

Making Everything Easier!™

BuddyPress

FOR DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Set up the WordPress® foundation to run BuddyPress
- Navigate fun features such as status updates and activity streams
- Customize BuddyPress with your own style
- Bring your social community subscriptions together in BuddyPress



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BuddyPress For Dummies[®]

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Chapter 6

Exploring Your New Community

In This Chapter

- ▶ Registering as a new member
 - ▶ Using the admin bar
 - ▶ Editing your profile
 - ▶ Managing messages
 - ▶ Making and adding new friends
 - ▶ Creating and joining new groups
 - ▶ Discovering your activity stream
 - ▶ Browsing community directories
-

When you're familiar with the BuddyPress components and know how to set them up in your community, it's time to have a look at how those components will appear on the front end of your site. In other words, what will users see on your site after they sign up to become a member?

This chapter steps you through registering as a new member on your site; setting up and editing your member profile; uploading and cropping your avatar (or photo); using the admin bar to navigate the areas of your community; making and adding new friends within the community; understanding activity streams, groups, and forums; and using the Members, Groups, and Blogs directories.

When you're done with this chapter, you'll understand how all the BuddyPress components work together to form a fun and interactive social community on your Web site, and you'll have the knowledge you need to support your member community.



In this chapter, and all subsequent chapters, I am using the BuddyPress Default theme. Because BuddyPress has two different themes available — the BuddyPress Default and BuddyPress Classic — some of the things I describe in this chapter may look different on your system if you are using the Classic theme on your site.

Signing Up as a New Member

The first step any prospective member of your community must take is registering to become a member of your site; without that step — she cannot enjoy the benefits of membership. It's a good idea for you to go through the process of signing up as a new member so you can experience what your members will experience. To accomplish this, be sure you log out of your WordPress dashboard by clicking the Log Out link in the top-right corner.

New member registration

The following steps assume that you're using the default BuddyPress themes. If you're not using those themes, then some of these steps may vary, and you'll have to make adjustments based on the theme you are using. (See Part IV of this book for more information about BuddyPress themes.) To sign up as a new member, proceed with the following steps:

1. Browse to your site at `http://yourdomain.com`.

Replace *yourdomain.com* with your own domain name, where you installed WordPress MU and BuddyPress.

2. Click the Sign Up link in the Site Admin menu.

The Sign Up page (`http://yourdomain.com/register`) appears with several fields of information that need to be filled out, including the profile fields that you created for the default profile group in Chapter 5. Figure 6-1 shows the Sign Up page.

3. Type your desired user name in the Username field.

This required field needs to be at least four characters in length. Because this account is for your testing purposes only, enter **tester** in the Username field. This username becomes part of the URL for the member profile. For example, with the username of *tester*, the member profile URL is `http://yourdomain.com/members/tester`.

4. Type your e-mail address in the Email Address field.

This required field needs to be an e-mail account that you can access. The e-mail address entered here is the one in which members receive all community-related notifications, including their account username and password login information. Additionally, member accounts are limited to one e-mail address, so if you're already using an e-mail address for a member account, you cannot develop another account using the same e-mail address. For your testing purposes, enter a different e-mail address than the one you're using for your WordPress MU admin user account.

BuddyPress For Dummies — Mozilla Firefox

BuddyPress For Dummies Log In Sign Up

BuddyPress For Dummies Members Search

BuddyPress For Dummies Home Blog Members Groups Forums Blogs

Create an Account

Registering for this site is easy, just fill in the fields below and we'll get a new account set up for you in no time.

Account Details

Username (required)

Email Address (required)

Choose a Password (required)

Confirm Password (required)

Blog URL (required)

Yes, I'd like to create a new blog

Profile Details

People Call Me (required)

Occupation

What I do for a living

Website

City

State/Province

Interests

To start connecting please log in first. You can also [create an account](#).

Username

Password

Remember Me

Log In

Recently Active Member Avatars

Groups

Newest | Active | Popular

Stamp Gang

26 members

Figure 6-1:
The default
BuddyPress
Sign Up
page.

5. Type your desired password in the Choose a Password field.

Your password can be anything you want it to be, but make sure the password is difficult for other people to guess. After you type the password into the Choose a Password field, you have to re-type the same password into the Confirm Password field — both are required.

6. Select the Yes, I'd Like to Create a New Blog check box.

This causes the system to create a blog for your test account when you sign up. Users can choose not to create a blog and bypass this selection altogether; they are not required to set up a blog within your network. If they don't select this box, users will have a member profile only, but can choose to create a blog within your network later if they want to.

7. Type your desired Blog address in the Blog URL text box.

The Blog URL is the Web address of your blog within your community. For your testing purposes, type **testblog** in the Blog URL field. This creates the Blog URL of `http://testblog.yourdomain.com` if you're using the WordPress MU subdomain setup, or `http://yourdomain.com/testblog` if you're using the WordPress MU subdirectory setup. (See Chapter 2 regarding subdomains versus subdirectories for member blogs in WordPress MU.)

8. Type your desired title in the Blog Title text box.

Here is where you can give your blog a name. The Blog Title displays at the top of your blog so everyone knows what your blog is about. For your testing purposes, type **My Test Blog** in the Blog Title field.

9. Select Blog privacy options.

This selection states, “I would like my blog to appear in search engines and in public listings around this site.” Select Yes to make your blog public and viewable in your community profile and blog directories, and to allow search engines (such as Google or Yahoo!) to see your blog and record it in their search directories. Select No if you want to hide your blog from community profiles, directories, and search engines.

10. Type your name in the Name text box.

This is a required field. Type your name the way you want it to appear on your member profile.

11. Fill out the remaining profile fields.

The profile fields that you add to the default profile group (see Chapter 5) will appear on the registration page. Fill in the requested information and keep in mind that the answers you provide display on your member profile.

12. Click the Complete Sign Up button.

A new page appears with a message that reads, “Sign Up Complete!” Your new account is created and you receive an e-mail at the address you provided in Step 4.

13. While you wait for the e-mail from Step 12 to arrive — upload your avatar.

An *avatar* is a photo or graphic image that visually represents you in the community. It appears on your member profile, in all comments you leave on member blogs and wires, and next to your activity streams throughout the community site. A default image displays for you, but you probably want to change it to something a little more personal and specific to you. To change your default avatar, follow these steps:

a. Click the Browse button.

A dialog box appears where you select a photo that you want to use from a directory on your computer. Select the file and click Open (or just double-click the file); the dialog box closes.

b. Click the Upload Image button.

The file uploads from your computer to your Web server where it is stored in a folder in your WordPress installation directory.

c. Resize your image.

BuddyPress provides a built-in cropping tool that allows you to crop your chosen file to a size of your preference. To use the cropping tool, you drag the edges of the box, shown in Figure 6-2, to the size you prefer. Everything inside the borders of the box displays as your avatar within the community. When you're done, click the Crop Image button; the page reloads and shows your new avatar. If you're unhappy with the image, you can follow these steps again to upload and crop a new image.

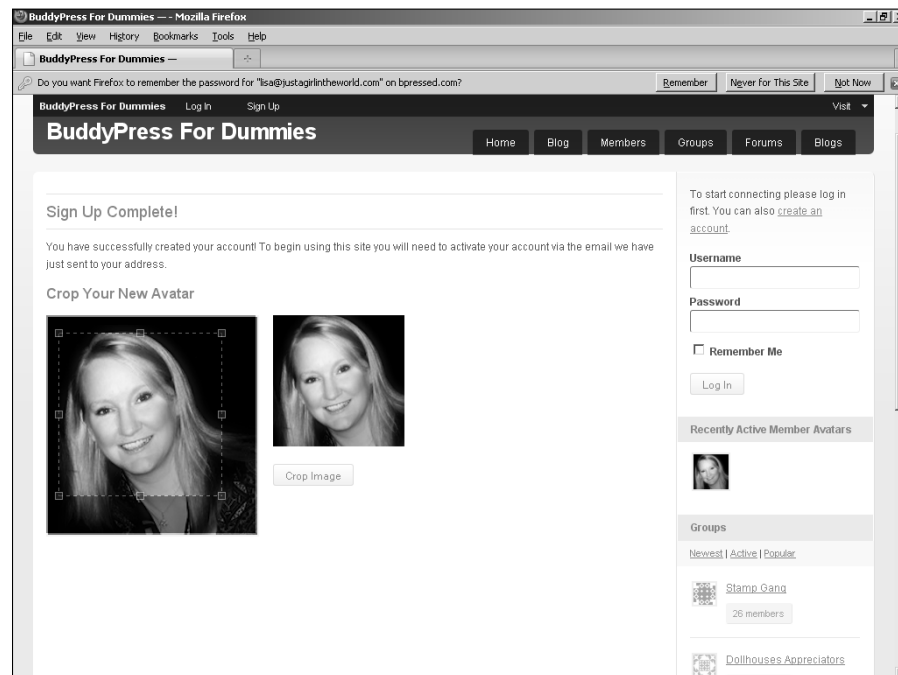


Figure 6-2: The cropping tool allows you to crop and resize your avatar.

