

WINDOWS7FORUMS.COM FORUM STAFF VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

SECTION 1.01 VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT: PURPOSE STATEMENT AND EXPLANATION

- (a) This agreement is retroactive for all existing moderators and administrators as of the 1st of October, 2010.
- (b) Your use of the website, which is logged, following the moderator flag being turned on for your account, signals your acknowledgement and voluntary willingness to adhere to this agreement.
- (c) This agreement shall be construed by all parties as an agreement of goodwill and good conscience. Its application will never be used against any volunteer staff members in any court of law, unless the agreement is sequestered or subpoenaed, as evidence, for some other unlawful act, by a law enforcement agency or governing body. This agreement does not excuse a volunteer staff member from committing any unlawful act in regards to the Windows7Forums.com website or any other activity.
- (d) To clarify, similar to the Terms of Service Agreement, if the agreement is declared to be broken by either party, it will simply cease to exist. SECTION 1.16 outlines how the agreement is terminated. This agreement is strictly voluntary, and shall not be construed as a contract of employment, demand for services, legally binding contract for services, or other type of barter scheme.
- (e) The purpose of this agreement is to provide rules, guidelines, and structure for volunteer staff moderation and other activities. It is hoped that by initiating such an agreement, volunteer staff members may have a codified reference for what to do in the very likely event that something will go wrong on a website that receives substantial traffic and social exchanges on a daily, reoccurring basis. The purpose of this text is never to legally punish, or bind under legal technicalities, any volunteer, but only to confirm that a volunteer relationship does exist, in writing, so for long that a forum member remains part of the volunteer forum staff. In doing so, rules and guidelines can be presented in an orderly fashion, similar the Terms of Service Agreement all members agree to when creating a free account.
- (f) The agreement is also designed to protect the interests of volunteer staff members, the members of Windows7Forums.com, its viewers, and the Windows7Forums.com website itself from disruptions, disagreements, arguments, and problems associated with the operation of an online forum website which involves heavy social interaction. By promoting clear rules, guidelines, and policies, it is reasonable to believe that conflicts can be avoided.
- (I) A FORUM STAFF MEMBER IS HEREIN DEFINED AS REPRESENTING THE WEBSITE IN AN UNOFFICIAL CAPACITY, AND MAINTAINING WITHIN HIS OR HER USER ACCOUNT, THE ABILITY TO EXERCISE MODERATOR ACTIONS ON THE WEBSITE ITSELF AND/OR ITS MEMBERS AS A VOLUNTEER.

SECTION 1.02 YOU ARE HEREBY DECLARED AN UNOFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF WINDOWS7FORUMS.COM.

- (a) You are still bound to the Terms of Service (TOS) Agreement.

SECTION 1.03 YOU WILL, IN NO WAY, DISPARAGE THE NAME OF THE WEBSITE, ITS OWNER, AFFILIATES, PARTNERS, OR MEMBERS, EITHER IN PUBLIC OR PRIVATE.

SECTION 1.04 YOU VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO MAINTAIN SOME LEVEL OF ACTIVITY ON THE WEBSITE, WHICH WOULD JUSTIFY YOUR CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP UNDER SUCH A POSITION.

- (a) Reasonable accommodation can be made in the event of illness, burnout, emergency, vacation, or other such activities which would limit your ability to access the website within reason. However, if in the event of dire emergency, or some life changing event which would prevent you from using or accessing the forums for a prolonged period of time, and as a result, you are unable to function as a moderator of the forums, you are asked to contact an administrator or the site owner as soon as possible.
- (b) "Some level of activity" is defined as taking an active role, on the website, and through its various functions, at least once every two weeks, or within a reasonable manner that any such person who, under such a volunteer position, would deem sound and appropriate, given the circumstances.
- (c) Substance Abuse: You will not abuse illicit, non-prescribed substances while a volunteer staff member, nor promote the use of such contraband. If you feel you may be having a problem with drug or alcohol dependency, we urge you to seek help and stay off the forums.

SECTION 1.05 YOU VOLUNTARILY AGREE THAT YOUR USER ACCOUNT AND/OR STATUS AS A STAFF MEMBER MAY BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME, AT THE DISCRETION OF THE SITE OWNER, AND ANY AND ALL PERMISSIONS TO USE THE SITE REPEALED.

- (a) Unlike forum members, you may not appeal this decision.
- (b) It is very unlikely this will happen, unless for good cause, deemed specifically by the site owner.

