Using moodletxt

This document is intended for those using:

moodletxt 2.2
Moodle versions 1.5 or 1.6

Documentation for other software versions is available separately.

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Section 1: What is moodletxt?

Introduction

moodletxt is a piece of add-on software created for the popular Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It allows its users to send and receive text messages directly within Moodle, without the inconvenience of having to access a separate provider.

Why Use moodletxt?

moodletxt is all about convenience. Users don't have to copy or re-enter their contact list into another system, and no additional login is required. Simply select a message's recipients from your existing contact list, enter the message, and click "send." It really is that simple!

Messages can be sent to as many or as few people as required. As well as allowing users to select individual recipients from a list, moodletxt allows you to send a message to any of your existing contact groups, enabling a large number of people to be contacted simultaneously. This is useful when, for example, you wish to contact all students that attend a particular module.

moodletxt also allows for the personalisation of messages being sent. A recipient's name can be automatically added to a message being sent, to give it a more personal touch. Messages that are often repeated can also be defined as a "message template," allowing users to quickly and easily send messages that are both relevant and standardised. Finally, a user can also define their own "message signature," which may contain, for example, personal contact information, and can be added to the end of each message sent. This allows the user to quickly add useful information to a message, without having to look it up or enter it manually.

With the release of moodletxt 2, inbound messaging is now also supported. Messages sent to your txttools accounts can be received through the moodletxt system, and filtered to individual Moodle users according to criteria set by the Moodle administrator. Again, the user never has to leave the Moodle system to use this functionality.

Before installing this copy of moodletxt 2.2, please make sure that your Moodle installation meets the minimum requirements shown below.

i) System Requirements

PHP, version 4.3.0 or greater
MySQL, version 4.0 or greater *or*
PostgreSQL 8 or greater *or*
Microsoft SQL Server 2005 or later
Moodle 1.5 or 1.6 (documentation for Moodle 1.7 and up is available separately)
An AJAX-enabled browser, such as Mozilla Firefox 2
An existing, active txttools account that has been enabled for use with moodletxt

Installing moodletxt is easy! Just follow the steps below, and you'll be sending text messages in no time.

PLEASE NOTE: *moodletxt is not provided with any guarantees or warranty. Txttools accepts no responsibility for any damage, loss of earnings or other negative side-effects of installing and using this software.   Bug-fix support will be provided free of charge via the contact details provided in this document. We welcome and appreciate all user suggestions and feedback.*
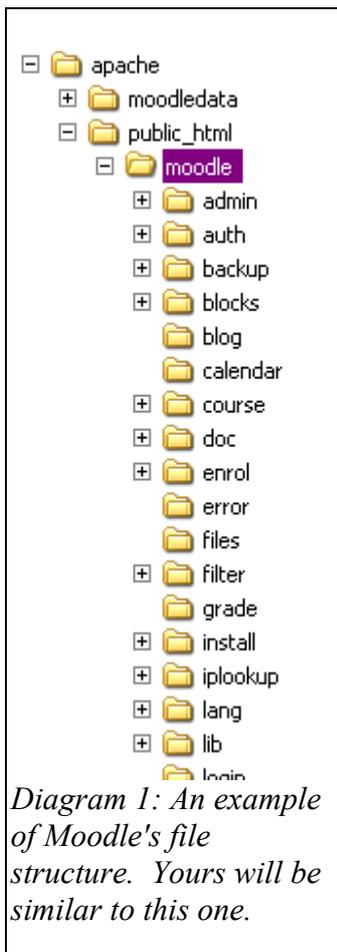

Diagram 1: An example of Moodle's file structure. Yours will be similar to this one.

ii) Preparation

As of moodletxt 2.2, in order for the module to work internationally, it has become necessary to require that all phone numbers within moodle are stored in the same location. Each user profile within Moodle has two phone fields, called "phone1" and "phone2," where the user can enter their phone numbers as appropriate.

Before installing moodletxt 2.2 and above, you must first choose which one of these fields will hold mobile phone numbers for use in moodletxt. Once you have made this decision, please ensure that all mobile phone numbers are stored in the correct field. (You will tell moodletxt which field to use later on in the installation process.)

iii) Step 1: Copying moodletxt files

Installing moodletxt 2.2 is a simple process. Firstly, open the provided mdl1.5_moodletxt2.2.zip file. Inside, you will see two folders, named "blocks" and "lang." These need to be extracted into your Moodle system folder, referred to as the "root" folder from now on. (The location of this folder will vary from system to system.)

As an example, shown to the left is the structure of a Moodle system running on Microsoft® Windows® XP. This is a fairly typical structure, and it is likely that your own structure will be similar.

The Moodle root folder is shown highlighted in the diagram 1. You will notice that it has "blocks" and "lang" subfolders, matching the subfolders found in the mdl1.5_moodletxt2.2.zip file.

Unzip the mdl1.5_moodletxt2.2.zip file into the root folder (check "maintain directory structure" if prompted). You may get a message saying that folders are to be replaced. Accept the replacement – you should not lose any files. Instead, the moodletxt files will simply be added to the required folders.

iv) Step 2: Configuring the Database

Once you have extracted the moodletxt files into your existing Moodle system, the next stage of installation is to activate moodletxt. To do this, open up your chosen browser and navigate to your Moodle system. Ensure that you are logged in as the admin, and then on the left side of the main page, click the link to the Administration panel, shown highlighted in diagram 2.

When you click the "Admin" link, moodletxt will set itself up by modifying your existing Moodle database. You should receive a number of messages regarding this process. Please ensure that all the messages report success. If any errors are reported, please contact txttools with the error message given.

Diagram 2: How to find the link to the Moodle admin page from the Moodle home page.

Assuming that no errors are given, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on "Continue." This will take you to the Administration panel. From the list of options given, select "Blocks." This will take you to the list of blocks installed on your Moodle system. If moodletxt is shown in the list, then the installation has been successful. Congratulations! You are now ready to configure moodletxt for use.

v) Upgrading From a Previous Version

Upgrading from a previous version of moodletxt, such as version 2.0, 1.1 or 1.0 is easy, and follows almost exactly the same procedure as a standard installation. None of your previous settings will be affected by the upgrade. First, follow the instructions given above in "Step 1: Copying moodletxt Files. Ensure that all previous files have been overwritten with the new versions, and that any new files have been correctly added.

Once this is done, follow the links to the admin section as detailed above in "Step 2: Configuring the Database." At the stage where the database is normally set up, the new version of moodletxt will modify your existing installation with the new functionality. You should see a message from Moodle, telling you that a new version of moodletxt exists, and a series of success messages as your installation is upgraded. Please ensure that all the messages report success. If any errors are reported, please contact txttools with the error message given.

When this process is finished (it should only take a few seconds), your upgrade is complete, and you can begin using moodletxt 2.2 right away!

vi) Adding Your First Txttools Account

Before you can gain access to the main control panel of moodletxt and set it up for use, you must first enter the details of a txttools account to use. To go to the moodletxt control panel (if you are not already there) and set up your first txttools account, visit the Moodle admin panel, and click on "Blocks" under the "Configuration" heading at the top of the page.

This will display the Moodle blocks page, which shows details of every block installed within Moodle. Within this list, locate the entry for moodletxt. On the right of this entry, click the "Settings" link to enter the moodletxt control panel.

Both these pages and the links you are seeking are shown in diagrams 3 and 4.

Diagram 3: Finding the link to the blocks page from the Moodle admin page.

