# Guide for Users of the Washington Apple Pi's TCS
version 6, 19 September 2006

The message boards of the Washington Apple Pi's "TCS" are where you can find interesting discussions, get good advice on a variety of topics about Macintosh and find Mac-savvy technical support for the several service offerings of the Pi: internet access, e-mail accounts, and the message boards themselves. You can also use the message boards to share your experiences and contribute your expertise. These are a just few of the benefits you get as a member of the Washington Apple Pi. This guide was written to help all members, new and old, become happier users of the TCS. To answer the question: "To what does 'TCS' refer?" please go here: http://www.wap.org/tcs/bbs.html

To reach the TCS sign-in page directly, launch your web browser and go to http://tcs.wap.org/. If you're visiting the Pi's public web site at http://www.wap.org and then wish to visit the "members only" TCS, click on the link labeled TCS Forums in the button bar at the top of the public page. Either way, you will be greeted with a page that looks like this:
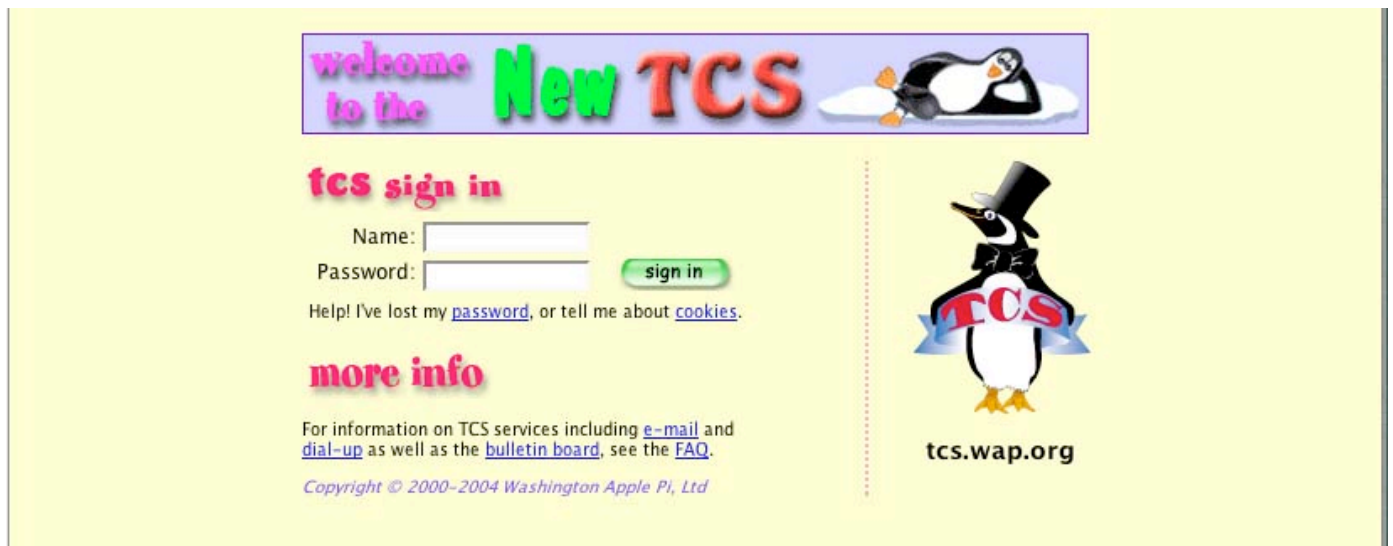
## Step 1: "Sign in" to Start a Session on the TCS
This is where you enter the TCS conferences and find the message boards those conferences contain. You can also find other information by clicking on one of the underlined words e-mail, dial-up, bulletin board, or FAQ. Be advised: this guide doesn't treat the subjects covered by those links, so keep them in mind for future use.

To sign in, two data fields must be filled in correctly. Click in the Name field and type your Pi account name; e.g., "jane.member". Now tab into, or click in, the Password field and type your password. Your account name and password are printed on your Pi membership card. The "Caps Lock" key on your keyboard must be unlocked as "letter case" is significant. When you are ready, either tap the "Return" key or click on the "sign in" button.