SECTION 1.06 YOU VOLUNTARILY GRANT CONTROL OF ALL CREATIVE LICENSES, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, AUDIO AND VISUAL RECORDINGS, COPYRIGHTS, TRADEMARKS, WRITTEN STATEMENTS, INNOVATIONS, AND ALL CONTENT MADE ON THE WEBSITE TO WINDOWS7FORUMS.COM.

- (a) This provision does not include any development that occurs outside of Windows7Forums.com.
- (b) This provision includes, but is not limited to, authorization to use full-text, audio and/or visual recordings made during official website functions such as forum meetings, events, and promotions.

SECTION 1.07 NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (NDA): YOU HEREBY AGREE THAT ALL MESSAGES RELAYED TO YOU, UNLESS EXPLICITLY STATED BY FORUM ADMINISTRATORS, ARE TO BE CONSIDERED PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.

- (a) This provision includes all communication taking place in the Staff Forum section of the website.
- (b) This provision also includes all communication relayed to you by the site owner, forum administrators, or others, unless it is obvious or apparent that this information may be released in a public announcement.
- (c) You will not leak "trade secrets" which may be used to improve, change, or alter the forum experience, nor will you release plans which are in development to improve the experience of website visitors.
- (d) You will release no information governing the Internet Protocol (IP) address of any member of the website, nor attempt to gain access to this information for any purpose other than moderation of the forums without prior authorization.
- (e) In the interests of privacy, you will release no personally identifiable information of any member, visitor, guest, associate, or representative of the website to the general public under any circumstances.
- (f) You will release no information to any member who is being subject to an inquiry by forum administrators, which would compromise such an inquiry.
- (g) You will make no attempt to contact any Microsoft Corporation employee, representative, official, contractor, or their affiliates, as a representative of Windows7Forums.com, or through the forum messaging system, without prior approval of the site owner.

SECTION 1.08 YOU WILL MAKE NO FALSE REPRESENTATIONS OF YOURSELF WHILE MAINTAINING THE ROLE OF AN UNOFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WEBSITE.

- (a) This would include, but is not limited to, stating that you are an official representative of the website when no such authorization has been granted.
- (b) This would involve implicitly or explicitly stating, or inferring that you are in a position of authority on matters relating to the website that are of no concern to you.
- (c) This would involve invoking administrator privileges when they have not been granted to you, as well as using any form of false status to make a false representation, demand, or statement regarding the website.
- (d) Such a false representation would involve providing false or misleading information to any user of the website, including fraudulent information such as falsified name, address, telephone number, or any information which misrepresents your true identity.

- (e) You hereby agree to provide your full name, mailing address, and telephone number to the owner of Windows7Forums.com for purposes outlined in the Privacy Policy: to provide service, promotions, and a better website experience; as well as to deal with situations of unlawful acts.

SECTION 1.09 PROVISIONS GUIDING AND REGULATING MODERATOR ACTIONS

- (a) No forum staff member shall violate any forum member's right to free speech. "Free speech" does not include hate speech, racism, sexism, homophobia, statements made outside the standards of generally accepted decency, or reprehensible behavior. It does, however, include every single other form of speech.
- (l) NO MODERATOR SHALL COMMIT ANY MODERATOR ACTION, DUE TO ANY DISPUTES, OR ACTIONS, BY OR BETWEEN MEMBERS AND/OR MODERATORS, WHICH FALL OUTSIDE OF THE "TERMS OF SERVICE" AGREEMENT.
- (b) Member's Right to Appeal: Any forum staff member who receives an appeal from a member, following a moderator action, must immediately report it to an administrator. Any administrator who receives such an appeal, but does not know what to make of it, should relay this message to the site owner as soon as possible.
- (c) Under no circumstances, will any member be banned, nor post edited, nor deleted, nor closed, without prior warning given to the member, for which a duration of 24 hours is provided, to allow that member to respond, unless these actions must be taken so that the member does not continue to violate the Terms of Service agreement or damage the integrity of the website.

Prior Warning: This determination is to be made solely by the moderator, but may be overridden by an administrator. This would involve a member posing an imminent threat to website access, content accessibility, its credibility, usability, and other matters discussed in the Terms of Service agreement. Moderators are under no obligation to give members any information other than: the reason the moderation action was taken. The prior warning MUST be done through the infraction warning system for data retention. There are some cases where there is no prior warning permitted under infractions, and this is because of the member does not deserve prior warning for these actions.

