



(yet another bulletin board)

Installation Guide

YaBB Forum Software

Software Provided By: www.yabbforum.com
Project Sponsored By: www.ximinc.com
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How to Install a YaBB Forum on Your Website

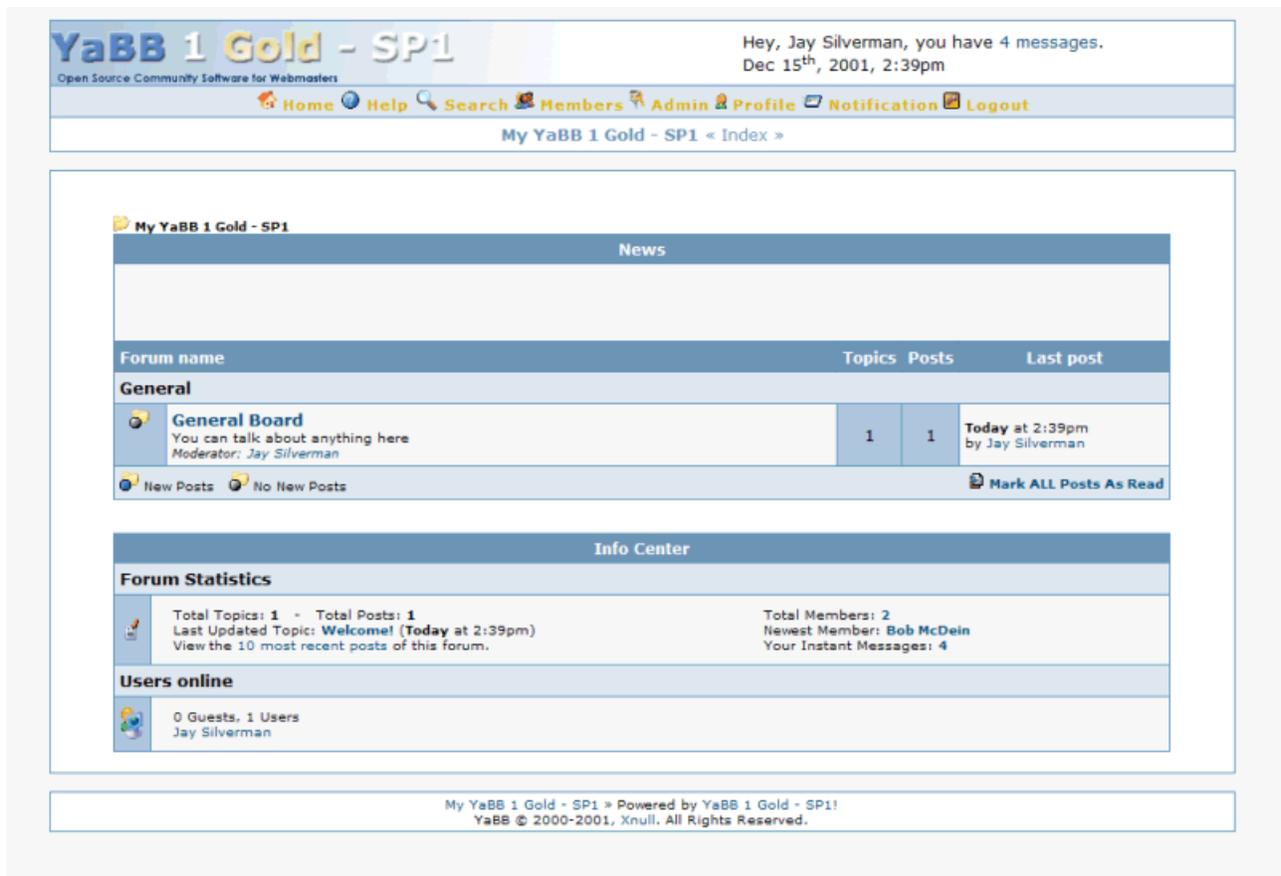
YaBB (Yet another Bulletin Board) is the original *FREE*, open-source, downloadable Perl forum! While chat programs allow people to talk directly, you must be logged into a chat room nearly 24/7 to please everyone. With forum software like YaBB, you can talk at any time, and everyone can join or read the conversation at his/her leisure. Get visitors coming back for interesting discussions, fun chit chat, or support without having to spend thousands of dollars!

