



IMarEST Connect - Guide

2025

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About IMarEST Connect

What is Connect?

IMarEST Connect – referred to as just Connect – is the Institute’s social networking and collaboration platform. It launched officially in 2024, but some users may have started using it in September 2023 when we launched our new website.

Connect replaces Nexus, our former social platform, as the primary place for communication between members.

Connect allows you to create and reply to posts or privately message any other member, meaning it is the most direct way to catch up with members and share information.

It is very similar in how it is used to some other social networking sites you might be familiar with, such as Facebook or LinkedIn.

As the only online community that features every IMarEST member, Connect is ideal for taking part in specific discussions and reaching individual groups. The more members that use it, the stronger it makes our community and the more we’re able to work together and communicate seamlessly.

❖ *If you need support with using or accessing Connect, email communications@imarest.org.*

Terminology

Category – a place where a group, such as a SIG, branch, or committee, can post.

Topic – also known as a conversation or thread, it is when you add a new post into a category.

User – any person who uses Connect.

Who can see what’s on Connect?

There are two groups of people that can see what’s on Connect: IMarEST members, and RINA members who are part of a joint IMarEST/RINA branch. No one else can view any of the content or categories of Connect, making it the perfect place for safe and secure discussions.

RINA members of joint branches only have access to their branch category and, if they are a branch officer, to the branch committee category for that branch. They are unable to view the All Member Forum, but can send and receive messages, make posts, and use other functionality.

How is Connect structured?

Categories

Within Connect, there are four top-level categories to know about:

1. **All Member Forum** – the ‘town hall’ of Connect, where every member can come together to share updates, events, and news.
2. **Branches** – every IMarEST branch has its own dedicated category, where you must be a branch member to post or reply. However, any Connect users can view what is in these groups.
3. **SIGs** – like branches, every SIG has its own exclusive category that anyone can view, but only SIG members can post or reply.
4. **Networking Groups** – these are non-exclusive categories that any Connect user can read or interact with. These currently include a place for Seafarers, Students, and Early Career Professionals, with new networking groups often being created.

Committees also have a private space for committee business. You can find out more about those [here](#).

Navigation and features

The navigation bar along the top has links to the Connect homepage, the IMarEST homepage, a list of members, and a search function. Next to this is the Chat speech bubble, the Menu, and your Profile.

Member Listing

This is a list of all users on the platform. You can search by first and last name or the first half of their email address if you know it.

Content Search

Like the Member Listing, this allows you to search Connect for a specific post or thread by entering keywords. You can filter by category, user, and date, as well as other factors. This is helpful for if you wish to return to a specific post, or if you are just doing a general search for content.

Chat

The Chat function allows you to view and send Direct Messages (DMs) to users. You can read more about the Chat function further on in [this guide](#).

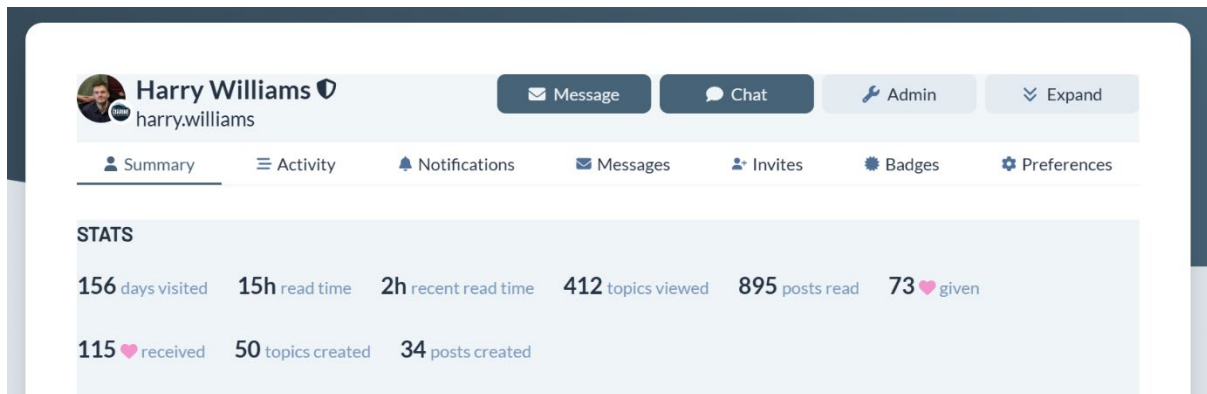
Menu

The Menu allows you to view different functions and pages on the site, such as the Calendar and FAQs. The icon is three stacked horizontal lines, next to your profile image.

