



USING THE YAMMER API TO CAPTURE PUBLIC RECORDS

Queensland State Archives

You can find and export Yammer content by using the system's application programming interface (API). The API is a tool that's designed to allow apps to access Yammer content in a way that they can easily process. But casual Yammer users can also use the API to access content. All you have to do is ask the API a question. This is technically described as 'calling an endpoint'.

You can't ask the API anything you like. It only responds to certain kinds of questions in certain formats. But you don't need any special permissions or technical knowledge to ask. You just need to know the format of the questions ('endpoint calls'). When you ask a question ('make an endpoint call') you get an .xml document with the answer. You can save this document into your recordkeeping system.

You don't need to go anywhere special to ask the Yammer API a question. You can use your normal browser to do that. You just need to be logged into your Yammer account, type the question into your browser address bar, and hit the 'enter' key. It's as simple as that.

Note that you can only export content you are permitted to access in Yammer. For average users this will be content in public groups and content in private groups of which you're a member. Network and verified administrators have more extensive access rights.

Endpoint calls

There are several useful endpoint calls you can make if you want to capture records from Yammer. They are:

1. export all messages from a group
2. export new messages
3. export group members
4. export all messages from a user
5. export all messages in a conversation

There's more information on how to make these calls below.

1. Export all messages from a group

Perhaps the most useful call is the **messages/in_group** one, which exports all the messages posted to a specific group. The template call looks like this:

[https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_group/\[groupID\].xml](https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_group/[groupID].xml)

a. Find group ID

To make the **messages/in_group** call, you first need to know the ID of the group you want to export from. To find the group ID, log in to Yammer, then click on the group you're interested in. The group ID is included in the URL in the browser address bar, for example:

https://www.yammer.com/dsitia.qld.gov.au/#/threads/inGroup?type=in_group&feedId=3800250

b. Query Yammer

Once you know your group ID, you can ask Yammer to return all the messages posted to that group. Open another tab and copy and paste the **messages/in_group** call into your browser address bar, replacing [groupid] with the ID number of the group you're interested in:

[https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_group/\[groupID\].xml](https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_group/[groupID].xml)

The call returns an .xml document that looks like this:

```
<message>
  <id>430207445</id>
  <sender-id>1511285994</sender-id>
  <replied-to-id>429387480</replied-to-id>
  <created-at>2014-08-19T22:58:48Z</created-at>
  <network-id>443364</network-id>
  <message-type>update</message-type>
  <sender-type>user</sender-type>
  <url>https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/430207445</url>
  <web-url>
    https://www.yammer.com/dsitia.qld.gov.au/messages/430207445
  </web-url>
  <group-id>3802319</group-id>
  <body>
    <parsed>
      Big thank you to the QSA social club. Must say though I'm turning over a new leaf and have committed myself to 'not buying chocies and chips'. Maybe i'll just turn to eating the tuna:)
    </parsed>
    <plain>
      Big thank you to the QSA social club. Must say though I'm turning over a new leaf and have committed myself to 'not buying chocies and chips'. Maybe i'll just turn to eating the tuna:)
    </plain>
    <rich>
      Big thank you to the QSA social club. Must say though I'm turning over a new leaf and have committed myself to 'not buying chocies and chips'. Maybe i'll just turn to eating the tuna:)
    </rich>
  </body>
  <thread-id>429387480</thread-id>
  <client-type>Web</client-type>
  <client-url>https://www.yammer.com/</client-url>
  <system-message>false</system-message>
  <direct-message>false</direct-message>
  <chat-client-sequence nil="true"/>
</message>
```

Unfortunately, limitations with the Yammer API mean that it returns a maximum of 20 messages per query. So, if more than 20 messages have been posted to the group you've selected for export, you'll have to repeat the query more than once.

c. Find out if there are older messages

You can find out whether the group has more than 20 messages by looking for this bit of information near the bottom of the .xml document (use CTRL+F):

```
<older-available>true</older-available>
```

If there are older messages, the value will be 'true'. If there aren't any, this bit of information will be left out of the .xml document.

d. Update your query

To find these older messages, you have to add a condition to your original query. You have to ask Yammer to return messages older than the oldest message in your current .xml document. The updated query will look like this:

[https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_group/\[groupID\].xml?older_than=\[messageID\]](https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_group/[groupID].xml?older_than=[messageID])

To make this call, you need to find the oldest message in your current .xml document and make a note of its message ID.

e. Find the oldest message in your .xml document

Finding the oldest message in your document is not so straightforward because they aren't numbered 1 to 20. Perhaps the easiest way to do so is to search for the field 'references' (use CTRL+F), which is a field that appears immediately after the oldest message. It looks like this:

```
<references>
<reference>
<type>tag</type>
```

The message immediately above this field is the oldest message in your .xml document.

f. Make a note of the message ID

The message ID for this message will be in a format like this:

```
<message>
<id>395592437</id>
<sender-id>1511285900</sender-id>
<replied-to-id nil="true"/>
```

The message ID comes before the content of the message. Make a note of it or copy it.

g. Call the messages/older_than endpoint

Now you have the message ID of the oldest message in your .xml document, you can call the **messages/older_than** endpoint. Add the group ID and message ID to the query below and paste it into your browser address bar:

[https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_group/\[groupID\].xml?older_than=\[messageID\]](https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_group/[groupID].xml?older_than=[messageID])

This will return the next 20 messages posted to the group. You may have to repeat this procedure a few times to capture all of the messages posted to a group, which can be a little bit time-consuming. But it is fairly simple to do once you get used to it.