Many forums can be difficult to install due to lack of sufficient documentation, insufficient knowledge by the person installing the software, or simply due to configuration problems with some web hosts. *These instructions explain how to install YaBB and bypass any problems one may encounter in the process.*

WARNING: This installation guide is only intended for webmasters with at least basic Perl, HTML, and FTP knowledge. See the section below and the glossary at the end of this document for help with these terms.

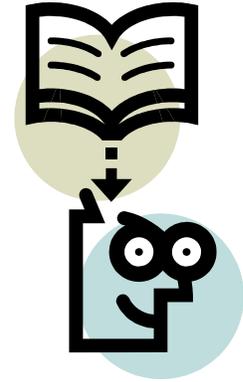
The installation, which should take approximately **ten minutes** for an advanced webmaster **or up to one hour** for a novice, consists of four major stages: **1) Prepare, 2) Create Directories, 3) Upload Files, and 4) Run, Login, and Test.**

Figure 1: Sample initial look of a YaBB forum after installation



What You Need to Know

Before you can begin a YaBB installation there are a few basic things you must know, such as usage of the `chmod` command (for UNIX and Linux servers only) or using an FTP (file transfer protocol) client. If you think you already know these things, you can skip to the next section. Otherwise, let's start here. *For an explanation of the terms used in this guide, please read the glossary at the end of this document.*



1. The first thing you need is a web host that supports the Perl language. Hosts like *Tripod*, *AngelFire*, and *Geocities* do not have this software installed. For a list of hosts that do, check the Official YaBB Community (<http://www.yabbforum.com/community/>). Most hosts' FAQ pages will say if they do or do not support Perl scripts. You also need to determine the location of the Perl program on your host's server (such as `/usr/bin/perl` or `D:/perl/perl.exe`).
2. Now that you've got a host, you'll need to get an FTP client. FTP clients allow you to connect to the FTP server that your host provides. Through the FTP server, you will install YaBB. For *MS Windows* users, we recommend *SmartFTP* or *WS_FTP*. For others, visit www.download.com or similar sites to download a client for your system. If you build your website with *MS Frontpage*, you may upload the files from that program, but it is not recommended!
3. The next key thing to understand is `chmod`'ing. `Chmod`'ing is a process that only UNIX- and Linux-based web hosts support. If your host doesn't say it's a *Windows* host, then it's probably one of those. `Chmod`'ing a file sets permissions on it, including reading, writing, and executing. You use your FTP client to `chmod`; how you do so in every client is different. In many of them, all you have to do is right-click on a file, select "Chmod" or "Set Permissions," then input the `chmod` number. If you are on a *Windows*-based host, you must give the folder read/write permissions through your server software.
4. You must also understand how to upload files in ASCII and Binary mode through your FTP client. These are different methods of transferring the data. Usually text documents are uploaded in ASCII and images in Binary.
5. Lastly, it is recommended that you have basic knowledge of HTML code. This will allow you to edit your forum's template. This knowledge is not required but your forum will get more traffic if you customize its appearance.

Materials and Tools Needed

All materials and tools can be acquired for free if you use freeware software or already have some of the needed tools installed on your computer.

Hosting Account Requirements

1. A web server or web hosting account for your website (such as from <http://www.ximinc.com>)
2. Perl (version 5 or higher) installed on your web host or server
3. At least 1MB free disk space on your web hosting account (3MB or more recommended)
4. Sendmail (for UNIX/Linux hosts) or SMTP (for *Windows* hosts) email server

Installation Software

5. The latest copy of YaBB from <http://www.yabbforum.com/downloads.php>
6. An FTP client (such as *WS_FTP*)
7. A text editor (such as *MS Notepad* or *Nedit*)
8. A compression utility for extracting .zip files (such as *Winzip*, *Winrar* or the built-in tool in *Windows*)
9. A web browser (such as *MS Internet Explorer*)

Stage 1: Prepare

NOTE: Throughout this guide, wherever “YaBB.pl” is referred to, you may need to reference “YaBB.cgi” if you downloaded the alternate package format. Both versions are the same except the filename of the main executable. Some prefer one filename over the other, and some web hosts only allow a certain extension to be used (either “.pl” or “.cgi”).

