Klabr

USERS GUIDE

Table of Contents

Gemcom Software

Concepts

What is collaboration?

Collaboration is an essential part of the design and development of complex systems. The human mind can only deal with so much complexity, the human body can only do so much work, and large-scale problems require the team efforts. This inherently leads the need for communication and collaboration – the sharing of ideas and information about the problems to be solved and the work to be done.

The basic challenge in any form of collaboration is the limited capacity of our communications channels relative to our internal thought processes. Think about it (you already are…): we have incredibly sophisticated means to store, manage and process information in our brains. But our ability to communicate the results to others is limited by our physical senses – sight, sound, touch and smell. As a species, we've tried to overcome these limitations through the use of media: books, films, music, art, etc. As technology has evolved, we've extended these forms of communications, first of all through the telephone, the radio, the television, and more recently through digital networks, the internet, mobile devices, etc.

But let's get back to basics. The essence of collaboration is shared problem solving. The people on the team are each trying to find solutions to various aspects of "the problem", and they need to share their ideas with others on the team in a timely and efficient manner. This is different than "entertainment", "news", "marketing", "social networking" and other forms of communications. It has to stay focused on the problem at hand and the evolving ideas relating to the solution. For this reason, communications and media forms that are useful for other purposes are not necessarily effective for collaborative problem-solving. In fact, they are often highly counter-productive.

Why e-mail (Outlook) is a poor interface for collaboration

Many people are addicted to e-mail as a means of networking and sharing information. E-mail has many useful purposes, but it is less than ideal for true collaborative sharing of ideas. Here's why:

- E-mail is highly "linear" in the way it presents information. Basically, first in, last out. While there are various means of sorting information, it really can't deal with the volume of information exchange that is likely to occur in a truly collaborative environment. Imagine, for example, that you received over a thousand e-mail messages a day. At a minimum, you would have to scan the headers for every email message and delete all the ones you weren't interested in. That is, actively *negating* the information

you don't want to see, as opposed to *positively* selecting the information you do want to see as in *Klabr*.

- On the same theme, e-mail is an inherently poor interface for tracking "threads" of discussions that happen intermittently over time. Yes, you can set up filters and folders to help manage this (at great pain), but again, *Klabr* does this for you automatically.
- E-mail doesn't readily archive previous discussions. Ok, there is an archive folder, and sometimes you can actually find a previous e-mail from someone. Now try to find all the associated e-mails relating to that discussion…
- E-mail is exclusive. That is, no one has access to a discussion unless they have explicitly been included in the "to list". If a discussion is already underway and a new member joins in, they have no access to the prior history of the discussion. Unless, of course, people copy every previous e-mail relating to the discussion in their replies – which people tend to do because *e-mail is a poor interface for collaboration!*

What is Klabr?

Klabr is a tool designed specifically to facilitate collaborative problem-solving. It acts as a front-end to "discussion boards" that are stored in a *Microsoft SharePoint*™ server. *Klabr* itself is a standalone program that runs on a user's computer. It treats *SharePoint* as a storage medium for discussion data. All of this data, and indeed the discussion boards themselves, can be accessed and managed directly through *SharePoint*. For most users of *Klabr*, knowledge of how the data is stored in *SharePoint* and use of the *SharePoint* system for purposes of collaborations are not required at all. *Klabr* provides most users with all the means necessary to fully participate in interactive, collaborative problem-solving.

What does Klabr NOT do?

Most of the things that *Klabr* does not support can be done directly in *SharePoint*.

- *Klabr* does not allow new discussion boards to be created. This must be done in *SharePoint*, and the discussion boards should be located in an appropriate place in the *SharePoint* server to facilitate effective administration of the data (for example, in a team site, a product site, etc.).
- *Klabr* does not provide a means to control and manage permissions on discussion boards. This is fully supported in *SharePoint*, and it should be managed by the creator or "moderator" of the discussion board as appropriate to the purposes of the discussion.
- *Klabr* does not have a means to delete discussion boards, topics, or replies. Again, this can be done directly in *SharePoint* when required. But removing information is somewhat antithetical to the open sharing of ideas, and it should only be done in exceptional cases.

Gemcom Software

- *Klabr* deliberately has limited means to display, format and enhance basic text. This is not because it doesn't recognize that there are other mediums of effective communications, such as graphics, video, audio, etc. But the time consumed in creating these other forms, and the potential distractions to the thought processes involved in problem-solving, are again antithetical to the principles on which *Klabr* is based. *Klabr's* concession to the need to extended discussion beyond basic text is support for *hyperlinks*. When it is essential to communications to include information not directly supported in *Klabr,* it can be implemented externally and linked from a reply.
- *Klabr* cannot currently create or manage e-mail alerts. These can be set up directly in SharePoint for those who care. Hopefully, if you get an e-mail alert telling you there is activity on a discussion board you will *open it in Klabr!*

Installation and Configuration

Installing *Klabr*

- Download and run *Klabr.msi.* You should accept all the default values in the installation.

- You will find a shortcut to *Klabr* on your Start menu.

- Use *Add/Remove Programs* in Windows to remove *Klabr* from your computer.