Diagram 4: Locating the link to the moodletxt control panel on the Moodle blocks page.
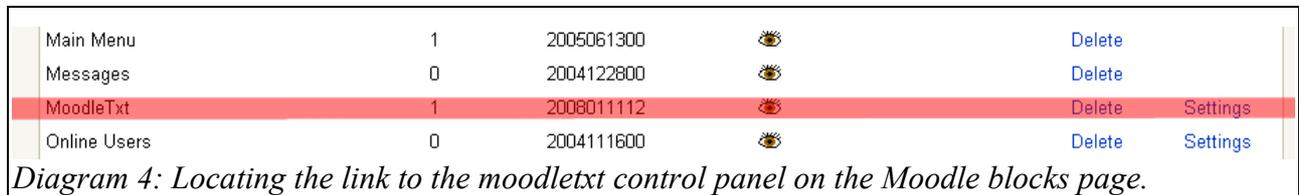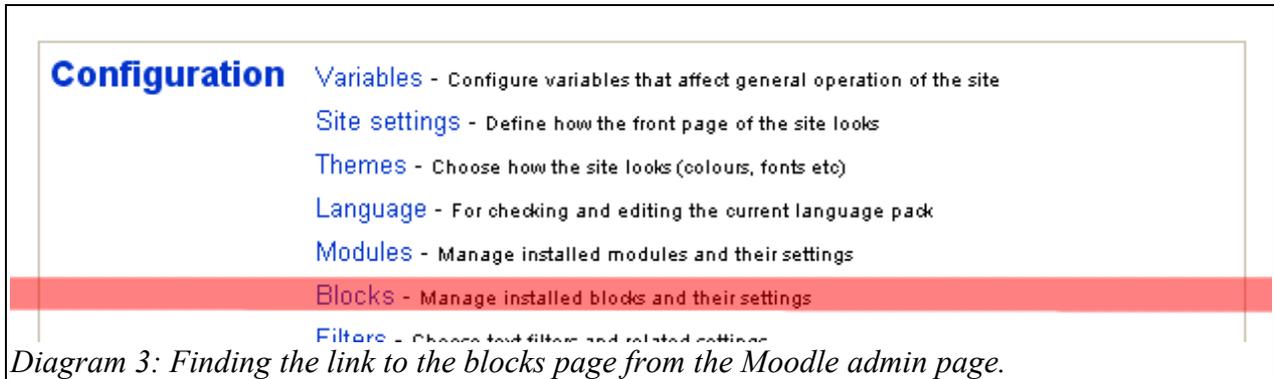
Once you have located the moodletxt block entry and clicked on "Settings," you should be presented with the welcome page for moodletxt. On the welcome page, there will be a short introduction to the moodletxt block, as well as some onscreen instructions to help you add your first txttools account. To do so, scroll to the bottom of this page and find the "Add a New Account" form, shown in diagram 5:

Diagram 5: This form allows you to add a new txttools account for use in moodletxt.
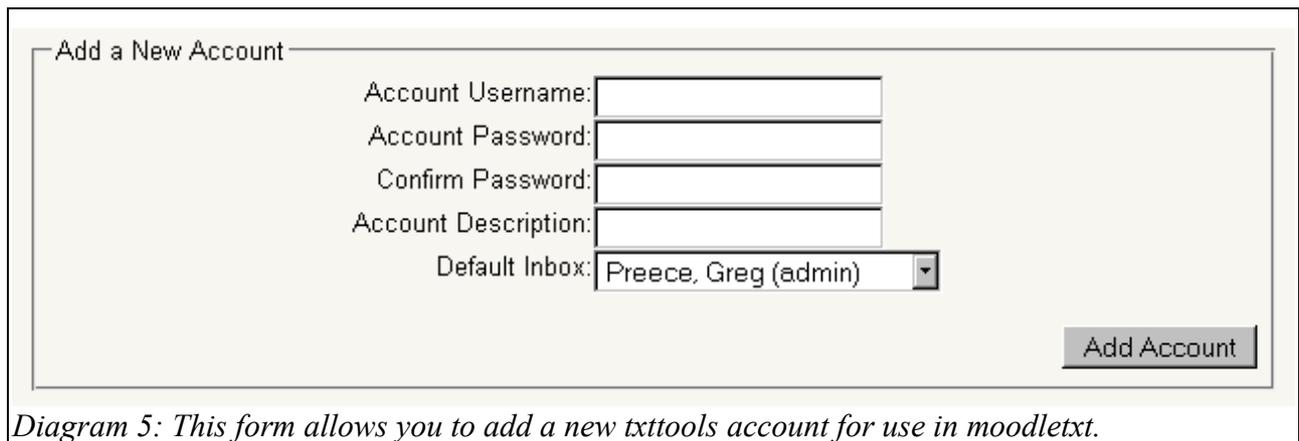
Enter the username and password of the first txttools account you wish to add to moodletxt. You may also enter a short description of the account if you wish. Also, please select an administrator to receive any unfiltered incoming messages on this account.

The user with the default inbox is the one that will receive any inbound text messages that do not

match an inbound filter. That is, if a message is received through this account, and moodletxt does not know where to send it, it will put the message in the default inbox. This is to prevent unfiltered messages being lost. It is required that you select a default inbox owner even if you do not intend to use moodletxt for inbound messaging. Please note that only administrators can own default inboxes.

Once you are done, click "Add Account." The page will refresh. As it does so, the account details entered will be validated with the txttools system. This ensures that all the txttools accounts you save in moodletxt exist on the txttools system, that the passwords are correct, and that the accounts have been enabled for use with moodletxt. If no errors are found, you should be presented with the moodletxt control panel.

From the control panel, you can assign txttools accounts to be accessible by your chosen Moodle users. For more information on how to do this, please see section 3: "User/Account Administration."

vii) Essential System Settings

Whilst you are still on the moodletxt control panel, this is an ideal time to configure some of the system settings that are essential to moodletxt's operation. Look to the right hand side of the control panel, under the "System Settings" heading. You can ignore most of these settings for now – they are all explained under Section 7)i) - "Changing System-Wide Settings."
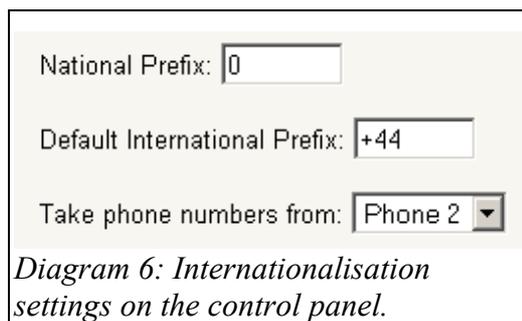
Diagram 6: Internationalisation settings on the control panel.

The three settings were are interested in at installation are those relating to internationalisation features, at the bottom of the settings list, and shown in diagram 5. These settings help moodletxt to work around the world, on a wide variety of platforms.

The first setting, the National Prefix, is the number (or numbers) that all mobile numbers begin with in your country, when dialling internally. For example, all domestic UK numbers begin with 0 (and this is the case for most countries). **If you are installing moodletxt in the UK, you will not need to change this, as moodletxt uses the UK phone system for its default settings.**

The second setting, the International Prefix, is the set of numbers that replace the National Prefix when dialling into your country. For example, when dialling a UK number from abroad, you would drop the 0 from the beginning of the number and replace it with +44. You must use the "plus" format rather than the "double-zero" format in this box – for example, you must write +44, rather than the alternative of 0044. **If you are installing moodletxt in the UK, you will not need to change this, as moodletxt uses the UK phone system for its default settings.**

(An excellent list of National and International Prefixes can be found at http://www.kropla.com/dialcode.htm – Please note that this webpage refers to the International Prefix as the Country Code.)

The last setting tells moodletxt which of the two phone number fields on a Moodle user's profile it should retrieve phone numbers from for use in moodletxt. Within Moodle, users can store two of their phone numbers. Unfortunately, Moodle refers to these simply as "Phone 1" and "Phone 2," rather than "Landline" and "Mobile" or similar.