Activating a new member account

During the signup process, an e-mail is sent to an address you provide that contains a link that you must click to activate the new user account. Skipping this step prevents the user account from creating fully. When you click the link, a browser window opens, and the Account Activate page on your community Web site appears with a message that reads, "Your account was activated successfully! You can now log in with the username and password you provided"

when you signed up.” At that point, you can log in to your site using the username and password that you created by following these steps:

1. Type your username in the Username field.

The login area is located in the top right of your Web site. Type the username that you designated when you signed up for this account; if you followed the steps in the preceding section, the username you created is *tester*.

2. Type your password in the text box to the right of the Username field.

Type the password that you designated during the signup process.

3. Click the Log In button.

The front page of your site reloads. At this point, the login area disappears and your avatar and username display. When you click your username, your member profile appears at <http://yourdomain.com/members/tester>.

Figure 6-3 shows my “tester” profile complete with avatar and the information I filled out during the sign-up process.

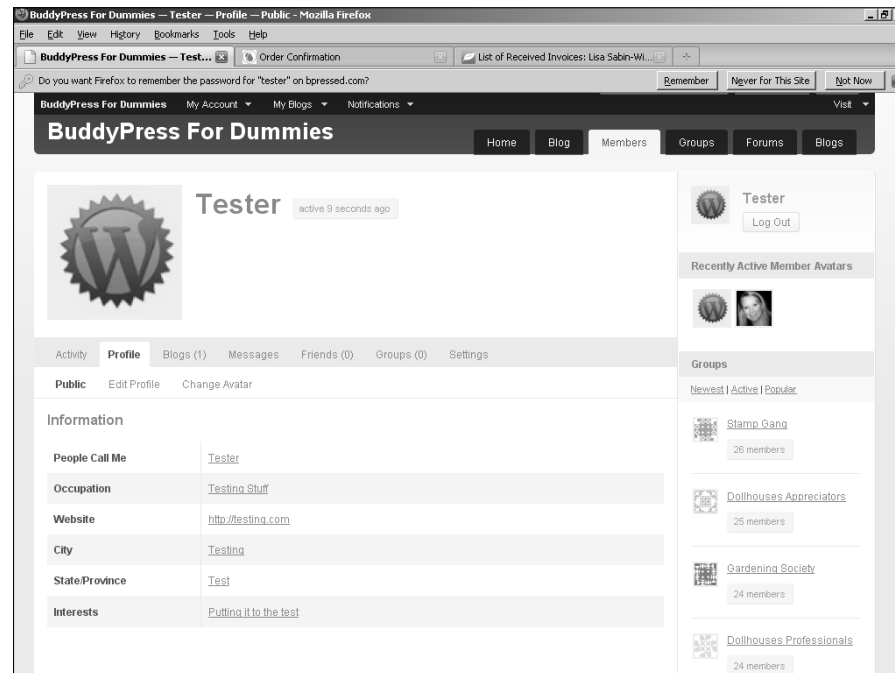


Figure 6-3:
A member
profile on a
BuddyPress-
powered
community
site.

Now you have a regular member account. You can use this account to test all the features in your community the way a regular member would. The next sections of this chapter cover those features in detail from a member's perspective.

Navigating the Admin Bar

You might have already noticed the admin bar located at the top of every page on your Web site (see Figure 6-4). Community members use the admin bar to navigate through the areas and sections of your Web site, and throughout your community.

Admin bar

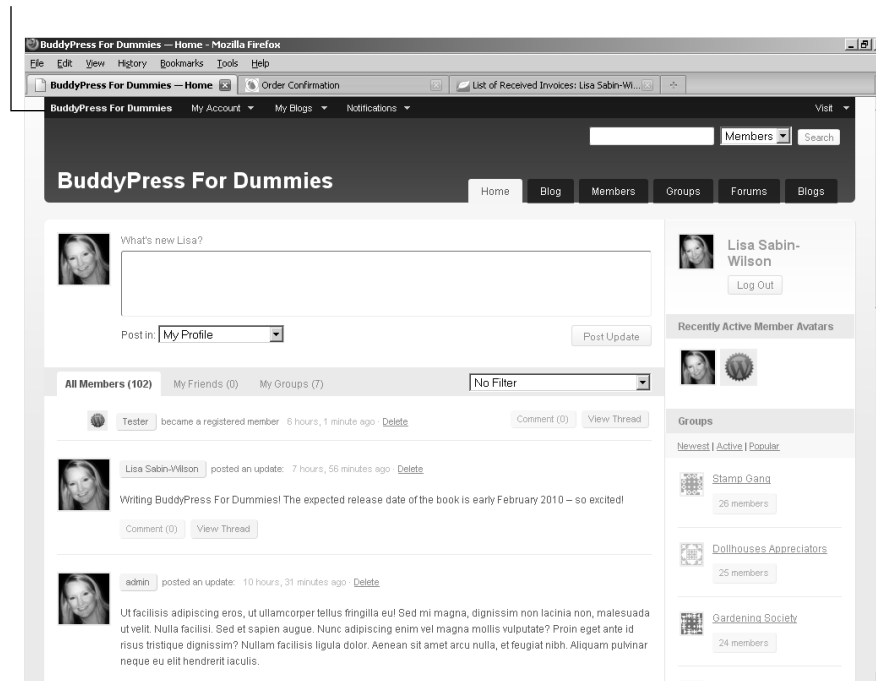


Figure 6-4: The admin bar appears at the top of every BuddyPress community page.

Table 6-1 provides a description of the menu items found on the admin bar. I discuss the My Account options more fully in the next few sections.

Table 6-1		Admin Bar Menu Items	
Main Menu	Submenu Item(s)	Destination Page	Description
<i>Site name</i>	None	Front page	Returns you to the front page of your Web site.
My Account	Activity	Activity page	Lists your recent activity within the community.
	Profile	Profile page	Displays your community profile.
	Blogs	Blogs page	Lists blogs that you own within the community.
	Wire	Wire page	Shows recent posts to your wire.
	Messages	Messages page	Displays messages sent to you by community members.
	Friends	Friends page	Lists friends you've added within the community.
	Groups	My Groups page	Lists community groups you've joined.
	Settings	General Settings page	Displays settings you can change, or you can delete your account completely.
	Log Out	Logout page	Logs you out of the community and returns you to the front page of the Web site.
My Blogs	<i>Blog name</i>	Dashboard for your blog	If you have a community blog, clicking your blog's name takes you to its dashboard.
	Create a Blog	Create a Blog page	Displays a form you can use to sign up for and create a new community blog.
Notifications	None	None	When certain activities happen, a small red alert appears here.
Visit	Random Member	Community member profile	Takes you to a randomly selected profile.
	Random Group	Community group page	Takes you to a randomly selected group page.
	Random Blog	Community member blog	Takes you to a randomly selected member blog.



In Chapter 5, I describe an option available to the site administrator that hides the admin bar from logged-out users. If you want site visitors, including ones who aren't logged in as a member, to see the admin bar, then be sure to select No on the Hide Admin Bar for Logged Out Users? option on the BuddyPress Settings page. If you want only members who are logged in to see the admin bar, then select Yes for that setting. The choice is yours — I report, you decide!

Exploring Your Profile

When you activate a community account, your profile is your gateway into the community's features. When you're logged in, your profile gives you menu options in the navigation bar above your profile information. Notice the options are the same as those in the My Account menu on the admin bar. You can choose whichever menu is more comfortable for you to use when navigating the features.



Your profile page looks slightly different when you aren't logged in to the community. Figure 6-3 shows a profile of a member who's logged in. Figure 6-5 shows a profile of a member who's logged out. When logged out, you are not able to see the menu options in the navigation bar above your profile, and a login form appears at the top of the sidebar on the right of the page.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the profile of Lisa Sabin-Wilson on the BuddyPress For Dummies site. The user is logged out. The profile page includes a navigation bar with links for Home, Blog, Members, Groups, Forums, and Blogs. The profile information section shows Lisa Sabin-Wilson's name, a recent post about writing the book, and a table of personal details. The right sidebar contains a login form and a section for recently active member avatars.

Information	
People Call Me	Lisa Sabin-Wilson
Occupation	Web Designer, Author
Website	http://ewebscapes.com
City	Milwaukee
State/Province	Wisconsin
Interests	Design, Writing, Skiing, Scuba, Gardening, Cooking

Figure 6-5: A BuddyPress profile of a user who's logged out.

A light gray menu with several navigation options appears above your profile information (refer to Figure 6-3). When you're navigating your profile, another subnavigation menu appears beneath those navigation options, which gives you the ability to edit or view different options for your account. For example, when you choose Profile in the navigation menu, the subnavigation menu displays any options you have for the Profile feature.