Profile

From your profile, you can view a summary of your activity on connect, including how much time you have spent there and how many topics you've viewed.

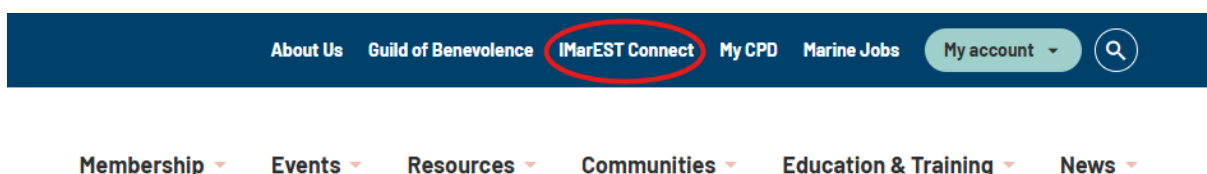
You can also access your Preferences, any drafts you've started but not finished with, and your Badges. Badges are awards from Connect that recognises users for reaching milestones, such as visiting for a certain number of consecutive days or receiving a particular number of likes on posts.



Getting set up

TUTORIAL: Accessing Connect

You can access Connect by typing in 'connect.imarest.org' into your browser, or by clicking 'IMarEST Connect' at the top of the IMarEST website:



- ❖ *You will be asked to login with your usual log in details, if not already logged in to the IMarEST website.*

Preferences

Connect is fully customisable, meaning there is no reason you should be getting notifications or emails about things you're not interested in.

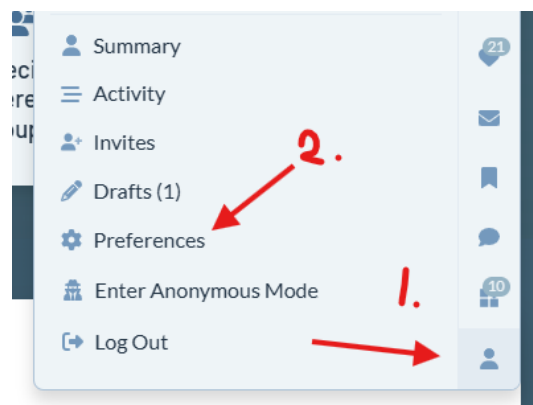
From the Preferences area, you can update your personal details and select your preferences for the emails, messages, and notifications you receive.

There are ten different areas in Preferences where you can select your options:

1. **Account** – upload a profile picture or change your username.
2. **Security** – shows which devices have been used to access Connect from your profile.
3. **Profile** – allows you to write a short biography, select your time zone, location and customise any how your profile looks to other users.
4. **Emails** – decide for what reason and how often Connect should email you.
5. **Notifications** – select when you receive a notification in the platform.
6. **Tracking** – choose which categories or tags you want to be most aware of (e.g. Watching), and which you would like to mute, if any.
7. **Users** – allows you to ignore or mute specific users and decide when you want to receive messages (this is separate to chats).
8. **Interface** – select how you want Connect to look to you, change text size and other options.
9. **Navigation Menu** – configure your Navigation Menu.
10. **Chat** – decide when you get notified or emailed when you receive a chat and other options.

TUTORIAL: Setting your preferences

1. Click the icon in the top-right corner (will look like either a photo of you or the first initial of your first name).
2. Click the Profile icon at the bottom of the list on the right (a silhouette of a head and shoulders), and then Preferences (as shown):



3. Update your Preferences as desired.

Emails, notifications, and messaging

There are many ways to communicate with other members on Connect, as well as receive notifications from Connect when you are not using the platform.