Using *Klabr*

Starting *Klabr*

The first time you open *Klabr*, the main window will contain a message indicating that you have not yet subscribed to any discussion boards. You will have to start by reviewing all of the available discussion boards and selecting the ones you wish to subscribe to (that is, to participate in). You can do this by using the "Manage Subscriptions" button on the Home ribbon at the top of the main window.
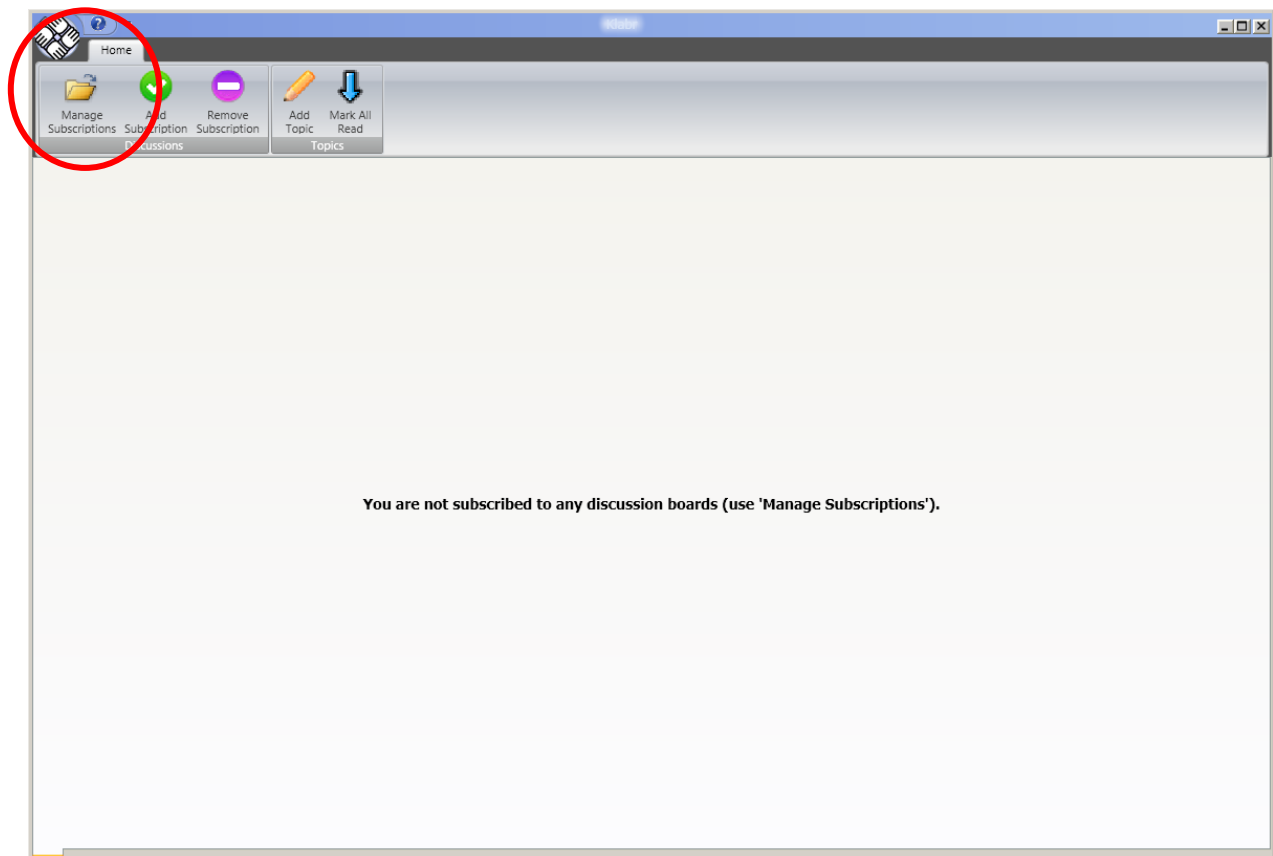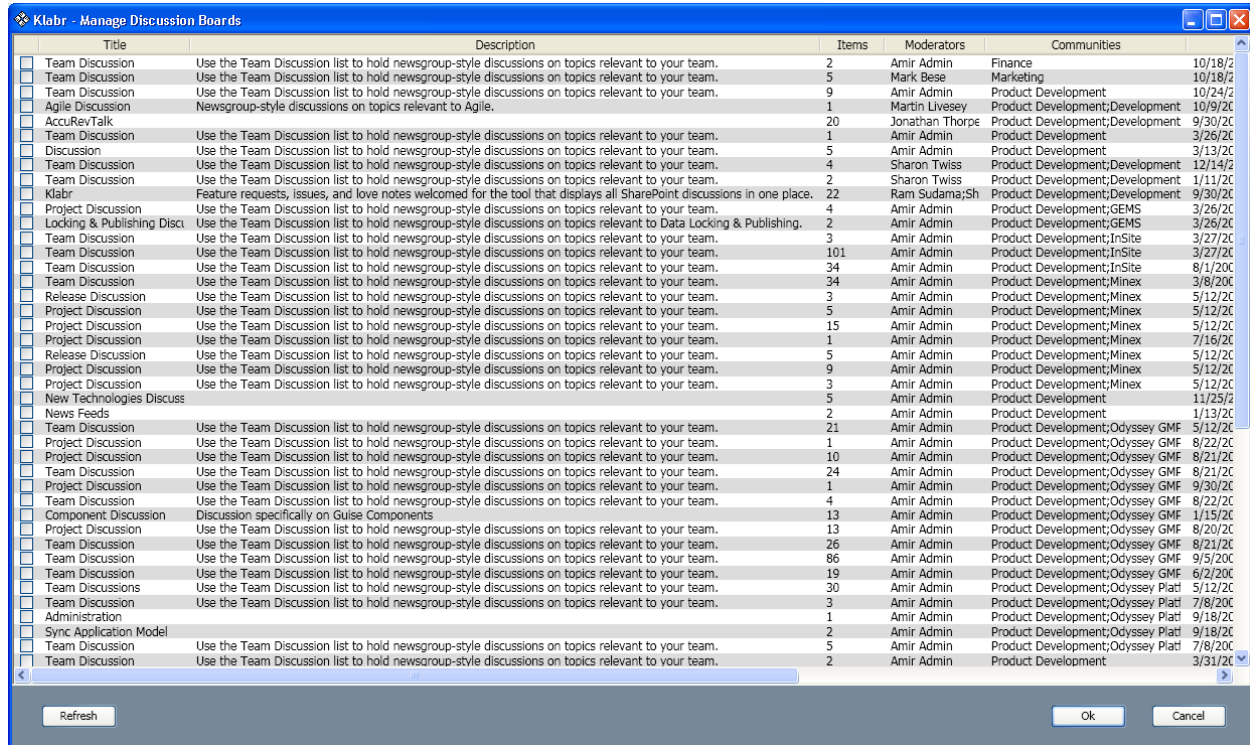
Managing subscriptions

Selecting the "Manage Subscriptions" button on the Home ribbon of the main window will open the "Manage Subscriptions" dialog. The first time this dialog is opened, *Klabr* will attempt to connect to

SharePoint and "discover" all of the available discussion boards. As they are discovered, the discussion boards will be displayed in a table.