- Step 1** This guide assumes you have downloaded the latest release of YaBB from <http://www.yabbforum.com/downloads.php> or a mirror site as outlined above.
- Step 2** Make sure you meet the qualifications listed in the “What You Need to Know” section of this guide. You must also gather the required tools and materials listed in the above section.
- Step 3** Extract the .zip YaBB package to any location of your choice on your computer using your compression utility (such as *Winzip*). Just remember where you extracted the files! Chances are, you have already extracted these files if you are reading this installation guide.
- Step 4** First open “YaBB.pl”, which is in the “/cgi-bin/YaBB” folder of the package you downloaded, in a text editor such as *MS Notepad* or *Nedit*. The first line of this file contains the path to your server's Perl location. Generally, the default setting (“/usr/bin/perl”) is correct, but Perl can be installed in different locations. For example on a *Windows* or *WinNT* hosting server, your Perl path should probably be set to “#!C:/Perl/Bin/perl.exe”. Check your server for the proper path, and change it accordingly.
- Step 5** Next open “Settings.pl” in your text editor and set the required variables in it as shown in Table 1. The remaining settings in Settings.pl are not required; they are additional feature and layout settings that may improve your forum.

WARNING: It is recommended that you DO NOT change the advanced settings in Settings.pl until you have a successfully running YaBB forum!

Table 1: Recommended and required settings needed for a first-time installation

\$mbname	Name of your YaBB forum
\$boardurl	URL to your forum's containing folder (without trailing “/”), where YaBB.pl is located (such as http://www.mysite.com/cgi-bin/yabb)
\$cookieusername	Name of the username cookie (no change necessary, unless you are installing multiple forums)
\$cookiepassword	Name of the password cookie (no change necessary, unless you are installing multiple forums)
\$mailprog	Location to your web host's sendmail program (generally “/usr/sbin/sendmail” or similar)
\$webmaster_email	Your e-mail address, such as qq~webmaster@mysite.com~
\$boarddir	Absolute path to your forum's containing folder (usually can be left as “.”)
\$datadir	Directory with message files (can be left alone unless you wish to move the directory elsewhere)
\$memberdir	Directory with member files (can be left alone unless you wish to move the directory elsewhere)
\$boardsdir	Directory with board data files (can be left alone unless you wish to move the directory elsewhere)
\$sourcedir	Directory with YaBB source files (can be left alone unless you wish to move the directory elsewhere)
\$vardir	Directory with variable files (can be left alone unless you wish to move elsewhere)
\$facesurl	URL to your user avatar images folder (without trailing “/”)

\$facesdir	Absolute Path to your avatars directory (this MUST be correct for profile page to display)
\$imagesdir	URL to your images folder (without trailing "/")
\$helpfile	URL to your help index file (such as "http://www.mysite.com/yabbhelp/index.html")

Step 6 It is recommended that you skip this step until you get YaBB forum working, unless you are an advanced webmaster! Open "template.html" in an HTML editor or your text editor and modify the layout as you wish (to make the forum look like your website). An explanation of each tag's purpose is explained in Table 2 below.

WARNING: The tags beginning with "<yabb " MUST REMAIN in the template.html file. You may move them around as you wish, but leave them somewhere in the file, or things will not show up in your forum.

The tag "<yabb news>" is not in the template of this version of YaBB, as it has been replaced by the NewsFader script. You may insert this tag if you would like the old text news format back in your YaBB forum. (But be sure to set \$ShowNewsFader in Settings.pl to "0" before you put that tag back in, or the news will show in two places on the Board Index.)

Table 2: Template tag definitions

<yabb title>	Title of forum appended with current location
<yabb charset>	Character set to use for page text
<yabb uname>	Display name of the current logged in user (or guest)
<yabb im>	Instant message count for the current logged in user
<yabb time>	Time and date string
<yabb menu>	Forum navigation menu for main items (such as home, search, profile, etc.)
<yabb boardname>	Name of the current board of the forum being looked at
<yabb position>	Current location in the forum (such as index, profile, etc.)
<yabb main>	Main table where the forum's content and tables are inserted (the guts)
<yabb copyright>	Required copyright notice for YaBB
<yabb news>	Static news tag if used in replace of the NewsFader script

Stage 2: Create Directories

Step 1 In the “cgi-bin” folder (or proper folder designated by your web host for containing Perl scripts) of your web hosting account, create a directory called “yabb” (or whatever name you wish to use). If you do not have a cgi-bin or another folder designated for use by Perl scripts, then first create a directory called “cgi-bin” and then inside that create the “yabb” directory. An example structure is provided in the YaBB package you’ve downloaded. The cgi-bin may have to be in your public_html folder or in the home root of your account, depending on your web host’s setup.