Receiving emails from Connect

You get emails from Connect to your personal email address depending on when you last visited and what notification settings you have.

These will come from 'noreply@connect.imarest.org', which is an official IMarEST email domain and should be trusted.

Activity Summary emails

When it has been a while since you last visited, you will receive an Activity Summary email, sometimes called digests, which feature some posts that you have missed.

This is set to weekly as a default, but you can change this to hourly, daily, or monthly.

Notification emails

Depending on what notifications you have set, you may receive additional emails letting you know of specific activity. You can read more about notifications below.

❖ *You can manage the type and frequency of emails you get from the [Preferences](#) area of Connect.*

Notifications

You can enable specific notifications for whole categories, or even just a specific topic that you are interested in. This means that you can cut out the noise and focus on just the topics and discussions that matter to you.

There are five types of notification available for each category or topic:

1. **Watching** – the highest level of notification, you receive an email whenever someone replies to a topic, or whenever there's a new post in a category. There will also be a count of all the latest replies since your last visit.
2. **Tracking** – you receive an email if someone tags your username or replies to a post you made. There will also be a count of all the latest replies since your last visit.
3. **Watching First Post** – only available for categories, this level sends you a notification of new topics that have been posted.
4. **Normal** – the default setting for all categories and topics, you will only get an email if someone tags your username or replies to a post you made.

5. **Muted** – you can mute a category or topic, so that you never get an email about it or see it on the Connect homepage. This is effective for when there is lots of activity on one topic that you are not interested in.

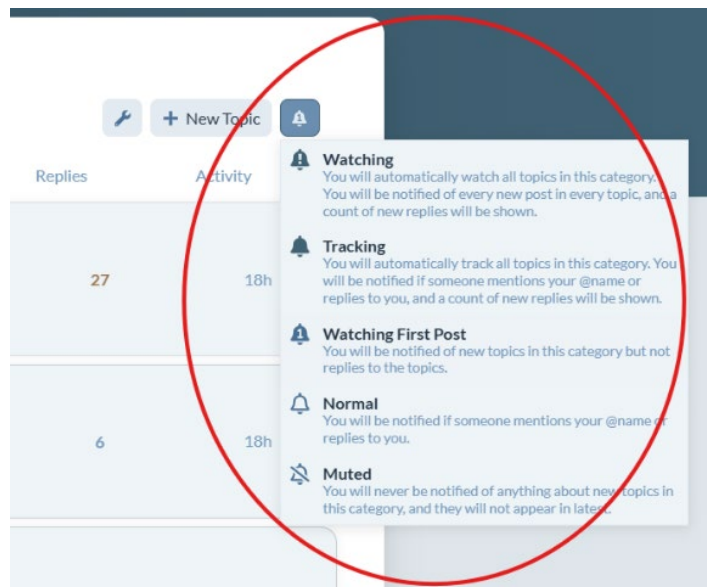
TUTORIAL: Selecting your notifications

To change the notification setting for a specific topic or category, follow the below steps:

1. Find the bell icon next to a topic or category. It will likely be on the right of a post (sometimes towards the bottom) or at the top of a category, next to the New Topic button:



2. Click the bell to bring up the list of notification levels and pick the level you want for that topic or category:



Chat

You can privately message users with a Direct Message (DM) from the speech bubble icon at the top of the site. You can check your messages by clicking DM on the bottom of the chat window or send a new message to someone by clicking the + icon.

You can create a group chat with up to 20 users. This is handy for instant messaging between small groups. You can also set up Channels, which are chats specific to a category. This can be helpful for reaching whole groups instantly.

As a default, you will receive an email notifying you that you have received a chat message if you have not visited Connect in the last 15 minutes.

- ❖ *You can manage your chat settings, as well as the frequency of emails about chats, from the [Preferences](#) area of Connect.*

Messages

Messages are another way that you can contact users or groups. Messages, unlike Chats, allow you to send whole topics to someone for further discussion. Like Chats, they are private. You can also invite more than one user to receive a message.