Activity

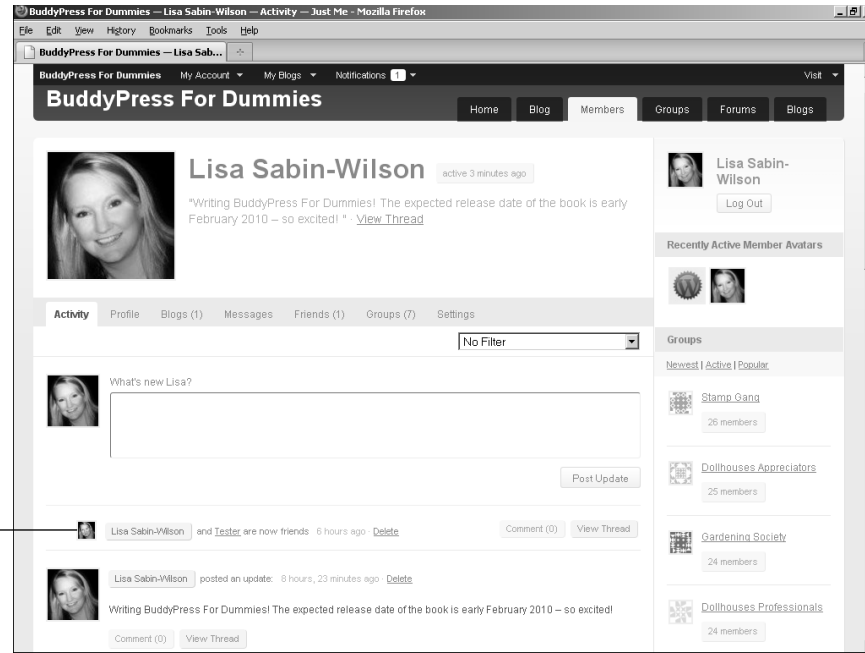
The first menu item is the Activity feature. Click Activity and the Activity page loads in your browser window and lists only your recent activity within the community. The types of activities listed here include

- ✔ **Blog posts:** When you publish a new blog post on your community blog, the title of the blog post displays in your Activity stream with a link to your new blog post. If my new blog post were titled, "BuddyPress is really neat!" the My Activity stream would display *Lisa Sabin-Wilson wrote a new blog post: BuddyPress is really neat!* Additionally, the time since that activity happened would display, such as *1 hour ago* or *2 months ago*.
- ✔ **New friendships:** When you add a new friend to your network, it displays in your My Activity stream. Figure 6-6 shows a listing on my Activity page that reads, "You and Tester are now friends." The name *Tester* links to Tester's profile, too.
- ✔ **Group activity:** All activity related to groups posts to your My Activity stream, such as new groups you create or join, new comments you leave on a group wire, and any topics you comment on (or create) in a group forum.
- ✔ **Profile updates:** Updates you make to your profile list in your My Activity stream. For example, your Activity page will mention if you change your avatar or update your profile fields.
- ✔ **Status updates:** All status updates you make post to your My Activity stream. (See the upcoming "Updating your status" section for more info about updating your status.)

Navigating the Activity page

The Activity page lists the 25 most recent updates per page — click the Load More link at the bottom to automatically load the next 25 most recent updates on the page.

Figure 6-6:
The My Activity stream displays new friendships I've made.



New friendship listing

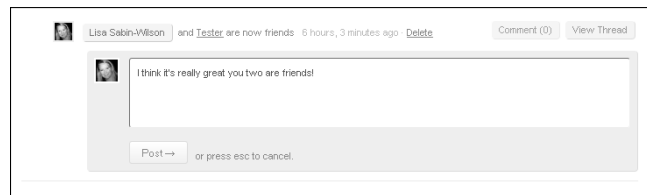
Above the My Activity stream, on the right side, you see a drop-down menu. (By default, the menu says, No Filter.) This menu gives you, and anyone else browsing your community pages, the ability to sort and filter the display of Activity listings on this page. The options provided within that drop-down menu include:

- ✓ **No Filter:** This option creates an Activity listing of all possible activities within the community. This is the default option.
- ✓ **Updates Only:** Choosing this option changes the display on the page to a list of status updates. (See the upcoming section, “Updating your status,” for more information about status updates.)
- ✓ **New Blog Posts Only:** Choosing this option changes the display on the page to a list of new blog posts.
- ✓ **New Blog Comments Only:** This option filters the activity listing to display only new blog comments.
- ✓ **New Group Forum Topics Only:** This option filters the activity listing to display only new topics created within Group forums.

- ✔ **New Group Forum Replies Only:** Choosing this option changes the display on the page to list only new replies made within Group forums — which is nice way of keeping track of new discussions going on within the different forums within your community.
- ✔ **New Friendships Only:** This menu option filters the activity listing to display newly created friendships between members within the community.

On each activity listing, a Comment link appears after the update. When clicked, this link opens a text box that allows any member to leave a comment. Figure 6-7 shows the comment text box beneath an activity listing of a new friendship.

Figure 6-7: Members can easily leave a comment on any activity listing with the Comments link.



Updating your status

Above the Activity listings is a text box where you can provide a quick status update. Status updates are usually short one- to two-line statements you write to update your friends and other community members about what you're doing. If you've ever used the Twitter platform, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Twitter is considered a "micro-blogging" service where members of the Twitter community can update their status, 140 characters at a time, to provide their friends and followers with details of exactly what they're doing at that moment.

You can use status updates in various ways:

- ✔ **Give a quick update on what you're doing right this moment.** For example, if I were to update my status right now in a BuddyPress community, I would probably write something like *I'm about halfway done with writing Chapter 6 of my BuddyPress latest book: BuddyPress For Dummies!*, as seen in Figure 6-8.

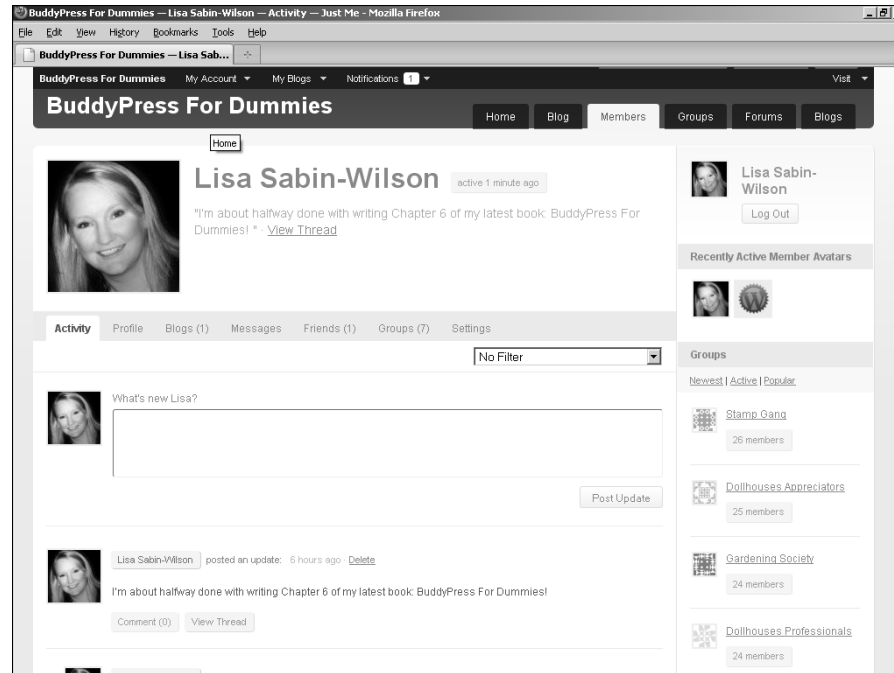


Figure 6-8:
My latest
status
update
on the
BuddyPress
demo Web
site.

- ✔ **Ask a question that community members will see.** You can ask a question like *Does anyone have any good examples of a live BuddyPress community site?* — and with any luck, you'll get a good answer. Community members can respond to you by clicking the Comment link on your status update. (By the way, you can find some great examples of live BuddyPress community sites in Chapter 17.)
- ✔ **Share a helpful tip or resource with your friends in the community.** For example, *Hey! I just found this great book called BuddyPress For Dummies — everyone should read it!*

There are no rules for status updates, you can use them any way you want. The following steps show you how to update your status on your profile:

1. Visit your profile.

You need to be logged in to update your status. You can view your profile at `http://yourdomain.com/members/tester` (where *your domain.com* is the domain of your Web site).

2. Click the Activity link in the navigation menu.

The Activity page loads, showing a text box at the top.

3. Type your update in the What's New? text box.

4. Click the Post Update button.

This saves and then displays the text of your status update with a timestamp of how long ago you made the update (for example, 1 minute ago, 1 hour ago, 10 days ago, and so on).

You can update your status as often as you want; there are no time restrictions on when you can do it. Your status update also appears to the right of your Member Avatar on your Profile page. That status update will change the next time you type in a new status update on the Activity page.