Step 2 Model the folder hierarchy in the YaBB package you downloaded to create the remaining folders. You should have a folder structure similar to the following:

```
/cgi-bin/yabb/  
/cgi-bin/yabb/Boards  
/cgi-bin/yabb/Members  
/cgi-bin/yabb/Messages  
/cgi-bin/yabb/Sources  
/cgi-bin/yabb/Variables
```

You may wish to move any of the folders but the main “yabb” folder and “Sources” to a secure location on your account, one that is not accessible from the Internet. If you choose to do this, make sure you reflect the changes by modifying the folder settings in Settings.pl (see Stage 1::Step 5).

Step 3 Then, in a section of your web space (outside the cgi-bin, generally in a “public_html” folder as suggested in the package’s folder hierarchy), create another directory called “yabbimages” or something similar:

```
/public_html/yabbimages/
```

Step 4 Finally, create another directory called “yabbhelp” or something similar in a section of your web space:

```
/public_html/yabbhelp/
```

Stage 3: Upload Files

Step 1 Upload the files from the downloaded .zip you extracted in Stage 1::Step 3 into the directories as shown below in Table 3. You must upload ALL .pl, .cgi, .dat, .cat, .txt, .html, and .htaccess files in ASCII mode. All images must be uploaded in Binary mode. Many FTP clients will select the upload mode automatically, but you might have to first set some of the file types' upload methods in the program's options for them to upload properly.

WARNING: If you are upgrading, take note of the files you should not upload! Doing so will damage your forum data. These files are denoted by the image:  in Table 3.

Step 2 Make sure you chmod the files as shown in Table 3. Chmod is not supported on *Windows* servers, so there is no need to do this step after uploading (or extracting) the files. On a *Windows* server, however, you will need to give the data folders (those specified to be chmod 777) full read/write permissions. You may need to ask your web host to do this for you if on a *Windows* server.

Table 3: File locations, file permissions, and upload modes

NON CGI-BIN Section (No Chmod Necessary) - these files are located in the public_html folder of the YaBB package -		
/ubbc.js		(Upload in Ascii mode)
/fader.js		(Upload in Ascii mode)
/YaBBHelp/	* *	(Upload in Ascii mode)
/YaBBHelp/images	* *	(Upload in Binary mode)
/YaBBImages/	*.gif - all files	(Upload in Binary mode)
/YaBBImages/avatars	* * - all files	(Upload in Binary mode)
CGI-BIN Section (Upload All Files in ASCII Mode) - these files are located in the cgi-bin folder of the YaBB package -		
/yabb/	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 755)
/yabb/YaBB.pl (or YaBB.cgi)	-rwxr-xr-x	(chmod 755)
/yabb/Settings.pl	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 777)
/yabb/template.html	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 777)
/yabb/english.lng	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Boards	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 777)
/yabb/Boards/.htaccess	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Boards/general_cat.cat	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Boards/news.dat	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Boards/news.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Boards/sticky.stk	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Members	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 777)
/yabb/Members/.htaccess	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Members/admin.dat	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Members/memberlist.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Messages	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 777) 
/yabb/Messages/.htaccess	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is) 
/yabb/Sources	drwxrwxrwx	(chmod 777)
/yabb/Sources/Admin.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/AdminEdit.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/BoardIndex.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Display.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)

