New features in Problem-Attic – Oct. 2013

This document explains some recent changes to Problem-Attic. Here is brief summary:
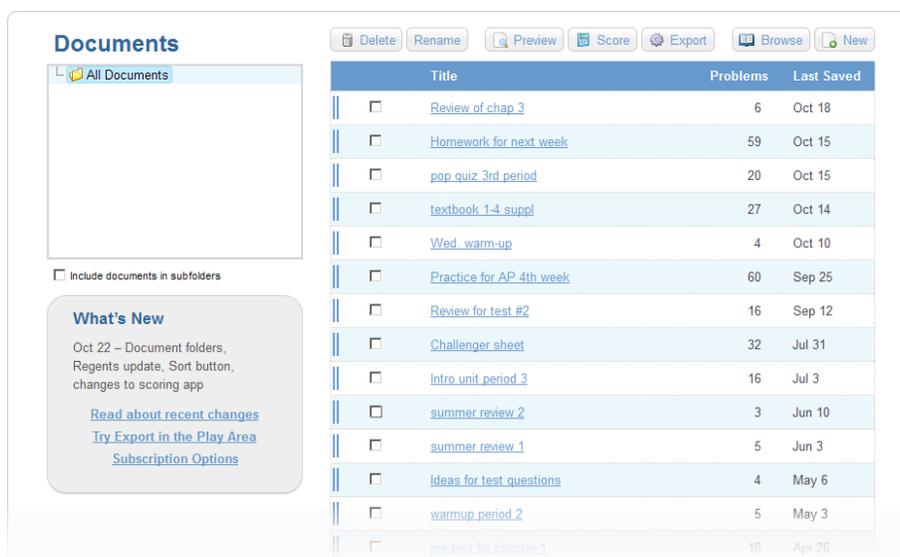
- Folders for organizing documents

- Sort button (show newest problems on top)

- Memo option (Format page > Headers tab)

- Redesign of Scoring App

- New options for test results

Important: Some of the new options are for individual and school subscribers only. For all users of Problem-Attic, the options are available for trial in the Play Area.

Below you will find details about each new option and screenshots that relate the information to the website.

1 Folders for Organizing Documents

This option appears on your home page. You will see the new folders panel on the left of the document list.

The top-most folder is called "All Documents". You can create as many folders and subfolders below it as you like, up to five levels deep, and give them descriptive names. You can use the folders to organize your documents by subject, type, class, teaching unit, etc.

To create a folder, right-click on "All Documents" (or on another folder that you've created below it), and choose "New Folder" from the drop-down menu. Type a name and repeat the process as necessary. Afterward, you can rename or delete a folder by right-clicking on it. You can also re-arrange folders or move one inside another by dragging and dropping.
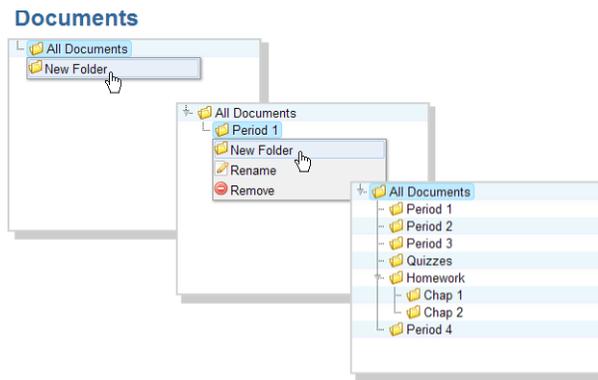
To move a document into a folder, click on its handle (the thin vertical bars on the left of the list), and while holding down your mouse button, drag the document to the folder, then release.
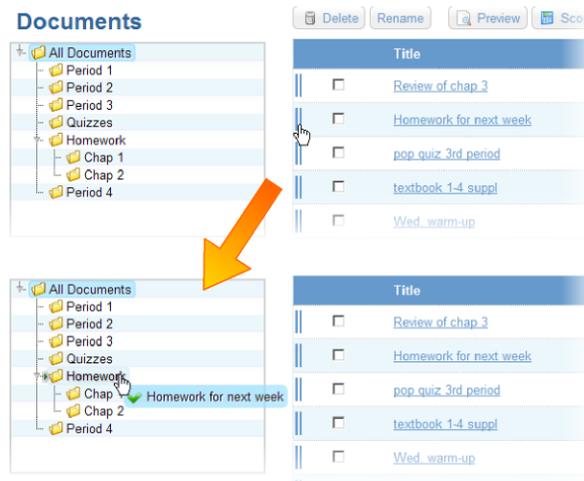
To move multiple documents at once, first select them by checking the box next to each handle. Click and hold any one of the handles, drag to the folder, then release.

