

The *SDA Education Committee* is keeping you informed..

Many of you may not have seen the announcement from **SDA National** concerning one of our networking platforms, the list servs. SDA National has revamped this communication tool, introducing the forum structure. A discussion forum is a method of communicating and networking with other people. It's an area where you can post questions or reply to ones that have already been posted. It's similar to the tool you all are used to using, the list servs, but different in that you do not use your email. You must go directly to the website to post questions and reply, but you can choose to receive email notification when other people send responses. Discussion forums, like list servs, allow you to communicate to a large group of people at one time. You can communicate with the entire membership or just your chapter, but either way you are able to get feedback from your peers and network to solve solutions to your problem quickly. Many other professional organizations are using forums for online discussion.

You can access the forum area on the National website under the "**Forums**" tab.

You should have access to almost all of the discussion forums. Some forum discussions may have restricted access where you won't be able to see them. Other discussions may be visible but there will not be a button at the top that says "Add a New Discussion" or "Add a New Post". If you feel like you do not have access to a discussion forum that you should, contact the SDA Headquarters at [admin@sdadmin.org](mailto:admin@sdadmin.org) and we will look into it.

One of the huge benefits of the forum structure is the ability to retrieve past discussions or posts. You have several different options to choose from when searching. You can enter a specific word or a group of words, search by date or select a certain topic. The search function is much like other searches that you have used before. Once your results are displayed, the variable you used to search by will be highlighted so you can see exactly where it is within each post

Each member has the ability to control his or her own preferences allowing you to customize your level of involvement with the discussion board. And, when those preferences are finalized, you can set up rules within Outlook to direct that communication to another folder – just as you did for the older list serv discussions.

Each chapter now has its own forum for communication among its members. You'll see a forum for general communication among all members, specific forums for various areas within an office (IT, Office Admin, Project Management, etc.). If your firm uses Axium or Deltek software, those products now have dedicated forums in which to talk directly with other individuals using the software. There is also a dedicated forum for AIA Contract Documents.

**SDA Houston** will be utilizing the new **SDA Houston Chapter Forum** for communications with its members. Postings have been made to the Houston forum updating all members on upcoming events.

You should set up your preferences to receive notification from all forums in which you are eligible. If you choose not to receive notifications from any of the forums, you should set a reminder on your calendar to check the forums for new communications, updates, announcements, etc., in all of the forums, especially the Houston Chapter forum. There are a lot of exciting programs on the horizon as well as communications from your chapter leaders. You don't want to miss a thing!

I would encourage you to visit the SDA National website and check out all of the forums available to you – especially the Houston Chapter forum.

If you have any questions about using the forums, setting your preferences, etc., please contact Tracy Graham or Melodee Futch at FKP, or as always, you can email SDA Headquarters at [admin@sdadmin.org](mailto:admin@sdadmin.org) or call 1-800-711-8199. Thanks again! See you in the forums!