Klabr - Manage Discussion Boards
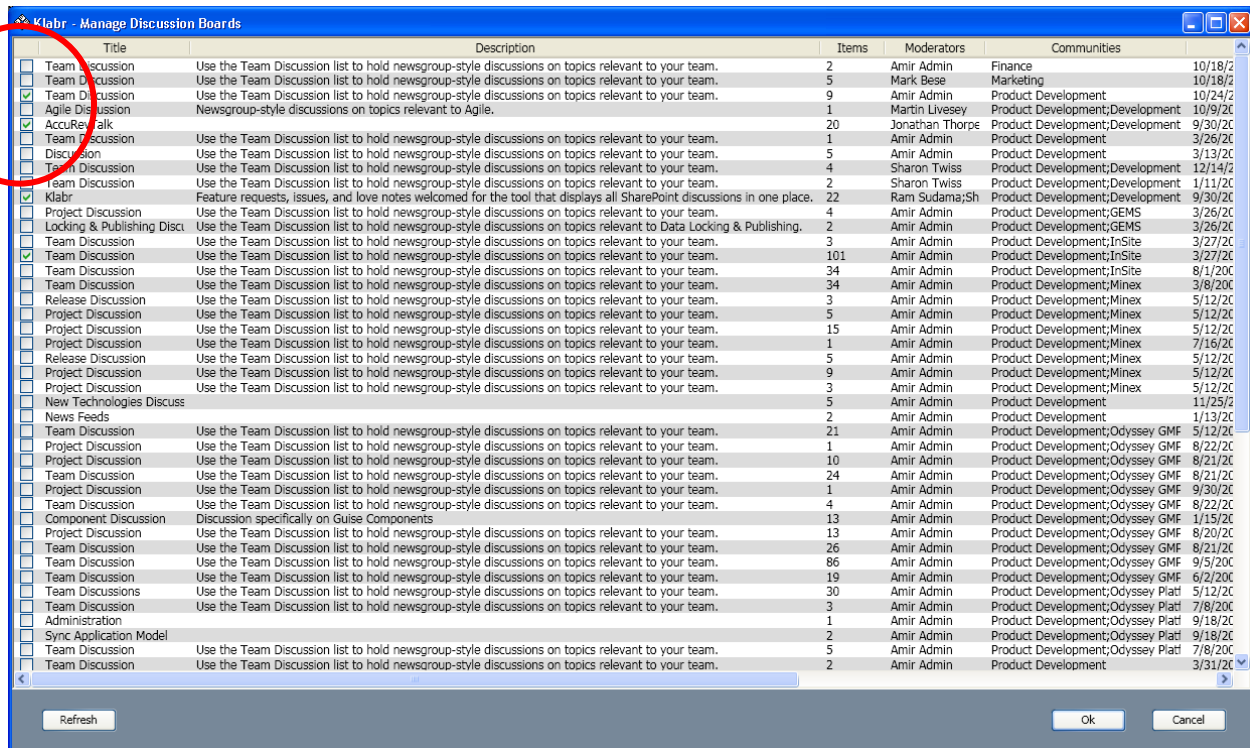
	Title	Description	Items	Moderators	Communities	
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	2	Amir Admin	Finance	10/18/2
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	5	Mark Bese	Marketing	10/18/2
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	9	Amir Admin	Product Development	10/24/2
☐	Agile Discussion	Newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to Agile.	1	Martin Livesey	Product Development;Development	10/9/20
☐	AccuRevTalk		20	Jonathan Thorpe	Product Development;Development	9/30/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	1	Amir Admin	Product Development	3/26/20
☐	Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	5	Amir Admin	Product Development	3/13/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	4	Sharon Twiss	Product Development;Development	12/14/2
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	2	Sharon Twiss	Product Development;Development	1/11/20
☐	Klabr	Feature requests, issues, and love notes welcomed for the tool that displays all SharePoint discussions in one place.	22	Ram Sudama;Sh	Product Development;Development	9/30/20
☐	Project Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	4	Amir Admin	Product Development;GEMS	3/26/20
☐	Locking & Publishing Discu	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to Data Locking & Publishing.	2	Amir Admin	Product Development;GEMS	3/26/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	3	Amir Admin	Product Development;InSite	3/27/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	101	Amir Admin	Product Development;InSite	3/27/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	34	Amir Admin	Product Development;InSite	8/1/200
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	34	Amir Admin	Product Development;Minex	3/8/200
☐	Release Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	3	Amir Admin	Product Development;Minex	5/12/20
☐	Project Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	5	Amir Admin	Product Development;Minex	5/12/20
☐	Project Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	15	Amir Admin	Product Development;Minex	5/12/20
☐	Project Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	1	Amir Admin	Product Development;Minex	7/16/20
☐	Release Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	5	Amir Admin	Product Development;Minex	5/12/20
☐	Project Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	9	Amir Admin	Product Development;Minex	5/12/20
☐	Project Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	3	Amir Admin	Product Development;Minex	5/12/20
☐	New Technologies Discuss		5	Amir Admin	Product Development	11/25/2
☐	News Feeds		2	Amir Admin	Product Development	1/13/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	21	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey GMF	5/12/20
☐	Project Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	1	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey GMF	8/22/20
☐	Project Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	10	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey GMF	8/21/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	24	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey GMF	8/21/20
☐	Project Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	1	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey GMF	9/30/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	4	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey GMF	8/22/20
☐	Component Discussion	Discussion specifically on Guise Components	13	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey GMF	1/15/20
☐	Project Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	13	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey GMF	8/20/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	26	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey GMF	8/21/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	86	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey GMF	9/5/200
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	19	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey GMF	6/2/200
☐	Team Discussions	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	30	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey Platf	5/12/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	3	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey Platf	7/8/200
☐	Administration		1	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey Platf	9/18/20
☐	Sync Application Model		2	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey Platf	9/18/20
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	5	Amir Admin	Product Development;Odyssey Platf	7/8/200
☐	Team Discussion	Use the Team Discussion list to hold newsgroup-style discussions on topics relevant to your team.	2	Amir Admin	Product Development	3/31/20

Refresh   Ok   Cancel

Once the discovery process is complete, the items in the table can be reviewed. The table can be sorted by clicking on the header of the column you want to sort on. For example, to sort by the number of topics and replies that have been made in a discussion board, click on the "Items" column header. This is useful to show which discussion boards have had the most activity.

