

So You Want To Blog?

If you've opened this then you might just have an interest in putting your Trials life online. It's really not difficult - especially if you've used the Trials Central Forums already. It's as easy as starting a new topic on the forums or making a reply to an existing one.

New Users

If you're already registered on the Trials Central Forums then you can skip this bit. If you're not then registration is necessary for obvious reasons - spammers are everywhere. We take control of spam seriously on Trials Central and that's why you very rarely see any.

Registration for the forums is simple. Just go to this link:

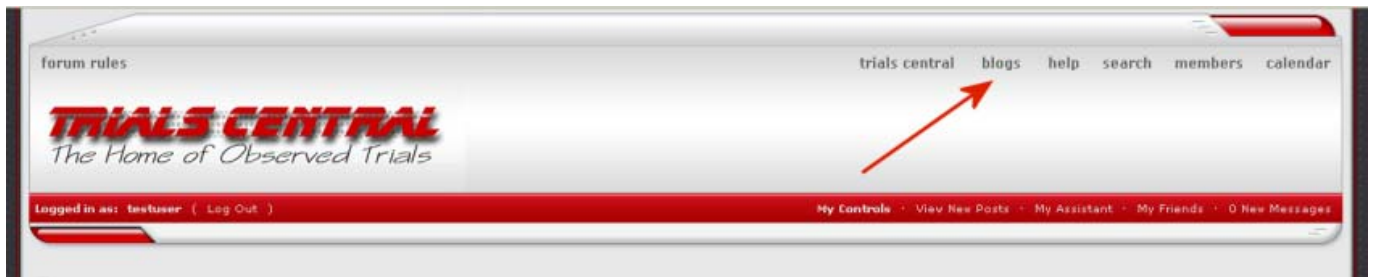
<http://www.trialscentral.com/forums/index.php?act=Reg&CODE=00>

DO take the time to read the rules. They are not generic rules and are specific to Trials Central. For example your time will be short lived if you use your Blog to try and sell anything or use the dreaded SMS text-talk which is strictly not permitted!

You do have to do a couple of verification things before you can post and we apologise for that, but they are anti-spam measures designed to keep the site clean.

Once Registered (or existing registered users)

Once you're registered and logged in you need to go to the "blogs" link at the very top of the forum page:



That gives you a list of the existing Blogs. To create your own one you need to (strangely enough!) click on the "Create a Blog" link.



After that you are required to accept the rules of having a Blog on Trials Central. They're no different to the general Trials Central forum rules so providing you read and accepted the Trials Central rules (which you must have done to get this far!) then just tick the box to indicate you accept them and click "Next"

Yay! Now you get to create your Blog!



1: First thing to do is give your Blog a name (D'oh!) Here we're logged in as "Test User" so the default is "Test User's Blog" – you can change that to whatever you want (as long as it's clean!)

2: A description of your Blog. This is self-explanatory

3: You are asked to select a Blog type. Unless you already have a Blog elsewhere then you will select "Local Blog". This means that your Blog will be hosted on Trials Central. For most users this will be the option you choose.

4: If you already have a Blog elsewhere then you can select "Link to external Blog". Note that external Blogs **MUST be Trials related** and they must abide by the general rules of Trials Central i.e. no profanity or anything you wouldn't want your kids to see. We're proud of the family nature of the site and will NOT allow linking to sites deemed unsuitable for general family viewing. If you selected "Link to external Blog" you are asked to input the link to it. That is all you need to do. We will verify your Blog is suitable.

