

www.ncsl.org.uk

A series of overlapping red concentric circles of varying sizes, creating a dynamic, abstract pattern across the center of the page.

talk2learn

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Accessing talk2learn

Logging on via the Learning Gateway

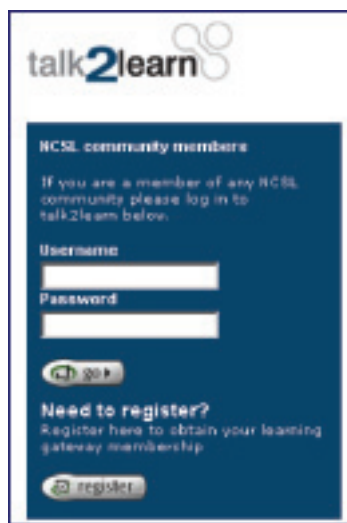
To access talk2learn, all members will log on via the NCSL Learning Gateway, using their existing username and password.

Click the talk2learn button on the home page of NCSL's website.



The talk2learn login screen will be displayed. Simply enter your existing talk2learn (or Learning Gateway) username and password here and click the 'go' button.

NB: Your username and password are not case-sensitive.

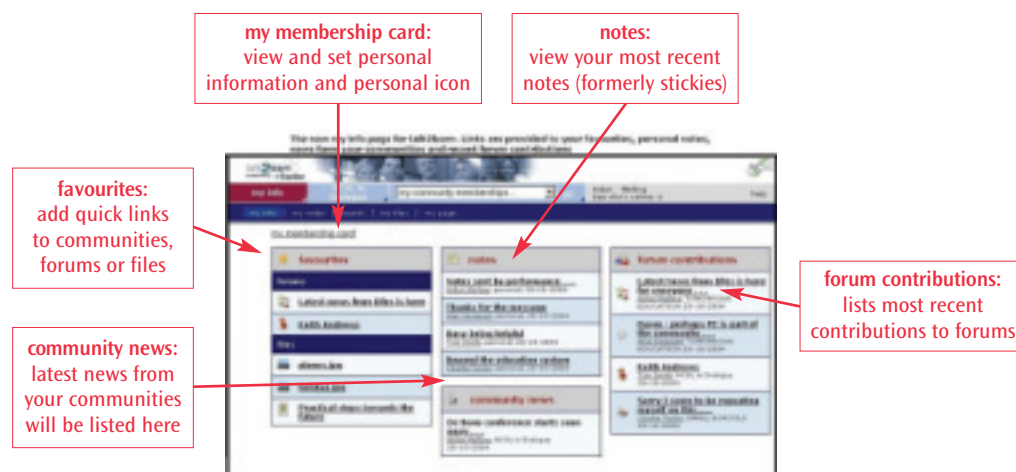
The talk2learn login screen. At the top is the 'talk2learn' logo. Below it is a dark blue box with white text. The text reads: 'NCSL community members', 'If you are a member of any NCSL community please log in to talk2learn below.', 'Username', 'Password', and a 'go' button. Below this is the text: 'Need to register?', 'Register here to obtain your learning gateway membership.', and a 'register' button.

My info

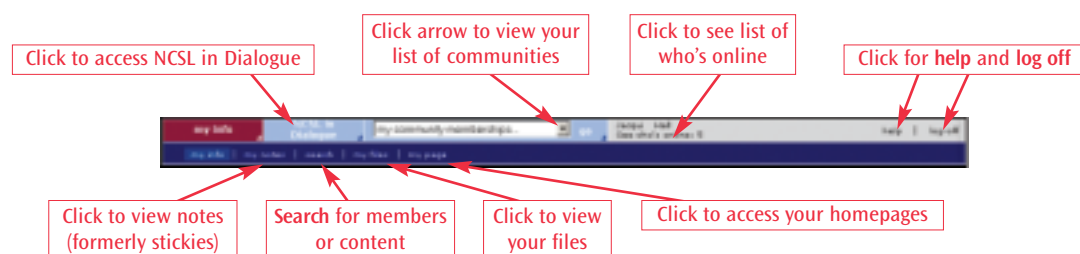
My info

The starting point on first logging in is **my info**. From here you can access much of the content of talk2learn, as well as receiving updates on community activity. It provides:

- access to your favourite items
- alerts to new notes and new messages in forums, and to community news posted by tutors and facilitators
- access to your talk2learn preferences



Tabs, drop-down list of communities and toolbar

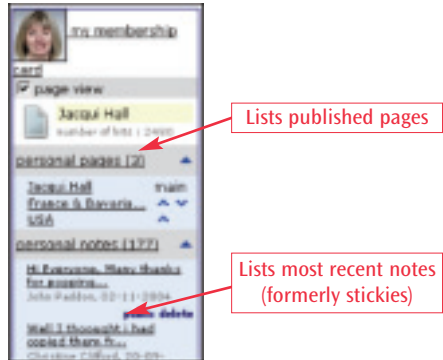


My info

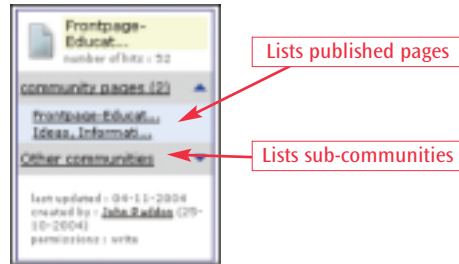
Left-hand frame

The left-hand frame provides different information according to whether you are in your personal pages or in a community.

