



Local Research

Do Buy and Sell Groups want Pages as members?

A qualitative approach to understand BSG
admin views on Pages as members

Jess Hohenstein | July 2018

Do BSG admins want to allow Pages to join and participate as members?

TL;DR

Yes, but they need control to maintain the communities that they have built.

Insight	Recommendation
Admins want Pages to join BSG but need tools to control joining and membership.	Let Pages join BSG, but allow admins to restrict membership requests based on location. We need to be considerate of the admin need for control when implementing this.

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01

Background



Background

Allowing Pages to join buy and sell Groups (BSG) as members could potentially allow more meaningful interactions for Page admins, BSG admins, and BSG members.

Currently, BSG are C2C only, meaning that only Profiles can participate.

We want to understand the extent which BSG admins want to allow Pages to join and participate as members and why/not.

Background



Methodology

We used a qualitative approach to answer these questions.



Qualitative interviews

$n = 14$

We conducted **semi-structured remote interviews** with active BSG admins living in the United States who had approved new members in the past two weeks.

Represented BSG included: 2 Public/12 Closed, 8 Yard Sale/6 Non-Yard Sale, 7 Small/7 Large

A photograph of two people sitting at a wooden table outdoors. The person on the left is wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a necklace, looking at a tablet. The person on the right is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and is holding a tablet. A laptop is open on the table. The background is blurred, showing an outdoor setting with greenery.

02

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Admins want Pages to join BSG as members

Admins want Pages to join BSG as members

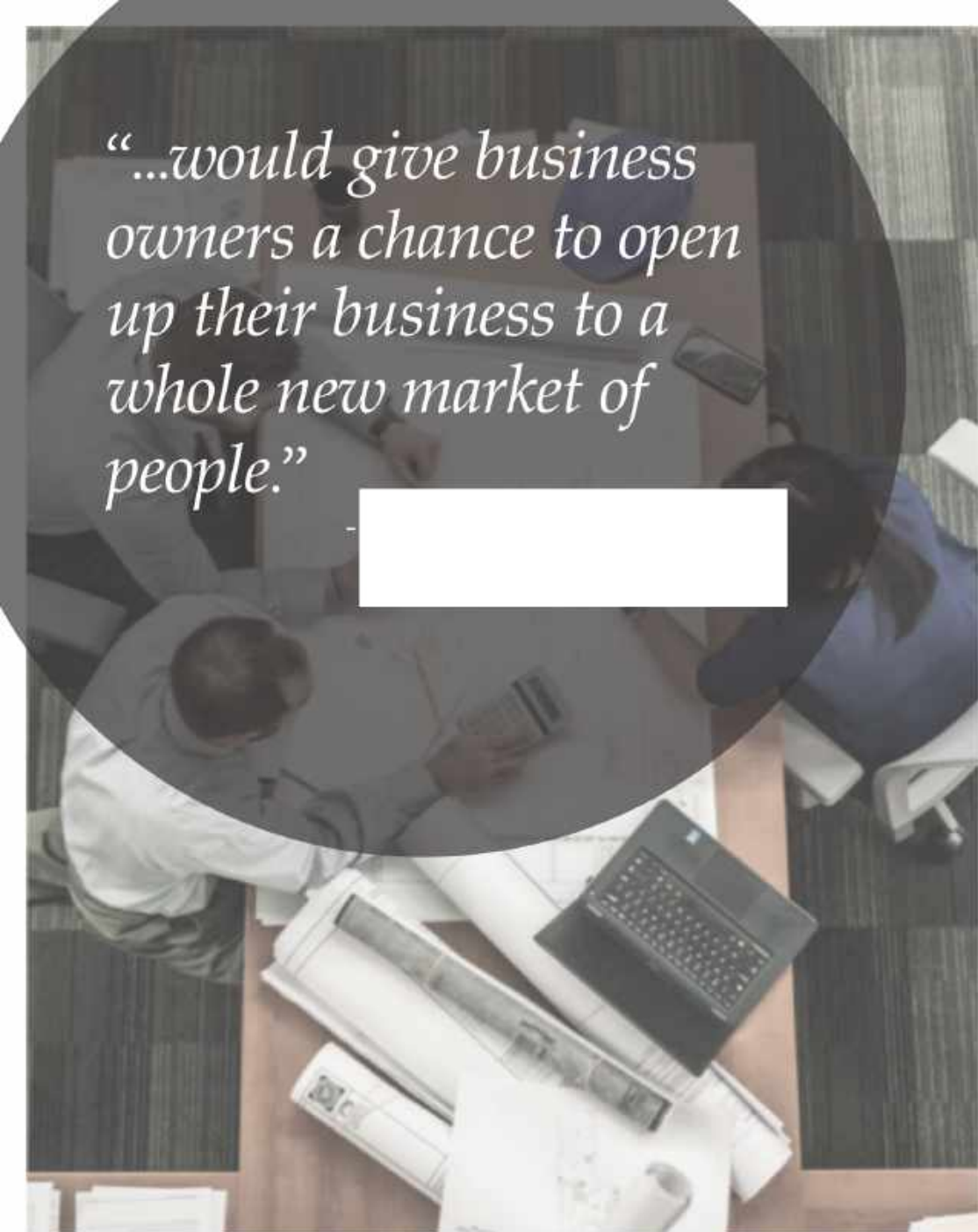
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A majority of admins agreed that it would be valuable for their BSG to have Pages join and participate.