/yabb/Sources/ICQPager.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/InstantMessage.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Load.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/LockThread.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/LoginOut.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Maintenance.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/ManageBoards.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/ManageCats.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Memberlist.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/MessageIndex.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/ModifyMessage.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/MoveThread.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Notify.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Post.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Printpage.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Profile.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Recent.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Register.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/RemoveOldThreads.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/RemoveThread.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Search.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Security.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/SendTopic.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/Subs.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
/yabb/Sources/YaBBC.pl	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is)
<hr/>		
/yabb/Variables	drwxr-xr-x	(chmod 777)
/yabb/Variables/.htaccess	-rw-r--r--	(leave as is) 
/yabb/Variables/agreement.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/ban.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/ban_email.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/ban_log.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/ban_memname.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/cat.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/censor.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/clicklog.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/flood.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/log.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/membergroups.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/news.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/oldestmes.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/reserve.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 
/yabb/Variables/reservecfg.txt	-rw-rw-rw-	(chmod 666) 

Stage 4: Run, Login, and Test

- Step 1** Try to execute your YaBB forum now! In your web browser, go to the URL that you specified in \$boardurl of Settings.pl (see Stage 1::Step 5) with /YaBB.pl on the end (such as "http://www.mysite.com/cgi-bin/yabb/YaBB.pl"). Remember most servers are case-sensitive, so type in the URL exactly as the folders and files are named.
- Step 2** If your forum doesn't run, first check that you visited the proper URL. If you did and your forum doesn't appear properly (an example would be a page that says "500 Internal Server Error"), please repeat the above 3 stages and consult <http://faq.yabbforum.com>.

NOTE: A successful test run of your forum should initially look like the example in Figure 1.

- Step 3** After you have successfully run your YaBB forum from the web, you need to try logging in. The default administration username is "admin" with a default password of "admin". Log in with that information by entering the text in the login boxes at the bottom of the main page of your forum (the "Board Index").
- Step 4** After a successful login (no errors have been reported), you should see an "Admin" icon in the menu of the YaBB forum (see Figure 2). This indicates that you are indeed logged in as an administrator. Clicking it will take you to the "Admin Center" where you can change forum preferences, edit your template, run maintenance routines, or manipulate users and categories. Please consult the "Administration Guide" for more information on this section of the forum.

Figure 2: Sample menu with the admin icon



- Step 5** Test everything (that you know exists), such as posting, registering a new member, and modifying messages. One category with one board in it exists in all new YaBB installations, allowing you to start using your forum right away!

How To Upgrade An Existing YaBB Forum

Below is an outline explaining how to upgrade your YaBB forum from a version prior to this release. You may follow the full installation instructions above should you wish, as long as you take note of the files you should not upload.

Any prior version of YaBB can be upgraded to this version of YaBB as long as all of the steps below are followed.

- Step 1** It is imperative that you backup your YaBB forum data before proceeding with an upgrade. You can do this several ways. One such method for Linux and Unix servers is to “tarball” your YaBB data folders. This is not possible on *Windows* servers; you must ask your web host to zip the data for you if you do not have direct access to the data. You may also simply download the data folders (in ASCII mode) with your FTP client. A backup provides you with all of your forum’s data before the upgrade should you need to reinstall the forum or return to a previous version of YaBB.

NOTE: It is highly recommended that you make a backup of your YaBB data (the boards, members, messages, and variables folders) before proceeding with an upgrade. This allows you to restore your data should the upgrade cause problems.

- Step 2** Delete all files in your “YaBBHelp” folder then upload the files in the “YaBBHelp” folder of the files you extracted for this release into that folder. This will update your online help so it no longer includes the installation and upgrade sections. This step is not required, but it is recommended.
- Step 3** Upload the YaBB source files as described in Stage 3::Step 1. It is not necessary to upload the files in the YaBBImages folder, as they have not been changed in this release. You *must* upload all .pl, .cgi, and .js files, however, replacing the copies already in your installed YaBB. Make sure you have uploaded the new “SubList.pl” file in the /Sources folder.

WARNING: Take note of the files you should not upload! Doing so will damage your forum data. These files are denoted by the image:  in Table 3.

- Step 4** If they do not exist already, add “a.” before each of the “nav” style tag classes in template.html so they all begin with “a.nav” instead of “nav.”
- Step 5** If you use a non-English language pack, copy and translate text variables 797-799 from english.lng and paste them in the language file you use if they do not already exist in your language file. Save the language file and upload it over the copy of the language file in your installed YaBB folder.
- Step 6** Login to your forum after completing the above 5 steps that pertain to you. Navigate through your forum and test everything (including posting, saving settings, and browsing) to ensure that the upgrade was completed successfully.