Left-hand frame in personal pages:



Left-hand frame in a community:

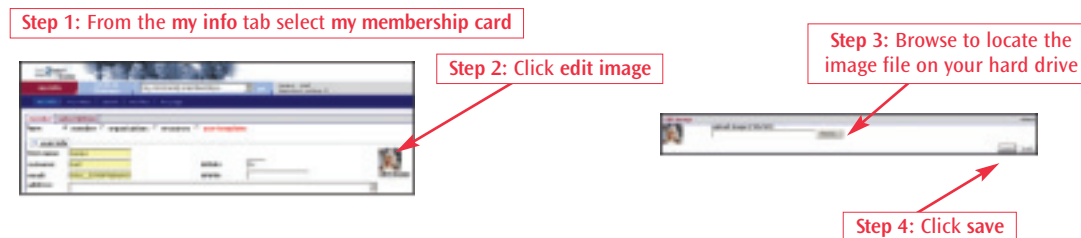


Back and refresh buttons

Avoid using the back and refresh buttons on the browser as they will usually return you to the my info page.

Adding a personal icon

talk2learn encourages all users to have details about themselves on their homepage and to have a personal icon which displays alongside all their contributions. To add a personal icon:



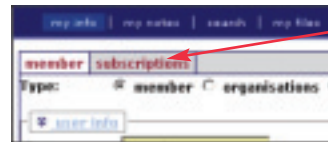
My info

Adding an email alert

Daily or weekly email alerts giving updates to the **my info** page can be set up. Before doing so, it is essential to enter a current email address in the Learning Gateway (log on to the Learning Gateway and select Profile→Contact Details).

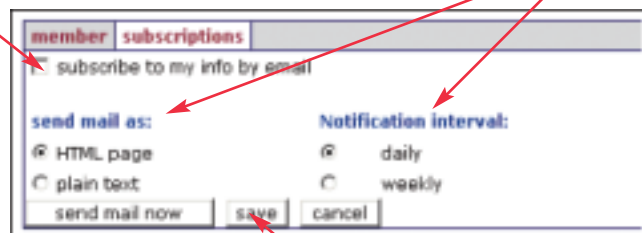
To set up an e-mail alert:

Step 1: From the my info tab select my membership card



Step 2: Click subscriptions

Step 3: Tick subscribe to my info by email



Step 4: Select options as appropriate

Step 5: Click save

Working with different communities

All about communities

A vibrant community is reliant on its members making regular contributions to items within the community. talk2learn has many communities in which members can contribute. A suggested starting point is NCSL in Dialogue which will point users to many of the discussions which are taking place in talk2learn. The majority of talk2learn users have access to NCSL in Dialogue. To see other communities to which you have access click on the drop-down list of communities and select the one you wish to work with.



Click to view your community list

If you cannot see all your communities in the drop-down list, you can add them from the **all my communities** list.

Step 1: Click all my communities in the drop-down

Step 2: Tick box alongside communities you wish to add to list



Step 3: Click add to favourite communities

Working with different communities

What's in a community

Communities are made up of a variety of different tools that allow members to contribute in different ways. These tools are called forums and they encourage collaboration and discussion. The forum tools include:

- 🗨 Conversations: unthreaded contributions
- 🗨 Discussions: contributions are divided into topics and threads
- 🗨 Debate: contributions are colour coded according to the debating position taken
- 💡 Brainstorms: ideas can be contributed anonymously
- 🗨 Hotseats: contributors can ask questions of a hotseat guest

talk2learn also has a range of new tools including votes, surveys, chat, whiteboard and instant messages.

Finding your way around

The front page of a community will give you access to a variety of the tools listed above. The community might also have further pages with other items to contribute to or read.



Working with different communities

Making a contribution in a forum

To make a contribution:

Step 1: Select the community you wish to work with from the drop-down list

Step 2: Click on the heading of the item to which you wish to contribute

Step 3: Read through previous contributions

Step 4: If contribution text box is not visible, click contribute opinion to see it

Step 5: Enter your contribution here

Step 6: Click contribute

All forums have a feature which allows for a collapsed view showing only the first few words of the contribution, the name of the contributor and the date.

Remove tick to return to detailed view of forum

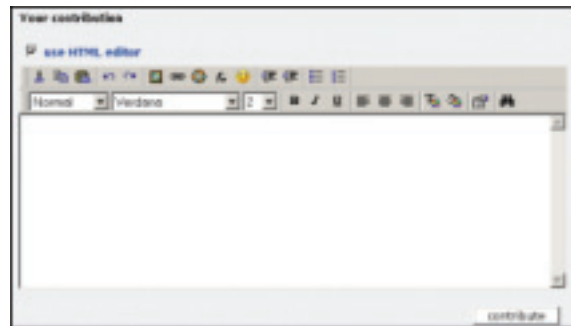
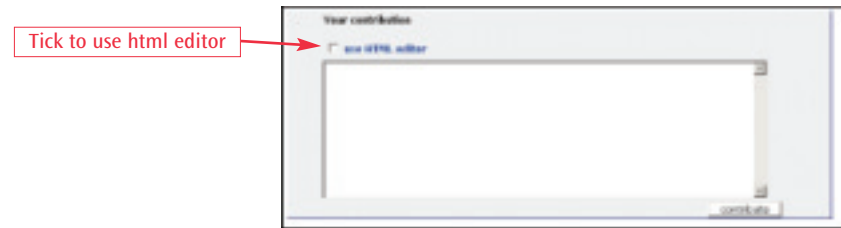
topic	Drivers of Education in the Future	written by	date	read by
01 Drivers of Education in the Future	John Padden	27-10-2004	7	
02 Online Communications	John Padden	27-10-2004	7	
03 The government will always be the main driver of...	John Padden	27-10-2004	8	
04 It is not sure that I would agree with that Matt...	John Padden	28-10-2004	4	
05 It has to be said that I probably agree with M...	Sude Clark	28-10-2004	4	
06 I agree but for a different reason. I think the...	Sude Clark	28-10-2004	6	
07 Will the children make the changes?	Sude Clark	28-10-2004	6	
08 Yes Sude and shouldnt we be bringing them in...	John Padden	28-10-2004	4	
09 I think that is some of the more progressive d...	Sude Clark	28-10-2004	4	
10 Thinking along those lines brings in a whole ne...	John Padden	29-10-2004	2	