Profile

The second menu item is the Profile feature. Click Profile, and the Profile page loads in your browser window. Earlier in this chapter, you see what a profile looks like in a BuddyPress community (refer to Figure 6-3). A member profile displays the following items:

- ✓ The amount of time since you were last active in the community (for example, as shown in Figure 6-6, Active 1 Minute Ago)
- ✓ Your avatar (or photo)
- ✓ Your latest status update
- ✓ The Add Friend button, which allows other community members to request your friendship
- ✓ The Send Message button, which allows your established friends to send you a private message
- ✓ The information from the profile fields that you fill out when you sign up.

On the subnavigation menu on the Profile page, you see three additional options that you can use to sort the Profile menu:

- ✓ **Public:** This Profile menu default view shows you exactly how your profile looks to others when they view your profile page.
- ✓ **Edit Profile:** Where you can edit the details in your profile, including the profile fields that you set up previously.
- ✓ **Change Avatar:** Where you can edit your avatar by uploading a new one, or re-cropping the one you currently have.

Editing your profile information

On the subnavigation menu on the Profile page, the second option, Edit Profile, is where you can update and add new profile information as often as you like. To create new profile groups and fields for your members to fill out so they can add information to their profile, see Chapter 5.

Figure 6-9 displays the Editing page for my profile.

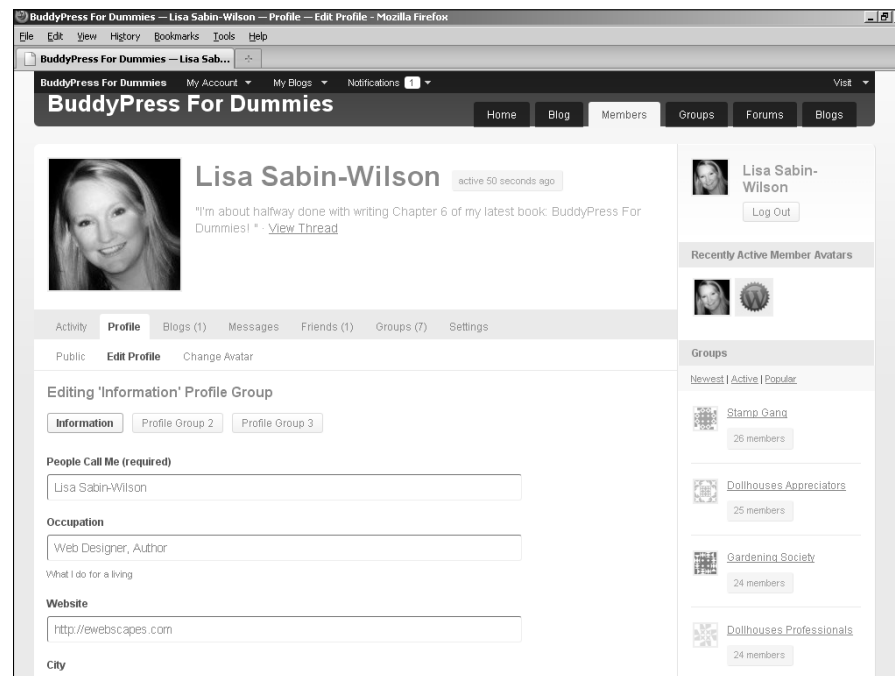


Figure 6-9:
Editing
personal
profile
information.

The profile group contains the questions I filled out when I signed up as a member. (As I discuss in Chapter 5, this default profile group is set up for you when you install BuddyPress on your site.) The remaining questions contain profile information that I can fill out after I log in and choose Profile→Edit Profile.

To edit your profile, fill out the profile fields with the information requested. Be sure to click the Save Changes button at the bottom of each profile group when you finish. If you visit your public profile (by choosing Public on the

subnavigation menu), you see your information is updated. Notice that some of the words in your profile are hyperlinked. Check out the following “Profile data — filtered” sidebar to find out why hyperlinks are a great feature for your community members.

Changing your avatar

On the subnavigation menu on the Profile page, the last option, Change Avatar, is where you upload and crop a new avatar to display on your profile. The method of accomplishing this is the same one you use during the user registration process; see the earlier “New member registration” section to change your avatar.

Blogs

The third menu item is the Blogs feature. Click Blogs, and the Blogs page loads in your browser window where you see a listing by title of the blogs that you own, or are a member of, within the community. The blog titles are hyperlinked, meaning you and other community members can click a blog’s title to load it in your browser window.

Above the Blogs listing is a drop-down menu that allows you to filter the display of your blogs by the following sort methods:

- ✓ Last Active
- ✓ Newest
- ✓ Alphabetical

Filtering the display of Blogs on the page is especially helpful if you own or are a member of several different blogs within the community.

Profile data — filtered

On your profile, you see that some of the words and phrases are a different color and are underlined (if you’re using the BuddyPress Default theme). When you click such text, called a *hyperlink*, a page that lists other members who have the same words in their profile appears. This feature is helpful because it gives you the opportunity to discover members within the community who have the same interests, live in

the same area, or do the same type of work that you do. For example, when I click Author on my profile, a directory of community members who have the word *Author* in their profile appears. From there, I can communicate with other authors and share experiences, resources, and information about a field and activity that we have in common.

Messages

The next menu item is the Messages feature. After you add community members as friends, you can send private messages to them, and they can send messages to you. Click Messages, and the Messages page loads in your browser window where you can read, send, and manage messages for your user account. Three options appear in the subnavigation menu: Inbox, Sent Messages, and Compose.

Managing your Inbox

When you choose Messages > Inbox, you can read messages sent to you by your community friends. A short excerpt of the messages displays with your friends' avatars (photo), their names, the dates the messages were sent, and the title of their messages. Click a message title to read the full content of the message.

You can sort your Inbox by using the Select drop-down menu on the Inbox page. BuddyPress gives you three options to sort messages by:

- ✔ **Read:** Displays messages that you've read.
- ✔ **Unread:** Displays messages that you haven't read.
- ✔ **All:** The default displays all messages sent to you, read or unread.

Managing messages in your Inbox is a pretty easy task. Figure 6-10 illustrates that I have two messages in my Inbox. The number to the right of the Inbox option in the subnavigation menu changes depending on the amount of messages you have in your Inbox. If there are no messages in your Inbox, nothing displays next to the Inbox option.

On the Inbox page, you can delete a message by clicking the Close button (the small red box with the white X in the middle), shown to the right of the message excerpts in Figure 6-10.

You can further manage the messages in your Inbox by using the links above the Inbox section and the check boxes shown to the right of the message excerpts in Figure 6-10. Select the check box next to the message you want to manage, and then choose one of the following links from the menu:

- ✔ **Mark as Read:** BuddyPress displays that message as one that you've already read. Additionally, the notification icon on the admin bar that tells you the number of unread messages you have in your Inbox turns off.
- ✔ **Mark as Unread:** BuddyPress displays that message as one that you haven't read. The notification icon in the admin bar remains active as a reminder that the message is in your Inbox.

- ✔ **Delete Selected:** BuddyPress deletes the selected message from your Inbox. Be careful with this one, though, because there's no confirmation message asking you whether you're sure that you want to delete the message. When you click the Delete Selected link, the Inbox page reloads and states the message has been deleted — and sure enough, the message is gone forever.

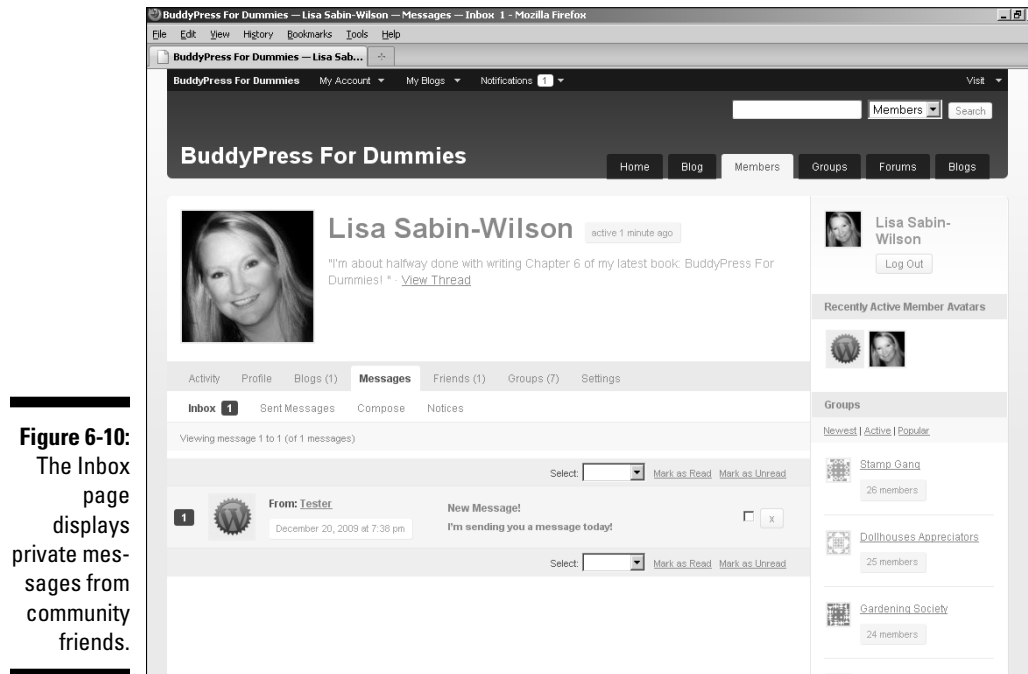


Figure 6-10: The Inbox page displays private messages from community friends.