When you find a discussion board that you are interested in participating in, click the checkbox in the left column of that row. You can select as many discussion boards to participate in as you wish (Note: subscribing to discussion boards that you don't actually participate in regularly will have some minimal impact on the overall performance of *Klabr*).
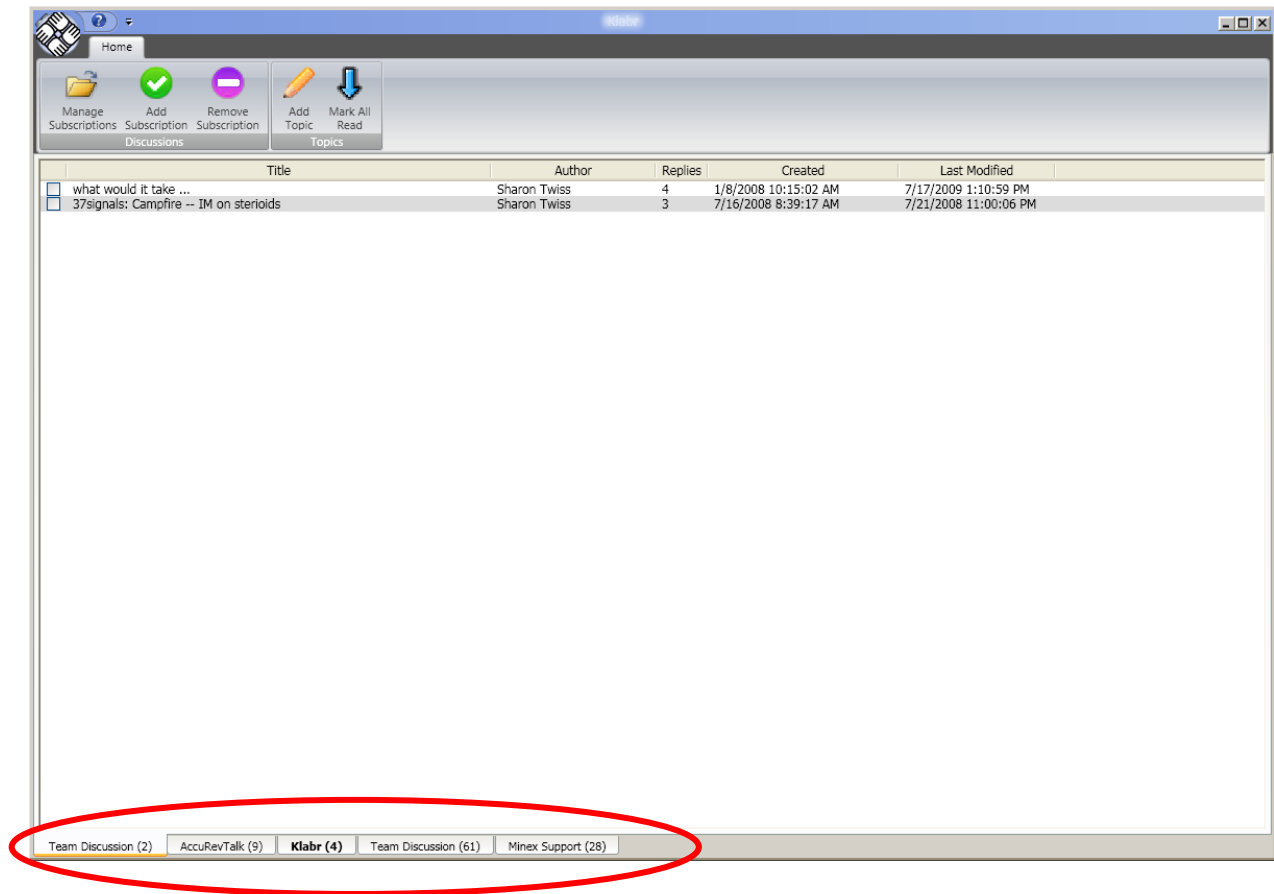
When you close the "Manage Subscriptions" dialog by clicking the "Ok" button, the list of available discussion boards and those you have subscribed to will be saved for the next time you want to manage your subscriptions (such as checking to see if there are any new discussion boards, subscribing to additional discussion boards, un-subscribing from discussion boards, etc.).

Participating in discussion boards

When you return to the main window, you will notice that there is now a tab for every discussion board to which you have subscribed. The tabs are displayed along the bottom of the main window.

Gemcom Software

When you select the tab for a particular discussion board, the contents of that tab will appear as a table containing all of the topics in that discussion. As in the "Manage Subscriptions" dialog, this table can be sorted by clicking on the column headers.

To open a particular topic in a discussion, simply click on the row for that topic in the table. This will open the "Replies Dialog" for that topic, in which you can read all of the existing the replies to that topic and optionally add your own replies.

Gemcom Software
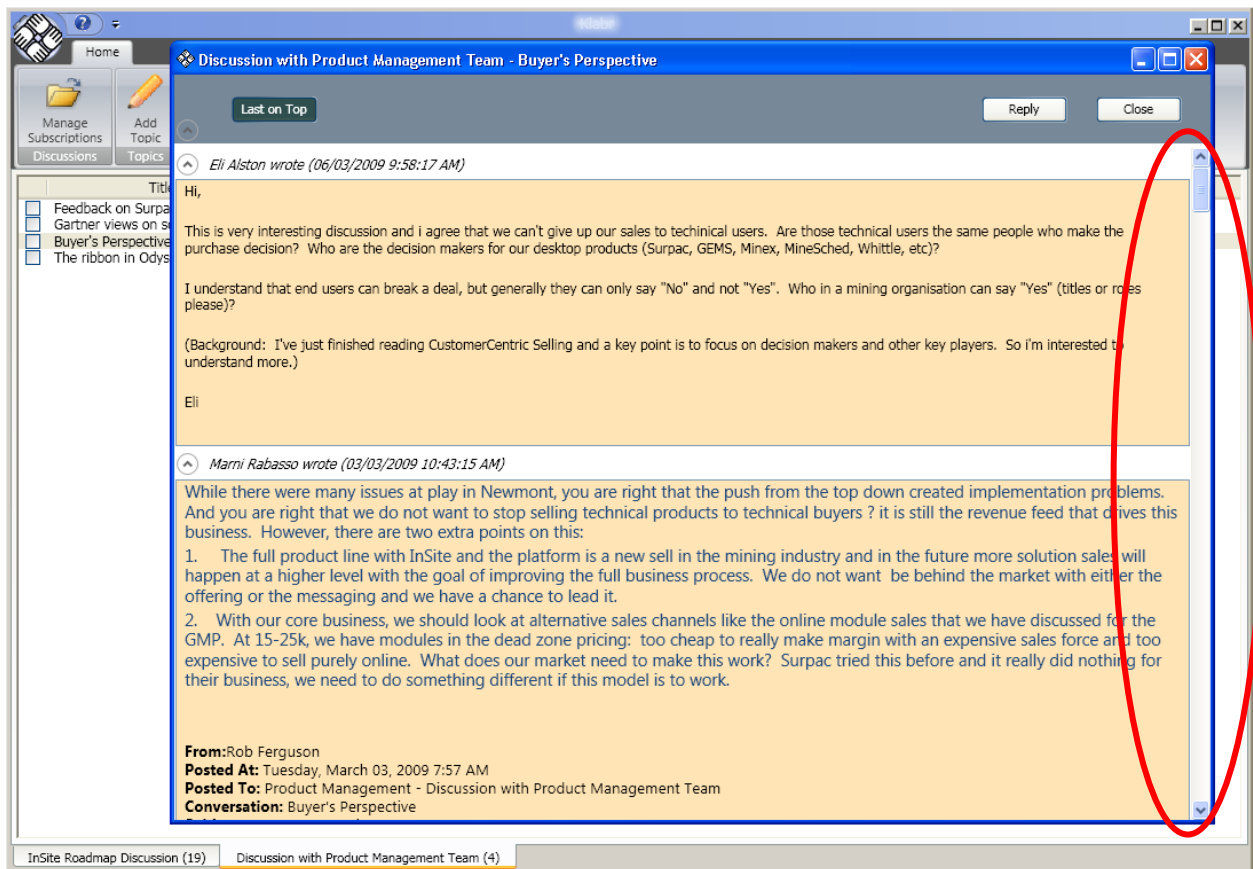
Reading replies to a topic