Features available in posts

You can add many different features to your post to make it more interesting.

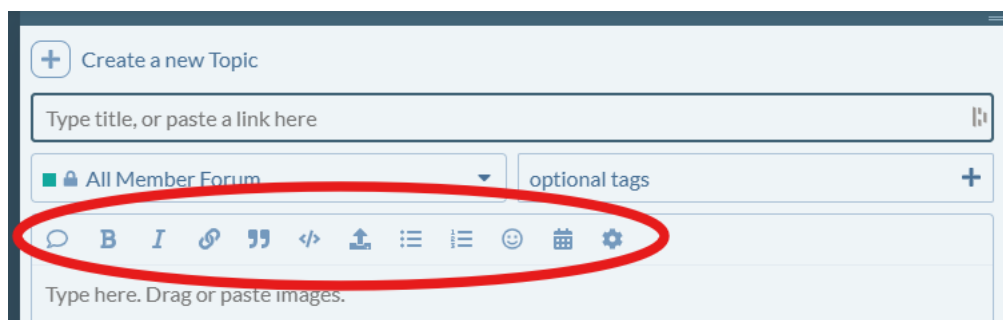
Tool bar features

In addition to regular text, you can add the following to your post from the tool bar at the top of the text editing box:

- **Images** – these can be either copied in or uploaded from your device.
- **External links** – please note that when including links to external websites that these should be of an appropriate nature and that the IMarEST takes no responsibility for the content of external sites.
- **Emojis** – cartoon people, objects, and emotions, e.g.: 😂 🚢
- **Tables** – present your information in a standard X/Y table configuration.
- **Code snippets** – input HTML code into your post to add extra functionality.
- **Files** – upload files from your device to be viewed and accessed by users.

You can also format text by making it bold or italic, or by adding bullet points, numbered lists or block quotes, or by collapsing information by hiding details, or blurring spoilers of information that needs to be clicked to be revealed.

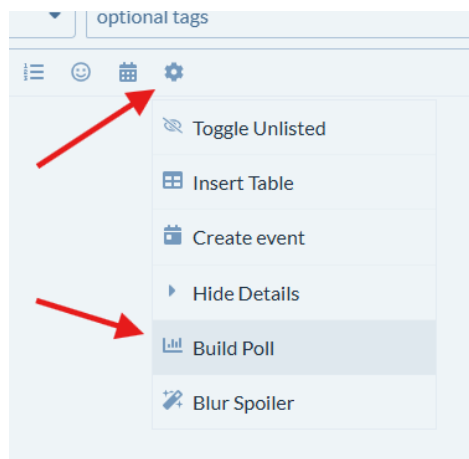
You can find all these features on the toolbar at the top of the text editing box after you click New Topic or Reply:



TUTORIAL: Creating a poll

Use a poll to take a quick survey of the readers of your post, making decision-making even easier.

1. Click 'New Topic' or 'Reply'.
2. Click the cog icon on the right of the tool bar, then click 'Build Poll':



3. Choose to make your poll either single or multiple choice and enter as many options as you like.
 - a. You can configure extra options with the cog icon, such as adding a title, choosing who can take part, dates when the poll is open, etc.

Events

Events are a clever way for sharing information about an upcoming event or arranging group business. Users invited to or able to access an event can find it marked in their Connect calendar or Upcoming Events area, both of which are in the Menu.

Creating an event on Connect is also an effective way to arrange a meeting, as the event functions allow users to RSVP and join an online call directly from Connect.

You might also create an event to link back to an already existing event on the IMarEST website. This is a great way to gain visibility and generate interest for an upcoming event, and direct interested users where they can register.

The event function on Connect has no relation to events on the IMarEST website, so you will have to direct users to it using a link in a post.

- ❖ *Events created on Connect shouldn't replace the standard events submission process for branches and SIGs, whereby branch and SIG officers can submit their events to the Events Team via the [Branch](#) or [SIG](#) Toolkit.*

TUTORIAL: Creating an event

1. Click New Topic or Reply.
2. Click the cog icon on the right of the tool bar, then click Create Event.
3. Enter the details of your event.
 - a. If your event is an online meeting, you can paste the joining link in the URL box, making it simple for attendees to join the call.
4. Click Create Topic to publish.