NB: Steps may vary according to whether you are contributing to a conversation, discussion or debate.

Working with different communities









Using the html editor

Using the html editor allows you to easily include paragraph and line breaks and enhance your contributions with bold, italics, different fonts, coloured text and bullet points.









The html editor has a standard and formatting toolbar with a range of features. Hover your mouse over the icons to find out what they do.

Standard toolbar

-  Cut, copy and paste: use as in other Windows programs
-  Undo/redo: use as in other Windows programs
-  Insert image: images must first be uploaded into the filing area of the community. Click on the insert image icon to see a list of all images in the community filing cabinet. Click the image name to insert it into your contribution.
-  Insert hyperlink: allows you to insert a link to a website. Ensure you provide the whole web address including the http://
-  Insert internal link: allows you to link to another resource within talk2learn
-  Insert smiley: click to insert a range of smileys into your contribution
-  Indent/outdent: use as in other Windows programs
-  Bullets/numbering: select text and click icon to add bullet points or a numbered list

Formatting toolbar

-  Styles: provides a range of pre-set heading styles
-  Fonts: choose from a range of fonts
-  Font size: choose from a range of font sizes
-  Bold/italic/underline
-  Alignment: left, centre or right aligned
-  Text colour: select text and choose colour
-  Background colour: select text and apply a background colour
-  Properties and search

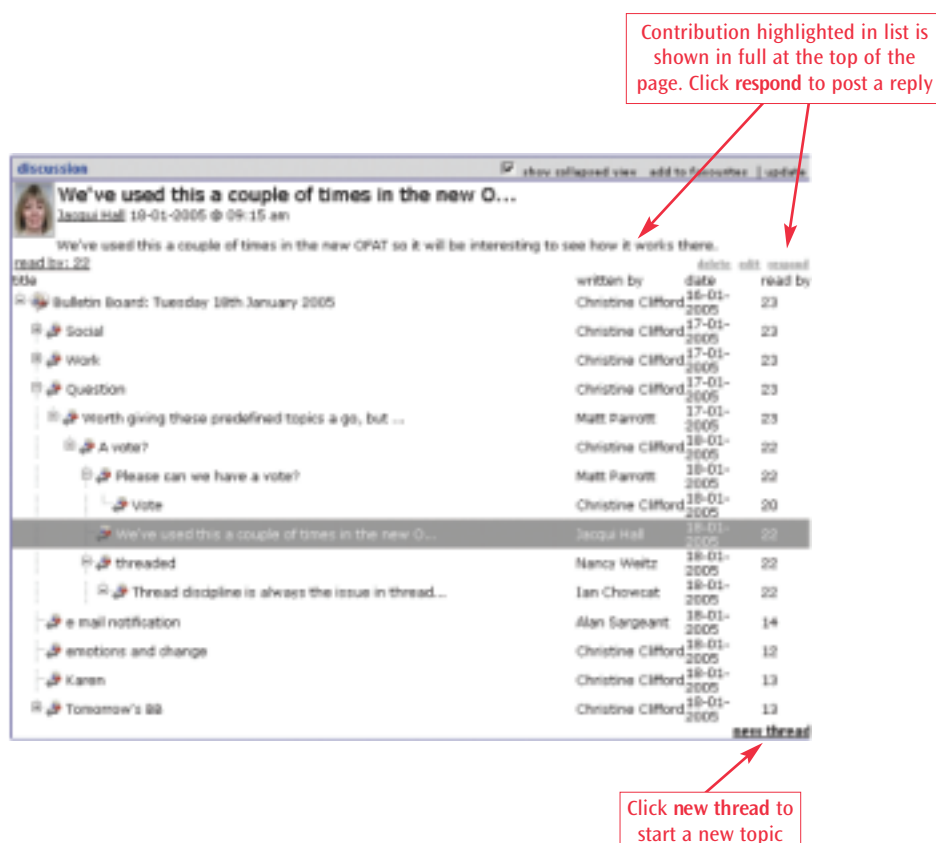
Working with different communities

Contributing to a discussion

The discussion tool provides topic based discussions in which contributions on the same topic can be linked together. These are known as threaded discussions. When contributing to a discussion you will need to decide whether (1) you wish to start a completely new thread or (2) respond to an existing topic. The following screenshot shows the discussion in expanded view.



In collapsed view, the discussion displays the first few words of each contribution. Clicking on any item will display the full contribution at the top of the page.