4 admins that did not agree discussed how:

- Members of their BSG had already found workarounds for Pages not being able to join
- They would need “custom options” to control which Pages are allowed to join and how they participate
- Before deciding, they would need to “see how it plays out”





“...would give business owners a chance to open up their business to a whole new market of people.”

[Redacted Name]

Admins want Pages to join BSG as members

Pages as members would be beneficial for businesses...

- By posting in BSG, businesses could generate awareness by advertising products and services to their local community
- Posting directly in BSG would save Page admins' time, as they could post directly from Page instead of posting as Profile linking to Page

A photograph of two women, one with long dark hair and one with short dark hair, looking at a smartphone together. The image is partially obscured by a dark circular overlay containing text.

“... great way to let communities know about new/existing businesses.”

Admins want Pages to join BSG as members

...and it would benefit users!

- Users could find new businesses and current sales/offers
- Increased Group activity, more items could make BSG larger and more effective
- Businesses could contribute “expert” opinions and promote their products/services
- Potential customers can get recommendations and reviews directly

“A lot of people go to FB for recommendations. You can Google all day long and see angry reviews, but when you ask on FB you can get peoples’ real thing. Users could see businesses they didn’t know about, see what they have from home.”



“Maybe [Pages] could contribute, I love to hear experts, I’m definitely not an expert. They might be more active, I love active members.”



Admins want Pages to join BSG as members

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Members are *already* posting to promote their businesses in BSG.

BSG admins already allow members to post:

- Advertising current sales
- Photos of flyers or business cards
- Examples of products or services with email, phone number, link to website
- Profiles that have changed their name to their business' name
- Member posting links to their business Page

“Half of the members have business Pages that they’re trying to get members to join. They’re already advertising their business Pages.”

“So many people create a personal page and use it as a business page and vice versa.”





“...option to link personal page for business into a business page; merge the two. Something to say, ‘We know your name is not Tacos Al Pastor, so let’s link it to a business page!’”



Admins want Pages to join BSG as members



Some admins already see Groups as a major channel for transactions.

Groups (including BSG) are already seen as an important distribution channel for small businesses

- Joining specific Groups allows businesses to strategically build brand awareness
- Small business owners are already driving transactions by posting in Groups



“It’s Groups where I get most of my business and make most of my money via FB.”

“Groups are far, far more important than Pages. Groups drive business and sales far more than any Page does, at least in my world. Groups are where it’s at. Pages you just do because you need to have one; it’s like putting a sign on your door. People actually use Groups to make money.”



03

Admin Concerns and Conditions for Pages as BSG Members



“ The girl down the street who has hand-painted cute little signs measured and priced; the other [business] post is getting a plethora of questions and stepping on her. ”



Concerns About Pages as BSG Members

Major concerns involve scams and abuse.