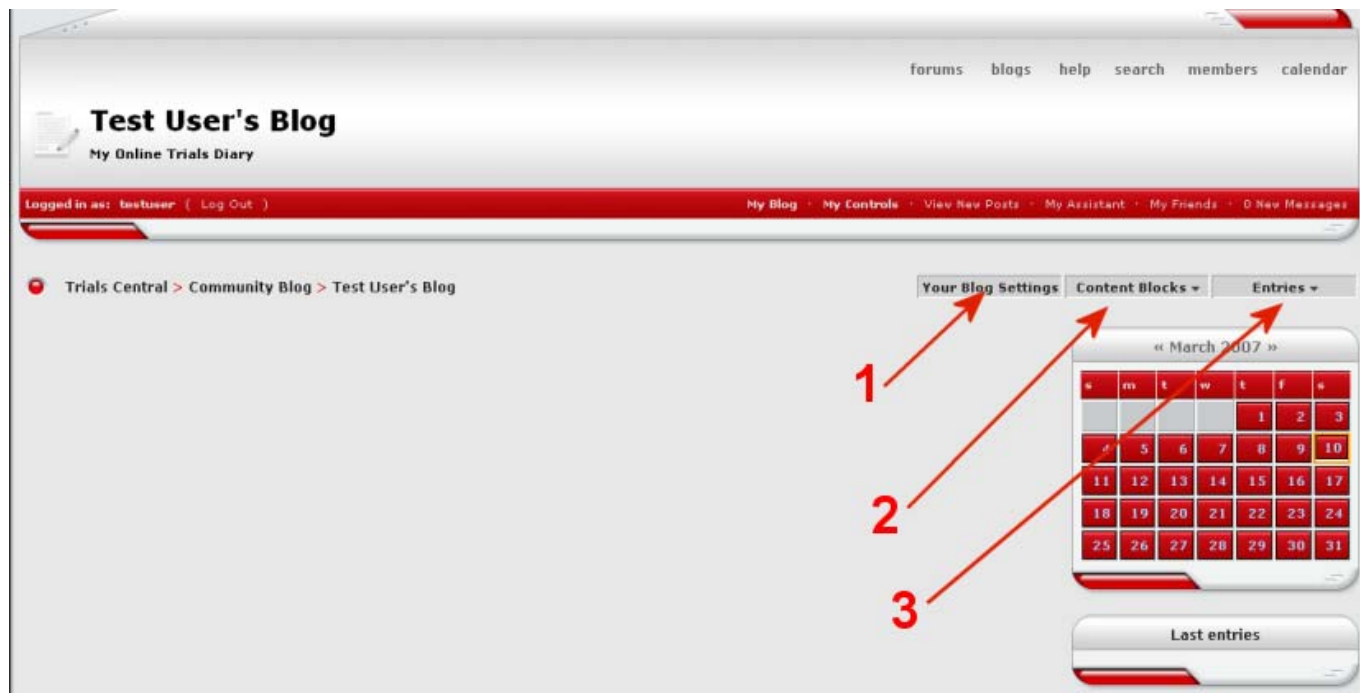
Once you've sorted out the above then click "Finish". You will now see a new link in the Forum Toolbar entitled "My Blog". This is where you go to add or edit entries to your Blog.



Adding A Blog Entry

Adding entries to your Blog on Trials Central is simple – especially if you're already familiar with making posts on the Forums already.

When you first enter your Blog you are presented with a screen similar to the following:

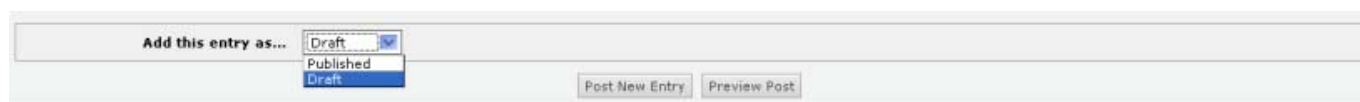


The highlighted links and drop-down menus allow you to manage your Blog:

1. **Change Blog Settings.** These are detailed in Appendix A at the end of this document although the defaults settings should suffice.
2. **Content Blocks.** Selecting this will have no affect. The ability to change content blocks has been disabled.
3. **Entries.** This allows you to create a new entry or to hide any draft items you have written, but have not yet published.

To make a Blog entry, simply select "Entries" then "Add Entry". The input screen is exactly the same as making a Forum post. You can insert images hosted elsewhere (e.g. PhotoBucket) the same as in a forum post and Trials Central Supporters can also upload photos to their storage space. Instructions in using PhotoBucket to host your photos are provided in Appendix B at the end of this document.

The only difference between making a Blog entry and a post to the Forums is when it comes to publishing. You will see beneath the text input box:

