

## Sample Newsletter Article

# Internet Advancement

### The New Internet Advancement

*Online advancement entry is here!* The *Sample Council* is excited to announce that units can now use Internet Advancement to record their youth member advancements from any online location—at home or at the office. You will find this new method to be easy, convenient, and accurate because you enter the information.

Here's how it works:

The *Sample Council* has an Internet Advancement page on our Web site ([www.councilwebsite.org](http://www.councilwebsite.org)) with instructions and a link to this new functionality.

Internet Advancement makes it easy for unit leadership to record awards, ranks, and merit badges to youth via an online process. This system is separate from Internet Rechartering, but uses a similar concept.

At any time during the year, the unit advancement processor from each active unit will be able to record advancements to youth member records. And, they'll also be able to print a unit roster at any time. The roster is the most current information from ScoutNET, and it will include the person ID for each adult and youth member.

These are other reports available from Internet Advancement.

- **Unit Advancement Summary** shows ranks, merit badges, and awards saved in each person record for current members of the unit.
- **Advancement Report** lists each youth member that has new ranks, merit badges, and awards, if any. This is the official unit Advancement Report to be signed and submitted to the office.
- **Unit Awards Summary** lists the number of new ranks, merit badges, and awards by name as a shopping list.
- **Advancement Update Summary** lists any ranks, merit badges, and awards that were already in the member record and were updated online.

The council will provide each unit with a unit ID, and the unit will assign an adult to record advancements. Ranks must be recorded based on program identification and in the correct rank and date sequence. Only the Eagle Scout rank cannot be awarded by this process. Awards to be entered will not include nominated awards, such as those for meritorious action, and awards that are controlled by other organizations, even if approved for uniform wear. As BSA policies for rank entry are enforced, what units enter will meet these requirements.

There's a link to the Internet Advancement help on the *Sample Council* Web site. There's also a Frequently Asked Questions link on the Internet Advancement site and these should be reviewed.

If you have any questions or comments, contact the *Sample Council* office and we'll be glad to help you out.

Come to the roundtables for an orientation to learn more about Internet Advancement.

# Internet Advancement

## Process Unit Advancements

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**Saves Time** Internet Advancement reduces the amount of time it will take for the council to process advancements. The data entry is completed up front by the unit. Because the unit is responsible for advancement of its youth members, unit information provided is complete and accurate.

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**What the Unit Does** The unit advancement processor completes the following three stages during Internet Advancement to submit each report: Load Roster, Update Member, and Submit Roster.

### **Load Roster**

In the Load Roster stage, the processor accesses **current** unit data directly from ScoutNET. The ScoutNET data is saved to another database in Internet Advancement. The two databases (ScoutNET and Internet Advancement) are completely separate while the unit completes each advancement report.

### **Update Member**

In the Update Member stage, the unit validates its information using the BSA's rank advancement rules. Internet Advancement checks the data against the rules and gives error messages for any violations. The errors must be corrected before the unit processor can proceed.

### **Submit**

When the members are updated and the data is validated, the processor submits the advancement file. Internet Advancement sends the advancement batch for the unit to PAS and updates member records and the unit statistics, as appropriate.

The unit processor prints the Advancement Report, acquires appropriate approval signatures, and follows the council's procedure for submitting the report. If a report was not printed, the council can print the report from **Web Admin > IADV Admin > Unit Activity**.

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### **New Unit Members**

Only youth members who are registered in the unit in PAS are available for advancement from Internet Advancement. If a unit processor loads the roster and finds that one or more youth members are missing, he or she must submit the approved member applications to the council for registration as additional enrollments, if during the charter term. The unit may process and submit advancements for members who are in the unit and wait to submit advancements for new members later, once they are registered.

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## Process Unit Advancements, Continued

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### Submitting Unit Reports

The unit processor does not need to complete all advancements in one session. The unit processor may log out and return later. A draft view of the entries saved is available at all times through the Review Advancement Report link.

#### Submitting the Report:

1. Once the processor has completed all entries and the data is validated, the processor must click **Review Advancement Report**.
2. After a final review, the processor clicks **Submit to Council**.
3. The user is offered the opportunity to complete survey comments.

The **Print Advancement Report** button appears. At this time the user must print the report. If the processor does not print the report, the council may print it from Internet Administration. To view and print the Advancement Report, the processor must have Adobe Reader installed on the PC and must be connected to a printer.