Working with different communities

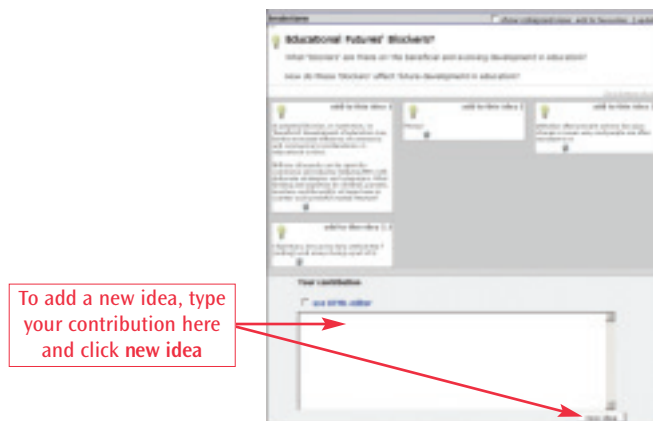
Contributing to a debate

The debate tool requires contributors to take up a position in the debate.



Contributing to a brainstorm

An important feature of the brainstorm tool is that all contributions are anonymous. Add your contribution to the text box and click **new idea**.



Contributing to a hotseat

A hotseat allows community members to ask questions either of a hotseat guest or of each other.

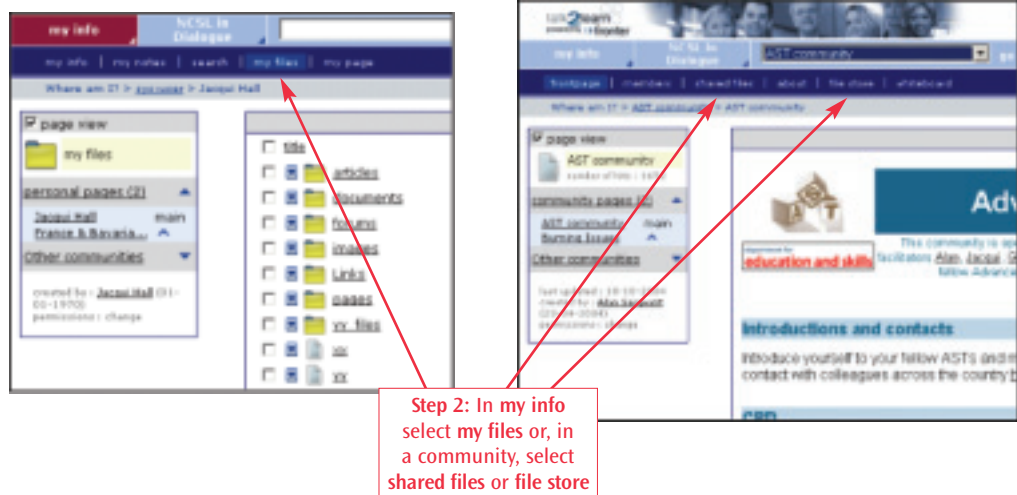


Setting up forums and other items

As we have already seen, talk2learn provides a variety of different tools that can be used to encourage sharing and collaboration amongst community members and encourage users to contribute to various types of discussion. The tools available include conversations, discussions, debates, brainstormers and hotseats. In many communities, and in your own **my info** area, you can set up and publish forums and other items such as articles and images.

Setting up a forum

Step 1: Select the community in which the item is to be placed or, if it is to be placed on your personal page, ensure your starting point is **my info**



Step 3: Select new forum

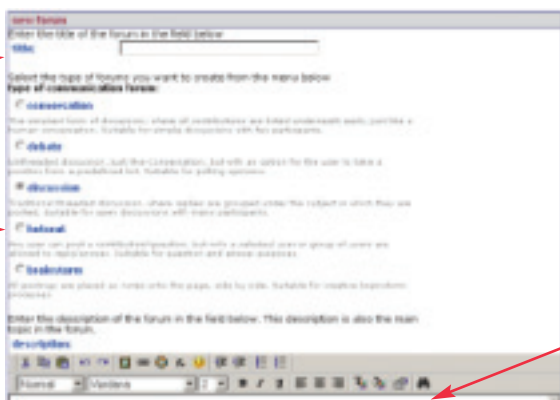


Setting up forums and other items

Step 4: Add a title

Step 5: Select type of forum

Step 6: Enter the detailed description of the forum



Step 7: Set start and end date

Step 8: Click Save



You may be prompted to complete other options according to the type of forum selected.

Depending on where you created the item, it will be stored either in **shared files** or the **file store** of the community or in **my files** in the **my info** area. It will remain there until you decide to publish it on a page.

Editing a forum

To make amendments to the text of a forum.

Step 1: Open the forum

Step 2: Click edit



Setting up forums and other items

Setting up an article

Step 1: Select the community in which the item is to be placed or, if it is to be placed on your personal page, ensure your starting point is my info

Step 2: In my info select my files or, in a community, select shared files or file store.

