

# CUNY Academic Commons - Feature #589

## Preview of Forum Posts

2011-02-17 11:33 PM - Matt Gold

<b>Status:</b>	Resolved	<b>Start date:</b>	2011-02-17
<b>Priority name:</b>	Normal	<b>Due date:</b>	
<b>Assignee:</b>	Boone Gorges	<b>% Done:</b>	70%
<b>Category name:</b>	Group Forums	<b>Estimated time:</b>	2.00 hours
<b>Target version:</b>	1.6		
<b>Description</b>			
It would be nice to be able to preview forum posts before publishing them to a group. Perhaps plugins already exist with this functionality?			
<b>Related issues:</b>			
Related to CUNY Academic Commons - Design/UX #3059: Forum Post Permissible Co...		<b>New</b>	<b>2014-02-21</b>

### History

#### #1 - 2011-02-18 01:20 PM - Boone Gorges

- Target version changed from 1.2 to 1.3

There's something out there but it will take adaptation.

#### #2 - 2011-06-17 02:55 PM - Boone Gorges

- Status changed from Assigned to Reporter Feedback

I looked at the plugin that I thought did this, but it turns out that it does **not** in fact do this. So I'll have to write something from scratch.

How important is it? I would like to push it forward to a different release if it's all the same to you, as it's going to be a pain to write, and I'm not certain if it'll be worthwhile in terms of impact.

#### #3 - 2011-06-17 02:58 PM - Matt Gold

Fine to push it back. But it is a pretty standard feature on most posting interfaces (including this one), so I would like us to keep it on roadmap.

#### #4 - 2011-06-17 03:00 PM - Boone Gorges

I'm testing out the feature here on Redmine, and I have to say I don't really get it. What advantages does it offer, above and beyond just reading the text in the editing window?

#### #5 - 2011-06-17 03:08 PM - Matt Gold

It's useful especially for long forum posts that have more lines than the text box (I realize that the corners of the text box can be pulled to make it larger, but not everyone does). It's also useful because the way the text looks in the posting interface for, say, links, looks different than when it is rendered in the post. Similarly, our bbpress forums accept limited HTML, so it might be useful for people to see what code will be rendered correctly and what won't.

Additionally, most people want to check over/proofread their messages before posting them, and it can be easier to do that on a preview screen/window/box/field.

Again, this seems to me to be a standard feature of most posting interfaces. But I'm happy to ask for more input from other members of the team/CAC committee on this.

#### #6 - 2011-06-17 03:10 PM - Boone Gorges

The HTML part makes sense.

I don't see much value in the longer-than-the-textbox part, since you can be longer than the preview window as well. Either you understand the convention of scrolling, or you don't.

I just want to understand what's expected here, and what features are found valuable, before I go implementing anything. I can imagine about a hundred different ways to do this, and I want to pick the one that is right for the desires of the community.

#### #7 - 2011-06-17 03:10 PM - Boone Gorges

- Target version changed from 1.3 to 1.4

#### #8 - 2012-03-20 12:45 AM - Boone Gorges

- Status changed from Reporter Feedback to Assigned
- Assignee changed from Boone Gorges to Raymond Hoh
- Target version changed from 1.4 to 1.6

I don't want to sink a lot of time into this for the current implementation of bbPress in BP. Within the next few months, a full-fledged bbPress 2.0 integration will be available; our efforts should go toward that instead. (It will be easier there too - we can take advantage of `post_status = draft`, for instance, like WP post previews do.) Ray, assigning to you for the moment, as I anticipate that you'll be taking the lead on other forum-related improvements.

#### #9 - 2012-07-16 11:16 AM - Boone Gorges

- Assignee changed from Raymond Hoh to Dominic Giglio

The UX for this has to be worked out. There are a few different ways it could be done (this is not exhaustive):

- 1) Dynamically display a preview underneath the post. Requires AJAX (JS for the DOM manipulation; PHP for running through the relevant filters). See how WP's Trac does it.
- 2) Display a preview underneath the post, but require hitting a Preview button first. Use either AJAX or a form submit. See how Redmine does it.
- 3) Display preview in a popup/lightbox on a button click. The preview would be minimally styled.
- 4) Display preview in a popup/lightbox on a button click. The preview would be styled exactly like the forum page, except with a large "This is only a preview" message.

In all of these cases, we should make sure that the text is run through the same save/display filters that regular forum posts are run through, so that we have some reasonable guarantee that the text will be a reliable preview of the final product.

There are arguments for and against all of the above - it really depends on what we're trying to get out of this feature. I lean slightly toward (1) and (2), though they won't work right with forum attachments.

Reassigning to Dom for exploration. Dom, any development for this feature should be done against a stock installation of bbPress 2.x. (Actually, something may already exist. Look around before you start building too much.)

