Frequently Asked Questions for NIRSA's Habitat

Logging In

Q: What is my Habitat community login information?

You will need to log in using your regular NIRSA Web site log in information. If you have forgotten your information, please use the "Forgot your password?" link on the member login screen.

My Profile

Q: How do I update my contact information?

The best way to update your contact information is to do this from the main Web site in the "My Profile" section. This will make sure that we have all your information in our AMS (Association Management System) database. The needed information for the Habitat will then be brought over.

Q: How do I control what information is shown in My Profile?

Under "My Profile", click the "Preferences" link in the left navigation. This will let you control what information is visible to whom. We recommend selecting the "Members Only" option, which will make your profile visible only to people with login access. After you've made changes, click the "Save" button at the bottom of the page.

Q: My picture won't upload. What's wrong?

The dimensions of the image must be no larger than 600 pixels wide by 600 pixels high. The file size (kilobytes, megabytes, etc.) does not matter. You can check the dimensions in programs like Photoshop, Microsoft Paint and Microsoft Photo Editor. The image must also be saved in a .jpg, .gif or .bmp format.

Q: What if I don't have a good photo of myself?

Have fun with it. The images enhance the collegiality of the Community, so feel free to include any image that reflects your personality. Just make sure that the image you include is neither offensive to anyone nor protected by copyright, if you have not obtained permission from its owner or copyright-holder.

Q: Do I have to enter start and end dates for my education?

No, just leave the date drop-down boxes set to the blank option.

Directory

Q: How do I find other members?

Click the “Directory” link found in the main navigation bar at the top of the site, and then “Find Contact” in the left navigation section. The Directory lets you search for other members based on:

• Name
• Company/Institution
• Location

Blogs

Q: When creating and writing a blog, who is able to view my blog?

By default anyone can see your blog, which means it has a "Public" view. When anyone creates a new blog, there are a few considerations to think of in terms of who can view it. If you belong to a community, you will see a drop down selection of the communities that you belong to. If you select to associate the Blog with a Community then the blog will be attached to that community. It doesn't however restrict the access to that blog to just that community, that ability currently can't be done. When you create a blog, you can select the viewable permissions but the most restrictive is to select "My Contacts" which means only your contacts can view your blog. Here is a breakdown of how the viewable permissions work:

- Public: Anyone can view this blog, including search engines. This option will give your blog the broadest exposure possible.
- Authenticated: All users able to log into the Habitat website may read your blog entry. This may include non-members.
- NIRSA Members: Only Members will be able to view your blog posting.
- My Contacts: Only people who are in your "My Contact" list will be able to view your blog posting.

You can also restrict who can make comments to your blog.

- Authenticated: All users that are able to log into the Habitat website may comment on your blog entry. This may include non-members.
- Members Only: Only Members will be able to comment on your blog posting.
- My Contacts: Only people who are in your "My Contact" list will be able to comment on your blog posting.
- No Comments Allowed: No one will be able to comment on your blog posting.

You then click “Publish” for your blog to be created and viewable in Habitat.

Contact List
Q: How do I add contacts to my contact list?

There are several ways to add contacts to your list. When you perform a search in the Directory, you will see an “Add as contact” link next to each person in your search results. Just click this link to send a contact request. If you click through and view someone’s profile, you can click the contact request link just to the right of their profile picture. Clicking any of your “Networks” links, either from your profile or under “My Communities”, will yield a similar list.

Q: Why should I add contacts to my contact list?

Creating this virtual address book makes it easy to send your contacts messages through the system to stay in touch or ask questions. Additionally, when you view another member’s profile, you’ll be able to see any contacts you have in common with them. Your contact list makes it easy to send invitations if you create a community, and you can also choose to let only your contacts view and/or comment on your blog.

Q: I noticed that I can rate my contacts based on a five-star system. Can people see how I rated them?

Don’t worry – this information is only visible to you. Since you can sort by rating, this feature provides a way to organize your list of contacts. We suggest you give the people you contact most five stars and the ones you contact least one star. Your highest-rated contacts will show up in the left navigation under “My Profile”, making it easy to access their contact information and send them messages.