Reading and replying to Inbox messages

To read a message listed in your Inbox, click the message's title. A new page loads and displays the full content. This page also keeps a record of your conversations with the message sender regarding this message, so when you send a reply, it lists on this page, too. Figure 6-11 shows a message thread between a friend within the community and me. The original message is at the top, followed by any subsequent replies and a text box at the bottom for you to easily add more to the private conversation.

Viewing messages you've sent

When you choose Messages → Sent Messages, you see only the messages sent by you to other community friends. You can view and manage those messages the same way you do on the Inbox page; review the previous section and apply that information to the Sent Messages page.

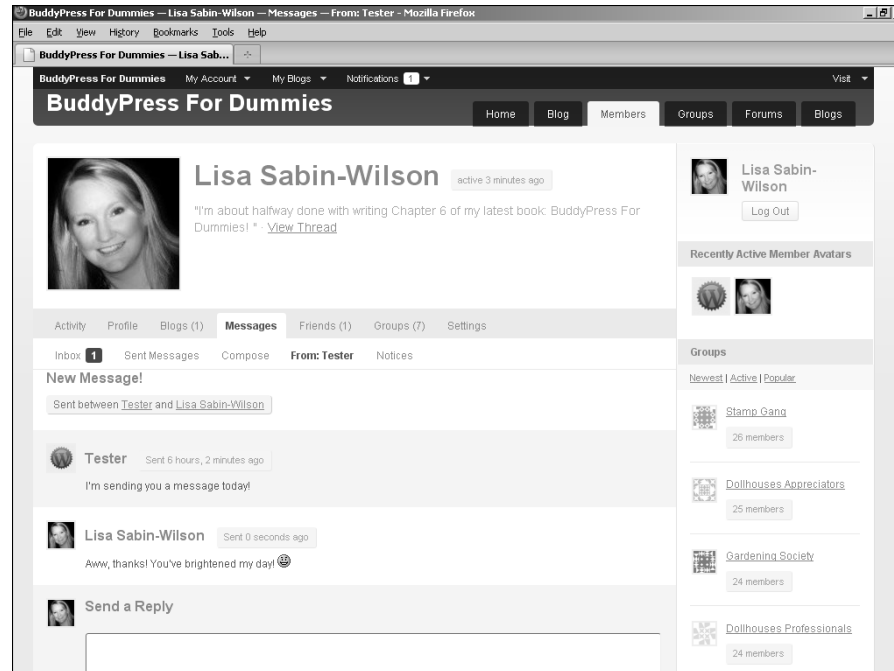


Figure 6-11:
The entire conversation thread for a private message.

Composing a new message

The next option in the Messages menu is Compose. When you choose Messages → Compose, the Compose page appears where you can compose a new message to send to a community friend. To compose a new message, follow these steps:

- 1. In the Send To field, type the username of the friend you want to send the message to.**

- 2. (Optional) Send as a notice to all users,**

Underneath the Send To field is the This Is a Notice to All Users checkbox — check this box if you want your message to be sent to all users within the community.

- 3. In the Subject field, type a message subject.**

The subject also serves as the message title that displays in your friend's Inbox.

- 4. In the Message text box, type the body of your message.**

There are no character or word count limits here, so your message can be as short or as long as you need it to be.

- 5. Click the Send Message button at the bottom of the Compose page to send the message to your friend.**

Notifications

The final option in the Messages menu is Notices. When you click the Notices link, the Notices page loads and lists all new notifications you have received. Notices can include several items, such as

- ✓ New friendship requests
- ✓ Newly received, unread messages
- ✓ Replies to messages you have sent
- ✓ New Group invitations

Additionally, when you have new notices waiting for you, you will see a notification alert. This alert — a bright white circle with a number in the center — appears in the admin bar at the top of every BuddyPress community page next to the Notifications item. The number within the circle indicates how many new notifications you have. You can see this in play in Figure 6-10.

Friends

Friendships are made and lost in social communities around the Web, and a BuddyPress-powered community is no different.

The next menu item is the Friends feature. Choosing Friends → Friends loads the My Friends page, which lists all the friends you've added within the community. Figure 6-12 shows my Friends list on a BuddyPress community Web site.

Viewing and sorting your My Friends list

The My Friends page, by default, displays your newest friends in the community first. The Friends list reveals your friends' avatars, names, and times since their last recorded community action, and a button giving you the option to cancel your friendship with each person.

You can further sort your friends by using the drop-down menu above the listing. This drop-down menu allows you to sort your Friends list by:

- ✓ Last Active
- ✓ Newest Registered
- ✓ Alphabetical

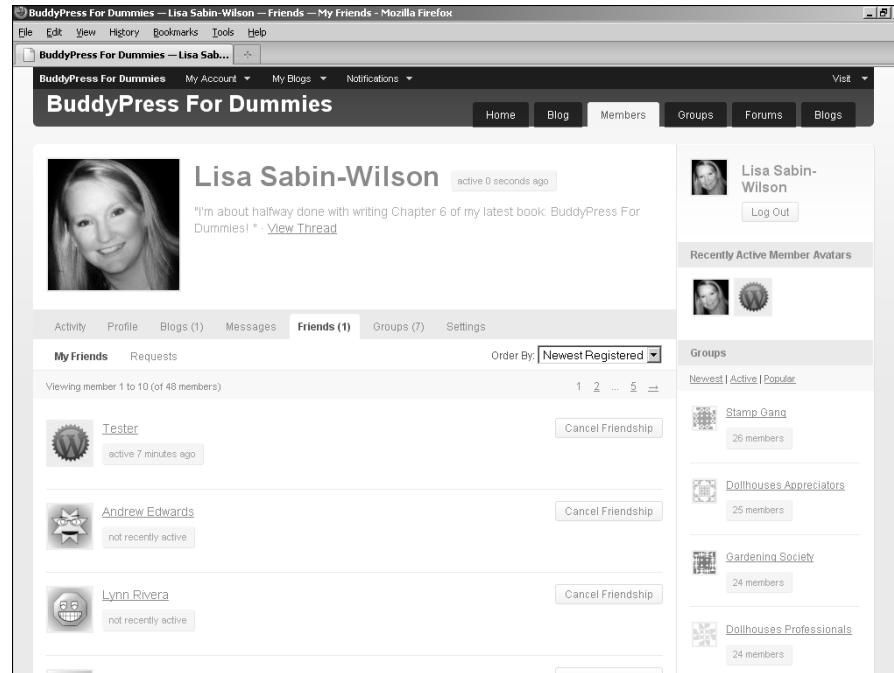


Figure 6-12:
My friends
list on the
BuddyPress
demo Web
site.

Groups

If membership in the exclusive community on your site isn't enough, you and other community members can create new groups and join existing groups within your community. In Chapter 5, I describe groups and using them in your BuddyPress community. The Groups feature is the place to go to view groups you belong to, create new groups, and invite your friends to community groups you're associated with.

Choosing Groups→My Groups loads the My Groups page, which lists community groups you either own or belong to. Figure 6-13 illustrates the My Groups page where the group's avatar, title, number of members, and description display for easy understanding and navigation.

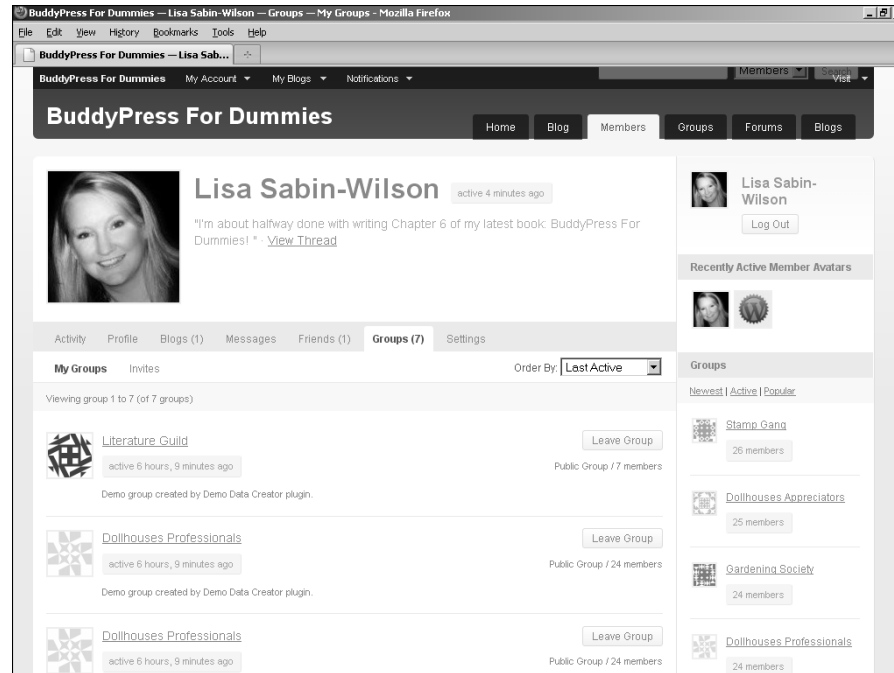


Figure 6-13:
The My Groups page displays the community groups you belong to or own.