Step 3: Select new object



Step 4: Give the article a title

Step 5: Select articles



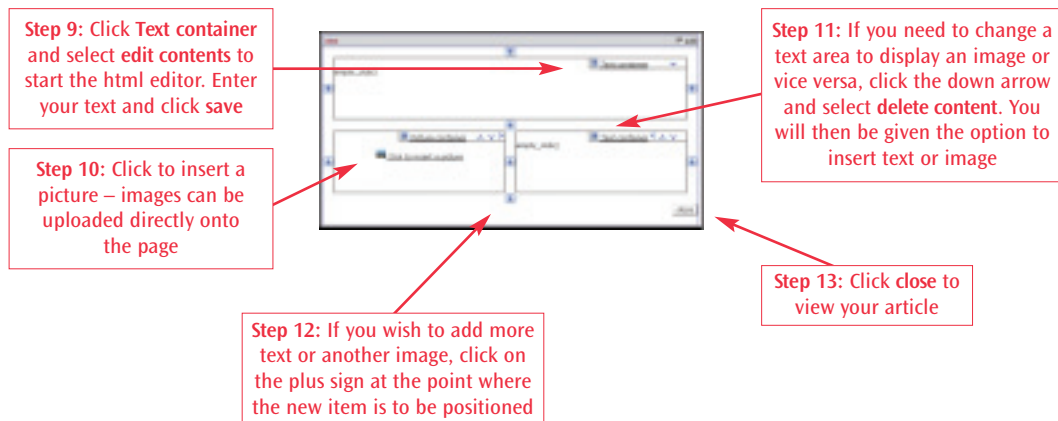
Step 6: Click save

Step 7: Choose a template to make it easy to arrange text and images



Step 8: Click next

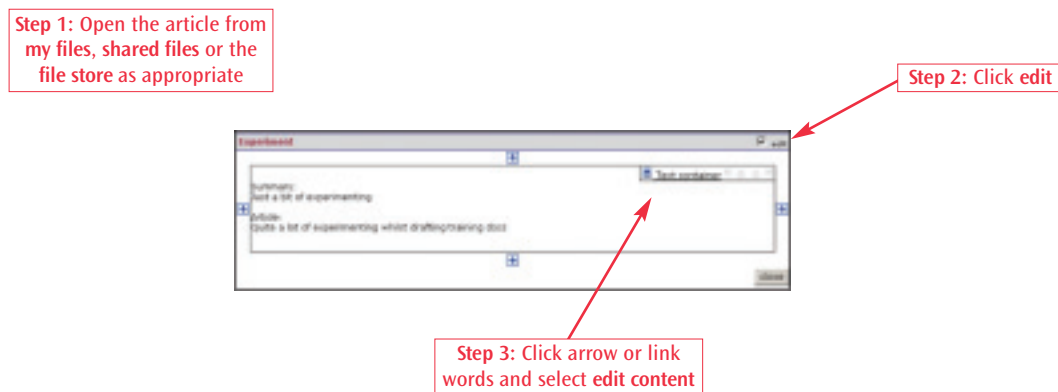
Setting up forums and other items



Depending on where you created the item, it will be stored either in **shared files** or the **file store** of the community or in **my files** in the **my info** area. It will remain there until you decide to publish it on a page.

Editing an article

If you need to make changes to the article:



Setting up forums and other items

Uploading a file

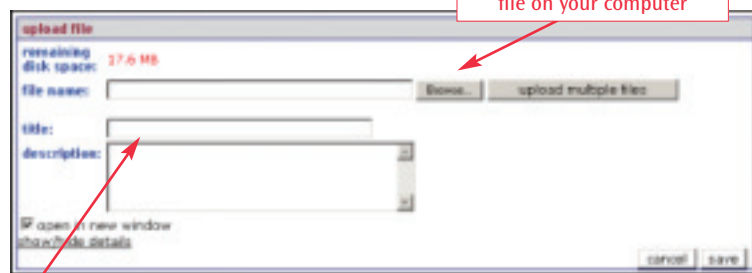
The file upload feature can be used for uploading files such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint as well as image files in .jpeg or .gif format. Multiple files can also be uploaded rather than having to upload each file individually.

Step 1: Select the community in which the item is to be placed or, if it is to be placed on your personal page, ensure your starting point is my info

Step 2: In my info select my files or, in a community, select shared files or file store.



Step 3: Select upload file



Step 4: Browse to locate the file on your computer

Step 5: Give the file a title - description is optional

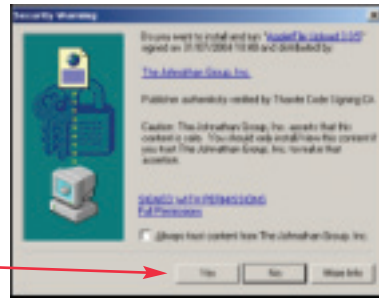
Step 6: Click save

Uploading multiple files

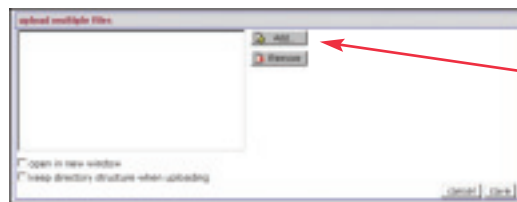


Step 1: Follow steps 1 and 2 above and then click upload multiple files

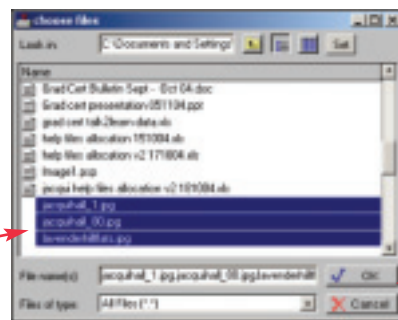
Setting up forums and other items



Step 2: Click Yes to install applet

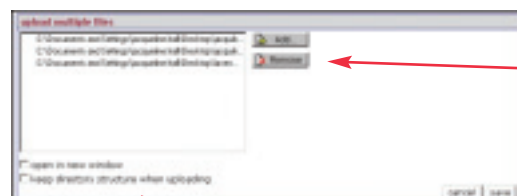


Step 3: Click Add...