As a result, it is necessary for you to choose which of these two fields will be used in your Moodle system for moodletxt numbers, and to ensure that phone numbers are stored appropriately. Once you have decided which of the two fields would be most appropriate given your current setup, change this setting appropriately. The default is to use the "Phone 2" field.

Once you have made the appropriate changes to these three settings, click "Update Settings" to save these settings permanently.

viii) Adding moodletxt to a Course Page

Because moodletxt is a "block," it must be added to each course page on which it is to be used. To do this, navigate to your chosen course page. Make sure that you are logged in to an account that has been granted permission to edit the course page.

Firstly, switch the page into editing mode by clicking on the "Turn Editing On" button at the top right of the page, as shown above. This will enable you to change what is displayed on the page, allowing you to add moodletxt to it.
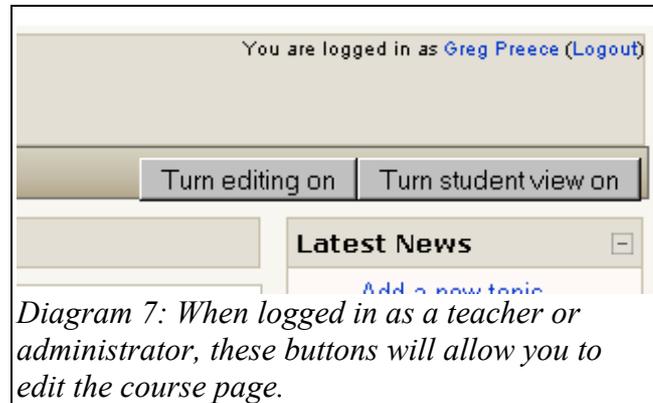

Diagram 7: When logged in as a teacher or administrator, these buttons will allow you to edit the course page.
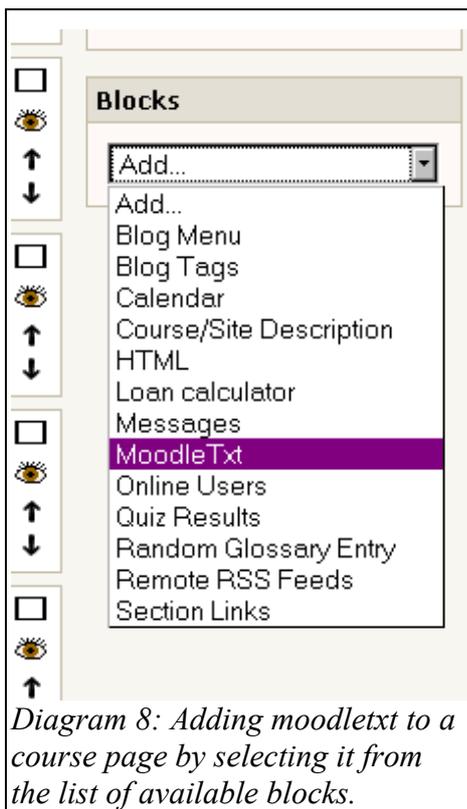

Diagram 8: Adding moodletxt to a course page by selecting it from the list of available blocks.

Once the page's editing mode has been activated, go to the bottom of your current set of blocks. These are normally shown on the right hand side of the page. You should find a list of the blocks available to add to this page, as shown to the left.

Select moodletxt from the list as shown. The page will refresh, and you should see the moodletxt block appear in the set. You can use the arrows on its titlebar to move it up, down and across through the set as required.

Once you have added and positioned the moodletxt block, click the "Turn Editing Off" button at the top right of the page, to return it to normal operation.

Please Note: You may not be able to see the moodletxt block at this point. moodletxt will only be visible if you have been granted access to use moodletxt on a given course. moodletxt will always be visible when editing mode is turned on.

User permissions **must** be set before moodletxt is ready to use. To begin allowing Moodle users to use moodletxt, please see section 3: "User/Account Administration."

This section of the manual details how to add more txttools accounts to the system, and allow Moodle users to use them through moodletxt.

i) Browsing the User Admin Panel

From moodletxt 2.0, a new access panel has been created specifically for administering user access to moodletxt. To access this new panel, first navigate to the moodletxt admin panel.

Recap: To move to the moodletxt control panel, make sure you are logged in as an administrator, then click the "Admin..." link on the front page. Select "Blocks" from the Moodle admin page, and click "Settings" next to moodletxt on the list of blocks that appears. This will take you to the control panel. Alternatively, as an admin, you can click the "Change Admin Options" link from any instance of the moodletxt block. For a full explanation of how to find the control panel, please see 1)vi) – *Adding Your First txttools Account*.

Once on the admin page, click the link under "User Access" called "Launch the User Admin Panel." This will take you to the User Admin interface.

The new user admin interface has been designed to allow users to quickly locate and assign permissions to any user or course on the Moodle system. When the interface first loads, you should see a list of the top-level course categories defined within your Moodle installation.
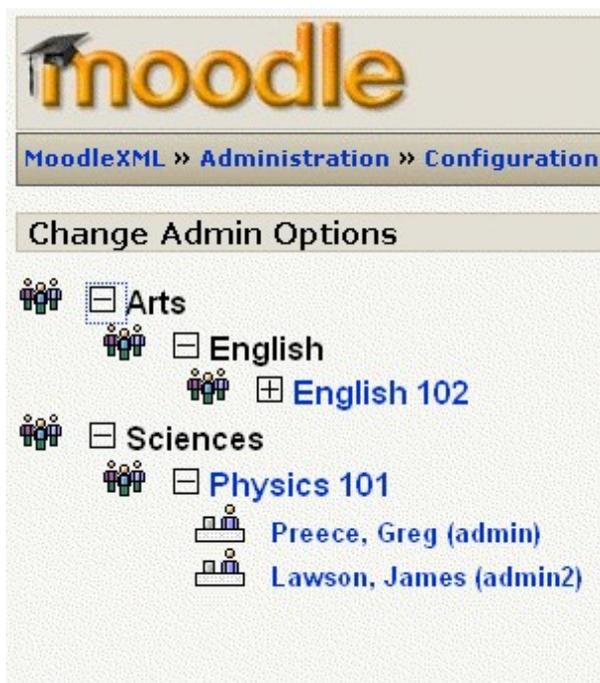
By clicking on the plus sign at the side of a category, you can expand that category and view the subcategories or courses underneath it. Similarly, these can then be expanded to show further subcategories, courses and users. By clicking on the minus sign next to a category or course, you can contract that section of the tree and hide it from view. This allows for very quick and easy navigation of your Moodle installation's courses. Expand the course tree as required until you have located the course or user you wish to set permissions for.

Once you have found the user or course you wish to modify, click on its textual name (please click only once) , and a loading message should appear. After a short delay, the access form for that course or user should be displayed on the right hand side of the page.

When the access form has loaded, please consult the relevant section below.

ii) Granting/Revoking Access to Send Messages

In moodletxt, when granting a Moodle user access to send messages, you do so on a per-course basis. A course is selected, a Moodle user is selected on that course, and a txttools account is selected for them to use. This per-course authentication is necessary because of the way Moodle itself assigns permissions to users.