- Admins are afraid that bad actors could hide behind Pages to push fake products and services, which they have seen often in the past
- BSG have always been predominantly for C2C transactions, and Pages could make BSG too business-oriented
- Members might leave if the sense of community was lost
- Fear that businesses will solely advertise and not make any unique, meaningful contribution like members do

“Groups don’t want to see businesses taking it over. I could see people leaving groups if they became too business-oriented.”

“I don't want to approve pure advertising, like 'Come to our store and buy our furniture'; how about you put something special? Put a specific product and price, that way it actually benefits my Group. People want to see prices, not just soliciting.”



Concerns About Pages as BSG Members

Admins also feel a sense of personal responsibility for their members' safety...

- They want to protect their members from bad actors
- Many admins make sure that they know of the business before allowing posts about them in the BSG
- A few admins verify that any businesses mentioned in their BSG are licensed and insured
- They pay attention to various signals, such as false claims or posting in many different Groups, that alert them of possible scamming


“The reason I do it is because I like to make sure people aren't getting scammed.”

Concerns About Pages as BSG Members

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...and they hope that FB will verify that
Pages are legitimate.

- Many admins want to see some verification of Pages, such as with a “blue checkmark”
- Admins trust that FB has some type of vetted verification process to make sure Pages are valid companies

*“I trust FB as far
as the integrity of
the business.”*



*“It’s about the
community; it’s
not about
businesses.”*

Conditions for Pages as BSG as members

The majority of admins only want local, relevant Pages to be able to join.

- BSG have a strong sense of local trust and community
- Admins are adamantly against big national corporations and companies not from their geographic areas joining
- Admins want to verify that what the business is selling aligns with what their members are looking for



“If they’re not local, they’re not coming in. We don’t want people when they’re not local; that’s when shenanigans happen.”



Conditions for Pages as BSG Members

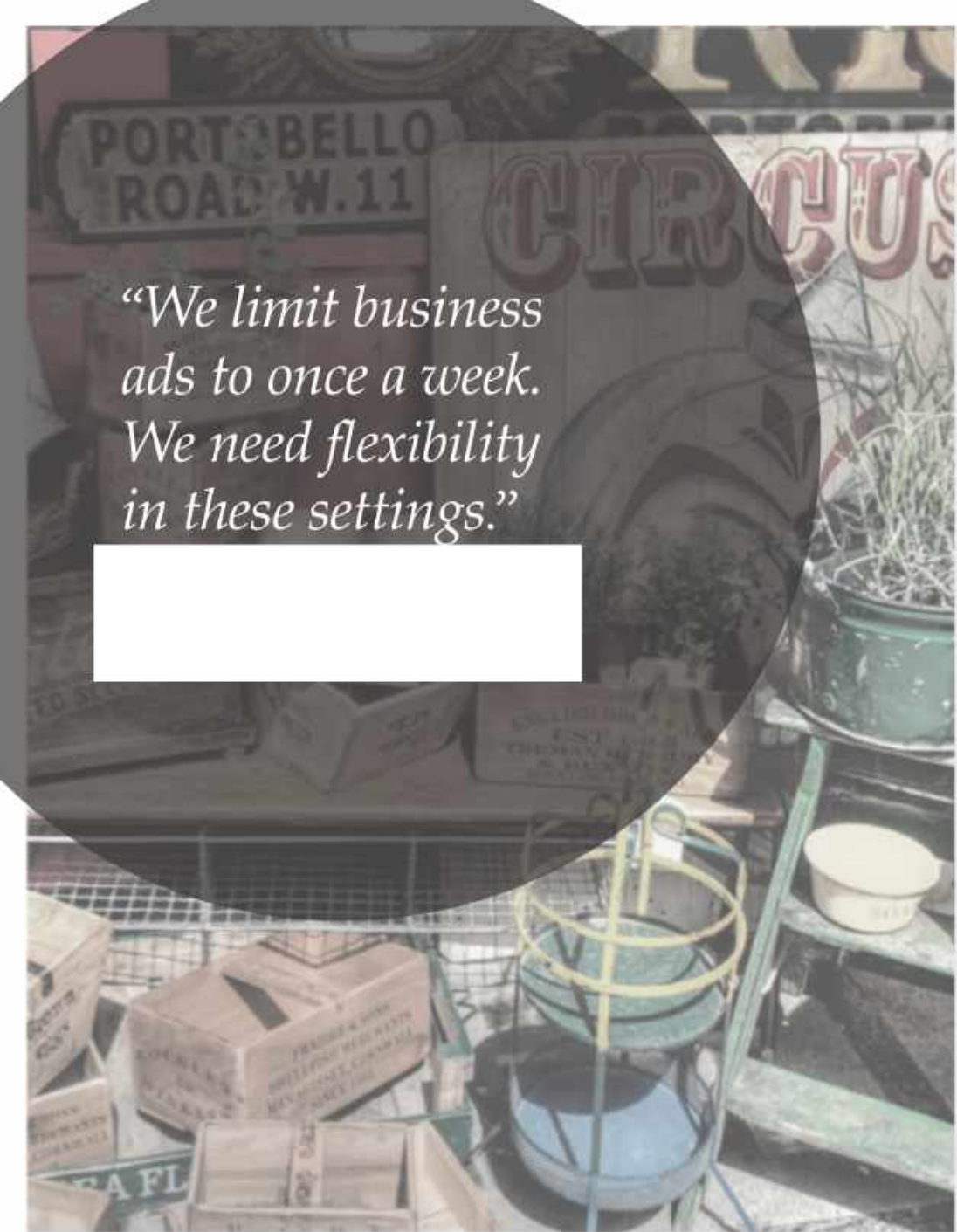
Admins want customizable control over which Pages can join.

