



CLEANING ON THE INTERNET: CHATROOMS, FORUMS & BULLETIN BOARDS

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PROFESSIONAL CLEANING REPORT

Let's Talk About Cleaning on the Internet
Chatrooms, Forums, and Bulletin Boards
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There are many resources on the Internet that relate to cleaning. Reviewed below are the most popular sites on the Internet that I could find, where you can chat, post or communicate in one way or another with others who are interested in the subject of cleaning. Keep in mind that, like everything else on the Internet, things change quickly, so on going research will be needed to keep your list up to date. I should also warn you, being active on more than one forum can eat up a lot time that would otherwise be spent cleaning, bidding or making money.

Most of the resources listed are specific in nature in that each one focuses on a specific type or area of cleaning such as carpet cleaning, janitorial distributors, floor covering inspectors, school custodians, pressure washers, janitors, window cleaners, cleaning business owners, custodial supervisors, floor covering installers, and more. As time goes on, additional specialty forums and boards will be developed, it would be a good idea to occasionally perform a search under the words: cleaning, janitorial or some other related subject on one or more of the following search engines: www.google.com, www.yack.com, www.yahoo.com, www.aol.com, www.infoseek.com, www.dogpile.com.

Internet Vocabulary

Defined below are some of the most common terms used to describe different aspects of chatting or using online forums and boards. It is not uncommon to find these terms used to describe more than one thing. Nothing is for sure on the Internet and although not everyone uses these exact definitions, here are my definitions.

- Chatroom: An Internet location where individuals with a mutual interest can congregate for live virtual communication. Typically via text entry with a keyboard, however some sites now have voice and photograph capability, with live video expected with in the next year or two. Some rooms include a scheduled guest expert or well known individual who chats about a specific subject and responds to questions from others who are in the room. This format is also used for some on-line learning classes.
- Forum: A location where individuals with like interests can post, respond or retrieve information, comments or questions and answers from others. Email forums also exist, in which case, posts are sent directly to your email address.
- Discussion or Bulletin Board (BB): Basically the same as a forum, originally called BBS, now referred to as a forum or a board.
- List Serve: A service that distributes emails to a list of individuals who have signed up to receive information on specific topics. Some forums and boards provide this service or offer it as an option or a separate service known and an email forum.
- Mailing list: A list of email addresses for individuals with a specific or common interest to which posts or specific information can be sent.

- Newsgroups/usernet: Similar to a forum or board. A location where individuals can post a question related to a specific topic or subject and others will respond. Generally these locations are not monitored or controlled in any fashion so the discussion often gets offensive and off subject.
- Flame: A sarcastic or caustic response to a post or comment in a chatroom, forum or board.
- Secure: Limited access to approved or registered individuals only.
- Digest: A summary of the entries made to a forum or board.
- Archive: A record of previous posts related to a specific topic, subject or thread.
- Community: A group of individuals with like interests who frequently chat or post in a chatroom, forum or board.
- Whisper: A private communication between two parties that others can't see or read.
- Filter: To remove certain words, phrases, individuals, or email addresses.
- Block: To prevent access to a location by specific individuals.
- Post: To place information, comments, a question or an answer on a forum or board.
- Thread: Several posts or an ongoing discussion regarding a specific subject matter or interest.
- Link: A connection to another site or location on the Internet.
- Moderator: An individual who monitors a forum or board and enforces established standards and rules. Some chats and forums are monitored by a moderator, others are not. The level of monitoring and enforcement of rules and etiquette varies with each location.
- Log on: To connect or enter a location on the Internet.

What's Available?

Many of these locations are connected to or operated by an association or publication. The most active forums have a small community of individuals who are active daily and are generally centered around being readers of a magazine, customers of a supplier or members of a cleaning related trade association. This common bond encourages the forum to develop into an online community, which keeps it active. Unless this community develops, there will be little regular traffic on the forum or board.

Chatroom

<http://justforcleaners.homestead.com/justforcleaners.html>

This is a live chatroom for cleaners, it's new so there isn't too much action yet. But it's an interesting place to visit. They also have a forum, but again there is not much action at this time.

Forums and Boards

www.cmmonline.com

This is an active forum for cleaning professionals. It has in-house supervisors and managers, employees and cleaning business owners as members. There are several international members who post regularly.

