AGORA-Tutorial: First Steps

This tutorial contains the most important instructions for using the CommSy platform. To access the platform, enter your uni username and password. Once you have logged into the system, you can request to join any workspace (e.g., a seminar workspace hosted by your lecturer). You can join any number of workspaces with your username or open your own workspace. The following chapters explain the main steps in this process for new CommSy users.

1. Workspaces

The “Workspaces” page is the starting point of our platform. To access this page, select the corresponding link from the menu on the left-hand side of the AGORA homepage. In “Workspaces”, enter your uni username (cf. 2. “Login”) to gain access to the workspace search and your personal workspace list.

![Figure 1: “Workspaces”: Overview of different sections](image)

1. Workspace search: Enter keywords (e.g., the name of the seminar or lecturer) to find workspaces on the CommSy platform.

2. Workspaces: A list of workspaces. When you are logged in, you can view your workspaces here. When you use the workspace search, the results will be listed here instead.

3. Create workspaces: You can create project workspaces and community workspaces.

4. CommSy bar: An important functional element of CommSy. It includes a link to your profile. Find out more: CommSy bar.
2. Login

Staff and students of Universität Hamburg can use their uni username to log into CommSy.

1. Navigate to the CommSy homepage in your browser.

2. The login mask is located in the dark gray bar on top of the “Workspaces” page.

3. Enter your uni username and password and click “Login”.

The source is set to “Uni Hamburg” by default. If you are using an old, local CommSy username, change the source to “CommSy” before you click “Login”.


Note: External users without an uni username can no longer create accounts by themselves. For reasons of data security, we are limiting external access to the platform. As of now, you require an invitation from a workspace moderator to register an account. If you need access to the portal for other reasons, please contact the portal administration.

3. Workspace membership

Once you have logged into CommSy, you can join project and community workspaces.

1. Select a workspace from the “Workspaces” page. If you cannot find a specific workspace or have not joined any workspaces yet (i.e., your list of workspaces is empty), use the...
workspace search in the box on the right. (Consult the FAQ for more details about the workspace search.)

2. Click a workspace on the list. You will be taken to the entry page of the workspace.

Tip: The door symbol indicates your membership status. A closed door means that you are not a member of the workspace. You need to apply for membership before you can enter (see instructions below). An open door means that you are a member of the workspace or that the workspace is accessible to the public. If the door is open, simply click it to enter the workspace.

Fig. 3: The workspace description page

3. Click “Apply for membership”. You will be asked to supply a membership code or a reason for membership, depending on the settings selected by the workspace moderator.

**Reason for membership**
Specify why you wish to become a member of the workspace. For example: “I am a participant of the seminar XY.” The moderator of the workspace receives automatic notification when you submit your reason. They will unlock the workspace for you. You will receive email notification when your membership application has been approved and you can use all functions of the workspace.

**Membership code**
Enter your membership code. If the code is valid, you will be able to enter the workspace immediately.
The code is often announced during the first session of a class. If you do not know the code, ask the workspace moderators.

4. Workspace and rubrics

Once you have become a member of a project workspace (cf. 3. “Workspace membership”),
you can start exploring the workspace. Each workspace is divided into different rubrics. They are displayed as a bar on the left-hand side (cf. Fig. 4). If you are accessing the portal from a mobile device or other narrow type of screen, this bar might only display the rubric symbols. The following section will explain the individual rubrics.

Fig. 4: Rubric bar

**Entry page:** Select this rubric to see an overview of the active workspace. It contains a list summarizing the latest content from the other rubrics.

**Announcements:** This rubric shows you announcements created by other members of the workspace. You can also add your own announcements.

**Dates:** This rubric contains an interactive calendar. It might already contain some dates relating to the workspace topic. If the workspace accompanies a seminar, the calendar might show you the dates of the sessions, for example.
Tasks: Select this rubric to set tasks and provide instructions for their completion. Members can specify how much time they spent completing each task.

Materials: Use this rubric to upload materials that are relevant to your project. You can upload files of any format. Choose images, videos, and texts that will enhance the workspace and upload them to your own material entry. Material entries can be divided into various sections. Refer to the tutorial entitled “Setting up materials” for more details.

![Fig. 5: Adding a material entry](image)

Discussions: The “Discussions” rubric is similar to the “Materials” rubric. It is primarily intended for discussion, but you can also upload files. Each discussion thread contains a text field. This is where you can submit your contribution to the discussion.

Members: Navigate to this rubric to view a list of all members of the current workspace. This section gives you access to other members’ public profiles. You can also send them emails. The workspace moderators manage the registered participants in this rubric.

Groups: In the “Groups” rubric, members of a project workspace can form subgroups. This is useful for tutorials, working groups, and individual topics. Groups can also set up a group workspace, which will be part of the project workspace but protected with a password. Group workspaces have the same functions as project workspaces, but only group members can enter and use them. A workspace moderator might have to activate this rubric before it shows up in the list of rubrics. Refer to the tutorial entitled “Group
workspaces” for more details.

Settings: Only visible to workspace moderators. This rubric contains an overview of all settings, divided into various menus (on the left). Only the creator and moderator(s) of a project workspace can configure it. CommSy gives moderators various options for adjusting their project workspaces to their own needs and those of the group. Refer to the tutorial entitled “Workspace settings” for more details.

5. Create workspace

Once you have logged into CommSy, follow these steps to create a new workspace and become its moderator:

1. Select “New project workspace” from the workspace overview on the right-hand side.
2. You will be taken to a page containing a form (Fig. 6).
3. Enter a title and choose whether you want a German or English interface for your workspace.

![Form “New project workspace”](image)

All other fields are optional. They provide users of the workspace with clearer guidance. We recommend that you complete the fields “Semester” and “Description”, as this will make it easier for potential members to find your workspace.

The “Template” field is a special feature. Select a template to open a workspace that already has some content. In addition to the standard template, templates from the field of general professional skills are available.
Tip: To view more helpful documents about using CommSy, visit the “Tutorials” section. You can find the link in the menu on the right.