Your web browser may offer to save your account name and password for your convenience when signing in for subsequent visits. If you're the only user of your computer, this feature reduces the need to remember your password. If you share this computer with other users, then relying on this feature is not recommended. If you rely on Apple's "Keychain Access" application to manage your passwords, then you can continue to rely on it here.

If your sign-in attempt is refused after faithfully following the above instructions, give us a call at 301-984-0300. You'll be issued a new password guaranteed to work. It sometimes happens that the password issued on a new membership card doesn't make it to the server that controls TCS access. However, once you are successfully signed in and you have done what is recommended in Step 3, you will never again have to depend on outside help to fix a failed password.

Step 2: Get familiar with the Menu page
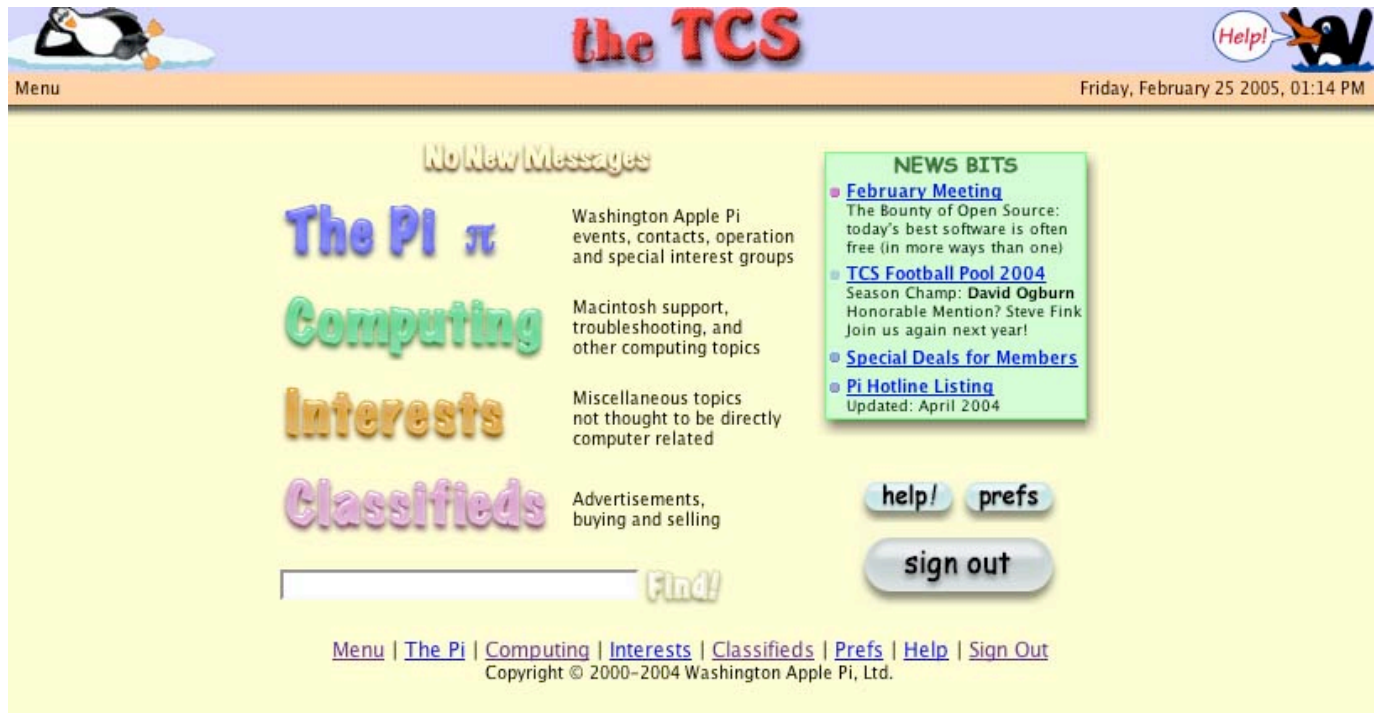
If your sign-in is successful, you will be presented with the Menu page. Notice the row of eight clickable links:

Menu The Pi Computing Interests Classifieds Prefs Help Sign Out

These links are at the bottom of every TCS page; clicking on Menu will return you to this, the starting page.

The Pi, Computing, Interests, and Classifieds links each take you to one of four conferences. To the right is a description of what each conference contains.