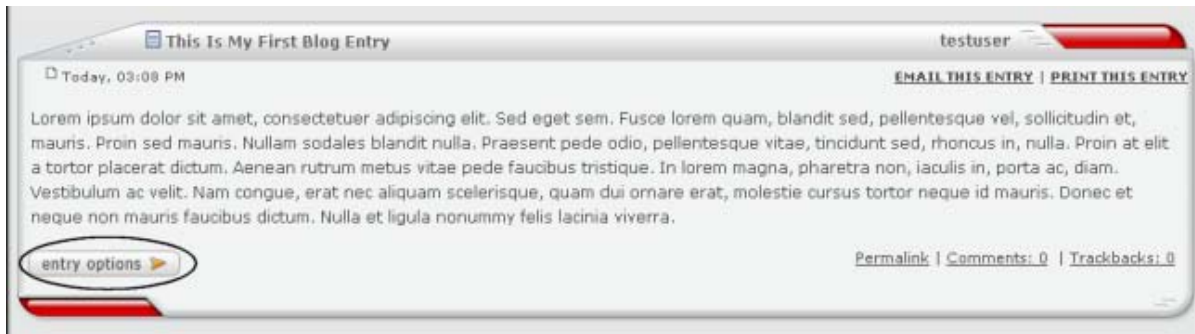


This allows you to select whether the article is visible by others or just by yourself. It may be you start an article, but do not have time to finish it in one session. Leaving it as "Draft" means it will not be seen by others until you go back and set it to "Published".

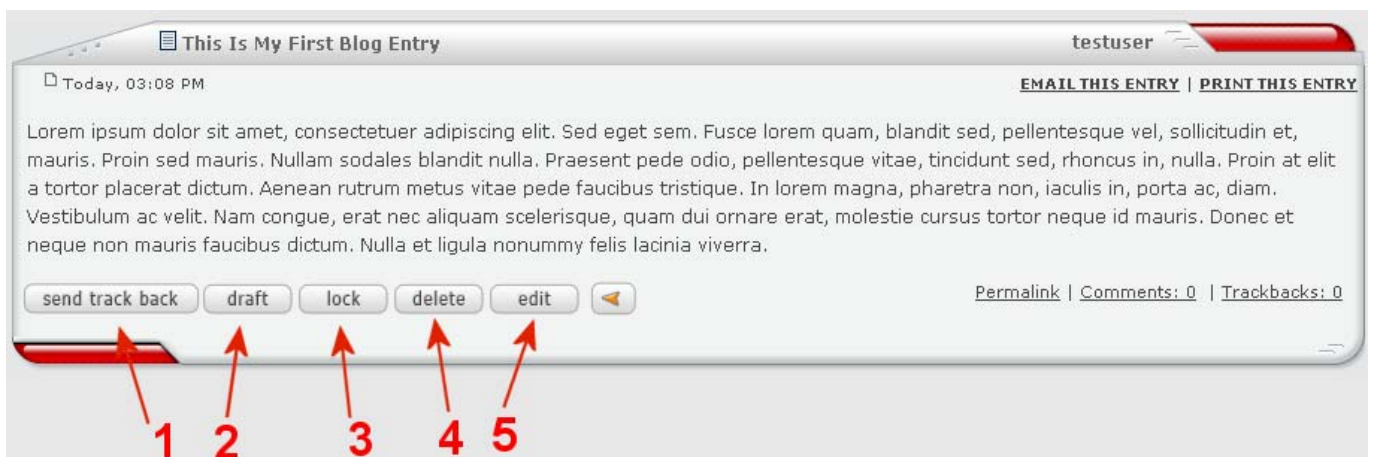
Providing you're happy with your first article then select "Published" from the list then "Post New Entry" and that's all there is to it!

Editing A Blog Entry

If you want to go back and edit a Blog entry then you need to go to that Blog entry. At the bottom of the entry you will see a button marked "Entry Options".



Selecting that expands to show other options.



1. **send track back** – A "trackback" is basically a system for cross-referencing between Blogs. For example if someone posted a blog entry on a particular subject and you wished to write possibly a follow-up article relevant to that subject. The full URL (link) to the blog article you are cross-referencing would be input into the dialog box for this option. Most users will never need to use this.
2. **draft** – sets a previously published article back to "Draft" status. i.e. "unpublishes" it. Vice versa if the article is "Draft" the button will say "Publish" and publish the article.
3. **lock** – this prevents any further comments being posted to this article. Any existing comments will remain. If an article is locked this button will say "unlock"
4. **delete** – erm....work that one out!
5. **edit** – selecting this will invoke a series of programs which will cause the Trials Central server to infiltrate the computers of NORAD and launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike against Russia. Alternately, it may just let you edit your article ☺

You will also see from the image above links marked;

Permalink – This will tell you what the full URL (link) is to this blog article if you wanted to publish it elsewhere.

Comments – How many comments have been made to this article and a link to them

Trackbacks – How many people have "trackbacked" to this article. In most cases this will read zero.

Appendix A – Blog Settings

There are extensive settings that can be configured within your Blog. Some have been disabled by the Administrator, some you will have no need to ever change and some you can tweak to your preferences.

The Blog Settings appears in a pop-up window (note this is not affected by pop-up blockers). There are five Tabs:

- Main
- Settings
- Interfaces
- Look
- Categories

We will deal with each of these in turn.