#### #10 - 2012-07-16 12:17 PM - Dominic Giglio

I also agree that 1 and 2 are the ideal scenarios, with my top vote going to 2. I am not a fan of popup/lightboxes at all. I'm right in the middle of [#1386](#) right now, so I'll start working on this as soon as I get something going there (unless you and Matt think this is more important than that feature).

I'm testing out the feature here on Redmine, and I have to say I don't really get it. What advantages does it offer, above and beyond just reading the text in the editing window?

Just so you know, I use the preview feature here religiously!! LOL I like being able to make sure my **textformatting** and grammar are as correct as they can be. When posting publicly I am always afraid that my words will make me sound unintelligent or ignorant, so I'm always re-reading my posts over and over. :-)

#### #11 - 2012-07-16 12:27 PM - Matt Gold

Thanks, Dom. If you're in the middle of work on the other ticket, I'd say that you should keep going with it.

#### #12 - 2012-07-16 12:41 PM - Dominic Giglio

OK, that issue is actually going pretty well. So it shouldn't be long before I can get to this.

#### #13 - 2012-07-31 08:56 PM - Dominic Giglio

Boone,

I really like the "live ajaxy" previews on BuddyPress Trac, what do you think about that kind of preview on the Commons?

#### #14 - 2012-07-31 09:05 PM - Boone Gorges

I really like the "live ajaxy" previews on BuddyPress Trac, what do you think about that kind of preview on the Commons?

It's cool by me. But I'm more concerned with what Matt thinks of that kind of implementation, as it's not (IMO) the typical way that forum posts are

previewed on the web (insofar as there is a "typical" way).

**#15 - 2012-07-31 09:06 PM - Dominic Giglio**

That's a good point, could end up confusing more than helping.

**#16 - 2012-08-01 12:25 AM - Matt Gold**

Agreed. I'm not sure I can articulate what a traditional preview button does and what the difference between it and a "live ajaxy" version would be. Maybe that, when clicked, the preview button would reload the page with a version of what the comment will look like posted, with "Edit" and "Submit" below? I notice that here on Redmine, the preview is done without reloading the page (which I assume means its 'live ajaxy'), but I think that the preview versions I've liked in the past do a better job of showing what the comment will actually look like when it is posted.

Definitely open for discussion and for hearing thoughts about what would be best.

**#17 - 2014-01-30 02:01 PM - Boone Gorges**

- Assignee changed from Dominic Giglio to Boone Gorges

Let's go ahead and do something that is similar to what WP/BP Trac does. I'm reassigning this to myself for the time being.

**#18 - 2014-01-30 03:10 PM - Boone Gorges**

- Status changed from Assigned to Testing Required

I've implemented a first pass at this in <https://github.com/castiron/cac/commit/e1ba360abb64ba7bc9478910d58b0342200eb218>

It's basically a modification of the very slick system that Ray built for bbPress 2.x: <https://github.com/r-a-y/bbp-live-preview> I modified it to work with bbPress 1.x inside of BP groups.

It's active on cdev. Start typing a new forum post or a reply in a group. When you pause for a second or two, you'll see a preview pop up below. The preview is formatted in the same way that the post will be, with HTML, shortcodes, and oEmbed all rendered.

**#19 - 2014-01-30 03:14 PM - Dominic Giglio**

Just checked it out on cdev...super slick and SO simple!! Really nicely done - both you and Ray!!!

**#20 - 2014-01-30 11:15 PM - Matt Gold**

Very cool, Boone and Ray.

My only concern in our implementation is that it can be hard to notice that the preview is happening, in part because the ags text box in between the forum posting box and the preview makes it hard to see, and in part because there is no visual cue (a different color around the box, or something) that would indicate that preview field is different in some way than the other text fields on the page.

Chris, what do you think of this? Seems to me like a little UX touch could improve the legibility of the preview.

As far as the functioning goes, it's great. Many thanks.

**#21 - 2014-01-30 11:17 PM - Matt Gold**

Also: I noticed that the preview rendered HTML tags (I tried the strong tag, for instance). Do our forums on the live site display html? Am I correct that our email notifications **don't** display them (so that text that looks bold because of the strong tag in the preview might end up producing an email notification that shows HTML strong tags rather than bolded text itself)? If so, we should be sure that the preview actually displays both what will be posted to the forum **and** what will be sent out via email notification.

**#22 - 2014-01-31 07:04 AM - Boone Gorges**

Am I correct that our email notifications don't display them (so that text that looks bold because of the strong tag in the preview might end up producing an email notification that shows HTML strong tags rather than bolded text itself)?

Correct. Does this mean that you want to have two separate previews, one above the other?

**#23 - 2014-02-01 10:33 AM - Matt Gold**

No -- I think that would be awkward. Maybe this isn't a big deal since we don't give a wysiwyg interface, encourage HTML tags, or note that they are possible. So, for now, let's just change the placement of the previews and separate them visually in some way; people who know enough to add HTML tags manually will discover quickly that the email notifications don't match.

and, since we're working separately on HTML email, everything will be aligned soon.

