

Cookbook

CrowdAsk

CrowdAsk: Question and Answer Sites

Administrator Manuals, Configuration and Guides

Version 1.0

The systems are further developed based on Question2Answer by Gideon Greenspan.

Question and Answer Sites

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Overview

Welcome to the Cookbook of CrowdAsk Question and Answer system. CrowdAsk is a library and research help system that allows students, instructors and librarians to answer students' questions on one interface and allows students to ask open questions related to course management, library service and research resources.

The project was originally forked from an open source project named Question2Answer by Gideon Greenspan. We further developed new features and new theme to make it fit to library and research theme.

Server

1. Web server such as Apache
2. PHP 5.x
3. MYSQL 5.x

Client

Standard View:

Most browsers are supported. (As long as the browser versions are not too old)

Mobile View:

Supported.

Supported Features

User Levels

In crowdAsk, there are the following user levels:

Registered

Expert

Editor

Moderator

Administrator

Users below moderator are points based, i.e. the system will automatically change a user's level based on the user's reputation.

Moderators are generally statistically assigned. For example, teaching assistants for a class are moderators.

Administrators are almost the highest user levels and are assigned to web owners.

Besides the above normal users, there is a level called super administrators. These users accounts are used to manage system plugins and code related functionalities. Consult developers to change something.

The following table lists the default points for point based user levels.

User Levels	Default Points
Registered	100
Expert	400
Editor	800

These parameters are set in the codes. Generally it is not advisable to change them after the web site has stored much user information. Please consult developers to change something.

Login

CrowdAsk supports local login and open login.

To create a local account, users may click on “Register” link in the topmost grey login bar.



Fill in necessary information to create a crowdask account.

A screenshot of the 'Register as a new user' form. The form has a title 'Register as a new user' and four input fields: 'Username:', 'Password:', 'Email:', and 'Anti-spam verification:'. The 'Anti-spam verification' field contains a CAPTCHA image with the text '82645546'. Below the input fields is a 'Register' button. There is also a 'Privacy & Terms' link.

Additionally, the easiest way is to use openID to login.

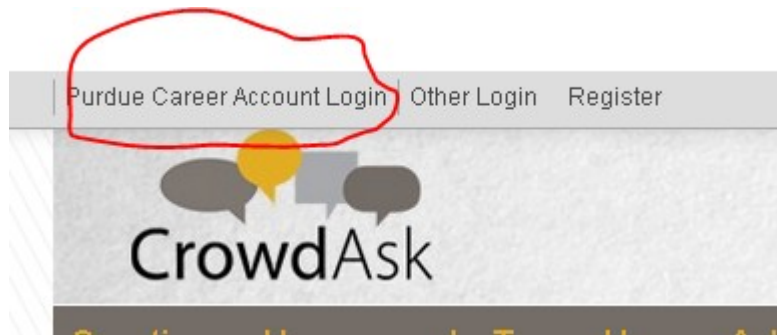
Click on other login link in the topmost grey login bar. Users can login with School, Google, Facebook or Twitter accounts.

Log in

A screenshot of the 'Log in' page. The page has a title 'Log in' and a subtitle 'Login through an external provider'. Below the subtitle is a text box that says 'Choose a service provider from the list below to login without creating an account on this site.' Below the text box are four buttons: 'myPurdue', 'log in with facebook', 'log in with Google', and 'log in with twitter'.

OpenID log-in is safe. CrowdAsk does not store users' account passwords.

In the meanwhile, School members are encouraged to use their School Career Accounts. There is a shortcut in the topmost grey login bar.

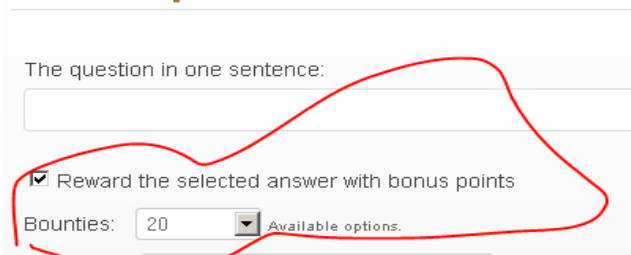


Ask a Question

After login, users are able to ask questions. Clicking “Ask a Question” button in the main menu, it brings users to a “ask question” page.