The first list box on the user access form holds details of the accounts to which the user has access. The second list holds all available txttools accounts in the system.
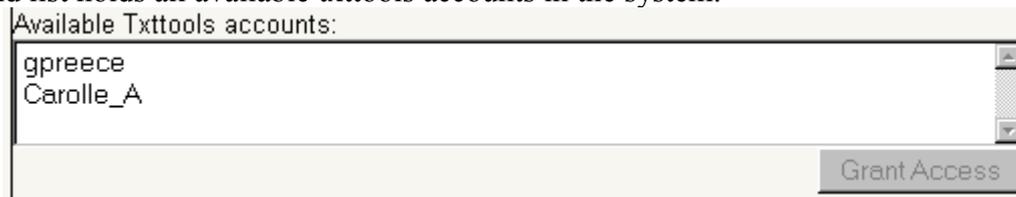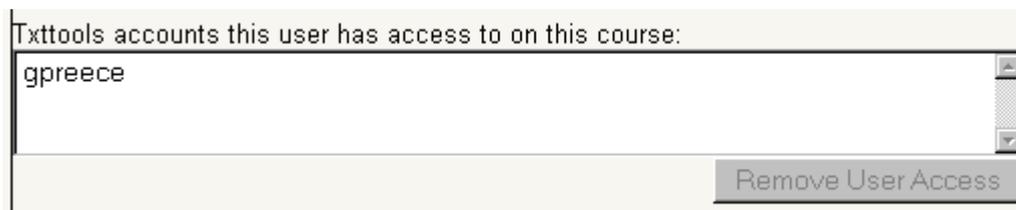

To allow the selected user access to an account, simply click on it in the "Available Txttools Accounts" list, then click "Grant Access." The user form will lock, and you should see a "Loading" graphic displayed. When the form has been processed, it should reappear, having been updated to reflect the changes made.


Revoking a user's access on a course is just as easy – select the account from the list of accessible accounts, and click "Remove User Access."

iii) Creating/deleting inbound text message filters

Locate the bottom section of the access form (user-level access only).

When allowing a user to receive inbound messages in moodletxt, you do so on a per-user basis, rather than on a per-course basis as with outbound messaging. Once a user has an inbox, they can access their received messages from any course where they can see the moodletxt block.

To add a new inbound messaging filter to a user's account, first locate the drop-down box at the bottom of the form labelled "Select an account...", and select the txttools account to which this filter will apply (normally only one of your txttools accounts will be used for inbound messaging). Next, use the radio buttons on the left of the form to select what type of filter to use.
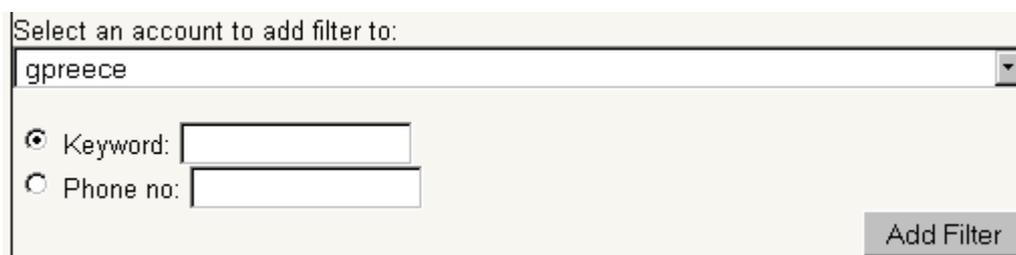
There are two types of inbound filter in moodletxt:

- PHONENO – This type allows you to filter messages based on the phone number they were sent from. Please enter all source phone numbers in the form "+4471234567890", rather than "071234567980."
- KEYWORD – This type allows you to filter messages based on a keyword at the beginning of the message. For example, if a text message began "GREG Hi there, it's John", then the

keyword would be "GREG".

Once you have selected a type of filter to use, type the filter value in the appropriate box, then click "Add Filter," and the filter will be applied. **If the user does not already have an inbox, one will be created automatically.**
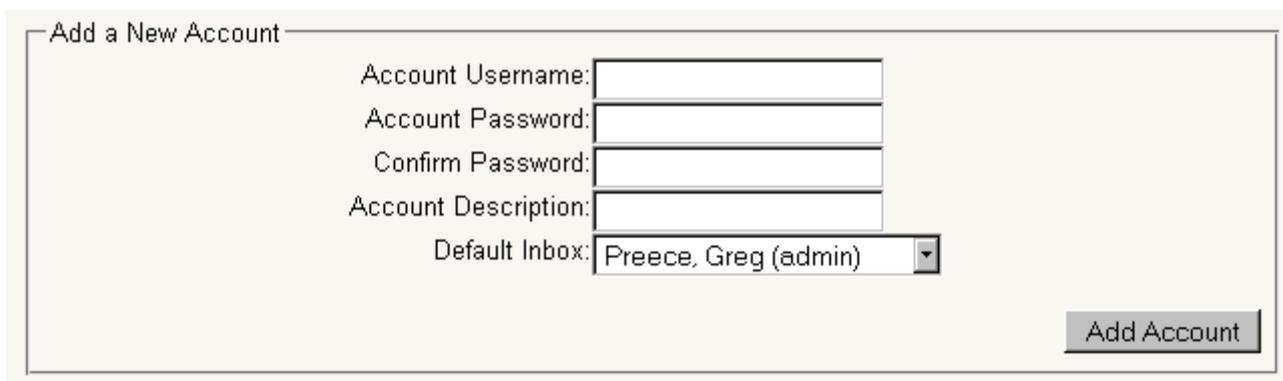

To remove an existing inbound filter from a user, locate the list box labelled "User's existing inbound filters." This box holds details of the inbound messaging filters this user already has in place. The type of filter is shown first (PHONENO/KEYWORD), then the phone number or keyword on which the filter applies, and finally the txttools account on which these messages are being received. To remove an inbound filter from a user, simply select it from the "User's Existing Inbound Filters" box and click the "Remove Filter" button underneath.

(Note that it is possible for a user to have the same inbound keyword on two different accounts, and each one will count as a separate filter within the system. It is also possible for two users to share the same keyword on different inbound accounts. For these reasons, the txttools account that a filter applies to is displayed alongside it in brackets, to help administrators keep track of different filters.)

iv) Adding a New txttools Account to the System

If you wish to add a new txttools account to moodletxt, the process is very simple. Firstly, ensure that you are logged in as an administrator, and navigate to the moodletxt control panel as described above.

Once you have arrived at the moodletxt control panel, look for the section entitled "Txttools Accounts." It should be under the "Courses and Teachers" section on the left of the page. Then locate the box titled "Add a New Account."

The form shown in this box is the same simple form used when first installing moodletxt. Enter the new account's username and password as indicated. You may also enter a short description of the account in the last box.

You must also select a user to receive any unfiltered inbound messages that arrive through this account. This is required even if you do not intend to use this account for inbound messaging, and

is to prevent inbound messages being lost because of incorrect filtering. Please note that only administrators can own default inboxes.

Once you have completed this form, click the "Add Account" button. The page will refresh, and you should see a short message confirming that the account has been added. You can now assign Moodle users to the account as normal.

Please remember that all txttools accounts added to the moodletxt system must be enabled for use with moodletxt. If the account you are adding has not been activated, or you are unsure, please contact txttools using the contact information displayed at the end of this document, and we will be happy to help.

v) Changing a txttools Account Password/Default Inbound Inbox

If you wish to change the password/default inbox saved for a txttools account, ensure that you are logged in as an administrator, and navigate to the moodletxt control panel as described above.

Once you have arrived at the moodletxt control panel, look for the section entitled "Txttools Accounts." It should be under the "Courses and Teachers" section on the left of the page. The list box at the top of this section shows all the txttools accounts currently held on file.

To change the password for an account, select it from the list. You should notice the boxes beneath the list become active, and the current default inbox owner should be selected from the list provided.
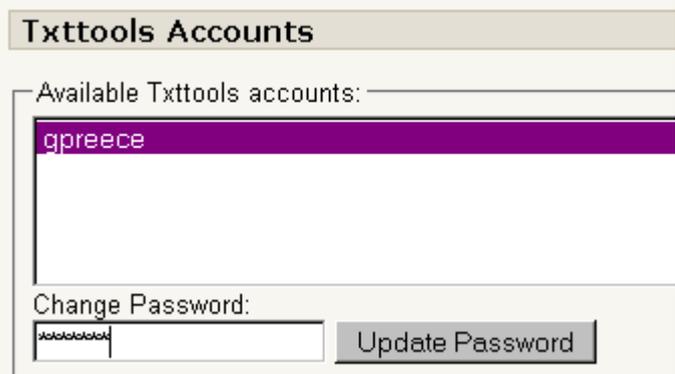
The page will refresh, and the new password will be validated with the txttools system, to ensure its correctness. If the new password is correct, a short message should be displayed notifying you of the change. The password will be updated with immediate effect.

