ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

phpBB

The Insider's Guide

Free open-source bulletin board software written in PHP



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among course and community platforms, read from phpBB's own pages.

Made by phpBB Limited · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

2.0

GPA



Contents

01 Welcome
What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

02 What it costs
Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

03 What it does
Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

04 Where it stands
Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

05 The alternatives
The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side

06 Quick answers
The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

07 About ToolGPA
Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from phpBB's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on phpBB's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

2.0

GPA, above 23 of the 98 other course and community platforms we grade

phpBB is a free, open-source forum package written in PHP and released under the GPL-2.0 license. You install it on your own web server and run it through administration and moderator control panels. Language packs, styles and extensions from the project's community can be added.

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about phpBB**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

> "
>
> **You install and maintain it yourself, and the permission system can daunt new admins.**
>
> From our report card of phpBB

1 **Best for classic open-source forum software**

phpBB is free forum software that runs on your own PHP server.

2 **It is free**

phpBB has no paid plan at all. The whole software is free under the GPL-2.0 license; you pay only for your own web hosting.

3 **It runs on Web**

Web.

4 **Administration and moderator panels**

Once installed, the board is managed through an Administration Control Panel and a Moderator Control Panel.

5 **Language packs**

The project offers official language packs, each with localized styles, installed by copying files to the board.

6 **Switchable styles**

Styles can be installed from the Customise tab in the admin panel and switched without touching the forum content.

7 **A 2.0 GPA, above 23 of 98**

That is against the other course and community platforms we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Keep it**

phpBB is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

phpBB at a glance

PRICING Free	FREE PLAN Yes
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON Web
MADE BY phpBB Limited	CATEGORY Courses & Communities
OUR GRADE 2.0 GPA, fair	

The report card

Best for classic open-source forum software

phpBB is free forum software that runs on your own PHP server. You install and maintain it yourself, and the permission system can daunt new admins.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD **phpBB** Graded Nov 13, 2026

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	C	The software is free but you pay for hosting and run it yourself, which keeps it at the ordinary grade.
Free plan and trial	B	Free outright under GPL-2.0, with no trial or plan caps, though you provide the server.
Features	C	Admin and moderator panels, styles, language packs, permissions and extensions cover forum basics. Extensions that touch the database can make upgrades harder.
Ease of use	D	No store rating on record, and it must be installed and maintained on a PHP server.
Platforms and integrations	C	Web only, and no integrations are listed.
Grade point average		Fair, out of 4.0 **2.0**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who phpBB is for

- ✓ Fits if you are comfortable running a PHP server
- ✓ Works for communities that want full control of their forum

Who it is not for

- ✕ Not for you if you do not want to manage a server, as the project sells no hosting
- ✕ Tight if you need paid support, as help is documentation, a knowledge base and community forums
- ✕ Watch out: extensions that change the database can complicate upgrades
- ✕ Watch out: the permission system can daunt new users, per the project's own readme

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Groups that want a free forum on a server they control
- ✓ Long-running discussion communities that value a long-established package

Worth knowing

- ⓘ It must be installed and maintained on your own PHP web server; the project does not sell hosting.
- ⓘ Support comes from documentation, a knowledge base and community forums, not a paid support plan.
- ⓘ Extensions that change the database can make upgrades harder, according to the project's readme.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

Free

No paid plan at all

phpBB is free to use.

> **The software is free but you pay for hosting and run it yourself, which keeps it at the ordinary grade.**
>
> From our grade for value for money

PHPBB

$0

Free open-source download. You host and maintain it yourself.

The free plan

The whole software is free under the GPL-2.0 license; you pay only for your own web hosting.

Read from github.com on Nov 13, 2026.

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

1

Place it runs: Web

Free open-source bulletin board software written in PHP. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: open source, self-hostable, community.

> **Admin and moderator panels, styles, language packs, permissions and extensions cover forum basics.**
>
> From our grade for features

Administration and moderator panels

Once installed, the board is managed through an Administration Control Panel and a Moderator Control Panel.

Language packs

The project offers official language packs, each with localized styles, installed by copying files to the board.

Switchable styles

Styles can be installed from the Customise tab in the admin panel and switched without touching the forum content.

Extensions

Third-party extensions add capabilities to the standard software and are listed in the project's Customisation Database.

Permission system

A detailed permission system controls who can do what on the board, which the project's own readme says can daunt new users.

Where it runs

Web

What it works with

Its own pages name no integrations.

phpBB is made by phpBB Limited.