1. Fill in question title.
2. If users reach enough points, they can assign bounties to the question. Just check the bounties checkbox and assign the bounties value.

Ask a question



The question in one sentence:

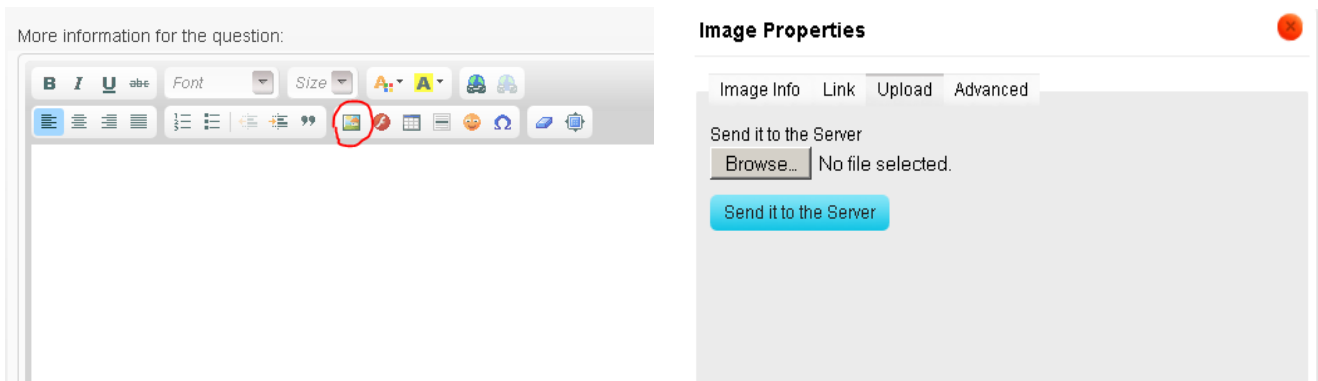
☒ Reward the selected answer with bonus points

Bounties:

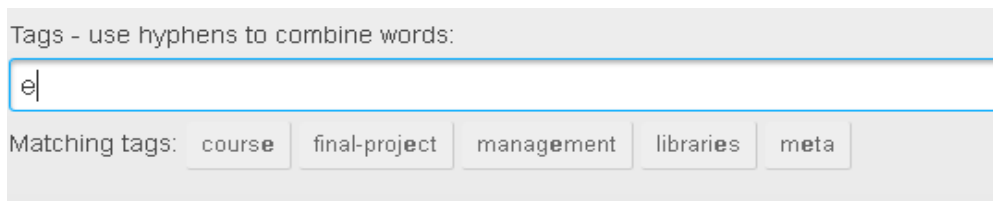
A red circle highlights the checkbox and the bounty input field.

3. Select a category if applicable.

4. Use text editor to input question content. To upload an image, click “Image” button in the text editor. Then upload local images. In the meanwhile, users can use a remote image URL in their questions.



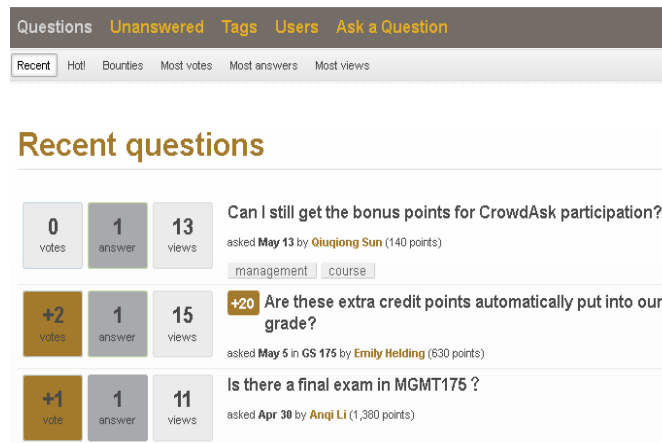
5. Specify tags for this question if applicable. When typing certain letters of a tag, the system will prompt matching existing tags. Users can create their own tags. Use hyphens to combine words.



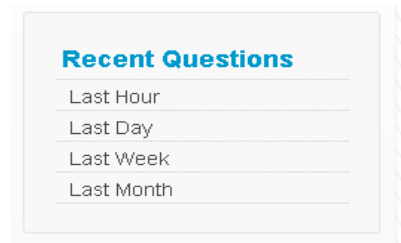
Get Recent Questions

There are a couple of ways to get recent questions list.

