to make private.
 - Uncheck the *Private* checkbox next to any private topics you wish to make public.

- 2 Click **Update**. The screen refreshes. The topics that you selected are now either private or public.
- 3 To add members to a private topic, click the box to the left of the topic. Click *Manage Members* under *Options*.
 - 4 The Private Topic screen displays and lists all of the members currently subscribed to the topic. If no members are subscribed, this is mentioned on the screen. Click **Select Members**.
 - 5 The *Member Selection* screen appears.
- 6 Select the topic members.

To select specific members, check their *Status* check boxes.

To select all members, click the *Status* check box.

To select members listed in the *Clipboard*, click **Clipboard**.
- 7 Click **Update**. The *Private Topic* screen appears, with a table listing the topic members.

Making a Private Topic Public

Occasionally, you may want to allow all users to see the messages created by members of a private topic. To do this, you can make the private topic public.

To make a private topic public

- 1 From the *Discussions* screen, unclick the *Private* check box next to the topic which you would like to make public.
- 2 Click **Update**. The topic is assigned a public status.



Note At any point after making a private topic public, you can choose to make it private again. All of the messages posted when the topic was public will be visible to the private users.

Anonymous Postings

If you wish, you can give *Discussion* participants the option of posting messages anonymously to a given topic.

To allow anonymous postings for a topic

- 1 From the *Discussions* screen, click **Designer Options**.
- 2 Check the *Anonymous* check box adjacent to the topic in which you want to allow anonymous postings.
- 3 Click **Update**.



Note You can choose to remove anonymous-posting privileges for a topic by unchecking the appropriate *Anonymous* checkbox in the *Topic Settings* table.

Locking a Topic

If you want to close a topic to any further discussion, you can lock it. When a topic is locked, no further messages can be posted to it.

To lock a topic

- 1 From the *Discussions* screen, click **Designer Options**.
- 2 Check the *Locked* check box adjacent to the topic you want to lock.
- 3 Click **Update**.



Note You can choose to unlock a topic by unchecking the appropriate *Locked* checkbox in the *Topic Settings* table.