2. Export new messages

The **messages/newer_than** call is useful if you have already exported some messages from a group and only want to capture messages posted since then. The query looks like this:

[https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_group/\[groupID\].xml?newer_than=\[messageID\]](https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_group/[groupID].xml?newer_than=[messageID])

To make this call you need to know the message ID for the last message you exported. This will be the ID for the very first message in your most recent .xml document. It will appear in this format:

```
<response>  
  
<threaded-extended></threaded-extended>  
  
<messages>  
  
<message>  
  
<id>411271609</id>  
  
<sender-id>1511286032</sender-id>
```

Once you've found the message ID, you can make the call by adding the group ID and the message ID to the template call above and copying and pasting it into your browser address bar.

However, if more than 20 messages have been posted since your last export, it's easier to follow the procedure for exporting all messages from a group using the **older_than** condition described above, until you reach the most recent message you've exported.

3. Export group members

It may also be useful to export all the members of a specific group for later reference. You can do this by finding the group ID and then copying and pasting the **users/in_group** call into your browser address bar:

[https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/users/in_group/\[groupID\].xml](https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/users/in_group/[groupID].xml)

Yammer will return a list of members sorted alphabetically by first name. However, by default Yammer will return only the first 50 members of a group. If the group you're interested in has more than 50 members you will have to repeat the query, adding a **page** condition to the end of it.

You can find out whether there are more than 50 members by looking for this field in your .xml document:

```
<more-available>true</more-available>
```

If the value is 'true', the group has more than 50 members. If the value is 'false', it doesn't.

To return the next 50 members of the group, simply repeat the query adding **?page=2** to the end of it, like so:

[https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/users/in_group/\[groupID\].xml?page=2](https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/users/in_group/[groupID].xml?page=2)

If there are more than 100 users in the group, repeat the query again adding **?page=3** to the end of it, and so on.

4. Export all messages from a user

If you want to capture all the messages from a specific user, you can use the **messages/from_user** call. The call is formatted like this:

[https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/from_user/\[userID\].xml](https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/from_user/[userID].xml)

To make this call you need to know the ID of the user you're interested in. The easiest way to find this information is to search for that person using Yammer search and then click on their name in

the results window that pops up. Their user ID will be in the URL of the user page you're taken to, for example:

https://www.yammer.com/dsitia.qld.gov.au/users/...#/Threads/fromUser?type=from_user&feedId=1526397661

Add their user ID to the template query above and then copy and paste it into your browser address bar.

If the user has posted more than 20 messages, you'll need to repeat the query with **older_than** condition described above. To do this, follow the instructions in steps c through g of the process for exporting messages from a group, but use the **messages/from_user** call instead of the **messages/in_group** call.

5. Export all messages in a conversation

If you want to capture all the messages in a specific conversation, you can use the **messages/in_thread** call. The call is formatted like this:

[https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_thread/\[threadID\].xml](https://www.yammer.com/api/v1/messages/in_thread/[threadID].xml)

To make this call you need to know the ID of the conversation (thread) you're interested in. One way to find this information is to search for someone involved in the conversation, scroll down the user-page to the conversation you're interested in, and click on the 'More' link under the user's contribution to that conversation. A box will appear with further links. Click on the 'View Conversation' link. The thread ID will be in the URL of the conversation page you're taken to, for example:

<https://www.yammer.com/dsitia.qld.gov.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=44411106>

Add the thread ID to the template query above and then copy and paste it into your browser address bar.

If there are more than 20 messages in the conversation, you'll need to repeat the query with **older_than** condition described above. To do this, follow the instructions in steps c through g of the process for exporting messages from a group, but use the **messages/in_thread** call instead of the **messages/in_group** call.

Saving exports

You can save endpoint calls using the browser's 'save as' or 'save page as' function. You can access this by, for example, clicking 'File ⇒ Save as' in Internet Explorer or using Ctrl+S in Chrome. Choose .xml as the file type and give it an appropriate title, for example:

Yammer export group ID 38023566 (Renewal policy consultation).xml

Yammer export thread ID 380258 (Development of plan to consult on renewal policy).xml

Yammer export user ID 45789 (Jane Smith).xml

Timing of calls

Yammer users can make these endpoint calls as often as required. But there is probably no need to do so until a particular decision or transaction is completed, for example at the end of a project or consultation process or of a discussion leading to a particular course of action. However, if messages are being deleted frequently from Yammer, endpoint calls should be made more often.

Attachments not captured

Endpoint calls will not export attachments to messages or conversations. However, attachments can be captured from their original location if necessary. Attachments and captured records should be saved in the same place or linked together.

Further information

There is more information about the Yammer API and endpoint calls in the Yammer Development Centre: <https://developer.yammer.com/restapi/>