<u>Section 4: Sending Your First Text Message With moodletxt</u>

This section of the manual will walk you through the process of sending your first text message using moodletxt. Please ensure that you have been granted access to use a txttools account on your given course, then open your preferred browser and navigate to that course page.

On one edge of the page, (left or right, depending on where you positioned it) you should see the moodletxt block. If you cannot see this block, then it has either not been added to this course, or you do not have permission to use it. To add the block to this course, see section 1)viii). To manage user access to moodletxt, see section 3)i).
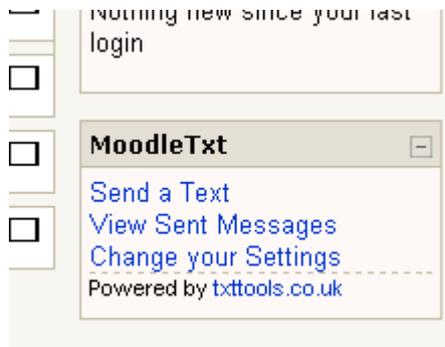
The moodletxt block should be displaying a number of links similar to those shown here. Click on the first link, "Send a Text." The compose page will be displayed. If you have used the txttools website previously, this page will be familiar to you. If not, there follows a brief explanation of its functions.

Recipients

Firstly, you must select the recipients for the message. You may send a text message to one or more individuals, or to a pre-defined group of users. (These groups are defined within the Moodle contacts system, not moodletxt.) Locate the boxed section marked "Recipients."

If you wish to send to one or more individuals, select the "Individual" radio button on the left, and then select the intended recipients from the large list on the right.
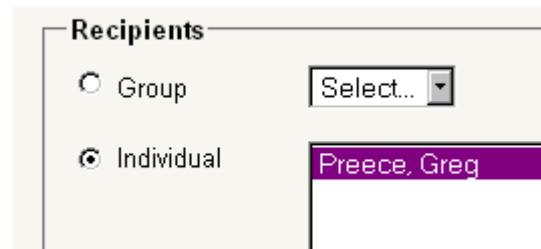
(To select more than one contact from the list, hold down CTRL on Windows/Linux, or the Apple key on a Mac, and click on each contact. You can also select a group of sequential contacts by clicking on the first contact, then holding the SHIFT key and selecting a contact further up/down the list. This will select every contact in a range.)

If you wish to send to a group, select the "Group" radio button on the left, and select the group you wish to send to from the dropdown box, initally marked "Select..."

Message

Now that the message's recipients have been selected, you must enter the message itself. Locate the boxed section marked "Message." Inside the large textbox (also marked "Message"), type your intended text message.
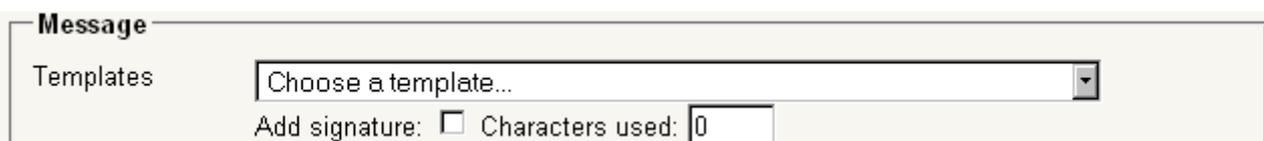
This section has several extra functions. If you wish to use a pre-defined message template, select it from the drop-down list marked "Templates," and it will automatically fill the textbox with the template for you. If you wish to add your own customised signature to the message, checking the "Add Signature" checkbox will append your signature to the end of the message in the textbox. For more information on adding templates or setting your signature, see section 6: "Changing Your

Individual User Settings."

 Also, underneath the message text box. you will find three buttons, labelled "First Name," "Surname," and "Full Name." Clicking on any of these buttons will insert a "tag" into the message. This tag will be automatically replaced, for each recipient, with the appropriate name, allowing you to add a personal touch to the message. For example:

"Hello %FIRSTNAME%, welcome to DMU."

Will be converted automatically to:

"Hello Jaime, welcome to DMU."

Date & Time
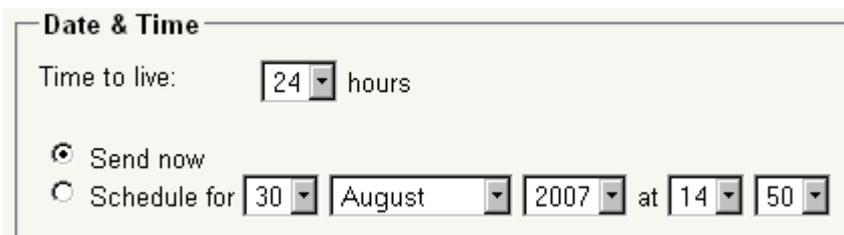
Locate the boxed section titled "Date & Time." This section allows you to control when your messages are sent, as well as how long they will "live" on the network.

Firstly, you can specify how long a message that isn't delivered straight away should keep attempting delivery before failing and reporting back. This is the "time to live" field shown in the image above. Select the number of hours you would like this text message to live for from the drop-down box.

You can send the message immediately, or you can schedule it to be sent at a later date/time. To send a message straight away, make sure that the "Send now" radio button is checked. To schedule a message, make sure that the "Schedule for..." radio button is checked, and then use the drop-down boxes to the right to choose the date and time on which you want the message to be sent.

Select Txttools Account
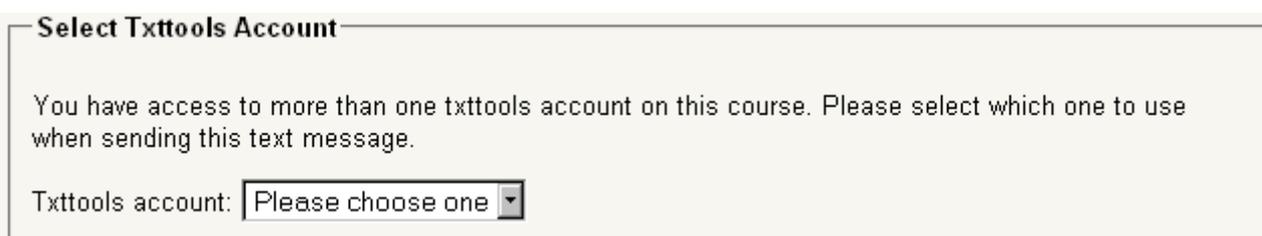
This final section will only appear if you have access to more than one txttools account on a given course. If this is the case, select which account you want to send the message from and continue.

Once you have filled in the compose form to your satisfaction, click the "Send Message" button at the bottom left of the page. **Only press this button once.**

If the message you have entered is longer than the industry standard length of 160 characters, you

will be shown a warning. By clicking OK, you can have the message automatically broken down into separate messages and sent to the appropriate recipients. Clicking "cancel" will return you to the form without sending the message.

After a short pause while the message is sent, you should be taken to the "Sent Messages" page. The latest message in the list should be the one you have just sent. Please note that messages over 160 characters will still appear as a single message in the "Sent Messages" page. However, when viewing status information for these messages, each recipient will be displayed multiple times – once per actual text message sent.

This section shows you the various ways to view the messages you have sent previously, and how to view delivery information for each one.

i) Overview of All Messages Sent

To view a summary of all the messages sent from your account, navigate to a course page where you have access to moodletxt. The second link on the moodletxt block, "View Sent Messages," will take you to the overview page.