There's a NEWS BITS box to the right – try clicking on one or two of these links to see what's there. The Pi Hotline is where you can find contact information on volunteers who are willing to help you in the areas of their expertise.

Prefs takes you to a window showing preference values currently set in your behalf. If you are new to the TCS, the default settings need to be refined to suit your needs. Please take the time to work through Step 3 below.

Help takes you to some on-line files intended to help you use the TCS.

Sign Out will terminate your current visit, or "session," and exit the TCS.

Above the list of conferences you'll find the New Messages alert. If it has turned orange and is flashing, it is telling you there are messages waiting that you have not yet seen. It is clickable, but don't click on it just yet. If you do, you will be shown ALL messages not read by you for the last seven days. If you're new to the TCS, that's probably too many to cope with and many are probably not of interest to you as a newcomer, so let's first set the preferences for your account.

Step 3: Set up your Personal Preferences

To make best use of the message boards and the e-mail services the Pi offers, it is important to keep your account preferences set to be in keeping with your current needs. To do this, click on Prefs, make any changes you desire, click on the Apply button where one is offered, and then return to, say, the Menu. From now on, the TCS will respond accordingly. You can return at any time to revise your choices as your needs change.

Clicking on Prefs will cause the window below to be presented to you. The last four tabs are where you choose the message boards you'd like the New Messages alert to monitor in your behalf and to alert you when new messages have been posted to any of them.

(1) Member tab: If this is your first time to enter the TCS, you should change the password that was automatically assigned to you by the Pi to something else, something that you can remember and can keep to yourself. For security reasons, this password will be known to you only. If you forget your password, no one else can look it up for you. Your only recourse is to create another password – see below.

To change your password, you must first enter the password you used to "sign in" as your Old Password, and then enter the desired one as your New Password. Enter the new password again in the box labeled Confirm Password.

If sometime later you want to be reminded of your membership number, what kind of membership you hold, or your membership renewal date, just come back to the Member tab.

(2) E-mail tab: You'll see three preference items:

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Your wap.org e-mail address

An e-mail address is assigned to you automatically when you become a new member and, in most cases, it will be of the form: "first name dot last name". If you would like a more personal email address, send the preferred one to office@wap.org, and we'll see if we can accommodate you. To learn more about using your wap.org email account, click on e-mail on the "sign in" page.

Your outside e-mail address

If you have an email address with another email service provider, you should enter it here. Now, if your current TCS/email password ever fails you, either because you've forgotten it or through a fault in the TCS access control software, you can always get a new one right away by doing this:

• Go to http://tcs.wap.org and click on "password" in the phrase that reads: "Help! I've lost my password..."

• If you previously entered an outside e-mail address in the preferences window above, a new password will be automatically emailed to that address. Since this email is sent immediately, you should receive it promptly. Sign in using the newly assigned password and go about your business.

If you have not done this and your password later fails, you will have to telephone the Pi office at (301) 984-0300 and leave a recorded message on our answering machine. Volunteers periodically check in and listen to any incoming messages. In response to your message, someone will find the time to reset your password and forward it to you. To avoid the wait, please take advantage of the automatic password-assignment mechanism described above.

If you desire to consolidate where you read all your incoming email messages, you can elect to have any e-mail received by your "wap.org" account forwarded on to your external email address.

Washington Apple Pi announcement

The Pi is a computer club and needs to communicate with members about important happenings, upcoming events, and changes in schedules. To become an informed Pi member, please elect to receive such bulletins by checking the announcements box in the window above. This method of informing our membership is used sparingly, so you'll not receive more than two or three of these a month.

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Before moving to the next tab, be sure to click the Apply button to save your selections.

(3) <u>The Conference tabs</u>: The TCS has more than 50 message boards. Some are highly active and others less so. If you were to try to brute-force your way through them by peeking into each board individually for fresh gems, you would become discouraged. To be a happy visitor to the TCS, we recommend using the New Messages feature.