**#24 - 2014-02-01 12:03 PM - Boone Gorges**

let's just change the placement of the previews and separate them visually in some way;

I'm confused - do you want two separate previews or not? Sorry for the confusion.

**#25 - 2014-02-01 12:19 PM - Matt Gold**

Sorry on my part for the confusion.

1. Only one preview, which should show what the message will look like on the web when it is posted to the forum.
2. We should move the preview up so that it is directly under the posting text box or somewhere else where it will be visible.
3. We should mark out the preview visually in some way indicate that it is distinct from other text fields on the page.

**#26 - 2014-02-05 12:28 PM - Boone Gorges**

- % Done changed from 0 to 70

- Estimated time set to 2.00 h

**#27 - 2014-02-14 09:48 AM - Boone Gorges**

Another pass at this is available on [cdev.gc.cuny.edu](http://cdev.gc.cuny.edu). I did the following:

- Added a blue border to the preview
- Moved it directly below the Content box

If you're still unhappy with the appearance (but don't have specific suggestions), let's reassign this over to Chris for help.

**#28 - 2014-02-14 10:48 AM - Matt Gold**

Thanks, Boone! The positioning really helps, as does the blue box. Can you please try out a lighter shade of gray for the background of the preview text box?

**#29 - 2014-02-14 02:56 PM - Boone Gorges**

Changed in <https://github.com/castiron/cac/commit/0068c210b64e0ca86a60c57f21cf77c91dc0a88b> and ready to test on cdev

**#30 - 2014-02-15 09:30 AM - Matt Gold**

Thanks, Boone. Can you please remove the dark gray box around the previewed text (don't think it's necessary, and it clutters the page). two other small notes:

1. Is the gray color on the preview box the same shade of gray that is in the main text box when it is in an active state? It looks a shade darker to me, but that may just be a visual trick due to the blue border. If it's possible for them to be the same, I think they should be.
2. I notice that the text size is larger in the active main text box than it is in the preview window. I'd say that all text sizes should be the same unless there is a reason for them to be different.

Minor points, obviously. This is very cool.

**#31 - 2014-02-15 09:51 AM - Boone Gorges**

Can you please remove the dark gray box around the previewed text (don't think it's necessary, and it clutters the page).

Can you please post a screenshot? I don't know what this refers to.

**#32 - 2014-02-15 12:04 PM - Matt Gold**

- File *post-preview.png* added

Please see attached

**#33 - 2014-02-15 01:46 PM - Boone Gorges**

Thanks for the screenshot.

Can you please remove the dark gray box around the previewed text  
Is the gray color on the preview box the same shade of gray that is in the main text box when it is in an active state  
I'd say that all text sizes should be the same

I've made all these changes in <https://github.com/castiron/cac/commit/4d7ce414780586b8f718cdc56121feded8a2d490> and they're ready to test on cdev.

**#34 - 2014-02-15 02:19 PM - Matt Gold**

Fantastic. Looks great to me. Just realized Chris wasn't a watcher and may want to comment. But I'm happy!

**#35 - 2014-02-19 07:14 PM - Chris Stein**

Just took a look. It looks fine to me. Testing it out made me realize that you can't tell what is permissible in the forum fields (like urls will be turned into links, or how to add images). I think it would be nice to add some text about what you can enter or at least a link that explains more.

That could be a separate ticket but would be a simple add on to complement this bigger update.

**#36 - 2014-02-20 07:10 PM - Matt Gold**

Chris - where would you suggest putting such information? Per earlier discussions in this ticket, I'm not sure we want to do anything to **encourage** HTML formatting in forum posts, since that will lead to lots of email notifications that contain HTML tags (at least until we create HTML emails). Maybe we should create a separate ticket for this so that we can work through the issues there and finalize when HTML email is ready.

**#37 - 2014-02-21 08:58 AM - Chris Stein**

If we have time we can talk about it on Friday. But yes, I agree we should create another ticket to discuss this and what needs to be done when. I'll create one.

**#38 - 2014-03-21 12:41 PM - Matt Gold**

We will soon have html emails so it shouldn't be an issue - can we strip tags for now so plaintext email notifications don't show tags? If so, will hyperlinks remain, or will they be stripped along w/ the <a hrefs>?

Chris, is there a redmine ticket as mentioned above? Otherwise this seems ok to close, and add to the codebase.

**#39 - 2014-03-27 01:33 PM - Chris Stein**

There is a related ticket [#3059](#) that addresses whether or not we should add explanatory text about what kind of HTML is permissible in the forums.

I'm OK with pushing that discussion to a further release (no version yet).

I recommend resolving this if no one has anything else to add.

**#40 - 2014-03-27 03:11 PM - Boone Gorges**

- Status changed from *Testing Required* to *Resolved*

Great. Thanks, Chris.

**Files**

---

post-preview.png	121 KB	2014-02-15	Matt Gold
------------------	--------	------------	-----------