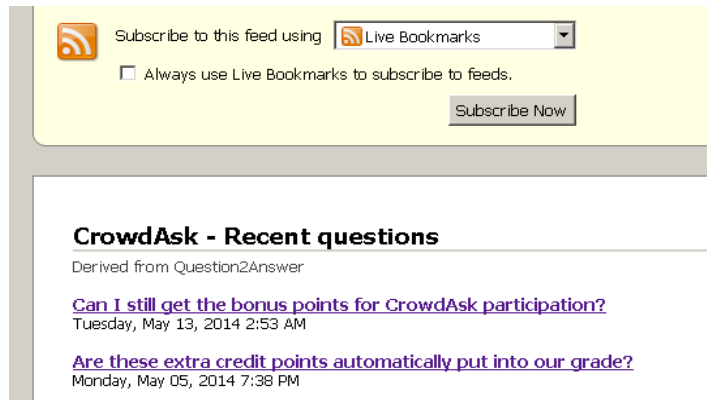
1. Click on “Questions” button in the main navigation and “Recent” button in the sub navigation. A full list of questions are displayed from most recent to the oldest.



2. There is a sidebar box for recent questions. Click on “Last hour” will give you a sub-list of questions asked in the past hour.

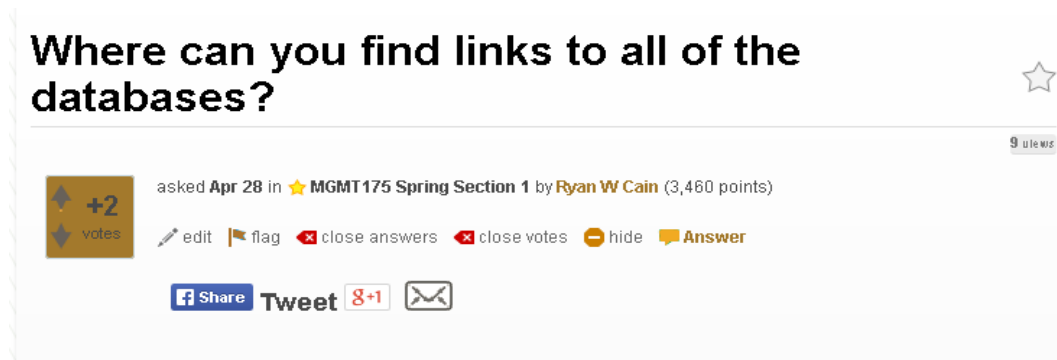


3. Alternatively, there is a feed box located in sidebar bottom. It will show you the most recent questions and answers.



Manage a Question

Owners and administrators are able to manage the asked questions.



If no further answers are expected, users with enough privileges can click on “close answers” button under the question content.

If no further votes are expected, users with enough privileges can click on “close votes” button under the question content. Then the question and its answers do not accept further votes.

Users can flag the question if they think the question is spam or inappropriate. Just click “flag” button under the question content to let the site know. Then administrators (or moderators) can hide this question.

Administrators can hide the question They will be able to un-hide the hided questions later as well.

Users can also ask a related question. Just click “ask related question” under an answer. A link of the new question will be displayed in the old question.

1 Answer



The restrictive 10:30 curfew placed upon women students who resided in campus residence halls was known as "Women's Hours." Helen Schleman, Dean of Women from 1947 until 1968, worked diligently to terminate the curfew as means of fostering equality between students. It took many years, but the curfew for women students was lifted in 1969. More information on Helen Schleman's efforts in making campus a better place for students can be found in the Helen Schleman papers, MSF 334.

answered **1 hour** ago by **Chris Gibson** (1,210 points)

edit flag hide ask related question comment

Follow a Category

Users can also follow their interesting categories such as a course. Login and click a category link. On the page of that category's question list, click on the star next to the title. Then the users are subscribed to this category.

All categories

Archives and Special Collections	
MGMT 175	(98)
ENGL 106	(28)
GS 175	(12)
Non Categorized	(...)