Main

This allows you to change the name, description or type (local or remotely hosted) of your Blog. Straightforward.

Settings

Private Blog? – Private Blogs are not permitted on Trials Central. Changing this will have no effect.

Allow guests to view your Blog? – Determines whether guests or only registered Trials Central Forum users can see your Blog. You can amend this setting.

Allow guests to post comments in your Blog? – for anti-spam reasons guests posting comments has been disabled by the Administrator. Changing this will have no effect.

Disable comments? – disables any comments from being posted to any article on your Blog. You may amend this setting, but disabling it will mean you get no feedback to your articles.

Approve comments posted on your blog? – You may select so that you have to manually approve any comments to articles on your Blog prior to them being made public. Note that the default of “Approve guest comments only” will have no effect if you switch this on as guests are not permitted to make comments. To enable this you must tick the box and also change the dropdown list to “Approve all comments”

Allow others to syndicate your Blog? – This will set up an RSS feed of your Blog so those wishing to syndicate it or read it using an RSS reader may do so. If in doubt, leave this enabled.

New comment notification? – Enabling this will send you an email whenever someone leaves a comment to one of your Blog entries.

Interfaces

I have no idea what most of these do! I'll try and find out. If in doubt, don't change from the default.

Look

Default status of new entries? – You can change this from “Draft” to “Published”, however it means whenever you create an article it is published immediately. Recommend leaving this as “Draft”.

Entry options – This refers to the “Entry Options” menu that appears below each of your Blog entries. Hide Automatically means you will only see the “entry Options” button and have to click on it to see all the options, “Show Always” means the options will always be expanded and you'll see them straight away. Not only you can see the Entry Options menu on your Blog. No other user, apart from an Administrator can see them.

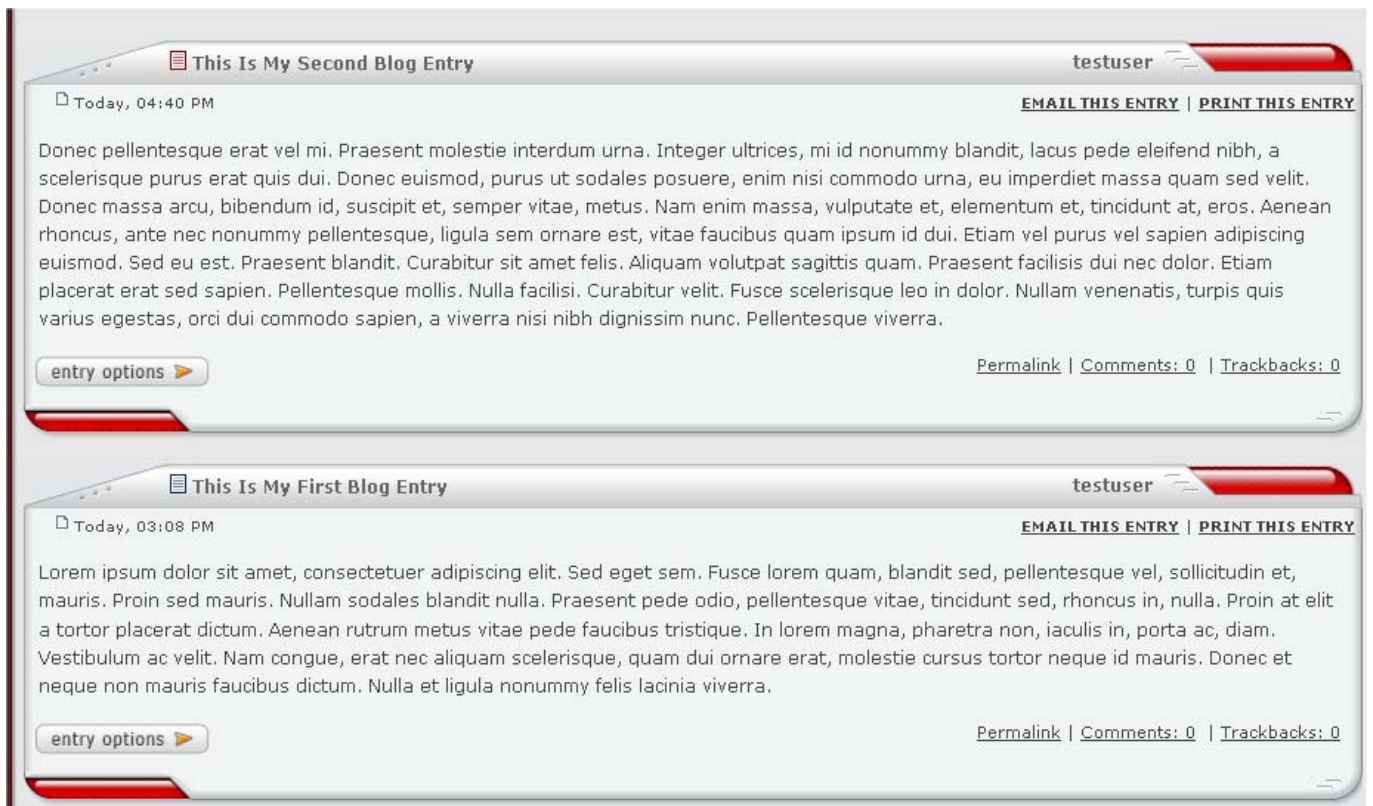
View mode of Your Blog – Changing this doesn't seem to make any difference right now. That is most likely due to the short time the Blog module has been installed and lack of current entries.