PART 04 · STANDING

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

23/98

Other course and community platforms it is graded above

phpBB's GPA of 2.0 is higher than 23 of the 98 other course and community platforms we grade, and level with 21.

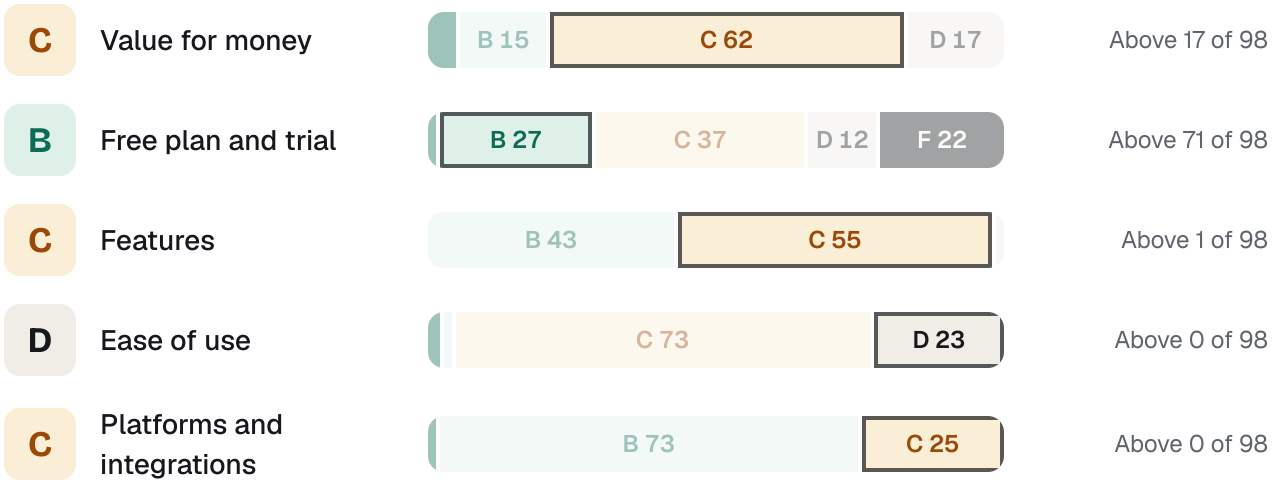
It stands best on free plan and trial (B, above 71 of 98) and worst on ease of use (D, above 0).

phpBB has no paid plan.

On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 1.7 out of 4. Nothing scores higher for less, though at least one tool matches that score at a lower price.

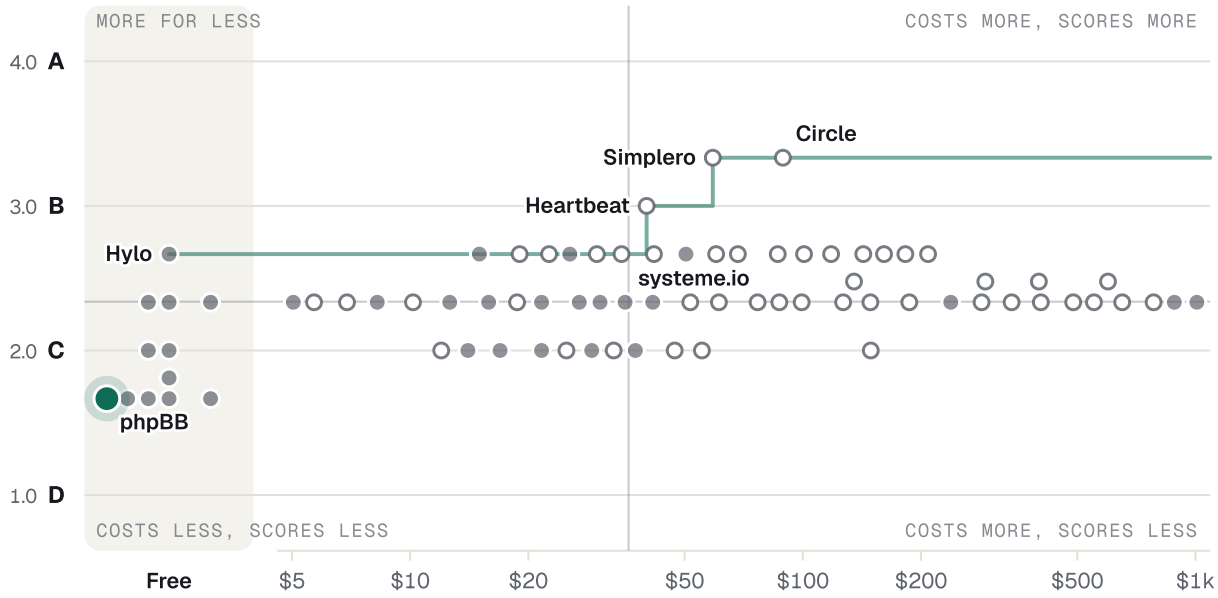
Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 99 course and community platforms we grade, cut by the letter each got. phpBB's own letter is outlined.