Appendix A: Glossary of Related Terms

Below are some terms that you need to understand when installing a YaBB forum. If this glossary does not explain the terms well enough, you will need to learn more about them on your own before proceeding.

Administrator – In YaBB this is the person in the forum with “total control.” Each new installation comes with one member who has administrator rights. Additional administrators can be added later. Administrators can access all boards of the forum, edit or delete posts, and change any forum settings.

ASCII – This is an information exchange code using a set of specific characters. Many files (all text-based) must be uploaded in ASCII mode to retain their original format. Samples include Perl scripts, text documents, web pages, and code files.

Binary – This is an executable type of file, as opposed to an ASCII file. These files are usually programs and images. Certain files must be uploaded in Binary mode for them to function properly.

Chmod – Change Mode. This is a command on UNIX and Linux machines that is used to change file permissions. Chmod can usually be done from an FTP client or from a telnet or SSH session. Chmod is comparable to setting file permissions on a *MS Windows* server running *MS IIS*. There are a total of 9 permissions available.

File Permissions – These are permissions that one can set on any file or directory with most any operating system. Permissions include read, write, and execute. They can typically be set for the file owner, a user, or a group, providing a total of 9 possible permission sets. On UNIX and Linux systems, these can be set using the chmod command. They allow files to be secured or accessed from the web, and they tell the server if the files can be executed, read from, or written to.

FTP – File Transfer Protocol. This is an Internet protocol that allows one to transfer files from a local PC to a remote machine over a network. Typically a client, such as *WS_FTP*, is used to transfer the files from a PC to a remote machine. This is what is used to upload YaBB files.

HTML – Hypertext Markup Language. This is the original markup language created for writing web pages, typically with the file extension .htm or .html. These documents often contain hyperlinks to other Internet documents.

Package – A collection of files, often a tree of files for a software release, bundled together for distribution.

Perl – This is a high-level programming language based on the C language. It was originally created to write scripts for the UNIX operating system, but it has evolved to include CGI scripts for the World Wide Web, such as YaBB.

Tarball – This is an archive file containing myriad related files. Essentially, multiple files and folders can be packaged into one convenient file. This is related to a “zip.”

Upload – This is the act of transferring data (files) from one computer to another, often remote, computer.

URL – Uniform Resource Locator. This is an Internet address to a resource, such as <http://www.yabbforum.com/community>.

Webmaster – This is the website administrator, a person responsible for the development and maintenance of the web pages at a website.

YaBB – Yet another Bulletin Board. This is a popular open-source forum for webmasters to install on their website. For more information, visit <http://www.yabbforum.com>.

Zip – This is a file extension for a collection of files or folders that have been compressed into one file, typically created on *Windows* computers. The filename will appear as “filename.zip.” This term is commonly used as a noun or a verb to denote compressed files or the action of compressing files.

Appendix B: Chmod Tutorial

While following the “How to Install a YaBB Forum on Your Website” section of this guide to install a YaBB forum, you will be asked to set permissions, known as “chmodding” on Unix and Linux servers. This does not apply if you are installing YaBB on a Windows or Macintosh server, for which you will have to set permissions another way or ask your web host to grant permissions as needed for you. The following steps explain how to chmod on Unix and Linux servers.

Setting permissions on files and folders will allow certain users access to those specific files and folders. This is critical to running an efficient and secure forum. It also grants the YaBB program to access certain functions on your web hosts’ server. Most important of these permissions is the write permission, which allows YaBB to modify or create files on the server, which is required for every access to your forum.

- Step 1** Chmods can be set by FTP’ing to your website or by logging into the shell via telnet or SSH. For this lesson, we’ll assume you have FTP access to your website and have logged in.
- Step 2** You must first understand the three categories (or levels of access) that can be given: owner, group, and other. These are the types of users on the server that you will be granting permissions to.
- Step 3** Each category can be given a combination of one or more of the following permissions: read, write, execute. Each of these has an equivalent numeric value: read = 4, write = 2, and execute = 1.
- Step 4** Once you have logged into your website with your FTP program, navigate to the “yabb” folder inside your cgi-bin where you installed YaBB.
- Step 5** Select the file(s) that you wish to chmod (as stated by the YaBB Installation section in this guide), right-click your selection, and choose the “chmod” or “set permissions” option in the menu that appears.