You can read all of the replies to a topic simply by scrolling down through the list. Hopefully, when you see existing *SharePoint* discussion boards in *Klabr* (especially ones in which the participants have used e-mail to create replies) you will start to realize how inefficient and ineffective it is to keep copying previous replies into your own. It just clutters up the screen and confuses the dialog.

You can also expand or collapse the contents of individual replies, or of all the replies to the topic, using the small up/down arrow buttons on the left. And finally, you can sort the topics by the most recent first (Last on Top), which is the default, or by most recent last (First on Top).

(Note: *Klabr* can display and edit most generic content from *SharePoint* which *SharePoint* stores in HTML format. There are some HTML objects that *Klabr* cannot currently create or display, such as graphics images.)

Gemcom Software

Adding a new reply to a topic

If you want to respond to a topic, click the "Reply" button on the top of the dialog. A simple text editor will appear into which you can enter your text.
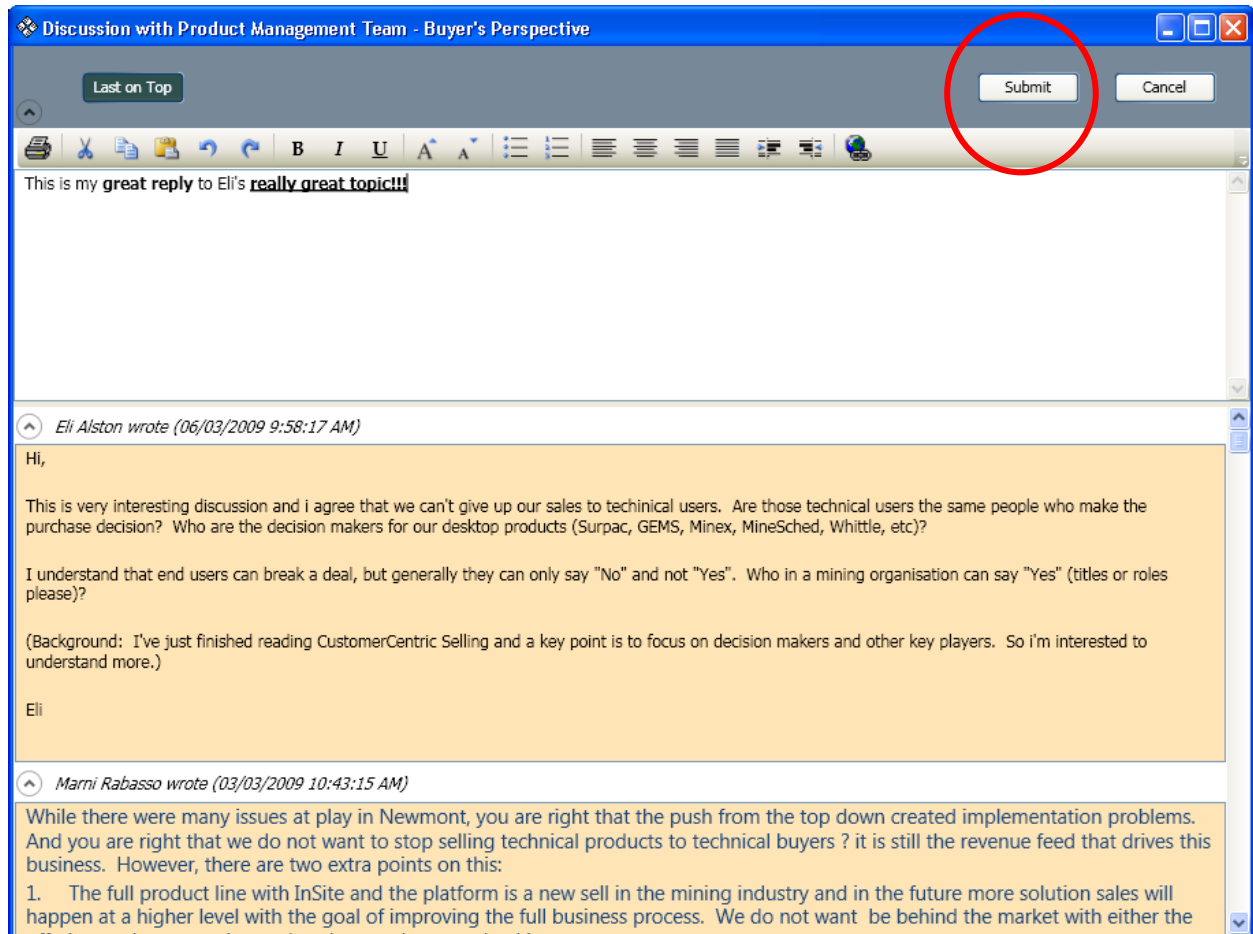
Minimal formatting capabilities are provided in the toolbar just above the editor. If you really need to quote text from any previous replies, you can use "cut and paste" from any text in the dialog (or any external text sources) with Control-C (cut) and Control-V (paste).

