Google Noticeboard User Guide

Introduction

Google Noticeboard is an application that helps people access and share information over the Internet using public digital noticeboards. Using Google Noticeboard, communities can access a variety of relevant information. People can create text messages or record voice snippets and post them to one or more noticeboards.

Typically each digital noticeboard carries publicly accessible messages. Compared to the notion of personal communication using email accounts, the Noticeboard metaphor allows user to engage in public communication with communities. Noticeboard is designed to be usable by all, even people with no prior computer experience. Since messages can be voice based, even literacy is not a pre-requisite.

Noticeboard is a firefox extension that is installed and configured on shared computers by an operator. After the initial configuration, the Noticeboard application enables community members to exchange information over the Internet without an intermediary. As a part of the configuration, each community Noticeboard is associated with an email address and a list of contacts.

To access the noticeboard, the browser Mozilla Firefox first needs to be installed after which the noticeboard extension (.xpi add on) can be added to it.

Installing Firefox

Follow the URL **http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/** to install Mozilla Firefox.

Click on *Firefox 3 Free Download* to commence installation and follow the instructions as shown. (Note: Upgrade to Firefox 3 if you have an older version of the Firefox browser)
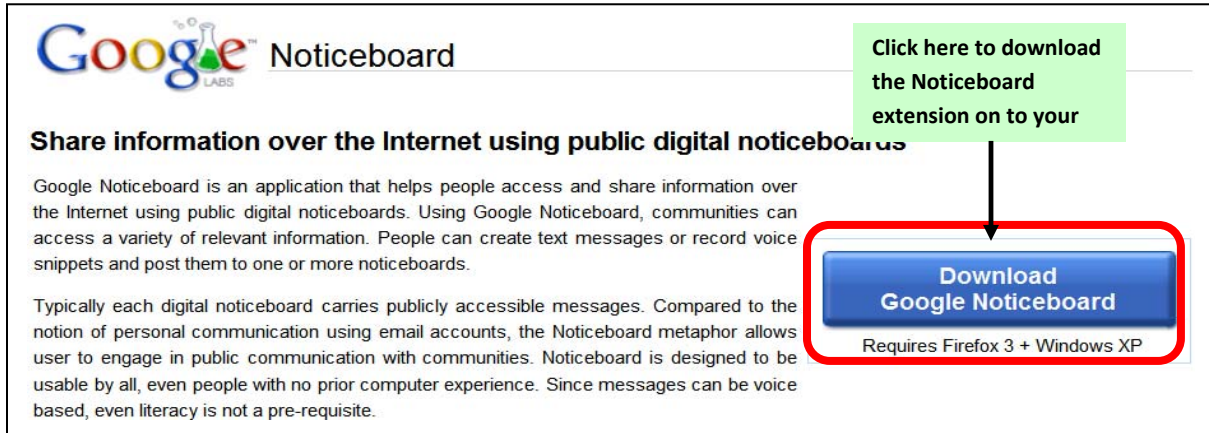
1. Save the file at a desired location