- (d) Edits to posts and other website content shall only be made in order to fix typographical or grammatical errors. Any other edit fundamentally violates the integrity of both the website and the poster. In the event of spam posts, the entire post should be deleted.
- (e) Threads shall only be closed if the topic has completely strayed away from the original poster's subject, thesis, or title, and for no other reason whatsoever.
- (f) No post shall be deleted for any reason that is not listed in Terms of Service, except in the case of a double post.
- (g) Except in the cases of the most egregious spam attacks, no member shall have, all or even a majority of their posts deleted, at once, or systematically, without administrative approval.
- (h) All posts discussing software piracy must be deleted immediately. The moderator has immediate flexibility in this regard. No prior warning is necessary.
- (i) No threads, posts, nor discussions, shall be mass-moved, renamed, or reclassified, without discussion in the Staff Forum.
- (j) All moderator actions adversely affecting a member must be reported in the Staff Forum.

SECTION 1.10 MODERATORS SHOULD ADHERE TO A NON-INTERVENTION DOCTRINE

- (a) Non-intervention in the affairs of the forum users is to be expected in concepts such as members setting up their user profiles, presenting information, arguing their points, and even going so far as complaining.
- (b) We recognize that there are and will be many people on the forums who are dissatisfied with Microsoft and hate Windows 7. We must accept this as part of the discussion and allow a person to speak their peace, even if this means bowing out of a conversation.

SECTION 1.11 STAFF ARGUMENTS, INSULTS, AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- (a) A staff member who feels insulted by another staff member, whether administrator or otherwise, must not inflame the argument. If controversial statements have been made through private message, you may forward such messages to administrators, but avoid sharing it with the entire Staff Forum.
- (b) If there is an inter-staff conflict between any parties, it must be made clear, in writing, to all administrators. It will be expected that the site owner, all administrators, and the arguing parties on the staff will engage in conflict resolution without resorting to name-calling, personal attacks, and other sentiments which would inflame the dispute.
- (c) The dispute must be contained and resolved amicably, approached maturely, by all parties. Under no circumstances should such a dispute be made public knowledge to the entire forum at large.

SECTION 1.12 TOLERANCE CLAUSE

- (a) If a member is being rude, the best course of action to take would be to contact the member in question and inform them that our community is intended to be inclusive and welcoming to all viewers.
- (b) Moderators are under no obligation to tolerate rude behavior from any member of the website, regardless of status. How that rude behavior is dealt with must be even handed in nature.
- (c) We must strive to adhere to strict standards of decency and behavior. This includes tolerating more obnoxious members, unless such a member shows a consistent pattern of problematic behavior.

SECTION 1.13 THE FORUMS ARE AN INFORMATION REPOSITORY

- (a) The forums are a repository of information, so it therefore becomes important to protect that information, by avoiding member attrition through moderator actions or inactions, thread editing, deletion, and closing.

SECTION 1.14 A FULL MEETING OF THE FORUM STAFF SHALL BE CONVENED NO LESS THAN TWICE A YEAR, NOT TO EXCEED TWO HOURS, EXCEPT IN THE EVENT OF EMERGENCY.

- (a) No volunteer moderator is required to attend these meetings.
- (b) These meetings may be pre-recorded and/or edited for the purposes of transparency, under which case forum administrators will attempt to notify all moderators ahead of time.

SECTION 1.15 THE USE OF URL SHORTENING SERVICES IS PERMITTED.

- (a) The use of URL shortening services like TinyURL, Bit.ly, and others is not banned on this website. However, if these sites are used to send people to misleading websites, this constitutes a violation of our rules. URL shortening services are a legitimate tool.

SECTION 1.16 TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT: THIS AGREEMENT MAY BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME BY EITHER PARTY.

- (a) Upon notice of termination, the volunteer moderator will be removed from such a position, but not before the agreement has ever been terminated, even after notice of such termination. Therefore, only after the volunteer is no longer in a position of authority on the website, will the agreement ever reach termination. This agreement can be terminated, at any given time, by giving written notification. However, until the site owner or administrative body of the forum removes your moderator privileges, you agree that you are still bound to these terms.
- (b) Without exemption, your use of the website itself, as a staff member, constitutes your complete, absolute agreement of the above aforementioned terms. All parties acknowledge that this is an agreement of goodwill and good conscience to promote a better website experience for all members.

End of Agreement

WINDOWS7FORUMS.COM MODERATOR GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of these guidelines are to help moderators and forum staff members understand the goal of moderation on Windows 7 Forums, and in what instances moderation may or may not be necessary.