The Pi conference has many message boards, among them–
Pi Announcements
Pi Suggestion Box
Pi Journal
Pi TCS Support

The Computing conference has many message boards, among them–
Internet Applications
Office Productivity
Shareware/Freeware
Digital Photography

The Interests conference has many message boards, among them–
Open Forum
Jokes & Humor
Movies, Concerts, Shows
D.C. Metro Region

The Classifieds conference has many message boards, among them–
Paid Advertisements
More Member Specials
Collectable Items
Employment/Internships

The four tabs for these conferences let you select just the message boards you currently have an interest in and want the New Messages alert to update you on each time you log into the TCS. Click on each tab and peruse the list of message boards. For now, check a few boards and leave the rest unchecked. Before moving to the next tab, click the Apply button to save your selections. You can always come back and check more boards later.

| Member | E-Mail | The Pi | Computing | Interests | Classifieds |

The Pi Conference Preferred Boards   Go There

Preferred (checked) boards are visited in the course of reading all new messages.
Unpreferred (unchecked) boards sit on the sidelines unless you visit them explicitly.

☑ Pi Announcements   ☑ Pi Office Admin   ☑ Retired SIG
☑ Pi Suggestion Box   ☑ Pi TCS Support   ☐ Teen SIG
☑ Pi Volunteerism   ☑ New Member SIG   ☑ iLife SIG
☑ Pi Staff   ☑ Power User SIG   ☑ Graphic Arts SIG
☑ Pi Journal   ☐ Genealogy SIG

Tip: You must press **Apply** for your changes to take effect.   Revert   Apply

Menu | The Pi | Computing | Interests | Classifieds | Prefs | Help | Sign Out
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I check into the TCS at least once a day, and I have all but three of the 55 boards checked in my preferences. I find this is the best way to keep abreast of what's happening in the Pi, and I have met some great new people that way.

Now, click on Menu, or the "reclining penguin," to return to the main menu. If the New Messages alert has turned orange and is flashing, click it to see just the new messages posted to the message boards you've selected.

Step 4: Getting Acquainted with the Four Conferences

Once you've looked at all the new messages of interest to you, click on one of the conferences, say, The Pi. You will be presented with a directory of all the message boards within this conference that you left checked in your preferences file. The directory table shows these attributes for each message board:

New Msgs: A count of how many new messages are on this board that have not yet been read by you. If none, the entry in this column is blank.

Most Recent: The date the most recent message on the board was posted.

Raison d'Être: The topic this message board covers.

Notice that you can also–

• Control the threshold that determines which messages are counted as yet unread by you. The default value is all messages posted within the last "7" days, but you can clear the deck by selecting **Now** or go back as far as **90** days.

• See immediately which message boards in this conference you've already selected, or
go to a new message board in this conference currently unselected in your preferences.

• Find messages archived in this conference that contain words or phrases of interest to you. Best way to learn how to use this search function is to play with it and see what comes back. **Find** is also on the Menu page; from there, your search will be conducted across the message archives of all four conferences.

Step 5: Returning to a message thread on another day
For any new message you want return to another day, do any one of the following while still looking at the message:

• Copy and save the absolute Universal Resource Locator (URL) – or "Internet address" – that appears in the location data field of your Internet browser. When you want to return this message, log into the TCS, paste its address back into the location data field of your browser, press the Return key and your browser will display that message.