Price against what you get

Each dot is one of 78 course and community platforms. Further left costs less; higher up scores better on features, ease of use and platforms. phpBB is the marked dot.



What paid plans start at, a month (each step along is roughly double)

Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Keep it

phpBB is free, so making your own would save you nothing.

That makes this kind of software worth paying for, not this one in particular: 54 of the 98 other course and community platforms grade higher.

What you could not

- ✕ A members' space with posts, chat and events that people keep coming back to.

What this rests on. phpBB's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side



MyBB, Simple Machines Forum, Flarum and Discourse

The 4 tools phpBB is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.

2.0 GPA

MyBB

Free

Free open-source forum software with plugins and themes.

phpBB and MyBB compared in full

2.0 GPA

Simple Machines Forum

Free

Free open-source community forum software (SMF).

phpBB and Simple Machines Forum compared in full

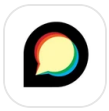
2.0 GPA

Flarum

Free

Free open-source forum software you host yourself.

phpBB and Flarum compared in full



2.6
GPA

Discourse

Free plan · from $100/mo

Open-source discussion forum software with hosted plans.

- Only Discourse lists iOS and Android apps.
- phpBB is self-hostable, according to its own site.
- Discourse also covers team chat.

phpBB and Discourse compared in full

PART 06 · QUESTIONS

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

11

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is phpBB free?

Yes. phpBB is free to use. The whole software is free under the GPL-2.0 license; you pay only for your own web hosting.

How much does phpBB cost?

phpBB lists one plan. phpBB: $0. Prices were read from github.com on Nov 13, 2026.

What platforms does phpBB work on?

phpBB is available on Web.

Does phpBB have an Android app?

No Android app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. phpBB is listed for Web.

Does phpBB have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. phpBB is listed for Web.

Is phpBB open source?

Yes. phpBB is open source, according to its own site. It can also be run on a server of your own.

Who makes phpBB?

phpBB is made by phpBB Limited.

What are the alternatives to phpBB?

The closest alternatives to phpBB in our directory are MyBB, Simple Machines Forum, Flarum and Discourse.

How does phpBB compare with other course and community platforms?

phpBB's GPA of 2.0 is higher than 23 of the 98 other course and community platforms we grade, and level with 21.

Is phpBB good value for money?

ToolGPA grades phpBB C for value for money. phpBB has no paid plan. On features, ease of use and platforms it scores 1.7 out of 4.

Could I make my own version of phpBB?

phpBB is free, so making your own would save you nothing. That makes this kind of software worth paying for, not this one in particular: 54 of the 98 other course and community platforms grade higher.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from phpBB's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from phpBB's own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by phpBB Limited. Prices change, so check phpbb.com before you buy.

github.com/phpbb/phpbb raw.githubusercontent.com/phpbb/phpbb/master…

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721
Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at **toolgpa.com**.

7,721	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

phpBB, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/phpbb

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

Quoting this guide?

Please name ToolGPA and link to the live page, so readers can check the figures for themselves:

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ToolGPA, "phpBB: The Insider's Guide", checked
Nov 13, 2026. https://toolgpa.com/tools/phpbb
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Know someone choosing between course and community platforms?

Send them this guide: toolgpa.com/tools/phpbb/guide

ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded course and community platforms after phpBB, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Courses & Communities Insider's Guide

Every one of the 99 course and community platforms we grade, compared

Hylo Insider's Guide

Free open-source platform for community groups and coordination

3.2 GPA

Academy LMS Insider's Guide

WordPress LMS plugin with a free core and Pro licenses by site count

2.8 GPA

Circle Insider's Guide

Community platform with courses, events, payments and branded apps

2.8 GPA

ToolGPA

Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what phpBB's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. phpBB is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by phpBB Limited. Prices and plans change: check phpbb.com before you buy.