Libraries

Q: How do I access my community’s resource library?

Click “My Communities”, find the community you’d like to access, and click its “View Library” link.

Q: Can I search for specific file types?

Yes. When in the resource library area, select “Search Library” from the left navigation. This search will let you to “Specify File Type”: PowerPoint, Excel, image, video, etc.

Q: On what other properties can I search?

The search option allows you to find documents based on keywords within a document title or description or even within its content. You can also specify which libraries you’d like to search, by which author, date posted, tags and more.

Q: How do the libraries get populated?

Your resource libraries are populated in two ways: you can upload documents directly by using the “Add Document” link found in the left navigation. Alternately, when you include an attachment in a forum post, the system automatically places it in the library and sends a link to it to all subscribers. This eliminates the issue of blocked attachments because of file size or type, which was a huge problem in the older forums. It also makes the attachments easier to find.

Q: How do I upload a document?

In the resource libraries area, click the “Add Document” link in the left navigation. Please note that uploading a document is done in three steps and each step must be completed before you can move on to the next. First, you will choose a title for your document, include a description (if you’d like) and select the library to which you’d like to upload it; then hit “Save”. “Step 2” then activates, allowing you to browse for and upload your file. After uploading, you will have the option of adding tags or keywords to your document so it is more easily searchable.

Q: What kind of documents can I upload?

The system supports literally dozens of file types: PDFs, PowerPoint, Excel, Word, images and even video. You are, however, prohibited from uploading copyright-protected documents that you do not have the rights to post.

Q: What are the “tags” for?

Tags are another way of organizing and searching for documents. You can help others find the file you uploaded by including tags when you upload it. We have given you a few sets to choose from, but you can request to also add your own. Other members can also add tags to your document, further enhancing this search feature. This comes in handy because the name of the same policy or procedure often varies between practices.

Q: I have several related documents. Do I have to post them individually?

No. You can post related documents together, and we encourage you to do so. Follow steps 1 & 2 to upload your first file. Then, rather than saving, perform step 2 again to upload another file. Continue that process until all of your related files are uploaded, then add your tags and hit “Save.”

Q: Can someone else edit or delete my file?

As the owner of the document, only you or a system administrator can delete your document. If you’d like to delete it, just click the red “X” that appears when you view the document details.

Q: Can I download documents?

Absolutely, that’s why they are being shared. However, please note all of these documents have been submitted by your peers and have not been reviewed by us. You must evaluate and bear all risks associated with the use of any content, including any reliance on the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of such content.

Discussion Forums

In order to be a part of group communications, you must join/subscribe to the community!

Q: How do I join/subscribe to a community?

Under “Discussions”, click the “My Subscriptions” link in the top navigation. Here, you will see a list of available communities. Select one of the delivery options (Real Time, Digest, PDA or No Email) for any groups you wish to join and then click the “Save” button at the bottom of the page. You will get a red message confirming that your subscription options have been successfully updated. This can take around 30 seconds if you change your settings for several groups at the same time.

Q: What options are available for e-mail delivery?

At the top of the “My Subscriptions” page within Discussions, there is an option for “Text” or ”HTML”. By default, this is set to “HTML”, and we encourage you to leave it set to this if your e-mail client can support it. However, if you are having problems viewing the HTML version or if it takes too long to open, please switch to the text version.

Under each group, you have the following delivery options:

- *Real time*: sends an e-mail every time a new message is posted
- *Daily digest*: sends one e-mail to you each morning, consolidating all of the posts from the previous day
- *PDA*: sends real-time text versions of the posts, which are compatible with Blackberries and most other handheld devices. This option also allows you to reply without logging in to a web browser, but it does NOT allow you to include attachments with your post.
- *No E-mail*: allows you to be part of the group without having e-mails sent to you. You can still post and read other’s messages on the integrated online discussion board.

Q: I’d prefer to have certain forums go to a different e-mail address. Is this possible?