Viewing and sorting your My Groups list

Above the My Groups section is a drop-down menu of options that allow you to further sort your list by the following sort methods:

- ✓ **Last Active:** The My Groups page, by default, displays your most recently active groups first.
- ✓ **Most Members:** Sorts your My Groups list to display the groups with the highest amount of members.
- ✓ **Newly Created:** Sorts your My Groups list to display the groups creation date, from newest to oldest.
- ✓ **Alphabetical:** This option sorts the My Groups list in alphabetical order, A through Z.

Creating a new group

If you want to create your own group within a BuddyPress community, click the Groups link in the top-right navigation menu — then click the Create a Group button. This loads the Create a Group page, where you can create a

community group on any topic, theme, or interest you want. Simply create the group and then invite other friends from the community to join. To create a new group, choose Groups → Create a Group, as shown in Figure 6-14, and then follow these steps:

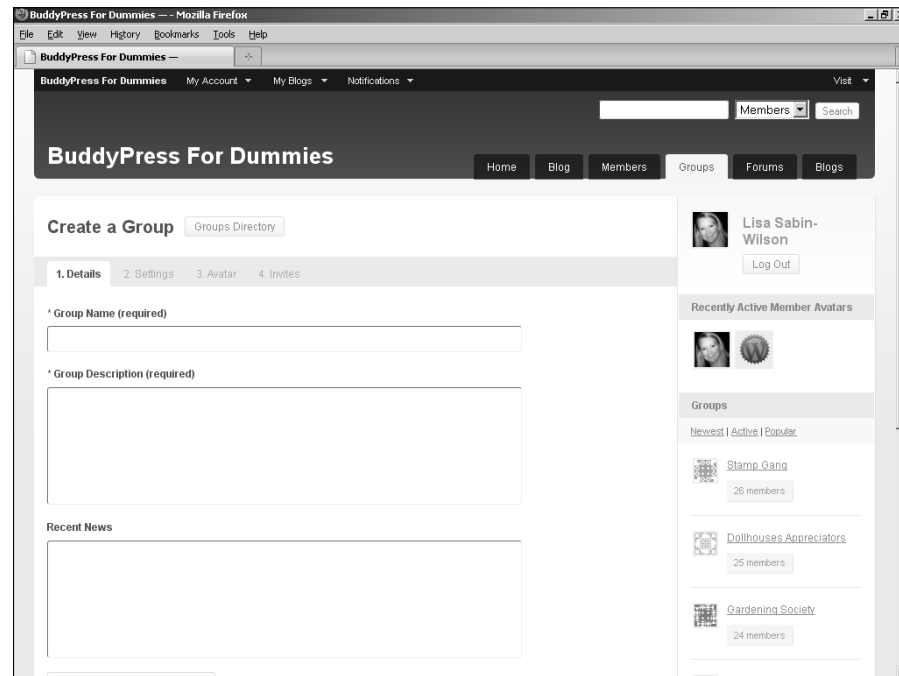


Figure 6-14:
Creating a
new group
in your
BuddyPress
community.

- 1. Type the name of your group.**

The Group Name field is where you type in the name of the group you are creating.

- 2. Type the group description.**

The Group Description field is where you type a short description of your new group.

- 3. Enter any recent group news.**

If your new group has any recent news you want to share, type it in the Recent News field.

- 4. Click the Create and Continue button.**

This loads the Create a Group — Settings page where you can choose whether to enable discussion forums for your group. If you do, place a check mark in the box labeled *Enable Discussion Forum*.

Additionally, you have three privacy options to choose from:

- *This Is a Public Group*: Any member of the community can join, and the group is listed in the community's group directory and in search results. Additionally, the group content (wire posts, members, forum topics, and discussions) are viewable by any member of the community.
- *This Is a Private Group*: Requires that community members request to join the group. Requests are sent to the group administrator (or creator) for approval. The group is listed in group directories and search results; however, the group's content is viewable to only approved members of the group.
- *This Is a Hidden Group*: Allows membership by invite only; the site administrator (or creator) has to invite the members before they can join. This group is not included in group directories or search results, and the group's content is viewable to only approved members of the group.

5. Click the Next Step button.

This loads the Create a Group — Avatar page where you can upload and crop an avatar that represents the group within the community.

6. Upload and crop the group avatar.

The steps for uploading and cropping a group avatar are the same as the steps to upload an avatar for your profile. Follow the steps in the earlier "New member registration" section to upload and crop your group's avatar.

7. Click the Next Step button.

The Create a Group — Group Invites page appears where you can select from your friends list who you want to invite to join your new group.

8. Click the Finish button.

Your new group's page loads in your browser window. The group I created during this process is shown in Figure 6-15.

Managing a newly created group

After you create a new group, as the group administrator, you need to know a few things about managing the group. The Groups menu provides easy navigation to the Admin, Forums, and Members options, as shown in Figure 6-16, but it also links to helpful options that are available to only the site administrator. Your options on the Groups subnavigation menu are

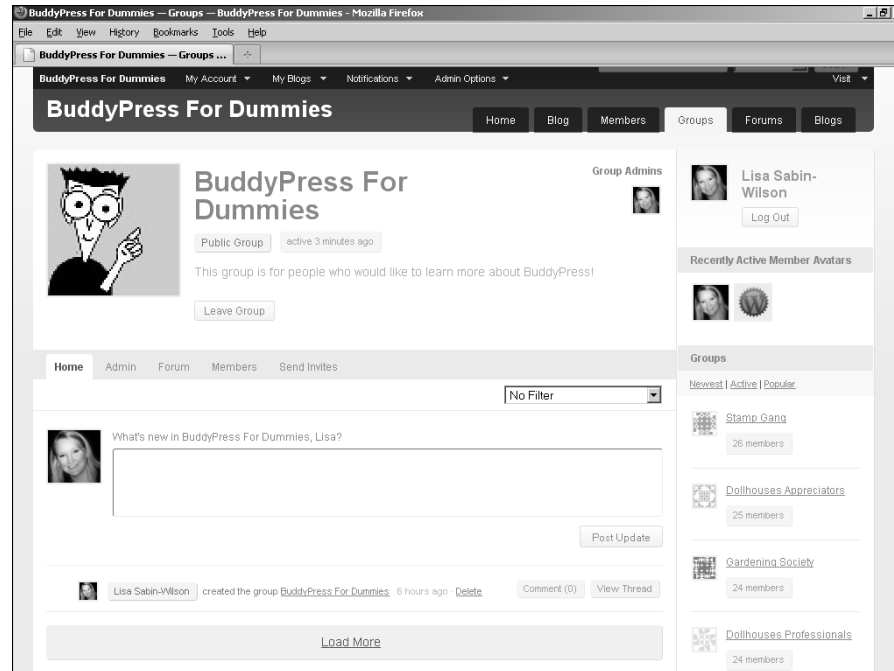


Figure 6-15:
A newly
created
group on a
BuddyPress
community
site.

- ✓ **Home:** This link is visible to all members of the group and returns you to the Groups front page.
- ✓ **Admin:** This link is visible to only the group administrator and contains the following options for group management, as shown in Figure 6-16:
 - *Edit Details:* Edit the group name, description, news, and notification preferences.
 - *Group Settings:* Edit the settings for enabling the comment wire or discussion form and set the privacy options for the group.
 - *Group Avatar:* Change the group avatar by uploading and cropping a new image.
 - *Manage Members:* View a listing of all members of the group and manage their settings.

