**CHAPTER 19**

# Use Gravatar to Display User's Avatars with Posts

An avatar is an image people use for their online identity. Gravatar is a free service for providing globally unique avatars. Gravatar allows users to register an account using their email address. Users then upload an image to be associated with their Gravatar account. When the user uses the same email address on a website that uses Gravatar, the website retrieves the user's avatar from Gravatar by using an image URL based on a hash of the email address. Websites, including Bullhorn, may freely use Gravatar to display the user's image. Bullhorn displays the image next to posts and on the profile page.

```
<img src="https://www.gravatar.com/avatar/205e460b479e2e5b48aec
07710c08d50?s=150"/>
```

To control the size of the image, append the URL with `?s=150` where 150 is the height or width in pixels of the square image to be returned by the URL. The value of 's' can range from 1 to 2048. Lower values will look better.

If a user does not have a Gravatar set up then a default image will be displayed:

`https://www.gravatar.com/avatar/unknownhash`



# Calculating an MD5 Hash with Java

An MD5 hash is a way of encrypting text such that it is not identifiable by looking at it. The value of MD5 is that the same email address will always generate the same MD5 hash.

The Gravatar URL is made from an MD5 hash of the user's email address. You can create an MD5 hash of an email address using code provided at the Gravatar website. This code is implemented in Bullhorn in the `MD5Util.java` class. The code will return a string containing the MD5 hash given the user's email address.[1]

The `DbUser` class in Bullhorn contains a method that generates the Gravatar URL. The method takes two parameters, email and image size. The method then returns the correct URL, which can be used in an image tag throughout the Bullhorn site. See Listing 19-1.

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[1]The source code for the MD5 class in Bullhorn is derived from that found at
`http://en.gravatar.com/site/implement/images/java`.

***Listing 19-1.*** The Method to Generate a Gravatar URL Based on the User's Email Address

```
public static String getGravatarURL(String email, Integer size)
{
                StringBuilder url = new StringBuilder();
                url.append("http://www.gravatar.com/avatar/");
                url.append(MD5Util.md5Hex(email));
                url.append("?s=" + size.toString());
                return url.toString();
        }
```