This page is very easy to understand. Some general statistics regarding messages sent are shown at the top left of the page. Below this, each message you have sent from your account is listed. For each message, the following information is shown:

User Account: The username of the Moodle account from which this message was sent.

Txttools Account: The txttools account through which this message was sent.

Message Text: A shortened summary of the message sent.

Time Sent: The time at which this message was sent from the system.

Clicking on the Moodle username for a message will take you to the Moodle profile for that user.

Clicking on the Message Text summary for a message will take you to a page giving more detailed information on that particular message, its recipients, and its status.

ii) Viewing More Details on a Specific Message

By clicking on the message text summary on the "Sent Messages" page, you may view additional details on a particular message. The "View Sent Message" page gives full details on the recipients of a given message, along with the status of the text messages sent.

When the page loads, the details of the message sent will appear at the top left. This includes the Moodle user from which the message was sent, the time at which it was sent, the time it was scheduled to be sent at, and the actual text of the message. Below this, the recipients of the message are listed.

For each recipient, the following information is shown:

Sent to User: This field shows the Moodle username of the recipient (if known).

Sent to Number: The phone number to which the text message was sent.

Time of Update: The time and date at which this message's status information was last updated by the txttools system.

Message Status: The current status of this text message. There are three icons that are used to denote the status of a message. A red icon with a cross through it means that the message has failed. The recipient will not receive the message, and it should be checked and re-sent to this recipient. A green icon with no cross or tick means that the message has been sent, and no further information has yet been received. A green icon with a tick means that the message was received by the recipient.

If some of the messages on this page have not yet been completely resolved, and you wish to check for updated information, simply click the "Update Status" button, below the Status Key on the right hand side of the page. The page will refresh (this may take a moment while the txttools system is contacted), and the most up-to-date information will be displayed.

moodletxt allows for extra personalisation of your text messages. For commonly sent messages, you can store a message template, that can be quickly retrieved and sent. It also allows a user to store a message signature, which can be automatically added to an outgoing message.

Before continuing with this section, please ensure that you are on the user settings panel. You can access this panel in a number of ways. The first method is to navigate to your chosen course page, and click the "Change your Settings" link on the moodletxt block. The second method is to click the "moodletxt" link on the navigation bar from any moodletxt page.

i) Creating a New Message Template

On the user settings panel, locate the section on the left entitled "My Message Templates," and within it, the text-box labelled "Add New Template." Type your template in this box and click the "Add Template" button at its bottom right edge.   The page will refresh, and you should receive a message saying that the template has been saved. An abbreviated summary of the template will appear in the list box titled "Existing Templates."
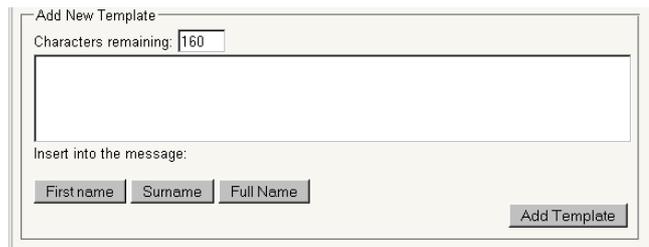
ii) Editing/Deleting Existing Message Templates

On the user settings panel, any of your templates already stored on the system will be displayed under "My Message Templates," in the list box titled "Existing Templates."

To edit one of these templates, select it from the list. The buttons to the right of the list will be activated. Click on "Edit Template," and the template will be displayed in the text-box below the list, now titled "Edit Existing Template." Simply make the appropriate changes, and click the "Update Template" button at the bottom right edge. The page will refresh, and a message will confirm that the template has been updated.
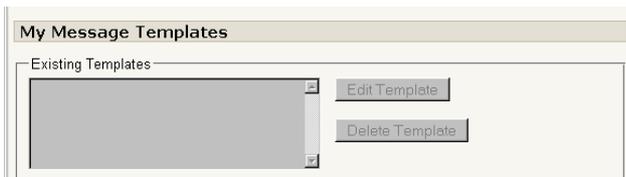
To delete a template, select it from the list, and click the "Delete Template" button. The page will refresh, and the template will be removed from the template list.

iii) Changing Your Message Signature

On the user settings panel, locate the section on the right entitled "My Signature." In the long text box provided, your existing signature will be displayed. If you do not have a signature set, this box will be blank. Make the appropriate changes to the text in the box and click the "Update Signature" button. The page will refresh, and a message will be displayed notifying you that the signature was updated.

Section 7: Advanced Functionality

In addition to its standard text messaging functions, moodletxt comes with several advanced features that grant the user greater control over moodletxt, as well as enabling the use of automatic status updates. Please note that this section of the documentation is intended for **system administrators only.**

i) Changing System-Wide Settings

Please ensure that you are logged in as an administrator, and navigate to the moodletxt control panel (Admin > Blocks > moodletxt > Settings). On the right of the page, below the section labelled "User Access," locate the section titled "System Settings." In this section, you will see a number of options relating to the operation of moodletxt.

The first option allows you to enable/disable the automatic fetching of status updates when viewing a message on the "View Message" page. Normally, when the "View Message" page is displayed, it automatically connects to txttools and retrieves the latest status updates. This assumes, of course, that you do not have XML Push or the cron script (see below) running in order to get the status updates.

If you have enabled XML Push or the cron script, then unchecking this box and clicking "Update Settings" will prevent the "View Message" page from automatically getting status updates, and it will load faster as a result. Users will still be able to press the "Update Status" button on the "View Message" page to manually retrieve status updates.

The second and third options relate to XML Push (see below). In these two boxes you may enter the username and password for your XML Push account. Clicking "Update Settings" will save these details, and they will be immediately available for use.
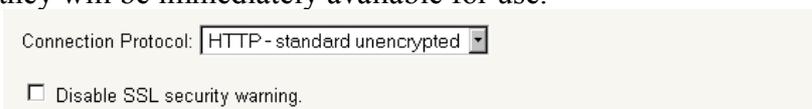
The fourth and fifth options relate to SSL compatibility. The first selection box allows you to switch moodletxt from using standard HTTP connections to secure SSL connections, and vice versa (though the latter is not recommended for security reasons). Its associated checkbox allows you to disable SSL security warnings when HTTP connections are in use.

The next pair of options relate to the automatic moodletxt news updates described below. The first option allows you to set how long moodletxt should wait before checking for new updates. The second option lets you decide how long a new news update should be displayed in the control panel before disappearing.

For more information on the difference between HTTP and SSL connections, please see section 8,

"Troubleshooting."

The final three settings relate to moodletxt internationalisation, and are required for moodletxt to operate.

The first of these settings, the National Prefix, is the number (or numbers) that all mobile numbers begin with in your country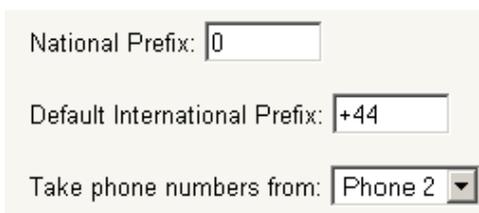, when dialling internally. For example, all domestic UK numbers begin with 0 (and this is the case for most countries). **If you are installing moodletxt in the UK, you will not need to change this, as moodletxt uses the UK phone system for its default settings.**

The second setting, the International Prefix, is the set of numbers that replace the National Prefix when dialling into your country. For example, when dialling a UK number from abroad, you would drop the 0 from the beginning of the number and replace it with +44. You must use the "plus" format rather than the "double-zero" format in this box – for example, you must write +44, rather than the alternative of 0044. **If you are installing moodletxt in the UK, you will not need to change this, as moodletxt uses the UK phone system for its default settings.**

(An excellent list of National and International Prefixes can be found at http://www.kropla.com/dialcode.htm – Please note that this webpage refers to the International Prefix as the Country Code.)