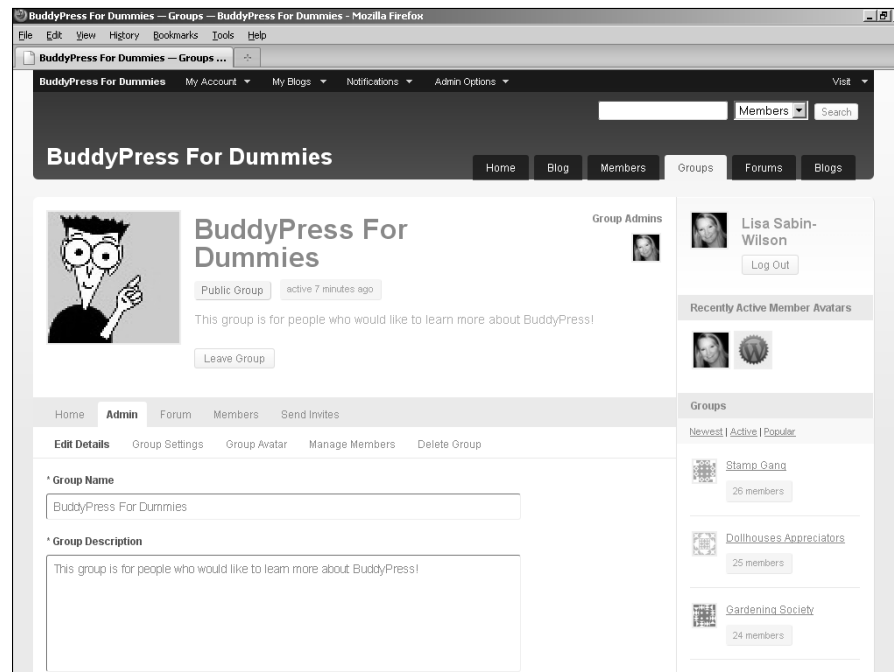
You can also “Kick/Ban” a member, which removes the member from the group and disallows them from re-joining the group in the future. You would do this for a group member who is being particularly difficult, or who has been harassing other members of the group, and so on. The decision to ban a member from the group is at the discretion of the group administrator.

Additionally, you can promote a member to Moderator or Administrator status, which increases the member's access to administrative group settings. Usually, group administrators promote another member to help moderate a particularly busy group where the administrator might need help with member and topic management. Additionally, you are able to demote a member from moderator or administrator to a normal member, with no advanced privileges.

- **Delete Group:** Delete the group completely from the community. Be careful using this option because it deletes everything — group wire comments, group forum discussions, and member lists — and removes the group from site directories, search results, and activity streams. Be aware that deleting a group is permanent — once you do this, all group data is completely lost and there is no way to get it back — so be careful with this option!

✔ **Forum:** This link is visible to all group members and loads the group forum page where you and other members of your group can view and create forum topics and discussions within the group.

Figure 6-16: The group administrator can edit the group's details and settings on the Admin menu.



- ✓ **Members:** This link is visible to all group members and loads the group Member Directory for the group, which displays members' avatars and names. Each name is a hyperlink that takes you to that member's profile.
- ✓ **Send Invites:** This link is visible to only the group administrator and loads a listing of your friends that you can select and send group invites to. The members you invite get a notification via e-mail and a notification in the admin bar at the top of the site.
- ✓ **Leave Group:** This link is visible to all community members and gives them the option of leaving the group completely. They can rejoin the group later if they choose to. Group administrators aren't allowed to leave their own group, so Group administrators will not see the Leave Group option in the navigation menu.

Above the Group listings is a drop-down menu that allows you and other group members to sort the display of group activity by the following methods:

- ✓ **Updates Only:** Choosing this option displays a listing of updates made by group members.
- ✓ **Group Forum Activity Only:** Choosing this option displays a listing of group forum topics and discussion.
- ✓ **Blog Activity Only:** Choosing this option displays a listing of blog activity (posts and comments) from group members.

Settings

The next menu item is the Settings feature. Choose Settings → General to

- ✓ Change your account e-mail address.
- ✓ Change your password by typing a new password in the Change Password text box, re-typing it in the second text box, and then clicking the Save Changes button.

The second option on the Settings subnavigation menu is Notifications where you can set your community e-mail notification preferences, as shown in Figure 6-17. Select Yes if you want notifications by e-mail; select No if you'd rather not receive e-mail notifications. Notifications are sent for the following events:

- ✓ **Messages:** You receive an e-mail when another member sends you a private message or a new site notice is posted.
- ✓ **Friends:** You receive an e-mail when another member sends you a friendship request or accepts your friendship request.

✔ **Groups:** You receive an e-mail when another member invites you to join their group, when group information updates, when a member posts a wire message to a group you belong to, when you're promoted to group administrator or moderator, and when a member requests to join a group that you marked private in the group settings.

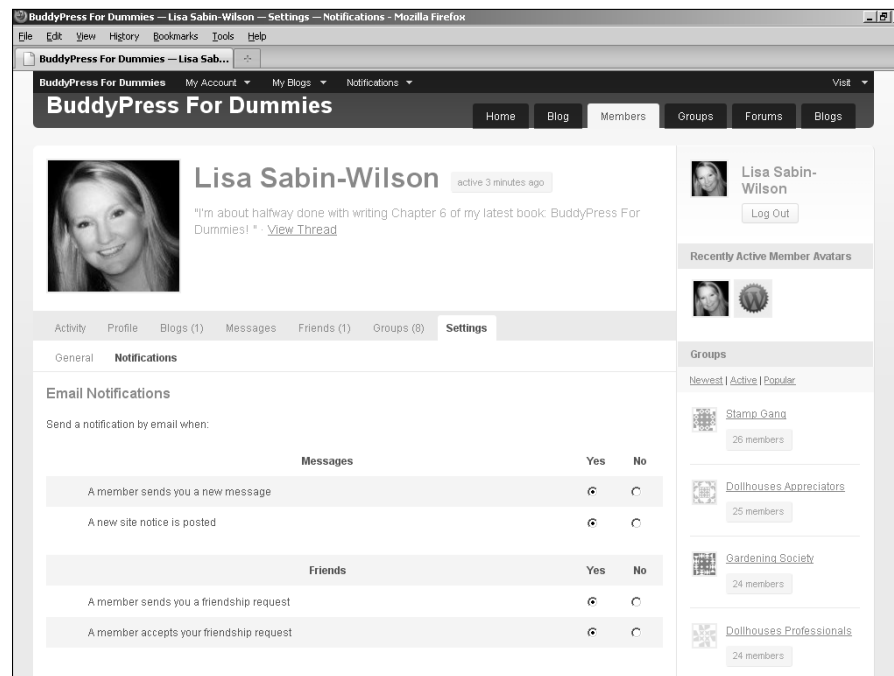


Figure 6-17: Set your e-mail notification preferences on the Notifications page.



By default, all e-mail notification preferences are marked as Yes; you'll automatically receive e-mail notifications whenever any of those events occurs unless you go to the Settings page and change your e-mail notification preferences.

Discovering Site Wide Activity, Directories, and Searches

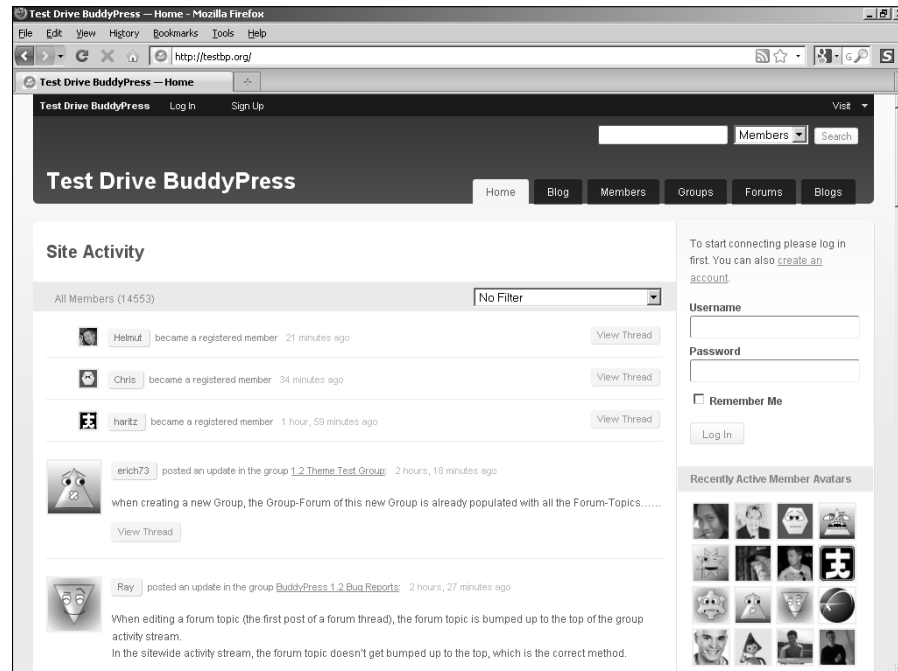
What good is a community of active, social members if they cannot find activities or other members within the community? About as good as photographer without a camera, I'd say. That's why BuddyPress communities come with the following features:

✔ **Site Activity stream:** A listing of activities that have happened throughout the entire community that includes the following:

- Wire posts on member profiles and group pages
- New friendships between community members
- New blog posts and comments
- New forum topics and discussions
- New groups
- New members to a group
- Status updates by community members
- Profile updates by community members (new avatars, new profile data, and so on)

When a community member performs an action within the community, it appears in the Site Wide Activity stream. Figure 6-18 displays the Site Wide Activity stream on the BuddyPress demo Web site at <http://testbp.org>.

Figure 6-18:
The Site Wide Activity stream at <http://testbp.org>.