Cleaning Maintenance and Management Magazine, which owns and operates the site also offers an email forum and an email newsletter.

www.cleanfax.com

This forum is quite active relates primarily to carpet and upholstery cleaning topics. It is owned and operated by National Trade Publications which also owns Cleaning Maintenance and Management Magazine and the Cleaning Management Institute (CMI).

www.icsmag.com

This is an extremely active forum with over 250 posts per day. It's primary focus is carpet and upholstery cleaning topics for small business owners and cleaning managers. The site is owned and operated by Business News Publishing Company in Troy, MI, which also publishes ICS Cleaning Specialist, Floor Covering Installer, Commercial Floor Care, National Flooring Trends and other magazines.

www.cleanlink.com

This site contains 3 bulletin boards: building service contractors, sanitary supply distributors and in-house cleaning professionals. It is owned and operated by Trade Press Publishing Co., which publishes Contracting Profits, Sanitary Maintenance, and Maintenance Solutions Magazine.

www.facilitiesnet.com

This site offers several forums for maintenance professionals in all type and sizes of facilities. It is owned and operated by Trade Press Publishing Co.

www.boma.org

This site has a webboard for building managers, membership is required.

www.issa.com

There is a forum for contractors and distributors on this site, but it does not have a lot of activity at this time.

www.JanCentral.com

This site has forums for distributors, contractors and cleaning consultants but doesn't have a lot of activity at this time.

www.schooldude.com>

This site has a forum for cleaning and maintenance professionals in school districts and educational facilities. Access is controlled. They get quite a bit of action regarding cleaning, landscaping and maintenance issues.

www.bigmop.com>

This site has a forum, but it doesn't get a lot of activity at this time.

www.lawnservicing.com>

This site has a forum that is quite active and deals with landscaping and mowing issues for in-house maintenance managers and the self-employed. Click on the Greenmaster Message Forum button.

www.iicrc.org

This site has private discussion boards for the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC) committee members. Access is tightly controlled and limited to IICRC business only.

www.pwna.org

This site has a forum for pressure washers.

www.tile-assn.com

This site has a forum for tile installation contractors.

www.window-cleaning-net.com>

This site is for professional window cleaners. Most are members of the International Window Cleaners Association (IWCA). The sight is extremely active and tightly controlled by the moderator.

www.members4.boardhost.com/LMCCA

This is a forum for the Low Moisture Carpet Cleaners Association. This group is made up of members who clean carpets with dry foam, powder and other methods that use little or no water in the cleaning process.

www.humboldt1.com/~dspreen/index.html

This site is has resources and a bulletin board for floor covering specialists.

www.fgamble.com

This is an active forum for floor covering and carpet inspectors.

www.nicfi.org

This site has a forum for carpet and floor covering inspectors.

www.flooringinstaller.com

This site has a forum for carpet and floor covering installers.

www.fcimag.com

This site has a forum for carpet and floor covering installers.

www.commercialfloorcare.com

This site is for facilities maintenance people along with professionals responsible for hard and resilient floor care in the commercial environment. This is a fairly new site and not very active at this time.

www.carpet-exchange.com

This site offers a forum about carpet and flooring.

www.dcs1.com

This site has multiple forum locations, specialties include, pressure washing, duct cleaning, window cleaning, carpet cleaning, chimney cleaning and kitchen hood cleaning. All forums are quite active.

www.ce-marking.nl

This site is in The Netherlands. The site has an information desk where you can post a question or look up information related to cleaning, as well as exporting products and equipment to and from Europe.

Listserves:

Send an email to: www.listproc@raven.cc.ukans.edu in the body of the message, type: subscribe: Janitors. then enter your first and last name.

www.isct.org> This association offer a listserve for self-employed carpet and upholstery cleaners. Click on the ISCT Listserver button.

Newsgroups:

Go to www.Google.com click on newsgroups or usenet. Another source is <www.yack.com> Search for: janitorial or Cleaning. You will find postings for both. These are not moderated groups so the content, language and responses you receive may be a little rough. Under janitorial you will find businesses and government agencies looking for contractors to bid on cleaning jobs and employees looking for jobs, plus other

posts. Under cleaning you will find posts regarding housecleaning topics.

Why Bother?

A lot of information goes through many of the forums and boards. Some of it good, some of it bad or worse. I find them interesting and a good source of information and contacts. At the same time it can be frustrating when the sites aren't moderated actively and posts get aggressive, off topic, repetitive or become useless chatter between two individuals who obviously have nothing else to do and need to get a life. Keep in mind that anything you post will be read by others, including your email address, which may also be sold or used by the forum provider.

Another down side is that if you participate in an active site you may regularly get 40 to 80 or more posts or emails a day, which can take quite a bit of time to review, respond to or delete. Each site that's active has it's own small community of core individuals who seem to have something to say about everything.

In the future, I confident we will see forums and boards that are specific to different segments of the cleaning industry and specific types of facilities. In the meantime, check out some of the forums and boards I've listed and see what your can learn and contribute. If you come across any new forums that I've missed, send me an email at wgriffin@cleaningconsultants.com and I will add them to the list. Keep it clean and stay connected.

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