Number of Entries per page – This is set by the Administrator to 10. You cannot change this.

Number of Comments per page - This is set by the Administrator to 20. You cannot change this.

Limit the entry size on main Blog page – This is quite useful. If you leave this blank or insert zero (the number not the word!) then your entire articles are posted on your main Blog page.

Example:



If you change it to a number (must be greater than 100) then only the first x characters of the article are published. The same articles would be displayed thus is the number of characters was set to 100:



This represents a neater way to display your Blog if you have a number of entries. You may change this feature.

Content Block width?(in pixels) – This should be set to 250. *Do not change this setting.*

Categories

It is possible to create your own Categories for your Blog entries. For example if you were riding the SSDT and the Novogar Championship you could create a category for each. Creating categories and applying them to your Blog entries makes it easier for people to find and follow your entries.

Once you have created categories you will see them appear in a dropdown list on the "Add Entry" screen. Simply select the category you want to apply to that Blog entry.

Appendix B - Inserting Photos

The Blog system and Forums on Trials Central use the highly popular BBCode. This uses “tags” to insert content. Images are inserted by use of the [IMG] and [/IMG] tags.

IF YOU HAVE YOUR OWN WEB HOSTING OR THE PHOTO IS ALREADY ON THE INTERNET

Let's assume you have a photo you want to put in your Blog entry or Forum post. That photo is already somewhere on the Internet. All you need is the link to that photo.

Example:

Let's say the link to the photo is:

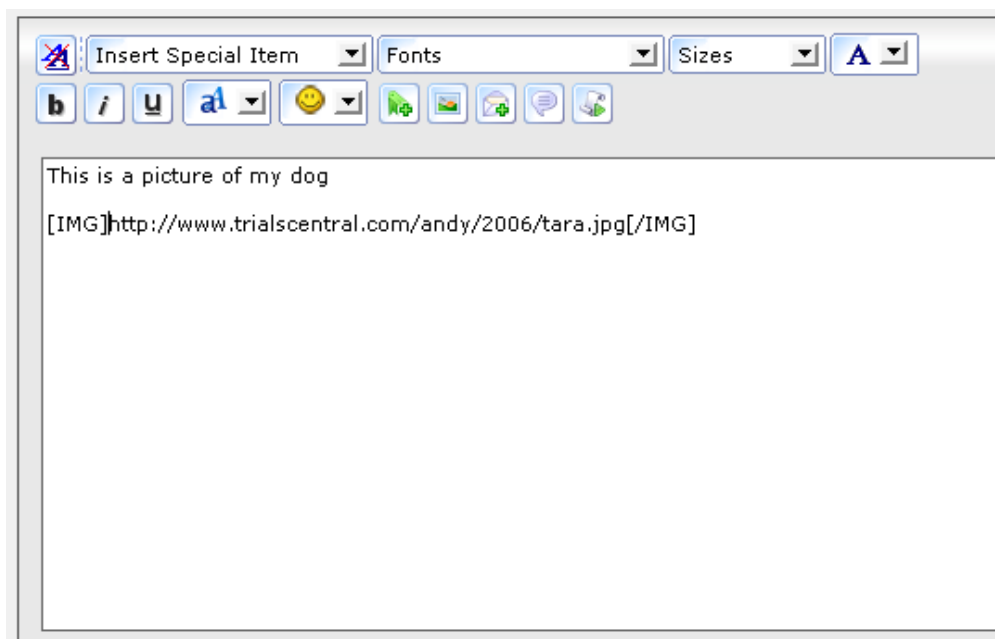
<http://www.trialscentral.com/andy/2006/tara.jpg>

To insert this, simply surround it with IMG tags in your forum post or blog entry i.e.