✓ **Members Directory:** A full listing of community members sorted from the most recently active member to the least recently active member where you can view names, profiles, and avatars. Additionally, you can use the drop-down menu shown above the Members listing to sort the directory by the following sort methods:

- Last Active
- Newest Registered
- Alphabetical

By default, the Members Directory lists the ten most recently active members, as shown in Figure 6-19. Other members appear, ten per page, on subsequent pages. Also, to the right of each member's name is an Add Friend button, which you can click to send friend requests to members from the directory page. (If you're already a friend of the member listed, the Cancel Friendship button appears instead.)

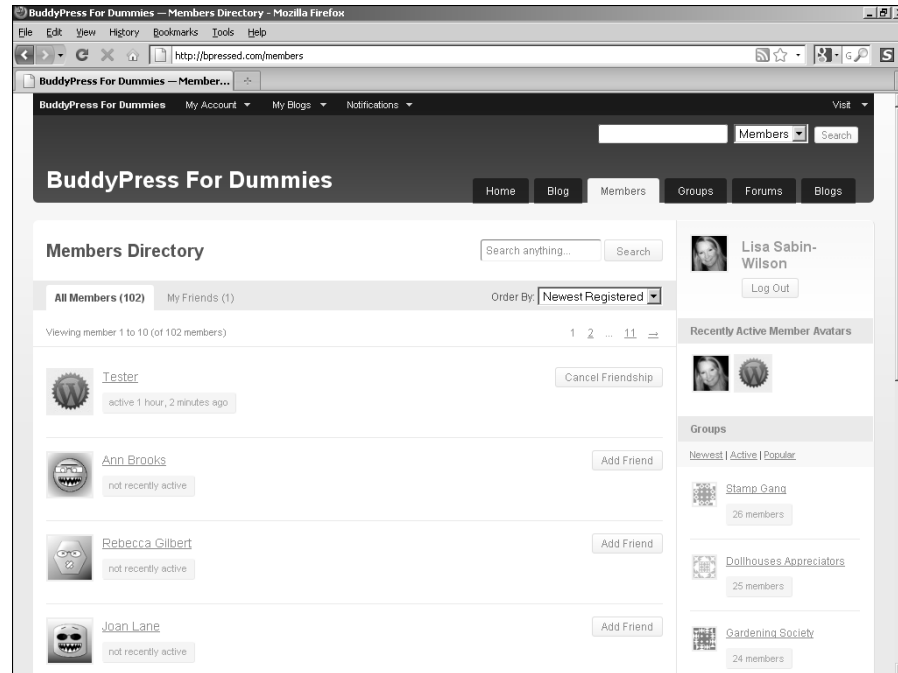
✓ **Groups Directory:** Similar to the Members Directory, a full listing of groups within the community sorted by the most recently active groups, which appear on the first page before the listing paginates. This pagination feature keeps the directory pages from becoming too unwieldy. To the right of each group listing is a Join Group button, which you can click to join that group. (If you're already a member of a group, the Leave Group button appears instead.) Also similar to the Members Directory, you can use the drop-down menu to sort the Group listing by the following sort methods:

- Last Active
- Most Members
- Newly Created
- Alphabetical

✓ **Forums Directory:** A directory listing of all forums created within the community, sorted by the most recently active forums. With the drop-down menu displayed above the forums listing, you can filter forum topics by the following sort methods:

- Last Active
- Most Posts
- Unreplied

Figure 6-19:
The
Members
Directory
on the
BuddyPress
demo Web
site.



✔ **Blogs Directory:** A directory of all blogs within the community sorted by the most recently active blogs, which appear on the first page before the listing paginates. As with the Members Directory and Groups Directory, you can sort community blogs using the drop-down menu at the top by the following sort methods:

- Last Active
- Newest
- Alphabetical

To the right of each blog listing is a Visit Blog button, which takes you to that community blog. Additionally, beneath the Visit Blog button is a link to the most recently posted article on that blog, as seen in Figure 6-20.

Another easy way to navigate the community is to use the built-in Search feature that appears on the top right of every page within the community. Figure 6-21 shows the Search feature on a BuddyPress community site.

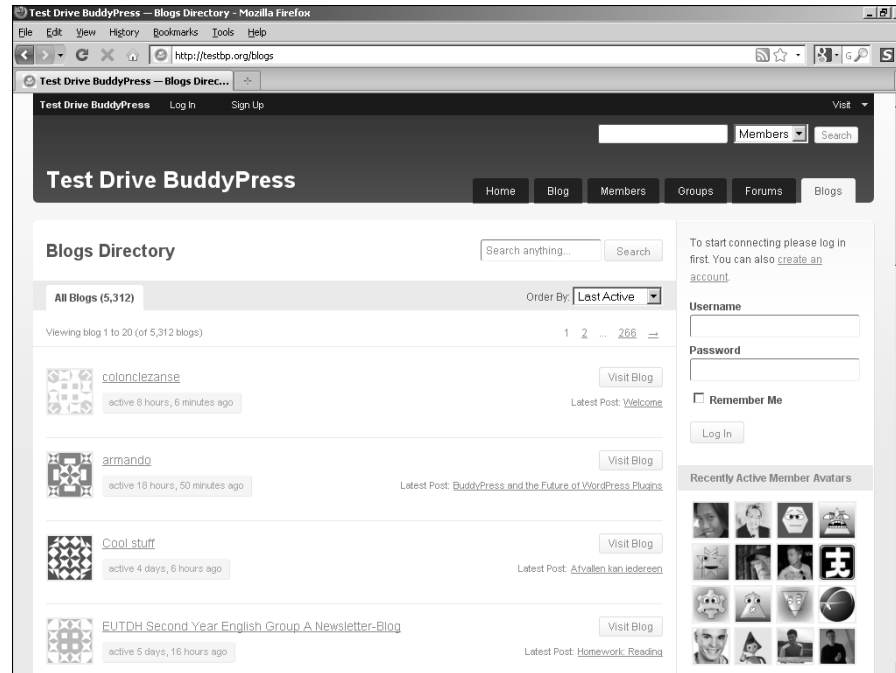


Figure 6-20:
The Blogs
Directory
listing.

The Search field

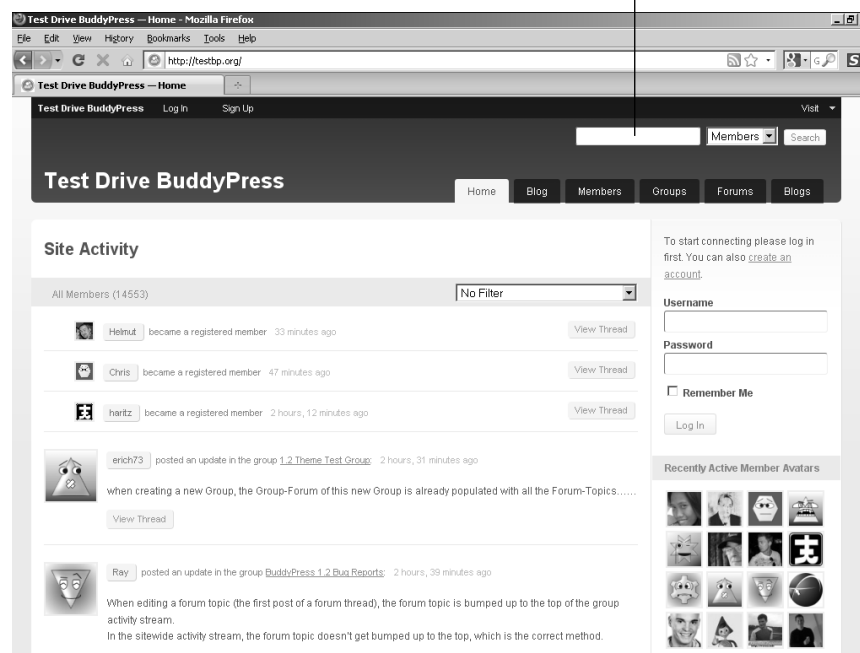


Figure 6-21:
The Search
feature
appears
at the top
of every
community
page.

To use the Search feature, follow these steps:

1. Type a keyword in the Search field.

The keyword you use should correspond with the criteria for your search. For example, if you want to search the community for members, groups, or blogs related to the subject of coffee, type **coffee** in the Search field.

2. Choose the type of search you want to perform.

The drop-down menu to the right of the Search field allows you to narrow your search results to the following directories:

- *Members*: Returns search results within the Members Directory.
- *Groups*: Returns search results within the Groups Directory.
- *Forums*: Returns search results within the Forums Directory.
- *Blogs*: Returns search results within the Blogs Directory.

3. Click the Search button.

BuddyPress performs a search based on the keyword criteria that you specified in the Search field. When the search is complete, a new page loads in your browser window with the results that meet your criteria.

Using the Site Activity stream; the Members, Groups, Forums, or Blog directories; or the Search feature within your BuddyPress community enables you and your community members to discover new members, new activity, and new information within your community.

You can also discover people and activities within your community by using widgets. Chapter 9 fully covers how to use widgets in your community.

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