SermonIndex Announcements :: Avatars not loading (should they be removed?)

Avatars not loading (should they be removed?) - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2011/7/12 18:14

Saints,

I realize right now on the forums Avatars are mostly not working, we are working to fix this it has to do with the new firew all security software installed.

This has us think of possibly removing the avatar images. Though they add an "identity" to people on the site, there is a sense also of an unreality to them and people can hide behind a false image such as a picture of a famous saint of God.

So we are seriously considering removing that feature from the profiles of the site. Let me know your thoughts on this d ear saints.

Re: Avatars not loading (should they be removed?) - posted by Areadymind (), on: 2011/7/12 18:17

That is a great idea.

Re: - posted by sarahsdream, on: 2011/7/12 19:06

Ahhh, that's too bad. Their so fun. Do we have to use our real names now or can we still hide behind our make believe o nes?

Sarah

Re: - posted by SimpleLiving (), on: 2011/7/12 19:44

I'm all for anything that simplifies things. The loss of avatars isn't really a loss at all.

I don't know anything about creating or running a forum. I don't know what kind of costs are involved, either. But, if I ma y be so bold, this forum set-up seems impractical altogether. The operation of the audio, visual sermons is okay, but the forums (and their features) seem difficult and a bit archaic.

With the problems you've been having, would it be easier to update the forums to a layout that's more common and easy to use? A larger font and wider screens would be kinder on the eyes to read. This forum is also the only one I know of where the posts are in reverse order and there is no direct search feature.

These aren't complaints, mind you. Just general observances. I don't know if they are cost issues or technological ones for those who operate the site, but I put them out there as simple suggestions for possible consideration.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2011/7/12 20:44

The avatars do make it easier to see at a glance who is speaking, but then that is just a matter of convenience.

Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2011/7/12 21:40

They make it easier to identify who is writing at a glance. I would keep them.

Re: - posted by JB1968 (), on: 2011/7/12 22:16

They are nice. Keep them.

Re: - posted by Giggles (), on: 2011/7/13 0:00

I rather enjoy glancing at dear old Spurgeon and the other great saints of old. I say keep them if feasible.

Re: Avatars not loading (should they be removed?) - posted by enid, on: 2011/7/13 3:56

For me, it doesn't matter either way if they stay or go.

I've never used them, so I won't miss them.

If it makes the site run better, then let them go.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2011/7/13 9:26

Thank you for the feedback. We are still considering and praying about doing this. Also restricting the amount of charact ers you can put in your signature. Some people are abusing the signature and putting many paragraphs of information o r many links.

Re: - posted by mikey2, on: 2011/7/13 13:43

Thank you for asking for our thoughts and opinions.

If it is a technical issue, that's fine and we all understand. Why make it a spiritual issue (accusing people of hiding behind avatars)?

I don't think there is any reason to do that unless you have some special insight that the rest of us don't have. If the soft ware or servers you are using can't handle Avatars, that's quite understandable. It is not understandable to label everyo ne who uses Avatars as "hiding", which connotes some level of dishonesty.

Hope you understand how your statement can be interpreted as such. I am sure you don't mean this, at least I hope you don't.

Re: - posted by JB1968 (), on: 2011/7/13 14:23

Who's hiding? But on the other hand, you don't know who sees your info. Be careful, because there are scammers out there who prey on people.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2011/7/13 16:02

If we were all operating in the Spirit, it would not matter who was doing the talking, for we would all be one in Him - and as such, the avatars serve to make a further distinction that only takes us further from the Truth.

Re: - posted by mikey2, on: 2011/7/13 16:23

Heartsong, how realistic is that? And what is wrong about distinctions? Are you serious? Avatars take us further from the truth? Please! How rational is that statement? Making us all "cookie cutter" online christians does not ensure unity. You were closer when you spoke of "operating in the Spirit" but then you ruined what you said by implying that distinctions sh ould be removed, because if we were all operating in the Spirit, "distinctions" would not matter. At least they are not sup pose to.

