

VMware Communities Proposed Homepage Design

We're Listening

We've gotten feedback that the Communities (top-level) homepage and each individual community homepage are too cluttered, contain too much Web 2.0 gunk, and are hard to navigate and read. Good feedback.

We're setting out to fix it. And since we've also gotten feedback that we implemented the redesign with insufficient community input, I'm posting screenshots of the proposed new homepage design. Please take a look below and [let us know what you think](#).

What We're Trying to Accomplish

Communities are places where all sorts of people meet up to discuss topics of relevance, interest, and importance to them. Technical communities involve a lot community-based support, but they also should be a place to discuss ideas, find news, share stories, and build a connection with peers. The VMware Communities redesign is about expanding the value in these other areas while preserving the tremendous self-service support value that has existed for some time. That's why we are adding features like blogs, documents, tags, and right-column content.

The new design we're proposing is meant to support this expansion of value, but also balance it with better navigation, better readability, and appropriate emphasis on the community content. We think we've made a big improvement, and most if not all of these changes are driven by your feedback. Now is an opportunity to tell us how close we are to the mark.

Process: We want to implement design improvements quickly, so [please give feedback](#) by November 9. We'll join the discussion too, decide on changes based on your feedback, communicate them, and then update the site.

And just to remind you, we also continue to work on [VMware Communities Known Issues](#).

Proposed Changes

Site-Wide Changes

- 1. Move to a 2-column layout for better readability and less visual clutter
- 2. Remove some page elements that weren't critical
- 3. Put main content on the left so it displays in the visible part of a narrow browser window
- 4. Sub-communities and Actions are always at the top of the right column for better navigation

View the [Communities Homepage \(guest view\)](#)

- **1. Header**
 - a. Login | Register is moved to the right for consistency with username location in member view
 - b. Advanced search link is added to the right of the search box
- **2. Main (Left) Column**
 - a. Announcement box is highlighted for better visibility
 - b. All Communities title is bold for better visibility

- **3. Right Column**
 - a. The following items will be in the right column:
 - - Actions box: Guests are asked to log in when they click on any action
 - - Small promotion for relevant VMware content
 - - Technical Resources: Top technical resources of interest to community participants
 - - VMware Blogs: Blog content of interest to community participants
 - - Top Members: Formatted for consistency with other right column items
 - b. Popular Tags and Latest Poll are dropped: These are more relevant on individual community pages

View the [Communities Homepage \(member view\)](#)

- **1. Header**
 - a. Same changes as communities homepage guest view plus:
 - b. Edit My Communities link is available in the My Content dropdown with other per-user settings (not shown)
- **2. Main (Left) Column**
 - a. Same changes as communities homepage guest view plus:
 - b. Tabs for My Communities and All Communities
 - - My Communities is the default
 - - All Communities loads only when clicked (to speed up page load time)
 - c. Edit My Communities is on the My Communities tab for better visibility
- **3. Right Column**
 - a. Same changes as communities homepage guest view

View the [Individual Community Homepage](#)

- **1. Header**
 - a. Same changes as communities homepage member view
- **2. Main (Left) Column**
 - a. Announcement box is highlighted for better visibility
- **3. Right Column**
 - a. The following items will be in the right column:
 - - Sub-communities: Same as current site
 - - Actions box: Guests and logged-in members get the same actions; guests asked to log in
 - - Small promotion for relevant VMware content
 - - Popular Tags: This is context-sensitive for this community
 - - Community Resources: Context-sensitive for this community, e.g. on the Workstation community, Documentation links to the Workstation product documentation
 - - Top Members: Top members for this community
 - b. Blogs and non-context-sensitive content are dropped

What Do You Think?

[Let us know!](#)

And thanks for your input. We look forward to improving the community experience.

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The VMware Communities team