Interact Server Administration

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Obtaining a copy of Interact

The latest version of Interact can be downloaded from http://www.interactlms.org/. Here you will find details about the latest stable release as will as package downloads in several formats.

License

Interact is release under the GNU GPL [http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/gpl.html]

System Requirements

Interact was developed on Linux using PHP, Apache and MySQL. It has also been tested on Windows using EasyPHP, and on Mac OSX. It should run on any webserver and platform that can support php and mysql. The requirements for Interact are :

- Some sort of web server. Apache is the most common, but it should work under any server that can support PHP.

- PHP version 4.1.0 or higher, with the following settings:

  - *Safe Mode must be turned OFF*

  - Session support turned ON

  - File uploading turned ON

  - A mysql database server

If you are wanting to run Interact on a hosted server, ie. one that you don't have full control over, then make sure the above things are available before you sign up.

Installation Steps

1. Untar/Unzip the Interact installation package.

    If you want Interact to run in the root of your webserver, ie. Interact runs when you go to http://yourserver.com/, then copy all of the files in the interact/ directory to your webserver root direcory.

    If you want Interact to run in a sub-directory, ie. Interact runs when you go to http://yourserver.com/interact/, then copy the interact/ directory to your webserver root.

2. Edit the includes/config.inc.php file to reflect your server settings. If you are not sure what to enter for the $CONFIG['PATH'] and $CONFIG['BASE_PATH'] settings then go to http://yourserver.com/interact/admin/setup/ and here you will see details about what to enter for these settings.

3. Give your webserver user write access to the following directories

    local/modules/sharing

local/modules/file
local/modules/dropbox
local/modules/forum
local/modules/kb
local/users

eg. for linux if your webserver runs as nobody from the interact home directory type >chown nobody local/modules/sharing etc. For the users subdir use >chown -R nobody local/users in order to give write access to the subfolders for the two default users.

If you are on a hosted server with no shell access then you may be able to set the permissions for these folders via your ftp client. You will need to chmod all the above folders to 777

For Windows right click on the above folders and select Permissions - Security and add give your webserver user permissions to write to the above directories.

4. Create a databse in mysql and grant all to the username you are going to use to run interact, eg. create database interact; grant all on interact.* to interactuser@localhost identified by 'topsecretpassword';

5. Set 'magic_quotes_gpc=off' and 'php_flag register_globals off' in your php.ini file, or set in an htaccess file. A .htaccess file is included in the root interact directory by default. Rename this file from htaccess.txt to .htaccess

6. Set a cron job to run the admin/auto.php file every 5 minutes or so. This can be run with standalone version of PHP or invoked via the web server. Use a batch file and 'at' or schedule to do this if you are on a Windows platform. eg wget -q -O /dev/null 'http://interact.yourserver.com/admin/auto.php' or php /home/httpd/html/admin/auto.php

7. Go to http://yourserver.com/interact/admin/setup/ and run the database installation scripts

8. You should now be ready to run. Go to http://your.interactserver.com/

And log in with username = admin password = admin

The first thing you need to do is change the admin password. Do this by clicking on the Administrators name at the top left of the homepage.

9. In order for the 'unzip' option to work when upoading files you need to have an unzip utility (ftp://sunsite.unc.edu/pub/Linux/utils/compress/) or (http://www.info-zip.org/pub/infozip/UnZip.html for windows) installed and in your server path.

You will also need to install imagemagik (http://freealter.org/doc_distrib/ImageMagick-5.1.1/) if you want uploaded photos to be automatically resized (once installed you need to make sure 'mogrify' is in your server path settings).

10. **IMPORTANT SECURITY NOTE.** Make sure you have directory indexing/browsing switched off for all of the Interact directories otherwise users will be able to browse through uploaded dropbox files, etc.

Also, to prevent users uploading and running their own php files within the system add the following lines to your apache conf file, replacing the directory path with the path to your interact installation.

If you do not have access to your apache conf file then rename the htacess.txt file in the local subdirectory to .htaccess (AllowOverride needs to be on for this directory in order for this to work though).

```
<Directory "/home/httpd/interact/local/users">
AddType text/html .php .php3
</Directory>
<Directory "/home/httpd/interact/local/modules">
AddType text/html .php .php3
```

</Directory>

Upgrading an existing server

1. **BACKUP YOUR EXISTING INSTALLATION!!!!!.**

    Make a note of the $CONFIG['SECRET_HASH'] setting in the config.inc.php file as you will need to reset this exactly in the new config file if you want user's permanent cookie logins to keep working.

2. Uncompress the new Interact release package and copy all the files and directories from it, **EXCEPT** the local/ directory, into your existing interact directory.

    N.B Make sure you keep your existing local/ directory in your live interact directory as this folder contains all your uploaded files and user files.

3. Reset the config.inc.php file back to your local settings.

4. Go to http://yourserver.com/interact/admin/setup/ and follow any of the upgrade steps listed here

Chapter 2. Setup

Sites

Site Hierarchy

Once you have your server setup and running the first thing you need to do is add some sites so you can start adding content.