[IMG] <http://www.trialscentral.com/andy/2006/tara.jpg> [/IMG]

The [IMG] tells the software that this is the start of a link to an image. The [/IMG] tells it that the link to the image is finished.

When inputting it, it would look like this on-screen:



When you submit it (or click the Preview button if you're not sure if you got it right) then it will look like this:

This Is My Dog


testuser

Today, 05:06 PM

[EMAIL THIS ENTRY](#) | [PRINT THIS ENTRY](#)

This is a picture of my dog

Reduced: 73% of original size [876 x 584] - Click to view full image



entry options ▶

[Permalink](#) | [Comments: 0](#) | [Trackbacks: 0](#)

You can see that the image is now embedded in your article. In this example the image has been automatically resized to avoid it "stretching" the page. A user can still view the image at full size in a new window by clicking on the link at the top of the photo.

IF THE IMAGE IS NOT ALREADY ON THE INTERNET

Trials Central Supporters – Note you have 20MB of space on our Server you can upload photos to. You can attach them simply by using the attachments box/button when creating or editing your forum post or Blog entry.

For non-Supporters of Trials Central we recommend PhotoBucket (<http://www.photobucket.com>) to host your photos. This is a free and easy-to-use service. You do need to register for it, but it is very simple.

Once you have created an account and uploaded your photo(s) PhotoBucket even provides the exact code you need to insert into your forum post.

Example – uploaded photo to PhotoBucket:

click to add title
move | edit | share | delete



lego.jpg

URL Link
HTML Tag
IMG Code

Click on 'edit' to see the full image and more options including resize, rotate, order prints or send to your mobile phone.
Click on 'share' to automatically post to your favorite sites, including MySpace, Facebook and Bebo.

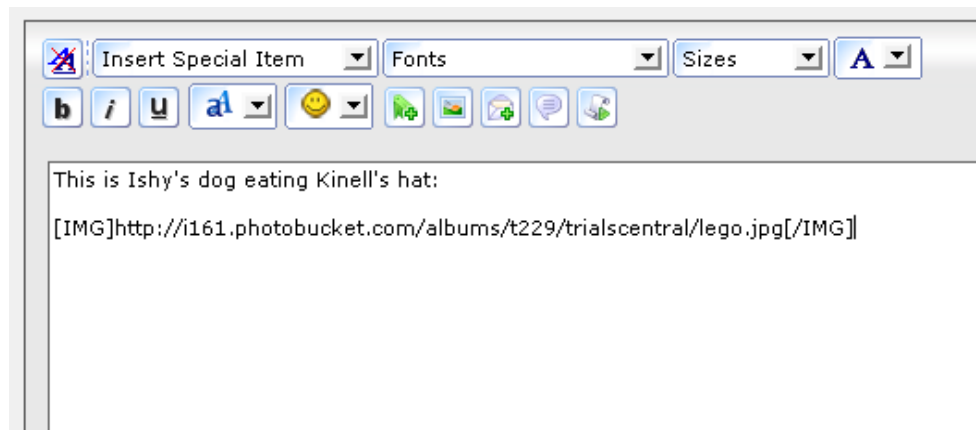
Use these to share

- **'URL Link'** is for sending over email or IM.
- **'HTML Tag'** is for your blog or social network.
- **'IMG Code'** is for forums.

Single click on the text field to automatically copy the text to your clipboard.

All you need to do is simply copy ALL the text in the box to the right of "IMG Code" and paste it into your Blog entry or Forum post

Example:



Insert Special Item | Fonts | Sizes | A

b *i* u [a](#) ☺ 🌿 📷 🗨️ 🔄

This is Ishy's dog eating Kinell's hat:


[IMG]http://i161.photobucket.com/albums/t229/trialscentral/lego.jpg[/IMG]

submit it (or Preview it) and...

Dog Eating Hat testuser

Today, 05:18 PM [EMAIL THIS ENTRY](#) | [PRINT THIS ENTRY](#)

This is Ishy's dog eating Kinell's hat:



[entry options](#) [Permalink](#) | [Comments: 0](#) | [Trackbacks: 0](#)

Simple!

I will add to this document any frequently asked questions. Feedback or suggestions may be given using the Contact form accessible from the front page of Trials Central or by PM to Andy via the Forums.