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2011/7/13 16:30

While I don't know that they matter much in the content, I do think that the avatars help provide a distinction between wh o is making a comment. I have noticed some confusion sometimes when someone incorrectly attributed a statement to t he wrong person. I have been mistaken about who was saying certain statements in some discussions, and I notice that it is easier to make a distinction regarding who is speaking by the presence of an avatar.

I'm not sure if the "operating in the Spirit" idea would make much of a difference in an online forum. It is true that we sho uld all be walking in the Spirit. Unfortunately, some people are quick to question your "walking ability" if you don't line up with what their own particular sets of beliefs (including non-essentials). Even some of the Apostles and other believers i n the early church had disagreements within their actions, beliefs and discussions.

Even now, we have many believers from different backgrounds who make comments. Those comments can often turn i nto debate or aggression when someone says something that the other person doesn't agree with or doesn't believe line s up with their own notion of what beliefs are the result of "operating in the Spirit." After all, many outlandish claims are often shared by people who believe that they came to such revelation after "walking in the Spirit." In an online forum of diverse believers, I think that it is the comments -- and the spirit and attitude behind them -- that serve to divide the Body of Christ more than an avatar or screen name.

Greg, I will be remembering this in prayer. I pray that the Lord grant you wisdom regarding this and every decision perta ining to this greatly appreciated website.

Re: Avatars not loading (should they be removed?), on: 2011/7/13 20:20

Well, I like my Avatar. To me it's not about hiding behind a false image it's about what kind of character one possesses. Choosing an Avatar is important, the selection will let others know what kind of a person you might be. For example, wh en I see a little lamb, that reminds me of someone who is meek and mild. My Avatar reminds me of someone who is con tent. When I see Admin Paul's Avatar I see an intelligent but discreet man.

I think they are important and we should keep them, but when choosing, choose wisely for they will define you to others.

Re: , on: 2011/7/13 20:27

Quote:
-------------------------Some people are abusing the signature and putting many paragraphs of information
----
Brother Admin Greg, I had to laugh at this. I was reading your post and than I looked down at your signature I smiled, th at is a big signature Brother.

I do agree with you, there is just way too much information in the signature lines.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/7/13 20:29

Quote:
-------------------------For me, it doesn't matter either way if they stay or go.
I've never used them, so I won't miss them.
If it makes the site run better, then let them go.

I agree.

Avatars mean nothing to me...

Re: - posted by JB1968 (), on: 2011/7/13 21:52

Quote:
------------------------Brother Admin Greg, I had to laugh at this. I was reading your post and than I looked down at your signature I smiled, that is a big si gnature Brother.

Ha Ha, I did too. Oh well, we can all be different, yet love Jesus Christ.

It doesn't really matter if they are there or not. I haven't noticed them not loading.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2011/7/13 23:12

Quote:
------------------------I've never used them, so I won't miss them.
----

same sentiments here. I say if they cause problems get rid of them. However, some forums allow you to use a real pictur e of yourself as your profile image. If this were possible here without causing technical issues i would probably vote for t hat. That way everyone could see how you really look and it would feel more real in interacting with one another.

One thing I will say about certain avatars here. I think sometimes they do give the wrong impression. For example, I don' t think it is too wise for a young believer to use an image of an old saint as his avatar. It does give the wrong impression sometimes. At first when you see the avatar you think, "this person must be very mature in the Lord both in years and wi sdom." But then you realize that that is not really the case.

anyhow, just my two cents.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2011/7/14 18:58

Saints,

Thank you for your feedback and thoughts. We want to continue to keep the sermonindex forums a place that is unique on the internet and place for very godly, christ-exalting, God honoring discussions. May God continue by His grace to m ake the sermonindex forums a salt and light on the internet.

We will pray and consider everything suggested. God bless.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2011/7/23 13:30

Saints,

Thank you for your thoughts we are still considering to remove the avatars and also the private messaging function on s ermonindex, so to encourage people to email each other for private communication. We feel this is better on many level s including the fact of not being responsible for not worthy or wrong messages being sent to members. We do not review and have not reviewed private messages to this date.

Thank you for your prayers and encouragements as the website is growing and some of functions that worked well with a small group of people need to be removed I feel as more traffic and visitors are coming to the site.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2011/7/23 13:53

Oh wow! Removing private messaging would most certainly change things...