The last setting tells moodletxt which of the two phone number fields on a Moodle user's profile it should retrieve phone numbers from for use in moodletxt. Within Moodle, users can store two of their phone numbers. Unfortunately, Moodle refers to these simply as "Phone 1" and "Phone 2," rather than "Landline" and "Mobile" or similar.

As a result, it is necessary for you to choose which of these two fields will be used in your Moodle system for moodletxt numbers, and to ensure that phone numbers are stored appropriately. Once you have decided which of the two fields would be most appropriate given your current setup, change this setting appropriately. The default is to use the "Phone 2" field.

ii) Viewing User Message Statistics

From version 1.1, moodletxt allows administrators to view message statistics for all users on the Moodle system. The "View User Statistics" page is available via the 4th link on the moodletxt block (visible only to administrators), or the link at the top left of the moodletxt control panel. (Admin > Blocks > moodletxt > Settings)

By default, the page will display message sent statistics grouped by user, with the user that has sent the most messages shown at the top of the list. By using the drop-down menu on the right hand side of the page, this display can be changed to show the number of messages sent grouped by date, with the most active dates at the top of the list.

This feature is planned to expand greatly in future versions of moodletxt, and any suggestions for welcome additional functionality are of course appreciated.

Note for users of previous versions

Users of previous moodletxt versions will be happy to hear that their previous moodletxt

installations will have been recording these statistics prior to upgrading to version 1.1, so they will be able to access statistics for both before and after the upgrade.

iii) Automatic News Updates via moodletxt.co.uk RSS Feed

Starting with version 1.1, moodletxt is capable of getting the latest moodletxt news updates from the RSS feed at moodletxt.co.uk and displaying them in the control panel. This is done so that we can keep all our moodletxt users up-to-date with the very latest releases and newest functionality. By default, moodletxt will check for new updates daily, and display new updates for 1 week before retiring them.

If a new update is found, it will be displayed at the top of the control panel, as shown in the screenshot below.
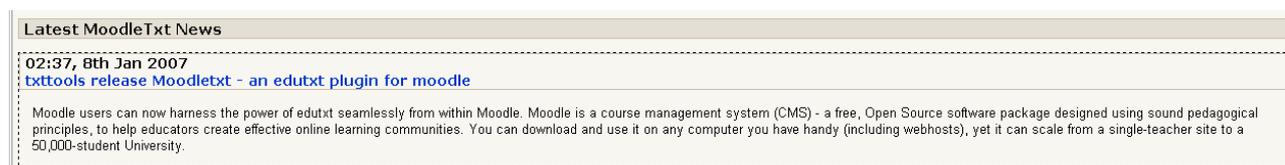
iv) Using the XML-Push Script to Receive Automatic Message Updates

For those moodletxt administrators whose Moodle installations are publicly accessible from outside their local network, txttools offer a free service that automatically sends message status updates to your moodletxt installation as soon as they arrive, without the need for moodletxt to fetch them when run. This solution provides the quickest and most convenient update of message status records, and ensures that the information contained within your installation is up-to-date and useful.

To use XML Push, please first ensure that you are sure of the URI path of your Moodle installation. Beneath this, the XML Push script is located at "/blocks/moodletxt/push.php." For example, if your URI for Moodle is normally:

http://www.yoursite.com/moodle

Then the path to XML Push will be:

http://www.yoursite.com/moodle/blocks/moodletxt/push.php

(This URI should also be displayed on the moodletxt admin page, in the section entitled "Automatically Updating Status Information.")

Once you have made a note of this URI, you must decide on a username and password for txttools to use to authenticate themselves on your installation. This username is used so that only txttools may send data through to your system, and helps to keep your installation secure – if the correct username and password are not supplied, XML Push simply shuts itself down, not accepting any further data.

When you have decided on a username and password for XML Push to use, please save them in moodletxt's system settings via the method described above.

Now you should have all the information necessary to activate XML Push with txttools. At this stage, please contact txttools (using the contact information displayed at the end of this document) with the following information:

1) A list of all the txttools accounts that will need to be enabled for use with XML Push (this is normally a list of all the accounts stored in moodletxt).
2) The URI path to XML Push on your installation.
3) The XML Push username and password stored on your installation.

Txttools will then activate your account(s) for use with XML Push. This process is normally completed quickly, but can take up to 24 hours.

If your change your XML Push username or password in the future, or add/remove any txttools accounts from the moodletxt system, please notify txttools of any changes that need to be made.

If you have XML Push enabled, you will normally want to disable the automatic fetching of status updates on the "View Message" page, as detailed in the section immediately above.

v) Using the moodletxt cron Script to Get Automatic Message Updates

("Cron script" is the term generally used to refer to a user-defined script or program that is automatically run at regular intervals.)

For those moodletxt administrators whose Moodle installations are not publicly accessible outside their local network, but who still wish to retrieve automatic status updates, moodletxt comes with a cron script that, when run, will fetch message status updates for any messages that require them.

The path to this script is "/blocks/moodletxt/cron.php", under your main Moodle installation directory. For example, if you have Moodle installed on Microsoft Windows at:

D:\Apache\public_html\moodle

Then the path to the cron script would be:

D:\Apache\public_html\moodle\blocks\moodletxt\cron.php

By specifying this file to be run in your chosen scheduling software, at an interval of your choosing, you can emulate the efficiency of the XML Push service without changing your security configuration.

i) Where does moodletxt get its phone numbers from?

Moodletxt takes the phone numbers displayed for sending from Moodle's own user profiles. Within Moodle, each user is allowed to store two phone numbers. During installation, you choose which of these phone numbers moodletxt should use for sending text messages to (see section 1) vii) – "Essential System Settings").

Within moodletxt, when a teacher/staff member on a course attempts to send a text message, the phone numbers of all students enrolled on the selected course are retrieved and displayed in the recipient list (see Section 4 – Sending Your First Text Message With moodletxt).

Phone numbers are not retrieved from the txttools website. This is a common mix-up that occurs when users first install moodletxt. The txttools system does not allow for the transfer of contact information to and from moodletxt.

It is possible that future releases of moodletxt will support such functionality, or that a separate address book will be added to moodletxt, to allow for non-users to be texted via the system. To stay notified of new features and future releases, you can use the RSS feed on the moodletxt control panel to view important moodletxt news (see Section 7) iii) - "Automatic News Updates via moodletxt.co.uk RSS Feed").

Alternatively, by texting "MOODLETXT" to 88020, you can subscribe to a free text-based update system, where you will receive notifications of new moodletxt developments via text message.

ii) Does moodletxt work in any country?

As of moodletxt 2.2, the plugin can work in any country without the need for modification. However, in order to work internationally, several system settings need to be configured correctly during or after installation. For a full run-down of how to install moodletxt, along with how to set it up to work outside the UK, please see Section 1 of the documentation.

iii) How is moodletxt tested?

moodletxt is tested on as wide a range of Moodle installations as possible. The diagram shown below details the combinations of web servers, PHP versions and databases we currently test on. We hope to expand this to support the Oracle database, amongst others.