Normally, as you move documents into folders, they will be removed from the list. However, depending on certain options, the documents may remain in the list and there will be just two indications of a move: the handle will turn from blue to gray and you'll get a message at the top of the screen confirming the move.

There are two options that control what you see in the document list. Most obviously, the list shows the contents of the currently-selected folder (1). If you like, you can check the box below the panel which says, "Include documents in subfolders" (2). If the box is checked, then the you'll see in the list all documents in the currently-selected folder and any subfolders below it. They will be distinguished by blue and gray handles, where gray means subfolder (3).


Notes:

- Any folder can contain both documents and subfolders.

- You can move documents between folders as often as you like.

- Folders are for organizational purposes only and do not in any way affect the problems within a document or the formatting options.

- A fast way to return to your documents home page, wherever you are in Problem-Attic, is to click the little home icon at the top of the screen.

2 │ Sort button (show newest problems on top)

Several of the database modules in Problem-Attic are organized by topic and date. These tend to be modules that are updated annually. By default, on the Select pages, the newest problems appear at the end of the topic.
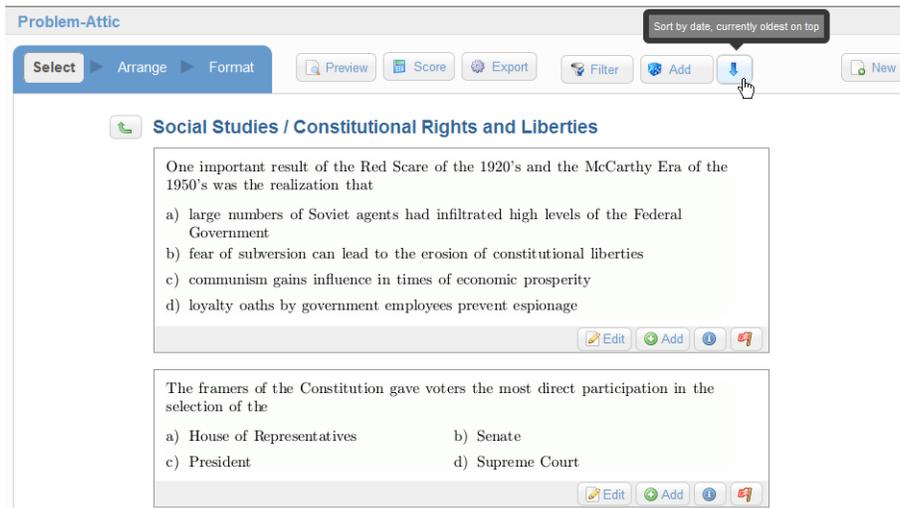
There is a new Sort button that lets you reverse the order, putting newest problems at the top. You will *not* see this new button everywhere in Problem-Attic, but only in those places where it makes sense, because of the organization of the questions. Specifically, you'll see the button when viewing topics for:

- NY Regents exams (all subjects)
- academic competitions (math contests)

The Sort button shows an arrow pointing up or down. By default, it points down, indicating that problems are sorted from oldest to newest. Simply click the button to reverse the order. Depending on the nature of the problems, the change may not be obvious. To confirm that newest problems are at the top, you can click the Info button (the 'i' with a circle around it) on a problem thumbnail.

3 | Memo

This feature was actually added to Problem-Attic in September but we neglected to document it. Sorry :-(
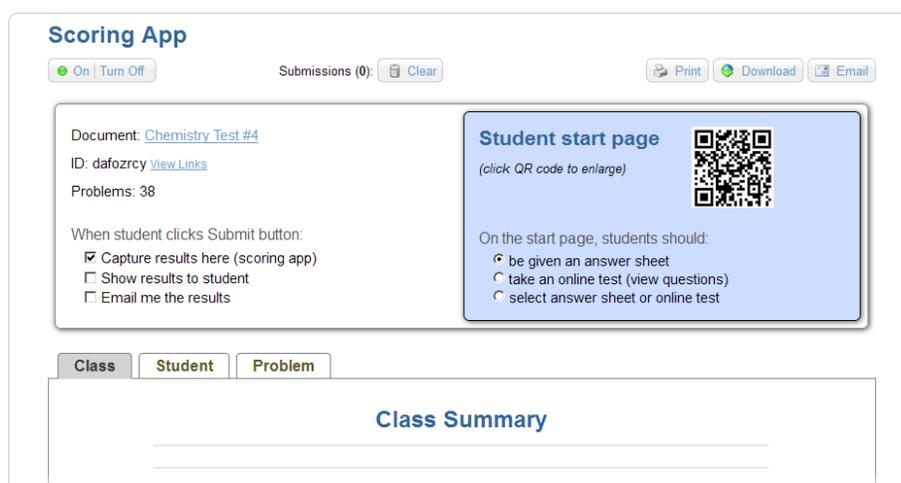