It is important at this stage to have some sort of mental model of how your server will be structured. Although you can move sites and sub-sites around at any time, it will save you time in the long run if you plan out your initial site structure

A site is the term used to denote a defined area within the system, and this can be anything from a specific course, to a general news and information area.

You can also add sub-sites to create a server heirarchy, so some sites may be nothing more than areas for organising the sites under it.

In the case of a learning environment you can add a site called Courses, then under that add a site for each subject area, then under that can be added the actual course sites where the staff can start adding there course content, eg.

- Courses

    - Science (here you could put information relevant to all science students)

        - SC101 (here the lecturer would add the actual content)

        - SC201

    - Maths

        - MS101

        - MS201

    - English

        - EN101

        - EN201

Or in the case of a corporate intranet your hierarchy could look more like this

- General News and Information (here you could put information relevant to all staff)

- Departments

  - Marketing

  - Sales

  - Engineering

Adding sites

You can add sites to your Interact Server in two ways

- On your server homepage click on the + icon in the 'Sites' banner.

- When logged in as an administrator you will see a link to 'Server Admin' in your navigation bar. Following this link will take you to a server admin page with options for adding sites in the navigation.

Adding sub-sites

There are also several ways to add a sub-site

- Go into the parent site and click on the + icon in the 'Sub sites' banner.

- Click on the small + next to the site name in the site listing.

- On the site settings page select the Parent site under Optional Settings.

Site Settings

When you add a new site, or modify an existing one you will see the following settings:

- **Name** - this is the name of the site, eg. Science for Beginnners, or General News & Info.

- **Short name** - this is an optional setting where you can enter an abbreviated name. This short name will display in the navigation bar and in the breadcrumbs. This is useful where the actual site name may be long, or where there is a recognised abbreviation for the site, eg. Science and Technology in an Educational Setting may also be know as ICT715.

- **Description** - the dscription will display when somebody mouses over the site name in the site listing pages.

- **Access** - there are three different access levels possible for any site:

  - *Open to logged in users* - if set to this then a site will be accessible to any user that is logged in to the server

  - *Open to public* - this allows a site to be accessed by anyone, even if not logged in to the server

  - *Restricted to members* - only members of a site can access it. Anybody that is not a member will be asked for an access code. The access code can be set on the Site Settings page.

- **Visibility** - if set to hidden then only server admins will be able to see the site

Optional Settings

On the site settings page there are also several optional settings:

- **Code** - by default the system will assign a random code to the site. You can also manually assign a code if you want to keep track of sites by your own coding system.

- **Copy another site** - instead of building each site from scratch you can copy an existing site. This will copy all of the components from the site being copied into the new one. If you select this option you need to enter the code of the site to be copied.

- **Combine short and long names on site hompage and site listing pages** - in some cases you may want the short and long names combined on the site listings page. This is manually useful for course sites where courses may be known by both long or short titles, eg. IT712 - Websites for teaching and Learning

- **Show members** - if set to now then the members link will not show in the site navigation bar. The site admin can still access the list of site members from the admin section, but site members will not be able to see who the other members of a site are.

- **Sort order** - by default on the site listing pages the sites will display alphabetically by name. If you want them to sort in a different order then you can set the sort order to a numeric value. A site with a sort order of 1 will display above a sort order of 2.

- **Parent site** - by default this will be set to the parent site to which the site is being added, or not set if site is being added at the top level. A site can have more than one parent, and so appear in more than one place. To assign more than one parent hold down your ctrl key (or cmd key on a mac).

Modifying/Deleting Sites

To modify or delete a site either click on the   icon next to the site name on the site homepage, or in the server admin pages follow the Modify/Delete option under the SIte navigation option.

Users

The Interact installing only comes with one default user account, the system administrator. In order to provide access to the server to other users you need to create user accounts.

Adding Users

There are several ways in which you can have user accounts added to the system:

- Create each account manually via the server admin pages. To do this access the Server Admin area and choose 'Add' under the User options in the navigation.

- Bulk upload user accounts via the server admin pages. You will see this option under the User options in the Server Admin pages. To use this option you need to have a tab delimited file with your user account details. Information about the format of this file can be found on the bulk upload page.

- Generate accounts from another database. In the /admin/users directory there is a sample file called dbupload.php. You will need to manually edit this file to work with your existing user database.

- Allow users to create their own accounts. On the login page there is a link to 'Add your account here' and users can follow this link and add their own account. If you want to restrict who can do this you can assign an access code in the includes/config.inc.php file to restrict access to this option.

- Allow site admins to create accounts. If you set $CONFIG['DEVOLVE_ACCOUNT_CREATION'] to 1 in the conifg.inc.php file then individual site admins can create accounts for their users.

User Settings

When adding user accounts the following settings are available:

- **Username** - this is a unique username and must contain only letters and numbers and be at least 5 characters long.