Recent questions and answers in MGMT 175

+8 votes	3 answers	16 views	How do you get points on CrowdAsk? answered May 2 in ★ MGMT175 Spring Section 1 by Emeka Andrews (3,400 points)
+1 votes	1 answers	12 views	how can I vote my favorite video ? answered Apr 28 in MGMT 175 by Heather Chen (4,450 points)

Next time, users just need to login. Click “My Updates” button in the topmost grey login bar. Then click on “My Favorites” button in the sub-menu. They will see new questions of the categories they are subscribed to.

[Questions](#) [Unanswered](#) [Tags](#) [Users](#) [Ask a Question](#) [Admin](#)

[All my updates](#) [My favorites](#) [My content](#)

Recent updates for my favorites

+2 votes	1 answer	9 views	Where can you find links to all of the databases? asked Apr 28 in ★ MGMT175 Spring Section 1 by Ryan W Cain (3,460 points)
+8 votes	3 answers	16 views	How do you get points on CrowdAsk? asked Apr 28 in ★ MGMT175 Spring Section 1 by Ryan W Cain (3,460 points)
+4 votes	1 answer	9 views	How many extra credit points are awarded for crowdAsk? asked Apr 28 in ★ MGMT175 Spring Section 1 by Ryan W Cain (3,460 points)

“Suggest What to Do” (Questions List)

In the end of a question list such as

/crowdask/index.php?qa=questions&qa_1=archives

there is a “Suggest What to Do” toolbox.

If number of questions to be displayed is less than the capacity of one page, show

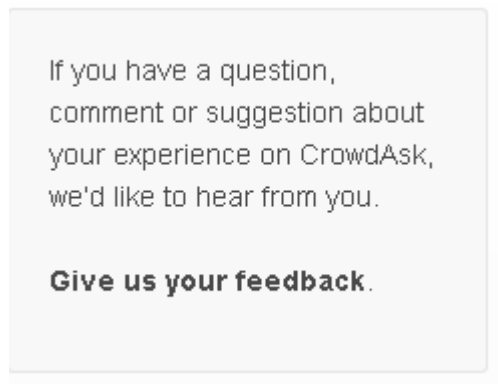
Help get things started by **asking a question**.

Otherwise, show

To see more, click for the **full list of questions** or **popular tags**.

Send A Feedback

If users want to send a feedback to the site. They have two ways:
There is a link in the sidebar. Just click “Give us your feedback”.



Users can also click “Feedback” link in the footer of the site.



The feedback emails will sent to administrator emails that are specified in the administration center. To manage them, go to administration center -> Emails. Separate different emails with semicolon.

Administration center - Emails

Sender address for messages from site:

no-reply@sites.lib.purdue.edu

Email address for admin messages - not shown to users:

[redacted]@gmail.com; [redacted]@gmail.com; [redacted]@gmail.com; [redacted]@gmail.com

Administration Configurations

Site Logo

In order to set site logo, the following configuration steps are needed:

1. Prepare a logo image with good size
2. Go to the source code directory. Upload your logo image into the images directory of the current theme, for example:
`crowdask/qa-theme/School/images`

3. In CrowdAsk Administration Center, set the logo under Layout.

Administration center - Layout

☒ Show a logo image in the page header

URL of logo - absolute or relative to Q2A root:

qa-theme/Purdue/images/logo.png

Bounty Rules

In Administration center, set the rules for each bounty.

Go to Badges tab, Click on “Add Rule” button in the bottom.

Badge Name: The name of badge to be displayed publicly.

Badge Type: Gold, Silver or Bronze.

Badge Rules: A well formed logic expression used to define the badge rules. (expression details provided behind)

Description: A description of badge.

Administration center - Badge Rules

Badge name:

Badge type GOLD 

Badge Rule

Description (Optional)

Add Rule

Cancel

The definition of badge rules follows disjunctive normal form.

The format of badge rules could be:

1. Clause
2. (Clause)
3. (Clause) || (Clause) || ... || (Clause)

The clause is defined as:

1. rToken
2. rToken && rToken && ... && rToken

rToken is defined as:

1. variable >= number
2. variable > number
3. variable <= number
4. variable < number
5. variable == number

The following is the table of variables used in badge rules:

Variable Name	Meaning
qposts	The number of questions asked by the user.
aposts	The number of answers given by the user.
cposts	The number of comments given by the user.
aselects	The number of answers the user selects as the best.
aselecteds	The number of the user's answers that are selected.
qupvotes	The number of questions the user up-votes.
qdownvotes	The number of questions the user down-votes.
aupvotes	The number of answers the user up-votes.
adownvotes	The number of answers the user down-votes.
qvoteds	The number of the user's questions that are voted.
avoteds	The number of the user's answers that are voted.
upvoteds	The number of up votes the user gets.
downvoteds	The number of down votes the user gets.
bountyOut	Total bounty points that has been given out by the user.
bountyIn	Total bounty points that has been received by the user.
bonus	Total bonus points the user has.