2. PROTECT FREE EXPRESSION FOR BETTER OR WORSE

Moderators should adhere to a lassie-faire doctrine, unless there is a feeling that the forum is imminent danger, a person is being verbally abused or attacked, or spam is taking place. When "lassie-faire" is referenced, this is a coin termed to describe a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the forum users in things like setting up their user profiles, presenting information, arguing their points, and even going so far as complaining. There are and will be many people on the forums who are dissatisfied with Microsoft and hate Windows 7. This is a great thing, because without these people, and without any OS problems, there would be nothing to discuss, now would there? If someone posts an "I hate Windows 7" thread and "here's why", we must accept this as part of the discussion and allow a person to speak their peace. In the past, we have had people leave the forum because moderators have argued with these type of old school people who enjoy using outdated operating systems, etc.

3. INTERVENTION WHEN NECESSARY

Let us look at the policy of intervention. When is it okay to intervene? When a user goes well outside of standards and norms. Windows 7 Forums does not guarantee to protect individuals from sexually explicit material or curse words, but we do try to keep standards reasonable. For example, if someone starts using expletives (curse words) in a post, a moderator should politely ask that this user tone down their behavior with an explanation as to why this is the case. "We are a community of people interested in technology, and using vulgar language serves no purpose on this forum." <- This is a great example of a good explanation to a user. If they do not cooperate, then an infraction should be given to the user.

4. BAN ON SPAM

Any user spamming the forums should be banned. There are few exceptions to this rule, except where it is possible the user does not even realize they are spamming. In cases where someone has over 100 legitimate posts, but has a spammy type of gimmick going on (for example, a signature with ads all over it, or some kind of blog that boasts their website), we must carefully look at these cases and weigh the factors. While they have no doubt contributed to the forums, they are also plugging their own site. So in these instances, it is best to start a thread in the Staff Forum. In fact, whenever there is some controversy such as this, it should be discussed in the Staff Forum.

5. MULTIPLE MODERATORS WORKING A THREAD

Typical problem: A user does something that one moderator considers against the forum policies, and then another moderator does something to reverse that decision. This leads to three things happening.

- 1) The user is angry and never wants to use the forum again, or now looks down on the entire website.
- 2) The moderators are now in disagreement about what the forum policies actually are.
- 3) The forum policies and rules are actually undermined because no-one actually knows or can agree upon what they are.

In this instance wherever there is conflict, please immediately bring it to the attention of the staff forum once again, so the admins on the site can do their duty of solving this type of problem. If you see another moderator working a thread, try not to interfere. These are in the cases of rules violations and not just helping out by answering posts.

6. MEMBER HAS A RIGHT TO APPEAL ANY AND ALL MODERATOR DECISIONS

While this is not public on the site, any member of the site, banned or otherwise, has a right to appeal any and all moderator decisions, including the closing of threads, the removal of posts, the editing of posts, the deletion of posts, the request for removal of signature, the request of removal of avatar, etc. If this appeal is made, it should immediately be brought to the attention of the staff forum and the admins on the site, if they have not already appealed to one of the admins on the site.

7. YOUR ACTIONS AS A MODERATOR REPRESENT WINDOWS 7 FORUMS IN AN UNOFFICIAL CAPACITY, BUT A CAPACITY NONETHELESS.

Windows 7 Forums has become a big site. Your actions on the site determine many things. Your actions, words, and how you conduct yourself on the site determine how people look at the site as a legitimate resource, repository, and community. You are asked to behave in a way that goes above and beyond the way we ask users to behave. If you lose your cool and develop an angry demeanor, please stop for awhile and relax. Stop using the forums for a couple days. Do something that will not damage the reputation of the site. Many times there will be frustrating conversations, users, people, and everything. This is just what happens the bigger and bigger a community gets. The admins on the site are on your side and we will work to develop a solution when you can't find one. That is why we have a tiered system.

8. USERS CAN ARGUE AT YOU ABOUT YOUR ANSWERS TO THEIR QUESTIONS

Users of the forums can disagree with mostly everything, as long as they do it the right way. They can disagree with you about how to fix their computer. They can disagree about how to upgrade your home network. They can appeal your decisions if they so choose or desire to do so. The goal of being part of the Windows 7 Forums team does not involve the abuse of power, but the use of your privileges on the site to remove spam, clean-up argumentative threads, and try to help people as best as possible. Being a "Windows 7 Forums Super Moderator" does not make you an amazing person because you have a title. What you do once you become a moderator makes you great. If a user does not seem to want your help, rather than allow the condition to drag on, it is best to move along to the next post. If you suddenly find yourself in the position of being a moderator, this does not make you an authority on all things technology. Rather, it simply means you have the ability to stop the forums from becoming completely chaotic, overrun by spam, and filled with junk. No one said this was easy!