- Great uncertainty among admins about how Pages joining will play out
- As a backup, many want to have the choice available to opt out of having Pages join
- There are some BSG where Pages don't belong
- Some admins want to block certain types of businesses from joining, with one wanting to filter out certain Page requests based on keywords that she supplies
- Only one admin wanted to limit the number of Pages that could join

“If it gets out of hand, then you might want it. Having an out would be a good thing.”

“We started as group of stay-at-home moms that make crafts. We don't want that to change... not the flavor. Have one business in, explain why you can't let them all in, so just say no businesses. Person-to-person buying and selling is our flavor.”





“We limit business ads to once a week. We need flexibility in these settings.”

Conditions for Pages as BSG as members

Admins impose limits on posting.

- BSG where businesses are already posting impose limits manually, ranging from 3x/day to once/week
- Without the ability to limit posts, concern that ratio of posts will skew towards businesses
- Some admins want Page posts to be visually differentiable from Profile posts
- Admins aren't concerned about more work if Pages join, and automatic limits on posting might create *less* work for them



“

[Redacted]

”

[Redacted]

A person wearing a tweed jacket and a flat cap is looking down at a wooden crate filled with books. The scene is set at an outdoor market stall. In the background, other people and market stalls are visible, though slightly out of focus. A sign in the crate reads "Graphic Novels" and "COMIC BOOKS".

04

How should Pages join BSG?

“Businesses should be scrutinized more before they join. We want them to represent us, in a way, and conduct proper business.”



How should Pages join BSG?