Be careful when defining a badge rule.









Example of valid badge rules could be:

1. `qposts >= 1`
2. `qposts >= 1 && aposts >= 1`
3. `(qposts >= 10) || (aposts >= 10)`
4. `(qposts >= 5 && aposts >= 5) || (aposts >= 10)`




There is a page displaying all the definitions of badge rules to user. Simply click on a user's badge under his account summary.

User Badges Help

Gold Badges

	Guru	At least 10 answers selected as the best answer
	Great Question	Questions with more than 100 up votes
	Researcher	Asked a question and accepted an answer
	Great Answer	Answer up votes with 100 or more.
	Professor	Answered 20 or more questions.
	Outstanding Contributor	25 comments or more and answered 20 questions or more.
	Trending	Answers received at least 5 votes
	Whiz	Questions or answers received more than 50 votes

Silver Badges

	Good Question	Questions with more than 25 up votes
	Good Answer	Answer up votes with 25 or more
	Pundit	Left 25 comments or more

Points Systems

Administrators can define points weight for user activities.

Important: It is highly recommended to define points during installations, or early stage of a live server. Points recalculation is risky when there are a lot of user information in a live production server.

In order to define points, login as administrator and go to points tab under administration center.

Administration center - Points		
Posting a question:	<input type="text" value="2"/>	points
Selecting an answer for your question:	<input type="text" value="3"/>	points
Per up vote on your question:	+ <input type="text" value="1"/>	points
Per down vote on your question:	- <input type="text" value="1"/>	points
Limit from up votes on each question:	+ <input type="text" value="10"/>	points
Limit from down votes on each question:	- <input type="text" value="3"/>	points
Posting an answer:	<input type="text" value="4"/>	points
Having your answer selected as the best:	<input type="text" value="30"/>	points
Per up vote on your answer:	+ <input type="text" value="2"/>	points
Per down vote on your answer:	- <input type="text" value="2"/>	points
Limit from up votes on each answer:	+ <input type="text" value="20"/>	points
Limit from down votes on each answer:	- <input type="text" value="5"/>	points

Note that the actual points applied to the user will be scaled by a factor. The following screenshot shows a factor of 10.

Increment of bounty points:	<input type="text" value="2"/>	points
Multiply all points:	× <input type="text" value="10"/>	
Add for all users:	+ <input type="text" value="100"/>	points

Google Analytics

It is easy to embed Google Analytics into the site.

The Google analytics codes are located under “qa-content/” directory. Its name is “qa-googleAnalytics.js”. This scripts specify GA account and contain events listener.

To setup this site for another owner, modify the account information in “qa-googleAnalytics.js”.

```
ga('create', 'UA-46449332-1', 'purdue.edu');
ga('send', 'pageview');
```

The GA scripts are embedded in every site page. It is inserted in page template in “include/qa-page.php”.

```
766 //Add Google Analytics scripts
767 $qa_content['script_rel'][]='qa-content/qa-googleAnalytics.js';
768
769 if ($voting)
770     $qa_content['error']=@$qa_page_error_html;
771
772 $qa_content['script_var']=array(
773     'qa_root' => qa_path_to_root(),
774     'qa_root' => qa_path_to_root(),
```

Simply comment out this line to disable GA functionalities.

Create Static Pages

Administrators can create or edit static pages to display general site information.

Go to pages tab under administration center, click on “Add Page” button.

Select link position. It is recommended to be around main menu or the foot.