• Copy and save the clickable path to navigate back to this message thread on your own; e.g.,
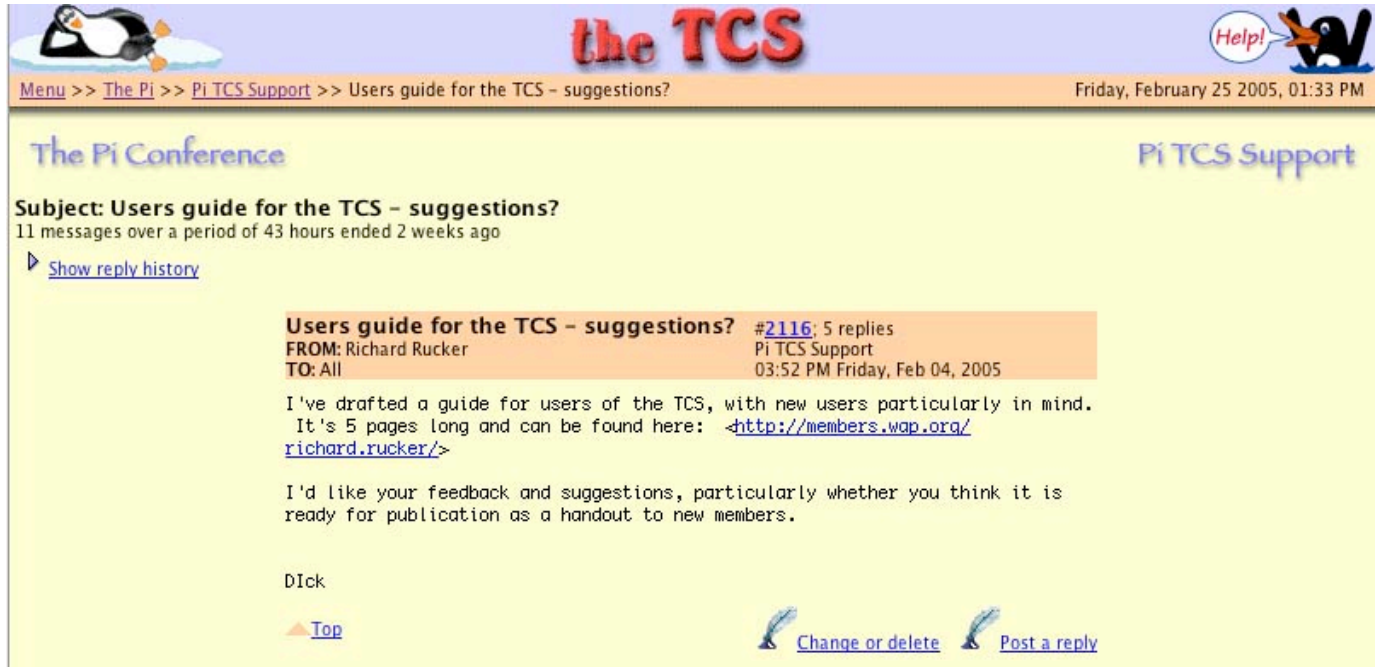
Menu >> The Pi Conference >> Pi TCS Support >> latest security updates

This path description can be copied from the top of the page you are looking and be pasted, say, in a "Sticky note."

• Print out the message of interest for later reference. It will have all the path information you need printed on it.

If you don't do the above, but later want to find this or another message, you can use the Find function that appears on the menu page and on the TCS directory pages. Search using "key words" that you believe exist in that message.

Step 6: Reading and Responding to Messages

Joining an on-going conversation couldn't be easier. If you read a message to which you'd like to reply, just click on Post a reply in the lower right. You'll be presented with a form in which to enter your reply:

The Pi Conference   Pi TCS Support

Subject: Users guide for the TCS – suggestions   Replying to Msg #2116 (below)
FROM: Richard Rucker   Pi TCS Support
TO: ☐ Private

Quoter   Cancel   Post Message

This is the message to which you are replying.

Users guide for the TCS – suggestions?   #2116; 6 replies
FROM: Richard Rucker   Pi TCS Support
TO: All   03:52 PM Friday, Feb 04, 2005

I've drafted a guide for users of the TCS, with new users particularly in mind.
It's 5 pages long and can be found here: <http://members.wap.org/
richard.rucker/>