Step 4: Locate and select the files to upload

Step 5: Click OK



Step 6: Check the list.
Any unwanted files can
be selected and removed

Step 7: Select appropriate options and click save -
files should now be visible in the file store

All about pages

All users of talk2learn have individual pages that can be used to publish information about themselves or their interests. All communities also have pages on which information is published to their members. As a starting point, all communities and all users have a page allocated to them. More pages can easily be added as required.

A variety of different items can be placed on pages. Some items such as text, images, spaces, lines, or votes can be placed immediately on the page by clicking on that option on the page template and following the instructions. Forums and articles need to be created first in the **my files** area or in the **file store/shared files** area of a community.

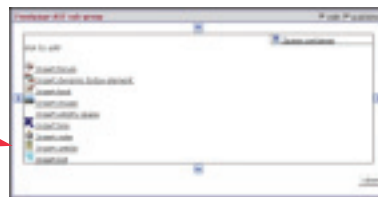
The steps described below apply to both community pages and individual users' pages.

Adding a forum or article to a page



Step 1: Go to the page you wish to edit and place a tick in the edit box at the top right of the page

Step 2: To insert a forum or an article that you have already set up in the files, click **Insert forum** or **Insert article** as appropriate



All about pages

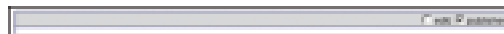
Step 3: Choose the appropriate file store



Step 4: Choose correct folder or click on file store folder to display items. Then select the correct item from the list that displays

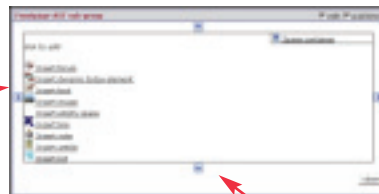
Step 5: Your item will now appear on the page. Click close to view it

Adding other items to a page



Step 1: Go to the page you wish to edit and place a tick in the edit box at the top right of the page

Step 2: Click on appropriate item to add text, image, empty space, line or vote



Step 3: If you wish to add more items, click on the plus sign at the point at which the new item is to be positioned

All about pages

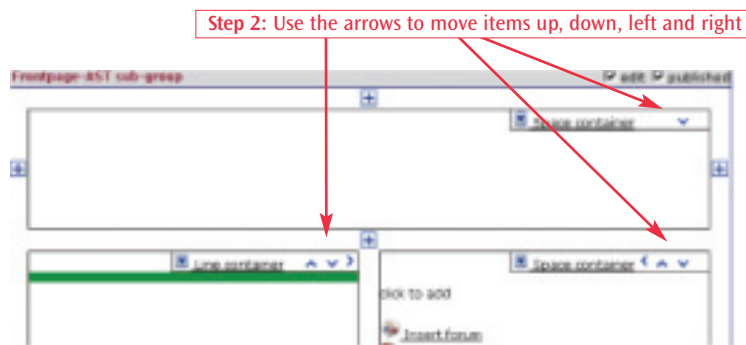
To add the following items:

- Text:** the html editor will display and you can type text directly into it (see page 9)
- Image:** you can either select the image from the file store or upload an image directly
- Empty space:** you will be prompted to set thickness and alignment
- Line:** you will be prompted to set thickness, alignment and colour
- Vote:** you will need to complete the title of the vote, the question and alternative responses. Further response boxes can be added by clicking **add alternative**.

Moving an item on a page

Items can be easily moved around on pages.

Step 1: Go to the page you wish to edit and place a tick in the edit box (top right)



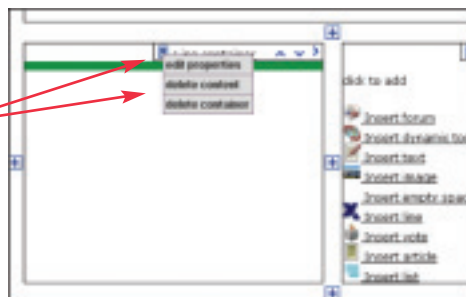
Step 3: Click close

All about pages

Deleting an item from a page

Step 1: Go to the page you wish to edit and place a tick in the edit box (top right)

Step 2: Click down arrow and select **delete content** – this will leave the container in place. **Delete container** will remove content and container



Step 3: Click close

Adding more pages

Each community will automatically have a page available for publishing items which is viewable by all community members. Every user also automatically has his/her own page and this is viewable by all talk2learn users. However, if one page is not enough, more pages can easily be added.