Administration center - Pages

Name of page (also used for tab or link):

Position:

Visible for:

Heading to display at top of page:

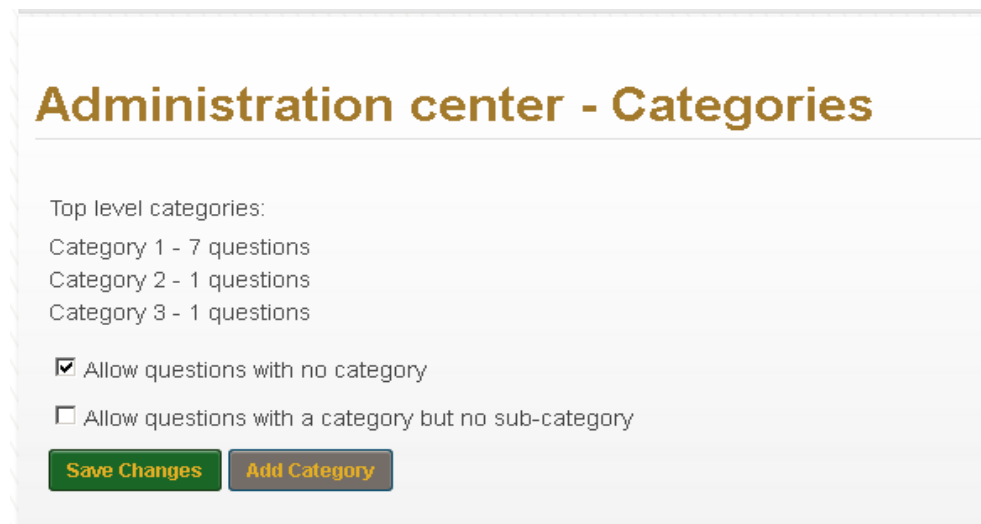
Content to display in page - HTML allowed:

Manage Categories

Administrator can add/edit categories or sub-categories in Administration center.

The add category button can be located under categories tab under administration center.

To edit an existing category, just click on the category. It navigates you to the category configuration page.



Administration center - Categories

Top level categories:

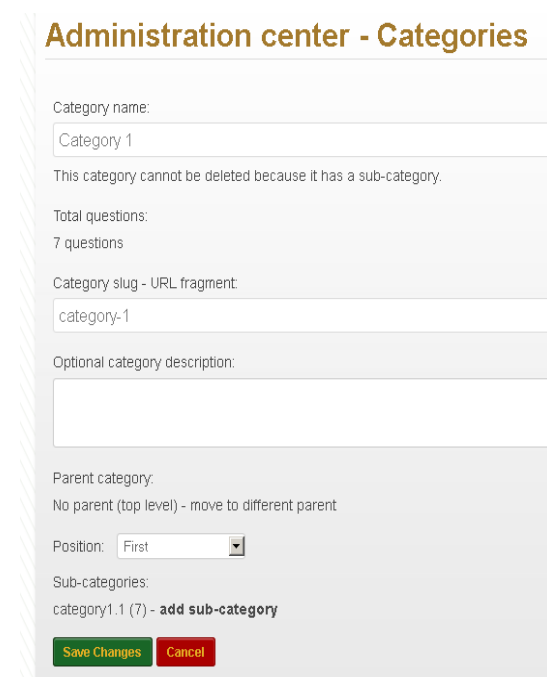
- Category 1 - 7 questions
- Category 2 - 1 questions
- Category 3 - 1 questions

☒ Allow questions with no category

☐ Allow questions with a category but no sub-category

Save Changes **Add Category**

Under an existing category configuration page, administrators can add its sub-category.



Administration center - Categories

Category name:

Category 1

This category cannot be deleted because it has a sub-category.

Total questions:

7 questions

Category slug - URL fragment:

category-1

Optional category description:

Parent category:

No parent (top level) - move to different parent

Position: First

Sub-categories:

category1.1 (7) - **add sub-category**

Save Changes **Cancel**

CAS configuration

If your institution uses CAS system as single sign-on system, you can enable CAS. Ask your developer to do this.

You need to configure the CAS plugin. The CAS plugin is located at “qa-plugin\cas-login” directory.

To do so, a CAS library file such as “CAS.php” needs to be visible to you system. Ask system administrator.