The Advancement Report is then signed as appropriate, delivered to the council, and the unit can purchase the insignia.

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### Unit Management Software

Internet Advancement cannot upload and process the unit-management software advancement files from Troopmaster, Scoutmate, ScoutSoft, and Rank N' File. Councils will be able to accept and upload these files to ScoutNET and process through Record Achievements as before. Units should be reminded of how to submit these files to the council for processing.

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### What the Council Does

The staff person(s) in the council responsible for unit advancement entry will monitor the usage of Internet Advancement and handle Advancement Reports turned in according to council procedures. Processing for the Eagle Scout rank will continue as before. All PAS reports used to track advancement will remain, including the District Advancement Report, the Unit Advancement Detail Report, and the Person Profile Listing. The Internet Advancement Unit Usage Report is a new report specifically for information on Internet Advancement.

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# Internet Advancement

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q Other than being licensed for Internet Rechartering, what agreements are needed to use Internet Advancement?**

**A** None. The Internet Rechartering license grants the council authorization to use Internet Advancement.

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**Q In what way is the Internet Advancement PowerPoint presentation used to support the council and its training of staff and volunteers?**

**A** The Internet Advancement presentation is useful with a variety of audiences. Show it to units, the council executive board members, council and district advancement committee members, council and district commissioner staff, and district committee members to inform them of the new application. Use it to orient council staff members. The council may edit the presentation to add slides with local information. The presentation may also be placed on the council Web site.

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**Q Will the Internet Advancement application work through any Internet connection and with any browser?**

**A** Internet Advancement is supported by Microsoft Internet Explorer version 5.5 or higher. No other browser provides full functionality. The system works with a minimum 56-KB dialup modem connection to the Internet. Faster connections such as DSL and cable will speed up the process.

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**Q How does the unit get its unit ID number for Internet Advancement?**

**A** The council provides it. The council can print the Unit List and Unit Labels from Web Admin > IADV Admin. The list and labels have the unit ID. The council decides the best method to distribute unit IDs to the units. As long as a unit is renewed as a reregistered or separated unit, its unit ID will not change. The unit ID may or may not be distributed each year to all units; the council should decide if this is necessary.

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**Q Can the unit ID the council gives a unit be used to see another unit's data?**

**A** No. Each unit has a unique unit ID and must be used in combination with the proper unit type (pack, troop, team, crew, ship, or post) and four-digit unit number to register the unit. When a user first registers, he will create a password. This password and the unit ID will allow the user to log in as a returning user the next time he uses Internet Advancement. The unit ID for Internet Advancement is the same as the unit ID used for Good Turn for America. Internet Advancement and GTFA are completely separate applications, however.

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## Frequently Asked Questions, Continued

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**Q Should the council provide advancement guidelines for its units as it has in the past?**

**A** Yes, the use of Internet Advancement does not change the need for council advancement procedures. The council should tell unit leadership how to turn in the Advancement Reports from Internet Advancement and how to handle reports for advancements not entered online or for upload files. Because the Eagle Scout rank cannot be submitted online, the leaders of a troop, team, crew, and ship must know how to follow the Eagle Scout advancement procedures.

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**Q What is the local council's role for support and administration of Internet Advancement?**

**A** The council serves as the "help desk" for its units using Internet Advancement. The council staff must know how Internet Advancement works. They will answer questions from units, referring to a Help file designed especially for council support. The council will administer the process by providing units with their respective unit IDs, monitoring unit activity, changing passwords, resetting profiles, and unit data, and creating reports requested by council management for staff and volunteer use.

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**Q What about the use of unit-management software and advancement file uploads?**

**A** The council may accept files from units for processing in ScoutNET as before. If the council has not been entering advancement to individual records, then an upload file from unit-management software can update member records to the benefit of the unit and council. If there is a problem with a file, however, it is the unit's responsibility to contact the vendor who sold and supports that product and request their assistance. Internet Advancement does not have the capability to process advancement file uploads.

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**Q What other support materials will be available to councils for training and communicating Internet Advancement?**

**A** The communications packet on Internet Advancement includes the guidelines for training, sample formats for the Web site and newsletter article, and suggestions for implementing the training and communications plan.