When your reply is complete, use the "Submit" button to add it to the topic. You should see the topic now with your new reply added to the discussion.
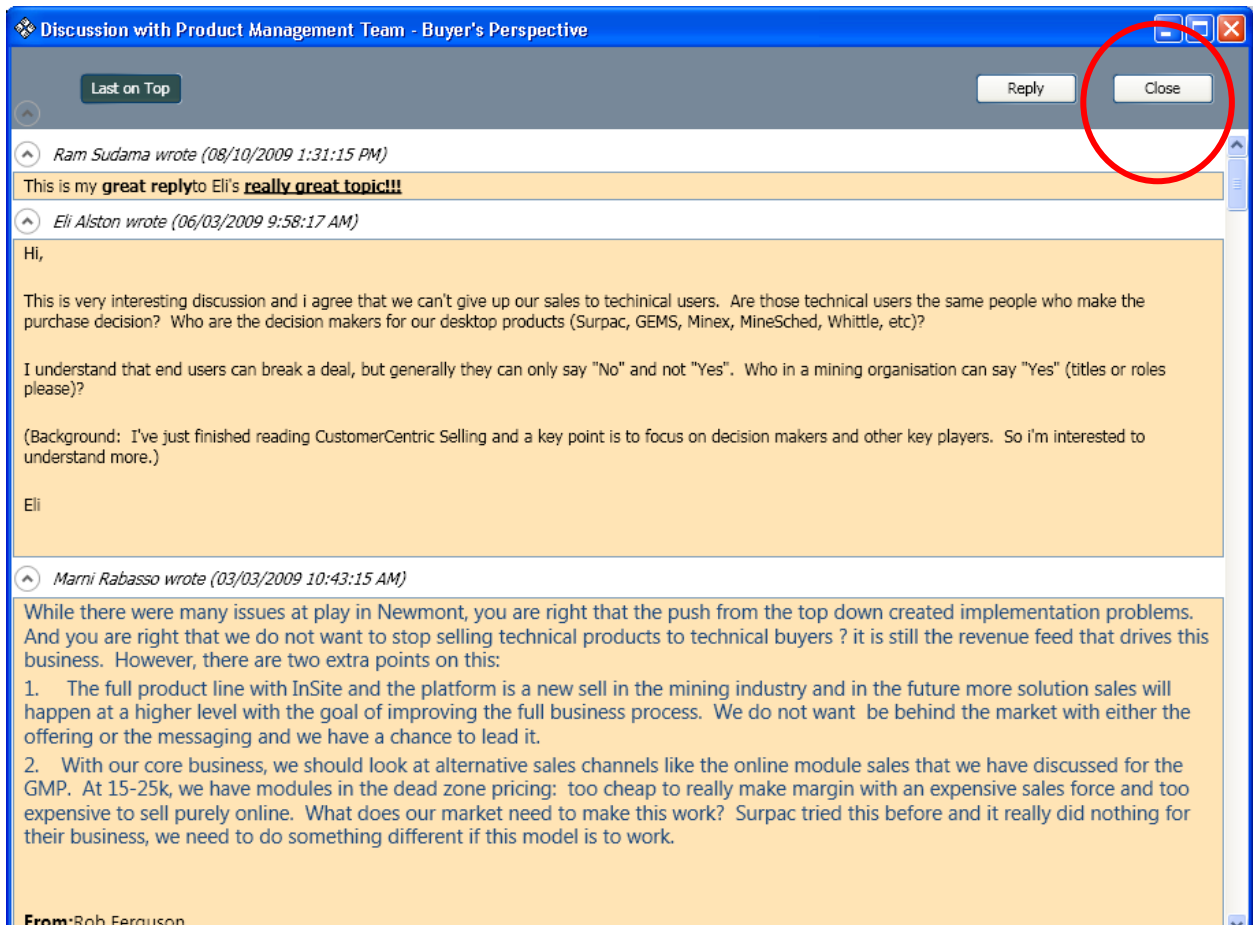
When you are finished participating in the topic you can use the "Close" button to return to the main screen.