9. WINDOWS 7 FORUMS IS NOT A "G" RATED FORUM OR A "FAMILY" FORUM

Windows 7 Forums is primarily a computer and technology forum regarding Windows operating systems. It has nothing to do with protecting people from obscene or vulgar content. While there are some places where we must draw the line, we must also observe the rules of "lassie-faire" policies, unless the user is intentionally being a troll and starting trouble. This can easily be determined by looking at their post history and seeing what is going on. In the worst case scenario, if there is doubt, it should be brought up in the Staff Forums.

FOLLOW TERMS OF SERVICE GUIDELINES

The terms of service spell out for you what is allowed and what is prohibited. refer to these rules regularly at: [Forum Rules - Windows 7 Forums](#). Every scenario will be different. Every case will require a different level of action. Use logic and reasoning and not an authoritative mentality when making your decisions. People will respect and like you more on the forums.

THREAD/POST EDITING:

It should be unsaid protocol that posts should not be arbitrarily edited by the moderator, since often times this information will become unrecoverable. It is a preferred action, then, that the post be deleted before it is edited, unless such an edit is being made to correct a typographical error or problem in the post that the author may be unaware of.

THREAD/POST DELETION:

Moderators are not in the position to decide if a post is anachronistic, out of date, arbitrary, or no longer needed. Therefore, the only reason to delete an entire thread or post is if it violates the spam policy or so blatantly violates the rules, that absolutely no discussion of it is needed in the Staff Forum. It would be in the best interests of everyone if such deletions are discussed in the Staff Forum first. Even though a thread is "soft deleted" and recoverable, from time to time, the database is purged of soft deleted messages, and this will result in data loss if threads/posts are deleted for subjective reasons. This will also drive away members very quickly.

CLOSING THREADS:

Threads should only be closed when they go off-topic from the original poster's message, in such a way that the conversation has become pointless and convoluted. Threads should NOT be closed because they are old, answered, or otherwise solved.

Thank you for taking the time to read the agreement which you are now bound to as a volunteer staff member on Windows 7 Forums! This agreement has contained within it all of the rules you need to strictly follow the role of moderator.

Now it is time to explain how basic moderation duties work. All information can be covered using the following link:

http://www.vbulletin.com/docs/html/inline_moderation_thread

If you can familiarize yourself with most of this manual, and its contents, you will be well on your way to understanding how the forum moderation system works. While almost all moderation can be done in-line (on the page), some moderation does require logging into the Moderator Control Panel at:

<http://windows7forums.com/modcp/>

Basic moderation is performed through in-line editing. Tools are available for every post and thread to perform different type of point-and-click actions.

For further questions about moderation, please post in the Staff Forum.

The Question: What Constitutes Spam?

Time and time again, this question has been raised, both by moderators and members. Spam is any commercial link which is intentionally posted to direct users away from the website and onto a separate site. It is performed strictly for the purposes of gaining attention, an audience; et al. Spam is dangerous to an open community because it undermines the ability of legitimate members to get their ideas across. Spam discussions will sometimes be difficult to recognize, but may become easier by viewing all of a user's posts, as well as their signature, and listed homepage. If all of them fall under the same category, and they are basically posting very similar links, to different discussions, they are almost assuredly spamming the website. If a user is suspected of spam activity, and there is no doubt, you are authorized to immediately remove their access to the website and delete all of the spam posts.

What flexibility do you have as a moderator?

Once you earn the trust of the team, you have a great deal of flexibility in dealing with forum threats, as well as contributing a great wealth of knowledge to the website. While there are limits to what you can do as a moderator, and what you should do, members will look to you as an authority on the website. This puts you in a position of responsibility that cannot be abused, but also should not be abandoned. Our intent is to provide maximum flexibility to all moderators, but any actions taken by moderators which may seem doubtful should be discussed in the Staff Forum. Sometimes these actions will be reversed by administrators.

About Infractions

Infractions are the primary method you should use to place sanctions on users for violating the Terms of Service. After so many infractions are accumulated, an automatic ban is placed. However, no user posts are removed, even after the automatic ban is enacted.

5 Points – 24 hours

8 Points – 7 Days

10 Points – 1 Month

20 Points – Permanent

IN CONCLUSION,

Please use your privileges sparingly, but for the better good of the forum. It does not matter if you have hundreds of certifications or went to the best technical schools, this website is for everyone. Please abide by these guidelines and we can all work together to make Windows 7 Forums a better website.

Thank you for reading to, and adhering to these guidelines. If you have any questions, please see our sticky thread in the staff forum, preferably, or e-mail admin@windows7forums.com.