I'd like your feedback and suggestions, particularly whether you think it is
ready for publication as a handout to new members.
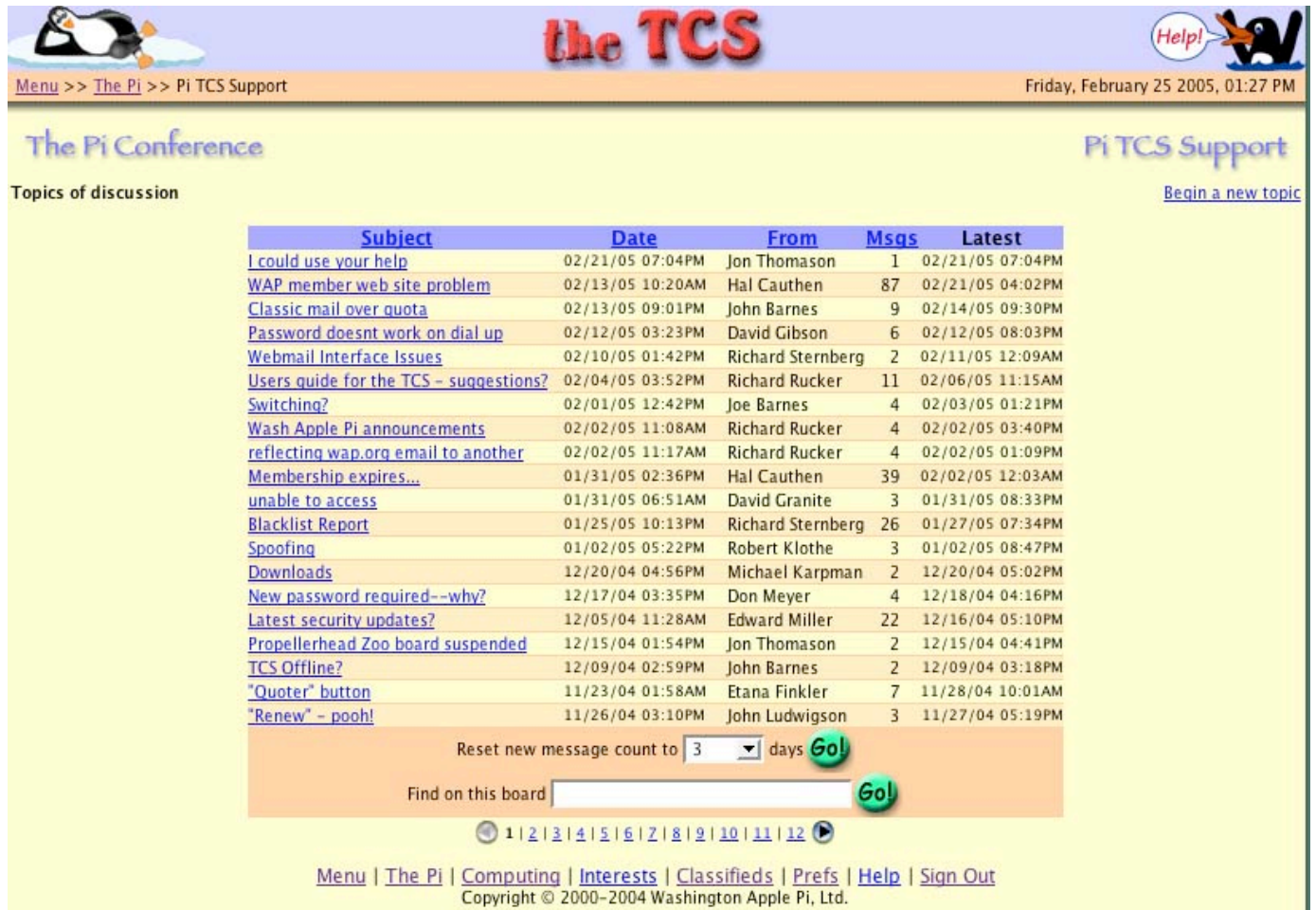
DIck

▲ Top   View in context

Menu | The Pi | Computing | Interests | Classifieds | Prefs | Help | Sign Out
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If you wish to quote something from the message you are replying to, select the sentence or phrase, click the Quoter button, and you will get – in a TCS Quotation Workshop window – your selection properly formatted and selected for pasting back into the message window as a quote. When you're through typing your message, click Post Message. Or, you can retreat from any action you've started by clicking Cancel.

Suppose you were the first member to reply to message #2116 pictured above. In your reply in the upper right-hand corner, you would see something like this: "#2117 in reply to #2116; 1 reply". Note that both numbers are in blue and underlined. If you click one of them, you will get something relevant in return. In this case, clicking on #2116 will return the message you were looking at within context of all the messages within this thread. This lets you read the entire conversation in order.

Step 7: Starting a New Message Thread

Let's assume you've now become familiar with reading and responding, but what about starting a message thread on a new topic? Easy! Go to the conference and then to the message board where your new topic belongs, look to the upper right and find Begin a new topic. Click on it and you will be presented with another form, very similar to the reply form discussed above. Fill it out and either click Post Message or Cancel.

Step 8: Oops! Let me rephrase that…

Sooner or later, you're going to want to change something you typed, but after you have posted the message. Please note that for any message written by you, whether it was a new posting or as a reply to someone else, there's a Change or delete link just to the left of the Post a reply link at the bottom of your message. That's your "out" and it will remain there as long as your message exists in the archive.

Dick Rucker,
WAP member 20480