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## Frequently Asked Questions, Continued

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**Q What ranks, merit badges, and awards may be recorded through Internet Advancement?**

- A** Based on the unit type and program, each unit will have an appropriate pick list for the entry of ranks, merit badges, and awards to unit youth members. Packs may enter ranks and awards only. Troops, teams, crews, and ships may enter ranks, merit badges, and awards. LFL Explorer posts may only enter awards. No nominated awards, including meritorious action awards, and awards controlled by other organizations, even if approved for uniform wear, can be recorded. Lapsed units may enter advancement only for dates prior to their unit expiration date. If a unit is dropped, the unit advancement processor will not have access to Internet Advancement.

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**Q How does the council prevent a specific unit from using Internet Advancement?**

- A** The council may block the unit by using the Block Unit process in Unit Management. When the Block Unit feature is activated, the unit cannot load its roster until the block is removed. Changing the password is only a temporary means of blocking a unit, as is not providing the unit ID. The council management should determine if and when to block a unit's participation and explain to the unit why it is not eligible to use the online process.
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# Internet Advancement

## Instructor Guide for Unit Orientation

**Subject:** Internet Advancement for Units

**Audience:** Unit Personnel and/or Council/District Volunteers

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Objectives

- Explain the benefits of using the new Internet Advancement system.
  - Show how to access the site.
  - Show how to log on and how to receive the unit ID.
  - Explain how to use the Help and the Frequently Asked Questions.
  - Explain the new online advancement entry process.
  - Explain the paperwork process and available reports.
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### Equipment Needed

If possible, conduct your training from a PC or laptop with a projector. You can play the Internet Advancement PowerPoint for the audience. The slides referred to in this document are from the PowerPoint presentation on the enclosed CD (and are also available from the ScoutNET Support site in Internet Unit Services).

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### Handouts

Hand out council instructions for use of Internet Advancement, including the following information:

To make Internet Advancement effective for your council, evaluate how your council currently records and tracks advancements. For example, if a council has been recording rank advancements through Record Achievements to individual records, there will be very few gaps that the units will need to fill in when they start using Internet Advancement. If a council has not been recording rank advancements individually, then units need to know this and be ready to fill in the blanks. Let your units know how much information they will need to gather before they can use Internet Advancement.

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## Instructor Guide for Unit Orientation, Continued

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### Agenda

#### I. Opening Remarks

- This is a brand-new process.
- This is the council's preferred way of recording unit advancement.
- Review other options available to units, including submitting paper advancement reports for advancement or awards that cannot be recorded online and uploading files created by unit-management software (Troopmaster, Scoutmate, Rank N' File, and ScoutSoft).

#### II. Benefits

- Explain how easy it is to use.
- Explain that advancement reporting will improve because:
  - The unit is responsible for approving its youth member advancements.
  - The unit starts with ScoutNET data and then updates it.
  - No one has to decipher another person's handwriting.
  - You can make corrections to the data anytime before submitting.
  - BSA rank advancement rules are enforced.

#### III. The Process

- Receive the unit ID from the council (the council determines the best way to distribute the unit ID numbers).
- Go to the council's Web site, find the Internet Advancement page, and click on the Help link to review this resource. Also review the council's instructions.
- You must use Microsoft Internet Explorer browser. You can access the Internet with AOL, but you must open Internet Explorer browser to view the Web page correctly.
- Click on the Internet Advancement link as a first-time user, and then log on with the unit ID, unit type, and **four-digit** unit number. Explain that the advancement processor will continue using the unit ID and user-selected password in the future as a returning user.
- Click the Frequently Asked Questions link and view the file.
- After log on, the system will use the information from ScoutNET.
- When the unit completes the process, it submits the file. This submittal process updates the youth member records for the unit within ScoutNET and the council information.
- The unit prints the Advancement Report and acquires the appropriate signatures. The signature(s) verify the approval for the advancements reported. Follow the council's instructions to turn in the Advancement Report and purchase award insignia.

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## Instructor Guide for Unit Orientation, Continued

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### Agenda (continued)

#### IV. How It Works

Show the PowerPoint presentation to describe how the advancement processor will update a member's awards, ranks, and merit badges, make a submittal, and print the advancement report.

#### V. Council Schedule and Support

Share the council's schedule for unit submittals and provide other information, for example:

- Units should submit reports monthly, before the end of each month, as needed.
- Units must submit anything not yet reported before December 31 each year.
- The council accepts advancement reports, as needed, for awards that can't be made online.
- The council accepts advancement upload files from unit-management software, as needed.
- The council has an implementation plan.
- Information on contact person(s) at council for support questions.

#### VI. Questions

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