Adding a new topic to a discussion board

If you want to create a new topic for discussion, start from the main screen and select the tab for the discussion you want the topic to be in. Then use the "Add Topic" button on the ribbon.
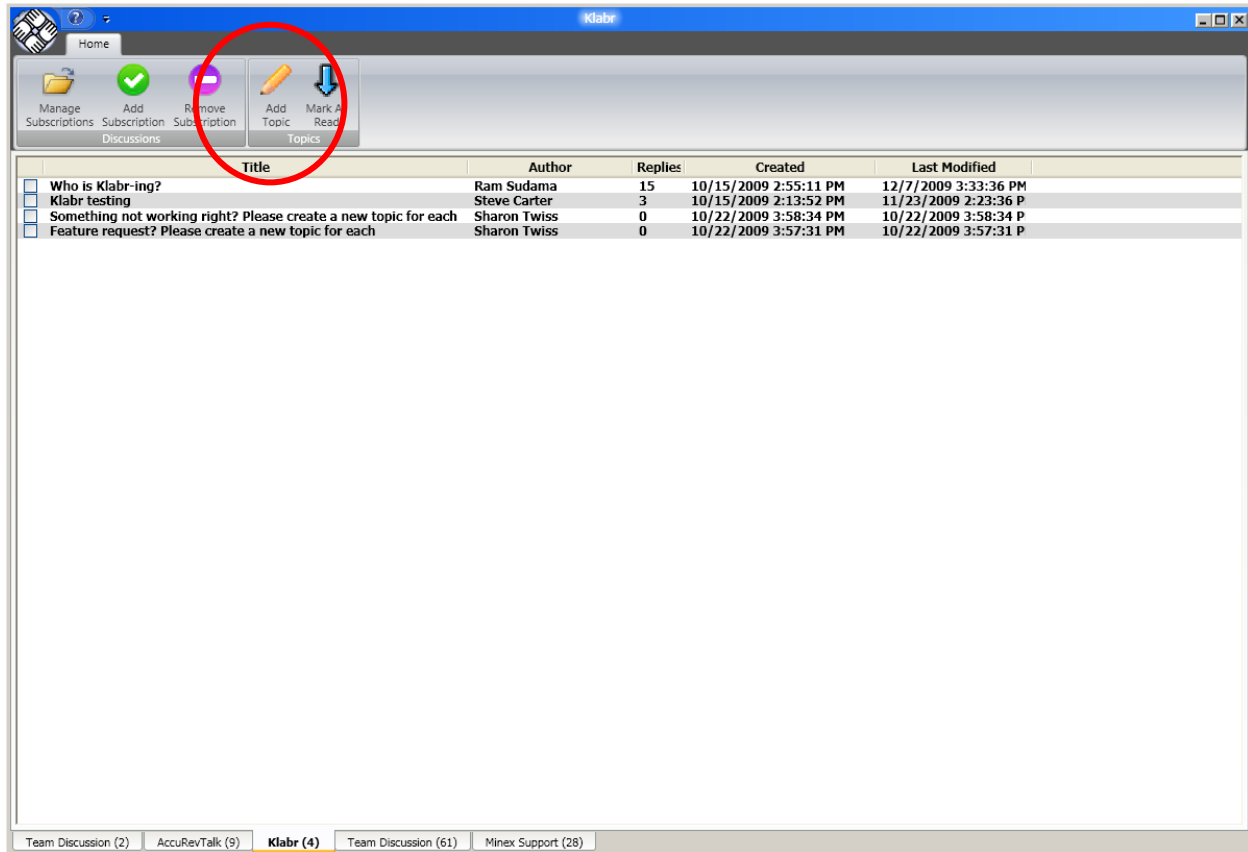
A dialog will appear that will allow you to provide a title for the topic, as well as enter the text for the first message to be entered into the discussion. As with the replies, just use the "Submit" button when you are ready.
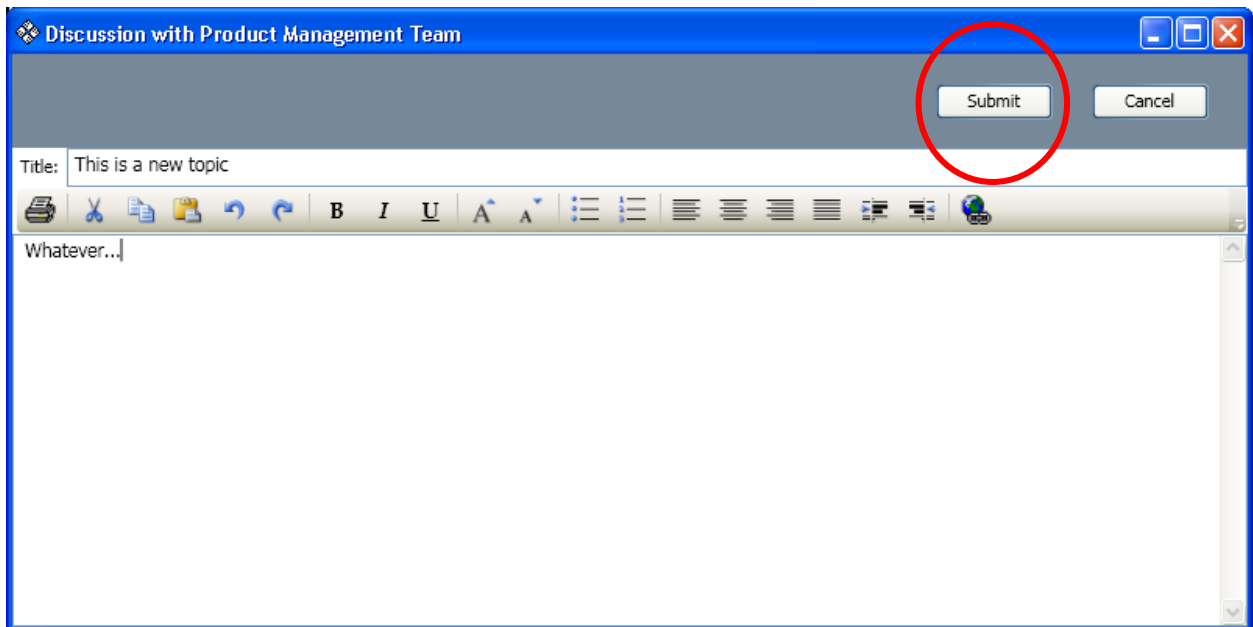
Notification and Alerts

Klabr is designed to poll the *SharePoint* server at intervals to get updated information on the status of the discussion boards you have subscribed to. This is reflected in the discussion tabs on the main window. If there have been new topics or replies to any subscribed discussion board since the last time you viewed it, that will be reflected by highlighting (bold) of the title on the relevant discussion tab, as well as an update to the topic count for that discussion board. This serves as an indicator that you may want to check that discussion to see if the activity is of interest to you.

In addition, it is possible to subscribe to alerts for specific topics that you are following or participating in. To subscribe to a topic, click the checkbox in the left column of the row for that topic, much like you did when subscribing to the discussion boards. You have to also set the "Notification interval" option to a value greater than 0 (see the section on Options). When topics have been subscribed to, and the notification interval has been set, *Klabr* will check the *SharePoint* server at those intervals to see if those specific topics have new replies since the last time you viewed them. If so, an alert box will appear in the lower right-hand corner of your screen. The alert box will fade out after a few seconds, and will re-appear at the next notification interval. It will keep re-appearing at intervals until you do one of the following:

- Click on the alert box before it fades out

- Open the topic in *Klabr*

- Unsubscribe from that topic by clearing the checkbox

Gemcom Software

That's it, really. If you got this far you know pretty much everything you need to know to actively participate in *Klabr*. Happy *Klabr*-ating.

Other useful things

Klabr does have a few other features that you might find useful.

Options

Klabr has a few settings that may be useful in customizing your user experience. These can be modified by selecting the *Options* button on the application menu (next to the *Exit* button). The following options can be configured:

- Minimum item count – the minimum number of topics that a discussion board must have to be displayed in the Manage Subscriptions dialog. By default this is set to 1, so discussion boards that no one has ever entered a topic in will not appear.

- Polling interval – the interval (in seconds) between polls to the *SharePoint* server for updated information on subscribed discussion boards. By default, this is set to 5 seconds for getting timely updates. On slow connections it may be useful to set this to a higher value so that polling is done less frequently – or disable polling altogether by setting the value to 0.