Step 1: Select the community in which the new page is to be added or, if you wish to add a new page in your own personal area, ensure your starting point is **my info**

Step 2: In **my info** select **my files** or, in a community, select **shared files** or **file store**

Step 3: Select new object



All about pages

Step 4: Click pages and enter a title



Step 5: Click save

Step 6: Choose a template
(this can always be
changed later)



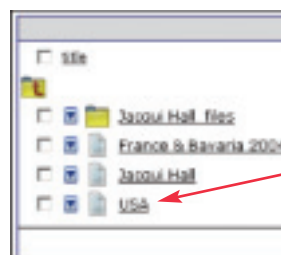
Step 7: Click next and your
page will display ready to
receive new items

Publishing a page

New pages added following the above instructions will not automatically be published but they will be saved in the file store. To publish a page:

Step 1: Select the community
in which the new page is to
be published or, if it you wish
to publish a new page in your
own personal area, ensure
your starting point is my info

Step 2: In
my info select
my files or, in
a community,
select shared
files or file store



Step 3: Click to open
the page that you
wish to publish. NB
you may need to
open a folder to see
the page

All about pages

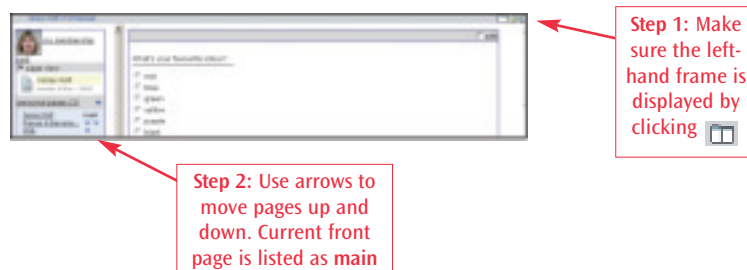


Hiding a page

If you no longer want the page to be viewable you can 'un-publish' the page by removing the tick from the box. The page will remain in the file store in case you wish to publish it again at a later date.

Re-ordering pages

Pages are displayed in the order indicated in the left-hand frame but this order can be changed at any time. The main front page is the one that is viewable on first entering a community or visiting a user's personal pages.



My files, file store and folders

Within **my files** or the community **file store** (or **shared files**) it is possible to:

- drag and drop files into folders;
- drag and drop folders into other folders;
- delete, copy or move individual files and folders;
- mass delete, copy or move files and folders;
- copy files and folders into different communities.

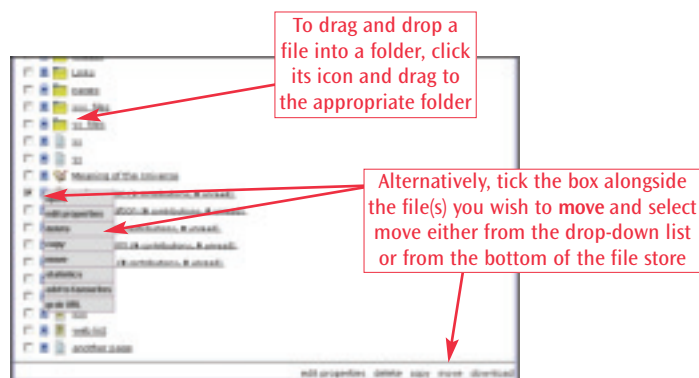
The filing areas also provide the facility to set up new items, including new pages, articles and forums.

Moving files into folders

Step 1: Select the community in which you wish to work or go to **my info** if you want to work with your personal files

Step 2: In my info select **my files** or, in a community, select **shared files** or **file store**

Step 3:



Notes (formerly stickies)

Sending a note

Notes (or stickies in the previous version of talk2learn) provide a quick means of communicating directly with other talk2learn users. There are a number of ways to send notes:

Method 1

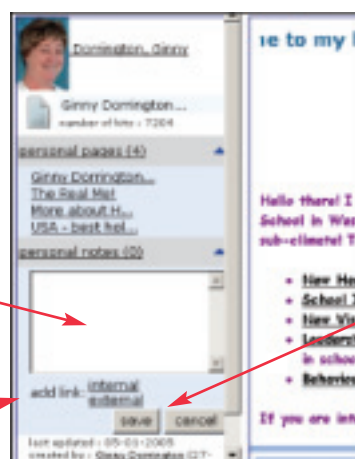
Step 1: Go to the home page of the user to whom the note is to be sent – either click on the user's name in a forum or use search on the my info page

Step 2: Click new note



Step 3: Enter text here

Step 4: If appropriate add links to items within talk2learn or to external websites



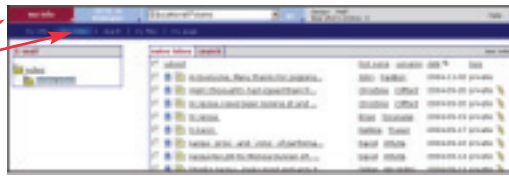
Step 5: Click save

Step 6: Click OK to confirm that you want to send the note

Notes (formerly stickies)

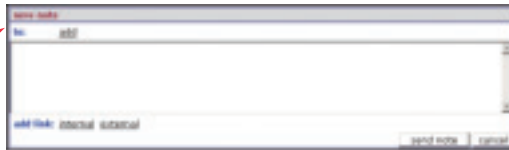
Method 2

Step 1: From the my info tab select my notes



Step 2: Select new note

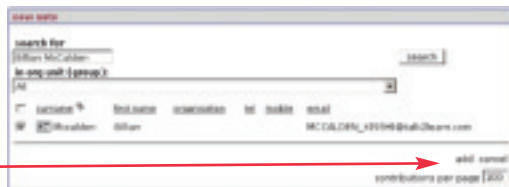
Step 3: Click add to search for user name



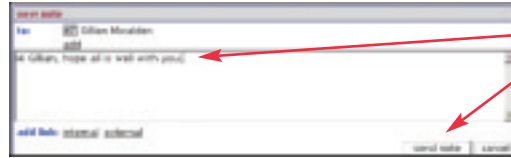
Step 4: Enter name of person to whom note is to be sent and click search



Step 5: Place tick next to name and click add



Notes (formerly stickies)



Step 6: Enter text for your note and click send note

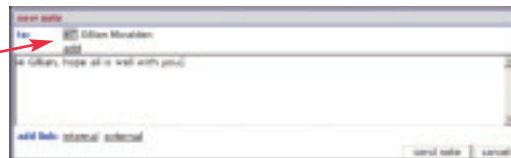
Step 7: Confirmation that note has been sent will appear – click OK

Method 3

Sending notes to multiple users

Follow steps 1-5 above

Step 6: Click add again and search for another name. Repeat this until all names are added



Notes (formerly stickies)

Method 4

You can send a note to all or some of the members of one community.