Moodle 1.5
Moodle 1.6
Moodle 1.7
Moodle 1.8
Moodle 1.9

MySQL 4.1
PostgreSQL 8.2
MySQL 5.0
MySQL 5.1
MySQL 6.0-RC
Microsoft SQL
Server 2005 XE

Apache 1.3
PHP 4.4

Apache 2.2
PHP 5.2
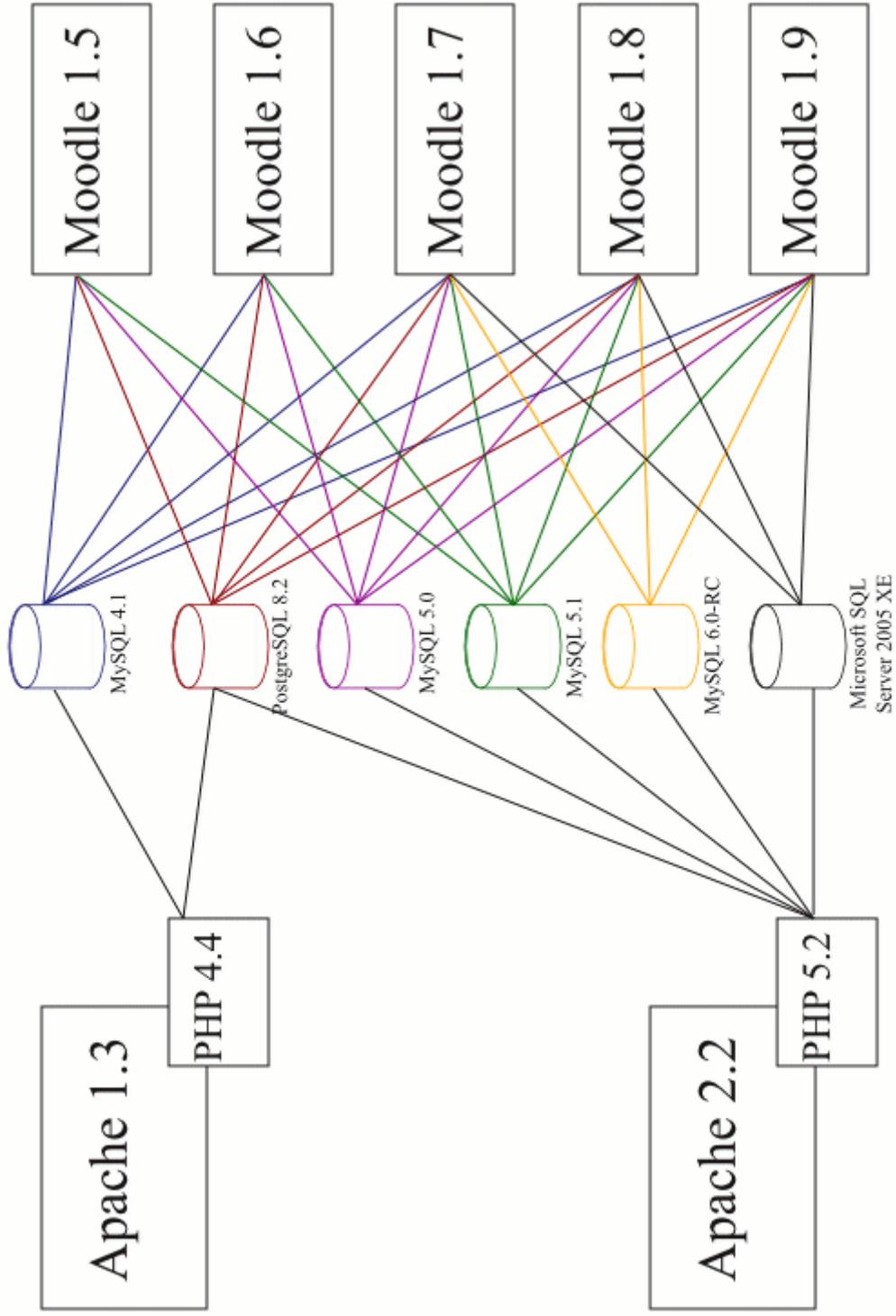
i) SSL Auto-detection Message

During installation, or when viewing the admin panel, the user receives a message from MoodletTxt explaining that SSL transmissions have been disabled, and HTTP will be used instead.

moodletxt is capable of communicating with the txttools.co.uk system via two different methods:

1) HTTP – a standard, unencrypted transmission
2) SSL – an encrypted, secure transmission

However, your system may currently be incapable of supporting SSL transmissions, or SSL may not currently be set up for use. As a result, moodletxt will automatically test your SSL capabilities when it is installed, and when the moodletxt Admin Panel is viewed.

If you have SSL selected as the transmission method to use, and your system does not support it, then moodletxt will display a message explaining this, and set the system to use HTTP. If HTTP continues to be used, then moodletxt will display further warnings when the admin panel is viewed (though these can be disabled – see section 7, "Advanced Functionality").

For SSL support to be enabled, your system will need to be configured to use SSL. Unfortunately, because of the huge number of different systems and software packages, txttools does not provide support in this regard. Please contact your local system administrator.

Once SSL support has been enabled on your system, you may reset the system to use SSL using the methods described in section 7, "Advanced Functionality."

ii) Cannot Send Text Messages Through txttools Account

When attempting to send a text message using txttools account details that are known to be correct, an error message is given saying that the message cannot be sent.

You will generally encounter one of three reasons for this error:

1) The txttools XML service is currently unavailable
2) You are using a txttools account that has not been activated for use with moodletxt.
3) Your authentication details are incorrect – ie, the password stored for this account in moodletxt is incorrect*

*Advanced authentication should prevent this from moodletxt 1.1 onwards.

The txttools XML service is the application that moodletxt uses to send text messages. To obtain information on possible outages and recovery times, please contact txttools support via any of the methods given in section 9, "Obtaining Support."

If you think that your account may not be XML enabled, please contact txttools support with the username to be activated via any of the methods given in section 9, "Obtaining Support." Once we have received your request, we will check the status of your account and activate it if necessary. This only takes a few minutes.

If you would like to change the password on your txttools account to bring it in line with the one

stored in moodletxt, please log in to the txttools website at www.txttools.co.uk, click the "Account" button at the top right of the screen, and then select "Change User Password" from the options that appear. (If you cannot remember your password, please contact txttools support and request that it be reset.) Once you have done so, remember to change the details stored in moodletxt by going to the admin panel and following the steps shown in section 3, "User/Account Administration."

If you are still encountering problems with sending messages, please contact txttools support, and we will try our best to help.

iii) Messages Over 160 Characters in Length Do Not Appear In "Sent Messages"

When sending a message over 160 characters in length, the text message is sent successfully, but the message does not appear on the "Sent Messages" page.

This problem is caused after moodletxt 2.2 when the module's upgrade script has not been run properly. The database requires modification in order to store messages over 160 characters long. Without this modification, the messages are not stored, and so do not appear in "Sent Messages."

For instructions on how to run the upgrade script, please see section 1) v) - "Upgrading From a Previous Version"

iv) After installing moodletxt, I cannot see the link to send messages, only receive.

If, when viewing the moodletxt block via a given course, you can only see the link to view received messages, it is likely that you have not correctly set up user permissions within moodletxt. For security reasons, users must be granted the ability to send and receive messages through moodletxt.

(While you have not explicitly given yourself permission to receive messages at this point, you can see the link to view received messages because when entering details of your txttools accounts, you selected your admin account as the default inbox for inbound messages – see Section 1) vi) – "Adding Your First txttools Account".)

To set up user permissions, please see Section 3 of the documentation.

<u>Section 9: Obtaining Support</u>

Txttools offer free support to all moodletxt users. If you are experiencing difficulties using moodletxt, or you wish to activate/deactivate accounts for use with moodletxt or XML Push, then please contact Txttools via any of the following means:

Telephone: +44 (0) 113 234 2111
Fax: +44 (0) 113 243 9289
E-mail: support@txttools.co.uk

NEW – To stay up to date with the latest moodletxt developments via your mobile phone, text "MOODLETXT" to 88020. This service is provided free of charge via txttools.co.uk, and you can stop receiving updates at any time by texting "MOODLESTOP" to the same number.

Our support staff are available between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, and will always be happy to help with any problems or queries you may have. Thank you for choosing moodletxt.