What to share or not share

What to share

Connect is a place to share thoughts and ideas from the marine industry. It is an open forum to hear from your fellow professionals.

It is ideal for sharing updates, news or events, messages and announcements to your branch or SIG, or asking for help or assistance with a project.

What not to share

In keeping with the Institute's [Code of Conduct](#), which asks all members to treat all persons fairly and with respect, you should make sure your posts on Connect are professional in nature and considerate of other users.

Negative comments and hate speech directed towards users is not allowed and could lead to your removal from Connect and consequences for your IMarEST membership, if you are found to be in breach of our Code of Conduct.

Connect is a professional network, so bad language is not permitted. Please keep all posting relevant to our industry and work.

❖ *For more information on what should and should not be posted to Connect, visit the [Connect FAQs](#).*

Sales

You should not use it as a sales platform for any business interests you have. Promotion of products and services is not allowed.

Users are also asked not to promote membership or professional services from other membership bodies.

Spamming

Spamming - repeatedly posting lots of irrelevant content in a short amount of time - is also not allowed, and your posts may be removed if this happens. Please note this does not include replies in an ongoing discussion where you and one or more people are having a general discussion relevant to the marine industry.

Personal information

Where possible, you should avoid sharing personal information. If you would like to share your contact details with someone, this should be done via the Chat feature which is private between you and the receiver. IMarEST staff are unable to view Chats.

Stolen content

You should not post anything that belongs to someone else without their permission, such as logos/branding, publications, papers, presentations, or photos and images. This can lead to intellectual property and copyright violations.

Moderation

IMarEST staff act as moderators for Connect and can review posts or threads that you feel are negatively impacting the community.

If you feel a post or a user is harmful or inappropriate, you can flag it by clicking the three dots under a post and then the flag icon. This will bring it to the attention of a moderator who will decide what to do and whether to take any action, which can involve removing comments or banning users. Moderators can remove any content or user accounts for any reason at any time.

The Connect app

You can download the app for Connect - called Discourse - for your phone or tablet, allowing you access to Connect while you are on the go.

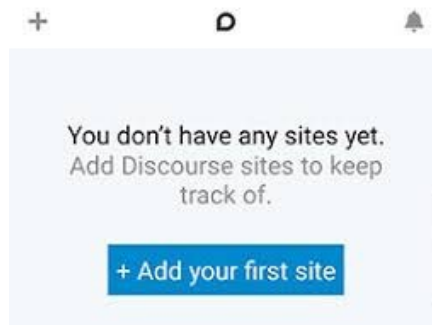
The layout of the app works in the same way as using it on your computer.

TUTORIAL: Downloading Connect to your device

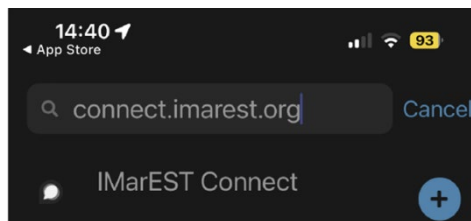
1. Open Google Play or the App Store on your mobile phone or tablet.
2. Search for 'Discourse Hub' and click on the correct app (icon shown here):



3. Download the app.
4. Once installed, open the app and click the + button to add your first site:



5. Enter the address 'connect.imarest.org' and press the blue + button to add the site (it will turn into a tick):



6. Click the name 'IMarEST Connect' when it appears.
7. You will be directed to a login page - login using your IMarEST website username and password.

Committee categories

Committees of branches, SIGs, Council, and the Board of Trustees all have private areas on Connect. These are not viewable to anyone apart from the members of the respective committees.

Branch/SIG Committee categories

All members of a branch or SIG committee can use a private committee area too. This is exclusive to the committee of your group.

You can use this to plan group meetings and events and discuss other high-level group matters.

- ❖ *If you are a member of any committees, it is advised that you enable notifications for your private committee area, to ensure you don't miss any important updates and are able to contribute.*