You can use different e-mail addresses for different forums. For example, you could have one forum go to your personal e-mail and others go to your work e-mail. On the “My Subscriptions” page within Discussions, under each community to which you’ve subscribed, you’ll see “subscribed as [e-mail address]. Change.” Just click the “change” link, enter a different e-mail address, click “OK”, and click “Save” at the bottom to confirm the change. If you change your main e-mail address in your profile or with us, it will update all of the forums that used your former e-mail address. Those that use a different e-mail address will remain the same.

Q: How do I leave a community?

Under “Discussions”, click the “My Subscriptions” link in the top or left navigation. Here, you will see a list of available communities and those to which you’ve subscribed. Select “Not Subscribed” to the right of the group you wish to leave and click the “Save” button at the bottom of the page. You will get a red message confirming that your subscription options have been successfully updated. This can take several seconds if you change your settings for several groups at the same time.

Q: What are “Networks”?

These are networking communities that are automatically created based on demographic information in your profile. They help you locate other members who live in your city or state, share your interests, have the same job title and more.

Q: How do I respond to others’ posts?

From a received e-mail or the online discussion board, you can click either the “Reply to Discussion” link to send your message to the entire forum, or the “Reply to Sender” link to send your message only to the sender; both links are located just to the left of the posting. We recommend replying only to the sender for comments like “me, too” that add little value to the discussion.

Q: How do I start a new discussion thread?

In an e-mail (HTML version) from a particular discussion forum, you can use the “Post a Message” link in the right navigation bar. You can also use the “Post New Message” link found in the upper navigation under “Message

Digest”. We recommend bookmarking or adding this link to your favorites list in your web browser to make it easily accessible.

Q: I’m having trouble viewing the HTML e-mail messages. How do I fix this?

If images are not appearing, it is likely that your e-mail client is set to suppress images. This should be something you can change in your security or viewing options. If you would rather receive text-based e-mail, go to the “My Subscriptions” page and select the “Text” format option near the top of the page. Be sure to hit “Save” at the bottom of the page once you’ve made this change.

Q: Why do I have to post messages and reply to them through the website?

There are many features in the Community Portal that are made possible because of the Web interface:

When you send an attachment through this new system, it automatically places it in the community library and sends a link to members instead – no more blocked attachments because of file size or type, which was a huge problem in the old forums.
Auto-responses like "out of office" won't clutter up this new system.
Since the system automatically adds your signature, there are no more anonymous postings. The "transparency" of the group (being able to see who is posting info) should be a huge improvement.
In the older forums, everyone's disclaimers and marketing messages at the end of their e-mails filled pages upon pages, making you scroll through all of it to get to the next message. That's all a thing of the past now.

Q: Can I search for postings across all the forums?

Yes. Under “Discussions”, click “Advanced Search” in the left navigation. This will let you search based on keywords in the posts, search all or specific forums, and select the date range in which you’d like to search.

Q: How do I see a listing of all of the posts to my discussion forum?

If you go to “My Communities” and click “View the Discussion” for the community you’d like see, it will take you to the forum digest – a listing of the most recent postings. At the top right of this page are links to view messages posted in the last 24 hours, 7 days or 30 days. If you see an interesting post, you can click “View Thread” in the left navigation, which will take you to the entire thread. “Show original message” at the bottom of all of the posts in a thread will display the original message that started that discussion. The “Author’s Messages” link will show you all of the posts that particular member has contributed to the forum.

Q: All e-mails now come from the same e-mail address. How can I sort them into different folders in my inbox?

If you have rules set up to sort e-mails to different folders based on the e-mail address, you should be able to easily change those rules to look for the forum abbreviation or acronym that appears in the subject line.

Q: How do I change the information showing up in the signature block?

We have set a default signature, but if you would like to change the information that appears or the order in which it appears, click the “My Signature” link within "Discussions". You can add, delete or reorganize the fields that show up in your signature. Please note that the content of these fields is pulled directly from your profile, so if you want to change the information itself, you will need to make the change to your profile at http://www.nirsa.org.