- **Password** - must contain only letters and numbers and be at least 5 characters long.

- **First name** - the users first name.

- **Last name** - the users last name.

- **Email** - a current email address for the user. This must be an external email address. Interact does not provide any email accounts, all email messages generated by Interact are forwarded to the users existing email address.

- **Access level** - the access level denotes the areas and functions that a user has access to:

  - *Super Admin* - can access all areas of a server and has access to all functionality. This level should be limited to a small number of overall server admins.

  - *Admin* - at this stage this access is reserved for future system developments, a user with this access level presently has no more access rights than a normal user.

  - *User* - a standard server user. The access levels of this user are dependant on their site/group memberships.

  - *Guest* - can access sites that are open, or which they are members of but can't post messages, upload content, etc.

  - *Permanent Guest* - same as guest, but user is unable to change user settings, password, etc.

  The access level can only be assigned when adding users through the Server Admin pages, or via bulk upload. When users or site admins create accounts they are automatically assigned and access level of User.

- **Groups** - user groups can be used to organise users. The main use of groups at present is to automatically assign users to default sites .Users can be assigned to more than one group.

- **ID number** - the ID Number field can be used to enter an institutional ID number, eg. a Student ID number. This number can then be used when adding users to sites or groups.

- **Details** - The details field can be used to enter a short bio on the user. This information can then be viewed by other users in the site members list.

- **Photo** - A jpg or gif photo of the user can be uploaded. This photo can then be viewed in the site members list, or added to forum postings.

In addition to the above settings, a user can set the following settings on their own account once they are logged in:

- **Always load editor when available** - if set to use then the built in html editor will always load on pages where it is available. If set to No then the user gets an 'Easy Edit' button on these pages and they can choose to start the editor by clicking this button if they wish.

- **Flag displayed posts as read** - if set to Yes then a forum posts status will be set to 'Read' if displayed on the users screen. If set to No then the user must manually flag the post as read.

User Groups

Users can be assigned to User Groups in order to control which sites they are members of by default. In future releases the User Groups will also be used to manage bulk maintenance of groups of users.

Adding User Groups

To add a new user group go into the Server Admin pages and select Add under the User Group settings. You need to enter a name for the group. The option to assign an Account Creation Password is for functionality in a future release that will allow you to provide account creation links that automatically assign users to certain groups.

Modifying/Deleting

To modify or delete a User Group select the Modify/Delete option under User Groups in the Server Admin area. Deleting a User Group will automatically remove all user links to that group, but will not remove the user accounts of the group members.

Set Default Sites

Using this option you can automatically give membership of certain sites to group members, eg. you can automatically make all members of the Staff User Group members of the Staffroom site. You can specify any number of default sites for each usergroup.

If you set the 'Permanent' flag then users are not able to remove themselves as members of the site.

Modify/Delete User

To modify or delete a user use the 'User lookup' option under Users in the Site Admin section.

Assign Membership

Via the Server Admin interface 'Assign Membership' option you can make users members of individual sites with different access levels. Users can also become members of sites by self enrolment, or by being given membership by the site admin.

Components

The Server Admin can control the setup of the following components:

- **Gradebook** - the default grading scales for the Gradebook component can be specified by the server admin. There are a number of default scales pre-installed which can be modified, and new scales can be added. See the Gradebook section in the Site Admin manual for details about the grading scales and their use.

- **KnowledgeBase** - the default templates for the KnowledgeBase component can be specified by the server admin. There are a number of default templates pre-installed which can be modified, and new templates can be added. See the KnowledgeBase section in the Site Admin manual for details about the templates and their use.

Icons

You can add alternative icons to be used in place of the default system icons. These icons will be available to choose when site admins add new components.

You can add a small and large version of the icon. The small version will display in the navigation bar, and the large version will display at the top of the content section when the component is selected.

Modifying templates/styles

You can change the look of your Interact server by editing the stylesheet and templates.

To edit the stylesheet open interactstyle.php in a text editor. Although this is a .php file it outputs .css settings.

The main templates you will need to edit to change the look of your server are Header.ihtml and Footer.ihtml and these can be found in the templates directory. These can be opened in any text/html editor.

When editing these files take care not to alter the {SOME_TEXT} parts. Any text chunks enclosed in {} are replaced by the system at run time. The side navigation bar template can be found in templates/Navigation.ihtml.

Chapter 3. Maintenance

There is little ongoing maintenance required for an Interact Server other than adding and removing sites or user accounts. As long as you set up the cron job mentioned in the installation process the following server maintenance tasks will be automated:

- Stale user accounts will be deleted (set the number of days to keep stale accounts in the includes/config.inc.php file)

- Old news items will be deleted as long as the user has set the date to remove

- Old calendar events will be deleted as long as the user set the date to remove

- Components in trash will be deleted (set the number of days to keep items in trash in the includes/config.inc.php file)