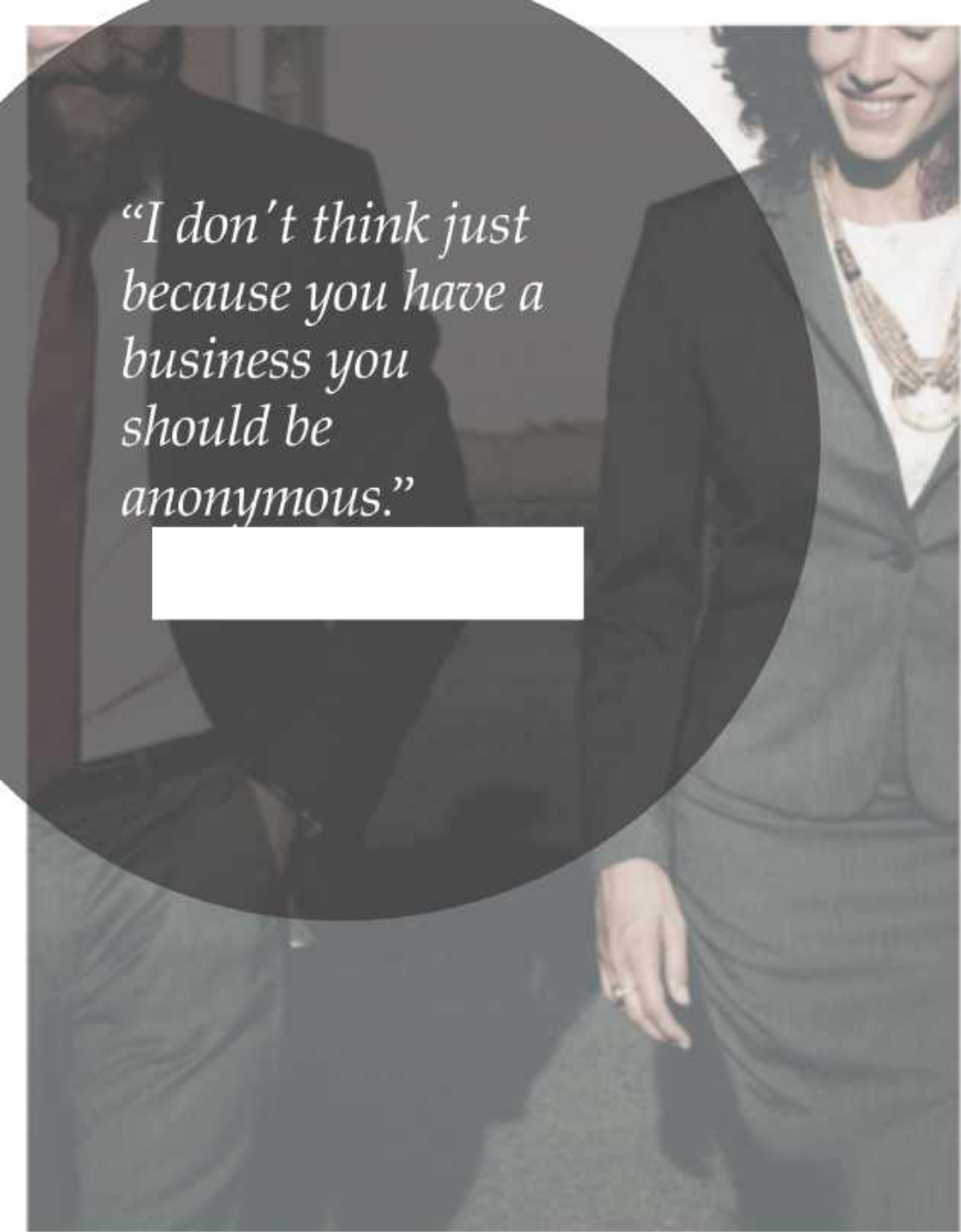


When deciding whether to allow a Page to join, the most important informat



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“I don’t think just because you have a business you should be anonymous.”

How should Pages join BSG?

Admins are split on whether they want to


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How should Pages join BSG?

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Admins want membership requests from Pages to be

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“...some way to identify them as a Page and not a personal profile. It would be nice to see them separate.”



“I don’t think members will have a problem, as long as they see somebody that brings something to the table.”

What Will BSG Members Think?

Admins are a proxy for their members and believe they will be okay with Pages joining as long as it benefits them.

- Pages will provide more relevant content and increased activity in the BSG
- Members don’t want to see businesses flooding the Page, so admins need to be able to control this
- One admin already polled his BSG on this topic, and members want *related* businesses in the BSG
- If members have an issue, they will alert the admin through comments or messages



05

Admin Concerns About

*“For being a free job, it’s
kind of a pain in the butt.”*



Admin Concerns About [REDACTED]



[REDACTED] is a significant pain point, and [REDACTED] are very unfavorable.

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A person is sitting at a desk, typing on a silver laptop. The laptop screen displays a website with a header image of a house and the number '06'. The person's hands are visible on the keyboard, and they are wearing a watch on their left wrist. The background is slightly blurred, showing a desk with some papers and a stack of books.

Recommendations

Recommendations

Allow Pages to join BSG as members, but give admins more customizable control over joining and membership overall.



Give admins the ability to restrict who can join.

Many BSG are about interacting with local community. Let admins restrict membership requests based on location. Admins also need more control over who can join their BSG, so consider letting them block requests from certain categories or giving them the option to block all Pages.



Allow admins to impose limits on member posts.