If you do these things, please give us some notice ahead of time if possible.

I will be praying.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2011/7/23 14:08

You know, if there were no private messaging, I would have had no where to go for help when things were really intense - where a precious brother, led by the Spirit, put many pieces in place and got me on the right track. This could not have been done in public, nor would I have entertained breaking into his personal world at such a time.

If the private messaging is taken down, that will be one less place for the Holy Spirit to send those that are in need of such things.

In any case, I will be praying.

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2011/7/23 14:09

My wife and I will be continuing in prayer, Greg.

Personally, I have found much encouragement with the brethren via PM. Although there have been a few, occasional disappointing or highly confrontational experiences via PM, most of my experiences with the PM feature here at SermonIndex have been quite beneficial.

For instance, I have sometimes felt inclined to respond privately about certain issues that might not need to be said in a public forum. Sometimes, a believer here may be struggling through a difficult situation and asks for prayer, advice and/or guidance. I have sometimes felt led to share something with them in regard to their potentially embarrassing issue in private since it might not need to be voiced in the public.

At other times, I have been able to set up meetings (by offering telephone numbers or by meeting in person) with some of the brethren as well. Even recently, my wife and I were able to meet with a long-time member from SermonIndex at one of Zac Poonen's local meetings. We have met with other brothers as well. We corresponded and set up meetings entirely by the PM feature here.

In addition, I have sometimes written a response in the forums that I felt inclined to pause and prayerfully consider when and if I should post it. So, instead of immediately posting it, I send it to myself via PM. After prayer, I revisit the post and consider whether to post it, delete it or reconsider the specific words that I used as I felt impressed to do so.

I suppose that all of this can still be done through email. However, the email address that I use here is rarely checked. I used to have another personal email address registered here, but I began receiving quite a bit of spam and even several angry emails in my Inbox associated with discussions on SermonIndex. Because of this, I removed the address to my most often checked email. In fact, I even considered removing any email from my profile.

Perhaps there is a way to list our emails in our profile so that a spam bot doesn't pick it up? I.e. - "johndoe at gmail dot com" instead of "johndoe@gmail.com."

Regardless, my wife and I will remember this in our prayers. May the Lord continue to give you the His wisdom and insight with each decision made regarding the work of SermonIndex. We pray that the Lord continues to bless you and this website...and that the fruit of this labor remains for Eternity.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2011/7/23 14:18

Quote:
------------------------You know, if there were no private messaging, I would have had no where to go for help when things were really intense - where a precious brother, led by the Spirit, put many pieces in place and got me on the right track. This could not have been done in public, nor would I have e ntertained breaking into his personal world at such a time.

If the private messaging is taken down, that will be one less place for the Holy Spirit to send those that are in need of such things.

In any case, I will be praying.

Dear Sister,

Amen none of this would change at all. It will be just a different way of communicating ie through email. I feel this is bette r also because emails in peoples personal accounts get stored automatically for future reference whereas on sermonind ex when the message is deleted it is gone forever. I would rather try and keep personally for myself all correspondence archived. Thus it will be a blessing to move everything to our personal emails.

I am praying that the same exact blessing will happen in fellowship via email as it has in the PM feature.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2011/7/23 14:21

Quote:
------------------------Perhaps there is a way to list our emails in our profile so that a spam bot doesn't pick it up? I.e. - "johndoe at gmail dot com" instead of "johndoe@gmail.com."

Regardless, my wife and I will remember this in our prayers. May the Lord continue to give you the His wisdom and insight with each decision made re garding the work of SermonIndex. We pray that the Lord continues to bless you and this website...and that the fruit of this labor remains for Eternity.

Brother,

Yes we are working on getting developed entirely new profile pages which will tie in facebook, twitter and google+ accou nts easier. And we want to encrypt the emails with a good solution also. Right now we have put in place an email hidder that hides it from email harvesters who try and grab many emails at once. This is the first step in security we are taking f or the emails.

Amen. May God see fit to allow the discussions and sermons to have an eternal impact and that SermonIndex would co ntinue to be in the Lord's hands fully and not building the kingdom of man (Babylon).