

## A brief overview and demo of esoTalk

- Free forum software project written in PHP

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## What is esoTalk?

- Free, open source PHP forum project
  - Written from the ground up in/using PHP, MySQL, jQuery/JavaScript, HTML5, CSS3
- Provides a place for conversation for your users or website
- Uses themes and plugins to extend features
- Takes a *conversation* approach instead of the typical threaded message board

## The History of esoTalk

- Started in 2008-09 by Toby and Simon Zerner
  - Started it to learn PHP/MySQL and JavaScript
- Advertised around the web, gained popularity in 2009. Grew to a few hundred users. I became involved in plugin development and forum support.
  - I started myesoTalk.com for free hosting
  - Development slowed with some outside issues
- In 2010 a rewrite was announced, but development was still slow, interest died down, I became a co-maintainer of the project

## esoTalk Today

- In 2011, complete rewrite was launched and development has picked up
  - Currently hosted on (private) bitbucket using Mercurial
- Taking on new features for mobile web and advancing technology like HTML5
- A new hosting service in planning stages
- User interest is still big, although there hasn't been a release in quite a while

## esoTalk Features

- People don't talk in threads, they talk in conversations
- Blurs the boundry between instant messaging and forums with Ajax and simplified view
- Tagging, Starring, multi-language support, and many other common features
- Built-in system for adding and updating esoTalk core, plugins, themes, and language packs
- Well documented and supported by community members

## esoTalk Demonstration

- Original project: <http://forum.esotalk.com>
  - No longer available for download (sorta), but is still stable and used by many websites
- Rewrite coming soon: <http://preview.esotalk.local/>
  - Structure and API changes
  - Support for new technology
  - Under heavy development, preview has bugs

## The esoTalk Request Process

- 11-step process from request to finished page
  - 1)Sets the environment, registers initial functions and classes
  - 2)Loads up configuration files, sets global variables
  - 3)Registers more classes and functions
  - 4)Sanitizes any incoming data
  - 5)Loads user's language file, sets language strings
  - 6)Initialize enabled plugin classes
  - 7)Connects to the database and loads session data
  - 8)Passes request to appropriate controller file
  - 9)If required by the controller, loads the skin files
  - 10)Passes result to appropriate view file. Plugin hook init()  
processes, show page HTML to user
  - 11)Closes database connection, done

## The Future of esoTalk

- Release date unknown, most likely in a few months. Once it's released, it will be open for public patches, forks, etc
  - Interface cleanup, timeline-style conversation view and eliminating pagination
- Developers center to host plugins, themes, and language packs. Integrates with Admin dashboard
- Free and paid hosting for forums
- More mobile support, possible apps for devices
- Involve more developers for both core and plugins



## Numbered Post Conversation

Announcements ☆ **STICKY**

Search within this conversation...

Search

Controls



**Usererebe8c58343** Oct 16

9



**dUserc991123a97** Oct 17

10



**buser2** Oct 18

11



**User733cd98649** Oct 19

12



**dUser4d0897b897** Oct 20

13



**Usererebe8c58343** Oct 21

14



**User6af8e99240** Oct 22

15



**User514d363c44** Oct 23

16



**dUser20fb6663ab** Oct 24

17



**auser** Oct 25

18

Original Post

**2006**

October  
November  
December

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

June

July

August

September

October

Now

+ Post a Reply

## More Information and Resources

- Visit the website, <http://esotalk.com>
  - Sign up for email announcements
- Follow @esoTalk on Twitter
  - Screenshots and development updates
- Email us  
Toby Zerner <[toby.zerner@gmail.com](mailto:toby.zerner@gmail.com)>  
Josh Knight <[jgknight@mtu.edu](mailto:jgknight@mtu.edu)>
- Join the support forum, <http://forum.esotalk.com>
- Talk to me in person