- Notification interval – the interval (in minutes) between checks for changes to subscribed topics that cause an alert box to be display on the lower right-hand corner of the screen. By default this is set to 0 to disable notification.

- Signature – by default, *Klabr* appends the signature line "—Posted using Klabr—" to every new topic and reply. You can customize the signature line, or eliminate it by deleting this string.

Linking to external sources

The *Klabr* text editor does support the use of *hyperlinks*. This allows you to include links to external sources that might be relevant to your reply – web pages, documents, images, etc. Many of these more complex sources of information will not render properly directly in *Klabr*. That's not what it was intended for.

Refreshing information

Klabr obtains information from *SharePoint* via the Internet. To reduce delays and minimize network utilization, it only refreshes information that is displayed when it really needs to. In some cases, if

you have *Klabr* open for awhile, there may be new information available in *SharePoint* that *Klabr* isn't aware of. On the main screen (discussion tabs), the reply dialog and the manage subscriptions dialog, pressing the <F5> key will cause *Klabr* to refresh the current screen with the latest information available in *SharePoint.*

Connecting to *SharePoint*

As has been pointed out, there are some things that you may need to do in terms of managing discussion boards that you can't do in *Klabr*, such as setting permissions, deleting replies or topics, etc. To facilitate tasks such as these, *Klabr* will attempt to connect you directly to the appropriate *SharePoint* site if you press the <F6> key. This feature is active in the main screen (discussion tabs) and the reply dialog.

Security in *Klabr*

Security in *Klabr* is based on Windows security as supported in *SharePoint*. The security is designed to be highly automated and non-intrusive. When *Klabr* connects to SharePoint, by default it uses your current Windows login identity to authenticate itself. That is, it will use whatever identity you established when you logged into your own computer. If your computer is a member of the same domain as *SharePoint* (which will typically be the case), you don't need to provide any additional information or make a separate login to use *Klabr*.

When accessing discussion boards in *Klabr*, you will have the same permissions as you have been granted in *SharePoint*. You will not be able to access any discussion boards that you have not been given permission to access, and you will not be able to add replies to discussion boards that you don't have permissions to contribute to.

If you are not able to discover discussion boards that you believe exist, or you are not able to add replies to discussion boards that you do see, you will have to contact the administrator for that discussion board (typically the administrator of the SharePoint site in which the discussion board is located) to change the permissions to allow you to have appropriate access to the discussion board in Klabr.

Logging in from a public computer

If you are using a computer that is *not* a member of the same domain as the SharePoint server, such as a computer at home, or one in a public place like a library or Internet café, you will have to provide *Klabr* with appropriate information to authenticate you to SharePoint. You can do this by selecting the *Login* command from the application menu.

When you select the *Login* command, a dialog will be displayed that will prompt you for your username, password and domain. The domain name will default to a preset name, and the username will be remembered the next time you login.

Once you have logged in by selecting the "Login" button in the dialog, *Klabr* will maintain this identity to SharePoint for the duration of this session. If you close *Klabr* you will have to provide the password again the next time you start *Klabr*.

Gemcom Software

Appendix A

8 Satirical "Rules" for using Klabr

Adhering to the following guidelines will ensure you get the most out of your *Klabr* experience.

Rule 1: **Argue!** This is absolutely the most important rule of posting in any *Klabr* discussion and many of the other rules are based upon it. Be sure to start an argument whenever the opportunity presents itself. In fact, even if the opportunity doesn't present itself, argue anyway. After all, people don't really use *Klabr* to share ideas, have polite discussions, or learn new things; they're there strictly for the non-stop arguments -- so be sure not to disappoint. Also, be sure not to back up your arguments with any facts.

Rule 2: **Flame other users.** This rule goes hand in hand with rule 1. You're already starting an argument, so why not insult someone while you're at it? Don't just disagree with the previous reply; make it personal! Throw in an insult that has nothing to do with the topic of discussion and make sure it's an insult about their appearance or something in their personal life you couldn't possibly know anything about.

Rule 3: **Never back down or give up on an argument.** No matter how clear it is that you're in the wrong and have lost, keep arguing and flaming. When everyone realizes your argument has nothing to support it, simply tell them that they just don't get it. If the other participants politely ask that you remain on topic and cease the arguing, insult them and drag them into your argument. Don't ever stop until the board's administrator closes the thread and issues you a warning and/or ban.

Rule 4: **Lie.** Fabricate stories about projects you never worked on, jobs you never had, people you never really knew. After all, who's going to check? This can be especially useful in arguments. Should someone attempt to call you on an argument which has no factual basis (none of your arguments should anyway), simply lie and tell them you graduated from an Ivy League college at the top of your class which landed you a 6-figure job and are therefore not only much smarter but also a more successful person in general than whoever it is you're currently locked in battle with.

Rule 5: **Never, under any circumstances, use proper spelling and grammar.** Doing so will only confirm that you are a nerd. Instead you should shorten three letter words such as 'you' and 'are' and express them as single letters like U and R. Be sure to substitute as many letters in a word as you can with numbers. Spell these words wrong as well. For example, instead of typing "I Like to eat," you should type "i L31k 2 34t." Also remember to never, ever begin a sentence with a capital letter. This will only make your sentences easier to understand and in turn easier

Gemcom Software

for whomever you're currently arguing with to pick apart and respond to your posts.

Rule 6: **Distract your opponents.** Don't let them get the upper hand with silly things like reason and logic. Spend hours creating fancy graphics, use a variety of fonts and styles in your replies, and generally make it impossible for anyone to get the point. You didn't have one anyway, did you?

Rule 7: **Repeat yourself.** In *SharePoint* there is a search feature. This feature is just there for show; make sure never to use it. Just create new topics willy-nilly. If it's already been posted numerous times before, great! Now there's one more and every good poster knows you can never have enough duplicate topics. If for some reason no one responds to your topic, don't search for answers or information elsewhere. Simply make another topic containing the exact same post you posted in your first topic. This time around you're sure to get a response from someone and as an added bonus they may complain about the duplicate topics...another chance to argue!

Rule 8: **Never give in.** When your username is banned from a discussion (and if you've followed the previous rules correctly it will be) register under an alternate username and continue to pursue best practices (see above). Mock the moderator who banned your other username while you're at it. When you're banned again, simply repeat the process all over again.

If you follow this guide correctly you should quickly earn yourself the coveted "*Klabr ban*," the ultimate goal of all good *Klabr* users!