Step 1: Go to the community and click members on the blue bar

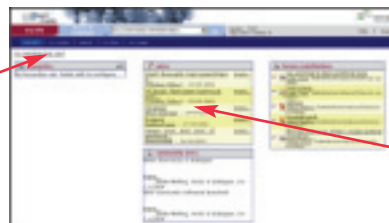
Step 2: Click tick box alongside individuals' names. Alternatively tick box at top of list or alongside choose all (from bottom of list) to select all members of the community



Step 3: Click send note

Reading notes

Notes can also be viewed from my notes



Most recent notes can be accessed from the my info page

Deleting notes

Step 1: Select message(s)



Step 2: Select delete

Making notes public

By default notes are private and only you can see them. To make a note public, so that all members of a community or all visitors to your page can read it, follow the steps for deleting notes but choose the public option.

Who's online and instant messaging

Who's online

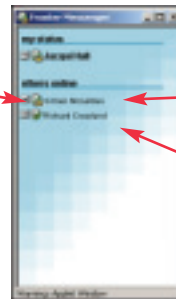


Click to see
who's online

Sending an instant message

Instant messaging is a one-to-one synchronous communication that allows you to send and receive messages to another person who is currently online.

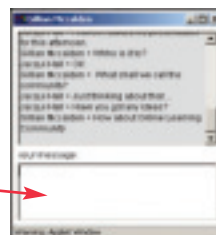
Yellow envelope indicates
message sent/received



List shows
who's online

Step 1: Click name
to chat synchronously
with that person

Step 2: Type your
message here –
press Enter (on
keyboard) to send

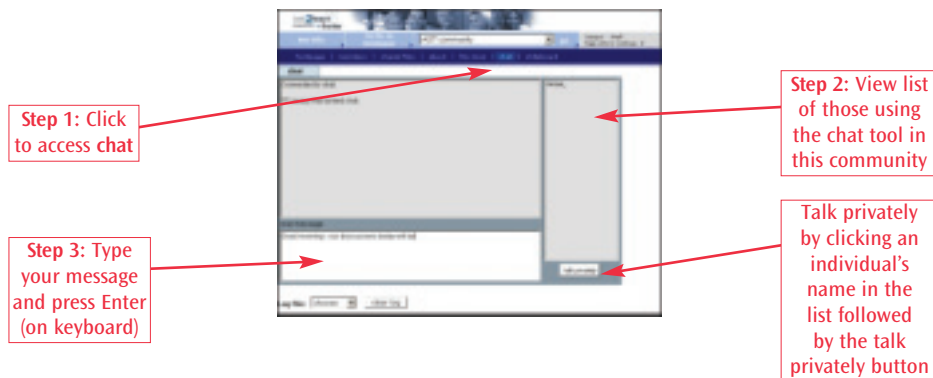


Chat and whiteboard

talk2learn now provides two synchronous communication tools: chat and whiteboard. Chat provides a facility for a group of users to meet online at a specified time for real time discussion. The whiteboard again enables synchronous online communication in a graphical interface allowing discussion to take place around diagrams, flow charts, pictures and other images.

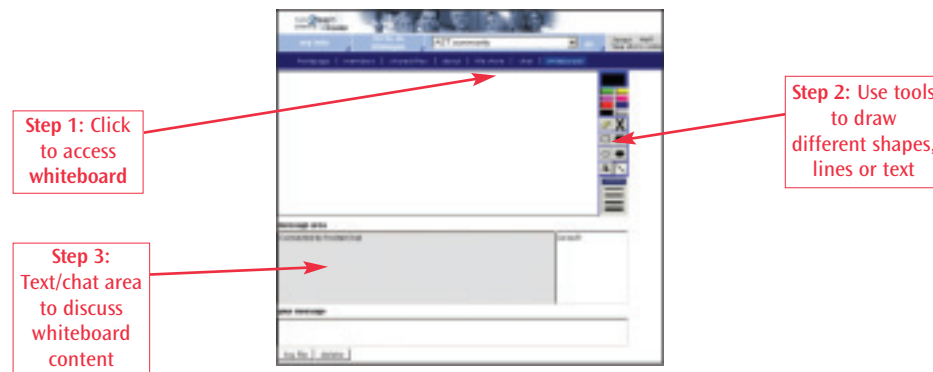
Using chat

The chat tool will not necessarily be available in all communities. It is for the community manager to decide whether to add the tool.



Using the whiteboard

The whiteboard tool will not necessarily be available in all communities. It is for the community manager to decide whether to add the tool.



Support

NCSL Helpdesk tel: 0845 601 3032

email: ncsl.support@bt.com

For more information about talk2learn online communities and the learning gateway visit www.ncsl.org.uk