“qa-cas-login-page.php” is where you should configure your plugin. See the following example:

```
try {
    /*
     * call cas api to get user credentials
     * Uncomment the following block in production server
     */

    require_once('CAS.php');

    $identifier = phpCAS::getUser();

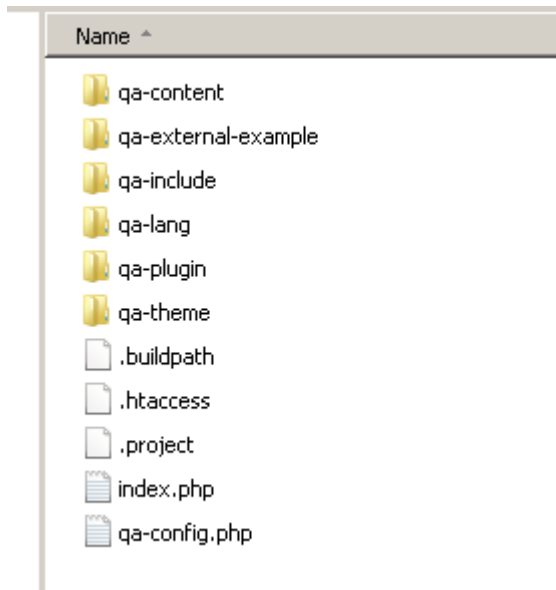
    $user = phpCAS::getAttributes();

    $cas_userid = @$user['puid'];

    if (is_array($user))
        qa_log_in_external_user('cas', $cas_userid, array(
            'email' => @$user['email'],
            'handle' => @$user['fullname'],
            'confirmed' => @$user['email'],
            'name' => @$user['fullname'],
            'location' => '',
            'website' => '',
            'about' => '',
            'avatar' => null,
        ));
}
```

File Structure

The root directory of crowdask consists the following folders:



“qa-content” folder contains javascripts of the system.

“qa-external-example” folder contains files to integrate with other systems. You do not need to change this folder.

“qa-include” folder contains system files of the site, including controllers and views.

“qa-plugin” folder contains the plugin files of the site.

“qa-theme” folder contains theme folders of the site.

“qa-config.php” file contains the configuration information of the site, including database connection.

Under “qa-include” folder, there are different types of php files.

1. Files with name “qa-ajax-xxx.php” are ajax functionalities. “xxx” is the related modules.
2. Files with name “qa-app-xxx.php” are application libraries for specific modules. They are usually wrapped as functions.
3. Files with name “qa-db-xxx.php” are database related libraries for specific modules.
4. Files with “qa-lang-xxx.php” are language phrases for specific modules. If you would like to change the some html labels, you may want these files.
5. Files with “qa-page-xxx.php” are page controllers for specific pages.

Installations

You can setup a new copy of crowdask system. Question2Answer has provided an installation automation script. For your convenience, we have integrated all crowdask features into this installation script.

Please follow the steps below to install a crowdask copy.

1. Set up web server such as Apache.
2. Install PHP 5.x.
3. Create MySQL 5.x database, with a user and full permission.
4. Copy crowdask folder to web server.
5. Create a new empty schema in MySQL, e.g. "crowdask". (This is important!)
6. Use an editor to configure the configuration file "qa-config.php" with your database details. (This is important!)
7. Open the appropriate web page for crowdask in your web browser, for example:
 - If you installed crowdask at the root of a domain, <http://www.mysite.com/>
 - If you installed crowdask in a subdirectory, <http://www.mysite.com/crowdask/>
8. Follow the on-screen instructions to set up your database and administrator account. That's it!

The on-screen instructions will guide you through the installation steps. You are almost done.

9. After the database is populated, you will be navigated to Admin center. Simply customize your system parameters such as website name. Submit these changes by clicking confirm button.

Moreover, you could configure the new sites in the following aspects:

1. Log in as developer account (super administrator account).
2. Set the site name under General tab under administration center.
3. Set emails under Emails tab under administration center.
4. Set up all other configurations under administration center.

5. You need consult developers to setup plugins under administration center.
6. You need to configure google analytics as well. Please refer to Google Analytics section of this cookbook.
7. You need to configure CAS plugin if necessary.

Additionally, you should create your own theme. A theme consists of php files, css files and images.

By default, there is a “School” theme under theme directory. You need to create your own theme. The most convenient way is to copy “School” folder, rename it to your own name. Change the theme of the system under General tab under administration center.

You need a developer to change the theme for your own institution. Note that there are two PHP theme files controlling the theme components. One is “qa-theme-base.php” under “qa-include” directory. This file includes shared theme components for the system. The other file called “qa-theme.php” is under the specific theme folder. This file includes the specific theme components. The theme functions can overwrite functions in the base theme.