A "memo" is optional text that appears below the first page header on tests and worksheets. You'll see the box where you can type a memo on the Format page (Headers tab). The box is intended for a short amount of text, such as directions to students. Lines will get automatically re-wrapped when a PDF file is created. If you want to type more than one paragraph, separate each with a blank line. No font effects or special characters are currently supported; the memo is for plain text only.

4　Scoring App

The Scoring App is an extension to Problem-Attic and is available through a single-user or school subscription. The following information is relevant if you are a subscriber or wish to try the export and scoring options in the Play Area.

The Scoring App has been redesigned to be more flexible and to handle many types of free-response answers, not just multiple-choice. You can see the new design if you create a document and click the Score button.

The most important addition is what we call a Student Start Page. This is the starting point for student interaction with the Scoring App, on a computer or handheld device. The device can be a smartphone, tablet, etc. The only requirement is that it have a web browser and be connected to the internet.

You direct students to the Start Page when you want Problem-Attic to score a test—or any type of document for that matter. The Scoring App works with all templates (tests, worksheets, overheads and flash cards), in addition to slideshows and online tests. The documents might be for formative assessment or regular instruction, or for any game or activity where you wish to capture student results. The Scoring App does not draw much of a distinction between types of documents or between an answer sheet and online test (where questions are shown).

There are several ways to direct students to the Start Page. The easiest may be with a QR code. If students have devices with a QR reader, then they can take a picture of it and avoid having to type a web address. The QR code can be included on any PDF document created by Problem-Attic (look for the option on the Format page). It is also included on hosted slideshows and can be projected onto a screen by clicking the image in the Scoring App.

If students do not have devices that can handle QR codes, then you can provide them with the address of the Start Page. To get the address for the current document, click "View Links". A box will appear with the address of the Start Page (URL), which you can click and then copy. The other links are mainly for use by the teacher, to switch quickly to a slideshow or to view the answer sheet or online test.

If you look at the screenshot of the Scoring App, you will see three options for the Student Start Page. These options can be changed at any time, even when the Scoring App is turned on. The default option is based on what you did last in Problem-Attic. If you clicked the Score button, then students will see an answer sheet by default. If you chose Export > Online test, then students will see that instead. Depending on the technology available to students, or whether you've given them printouts of a document, you may prefer the third option, which is to let them decide between an answer sheet and an online test.

5 │ Test results

The Scoring App captures results in much the same way as before. But there are some important changes: the handling of free-response answers is much improved, and the Scoring App now respects the hiding of multiple-choice answers or a reduction in the number of choices. (When you view results by problem, you will see new thumbnails with the correct number of choices, or none at all.)

Also, the Scoring App gives you two more options for what happens when students submit their answers: the student can be shown the results; and the results can be emailed to you (student by student). The email option is most practical when you assign a test to a small number of students. For a whole class, you probably want to capture the results in the Scoring App. You can send those results to yourself by pressing the Email button.

The scoring of free-response answers, while greatly improved, is still not perfect. At this time it is intended for numeric answers or answers that are comprised of just a few letters or a word. For numeric answers, which means any "floating point" number including an optional decimal point and minus sign, scoring should be very accurate. For text-based answers, the scoring is case-insensitive and ignores leading and trailing spaces. But otherwise the match must be exact for Problem-Attic to treat an answer as correct. In short, you can use the Scoring App with any kind of question, but you should not rely on the calculated scores if you deviate much from numeric or simple text-based answers. We'll keep working to expand Problem-Attic's capabilities in this area.

As always, we appreciate your support of Problem-Attic and hope you enjoy the new features. Please send any any comments or suggestions to **support@problem-attic.com**.

Note: If you have a printout of this document and would like an electronic copy, you can download it from **www.problem-attic.com/resources/new-features-Oct-2013.pdf**.