

HTML → YaBB Converter (README)

Overview

This toolchain converts standard HTML files into old-style YaBB message files (.txt) suitable for use in restored YaBB forum archives.

The normal entry point is the `yabbify` wrapper script, which calls the underlying converter and handles one or more HTML files in a single invocation.

Each conversion produces:

- a single-line YaBB post
 - stored as a uniquely timestamp-named .txt file
 - fully compatible with YaBB's original message format and sorting logic
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How YaBB Handles Posts (Important)

YaBB does not derive post identity from the content.

The filename (Unix timestamp in seconds) *is* the post ID.

The internal timestamp field is metadata only.

Two posts with the same filename are treated as the same post.

This toolchain therefore:

- generates a unique UTC timestamp for each post
- uses it as both the output filename and the internal YaBB timestamp field

This prevents collisions and preserves correct chronological ordering.

Basic Usage (recommended)

Convert one or more HTML files using the wrapper script:

```
./yabbify file.html  
./yabbify file1.html file2.html  
./yabbify *.html
```

Each HTML file produces a separate timestamped YaBB .txt file.

The original HTML filenames are irrelevant to YaBB and may be named freely.

Recommended Workflow

1. Write or edit content as normal HTML (full page or body snippet).
2. Run `yabbify` on one or more HTML files.
3. A timestamped .txt file is generated for each input file.
4. Copy the resulting .txt files into the YaBB Messages/ directory.
5. Reload the archive viewer.

HTML files are working drafts; .txt files are the published artefacts.

Formatting Rules Applied by the Converter

- Newlines are converted to `<br />`
- Blank lines become `<br /><br />`
- Literal pipe characters (|) are replaced with `|` to prevent YaBB field parsing errors
- `<br>` is normalised to `<br />`
- Each post is written as one single line, ending with ||

YaBB markup such as `[img]...[/img]` is preserved.

Notes & Limitations

- Output is UTF-8; avoid exotic characters in titles if targeting very old viewers
 - The converter does not attempt to sanitise or modernise HTML
 - Light messiness is intentional and reflects real-world YaBB usage
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Purpose

This toolchain exists to allow continued maintenance and extension of legacy YaBB archives using modern authoring tools, without modifying the original forum data model.

In short:

write modern HTML → run `yabbify` → publish authentic YaBB posts

Download scripts:

- [yabbify](#)
- [html_to_yabb.py](#)

The `yabbify` script must be marked executable before first use (`chmod +x yabbify`).