2. After downloading the file, run it to commence the installation

3. A Setup Wizard shall guide you through the installation process
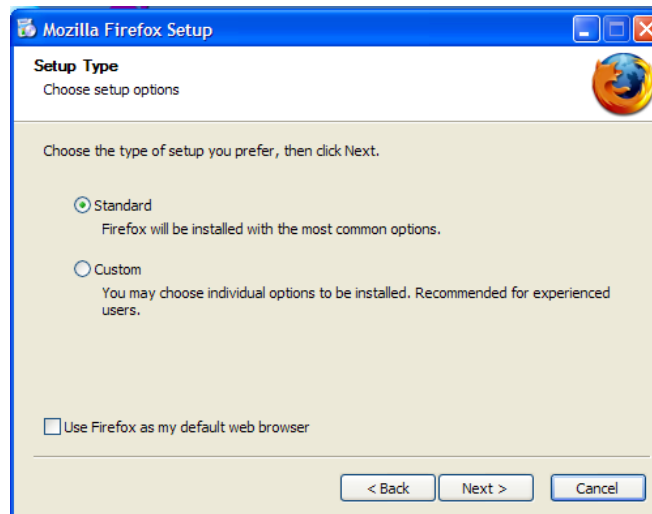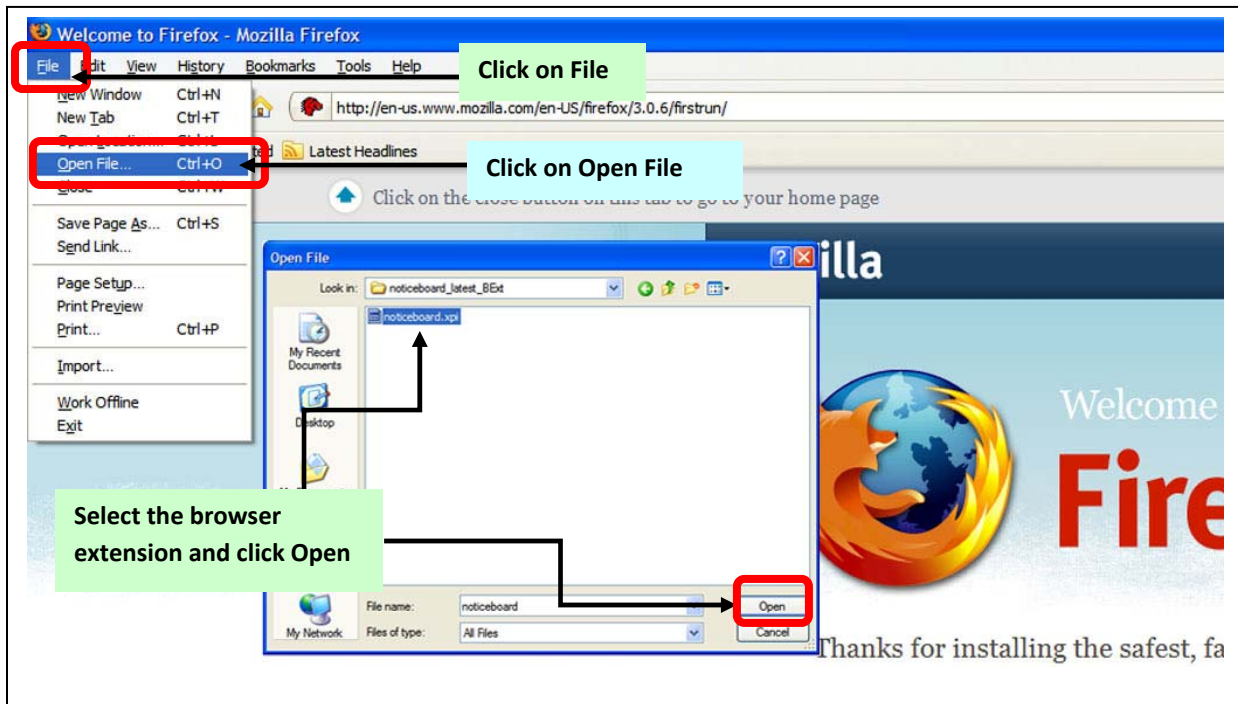
Adding the Browser Extension

A Browser Extension to Noticeboard helps Firefox to configure Noticeboard correctly. You can download the browser extension from ***http://labs.google.co.in/noticeboard*** . Click on the button ***Download Google Noticeboard*** to save Noticeboard on your computer*.*

To add the browser extension, save the extension file ***noticeboard.xpi*** in a folder on your computer (label the folder appropriately so that the file can be retrieved and used whenever required) and follow the steps mentioned below.
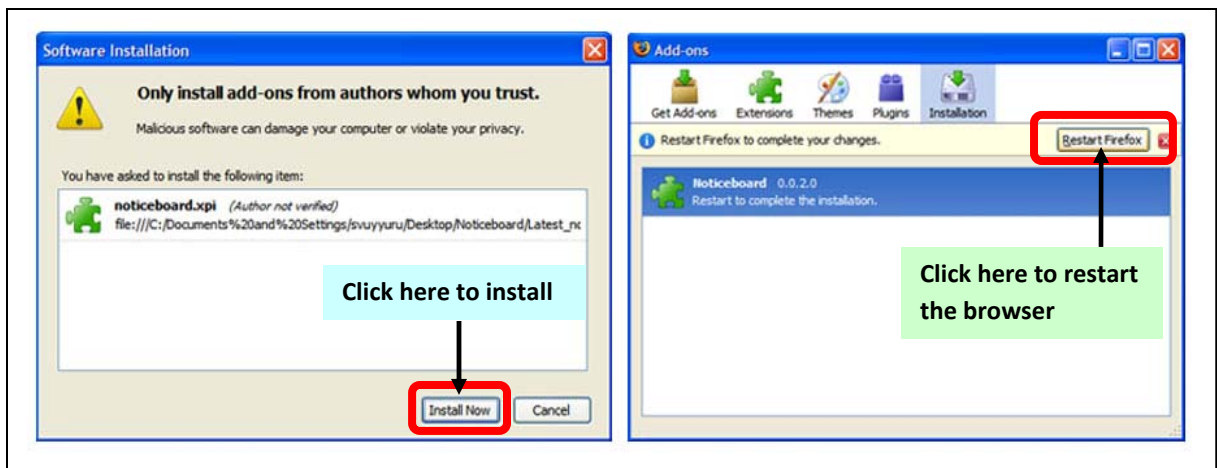
1. Open Firefox, click on ***File*** and then select ***Open File***

2. Select the extension file from the folder you had saved it in. Click ***Open***

3. Firefox will then prompt you to install the software (Browser Extension). Click on **Install Now**. Once the extension has been installed the browser needs to be restarted. Click on **Restart Firefox**.

4. Once the browser has been restarted you will get a confirmation that the browser extension has been installed. You can now see a small icon of Google to the right hand bottom corner of your browser, indicating that the installation is successful. This completes adding the Notice board browser extension to Firefox.
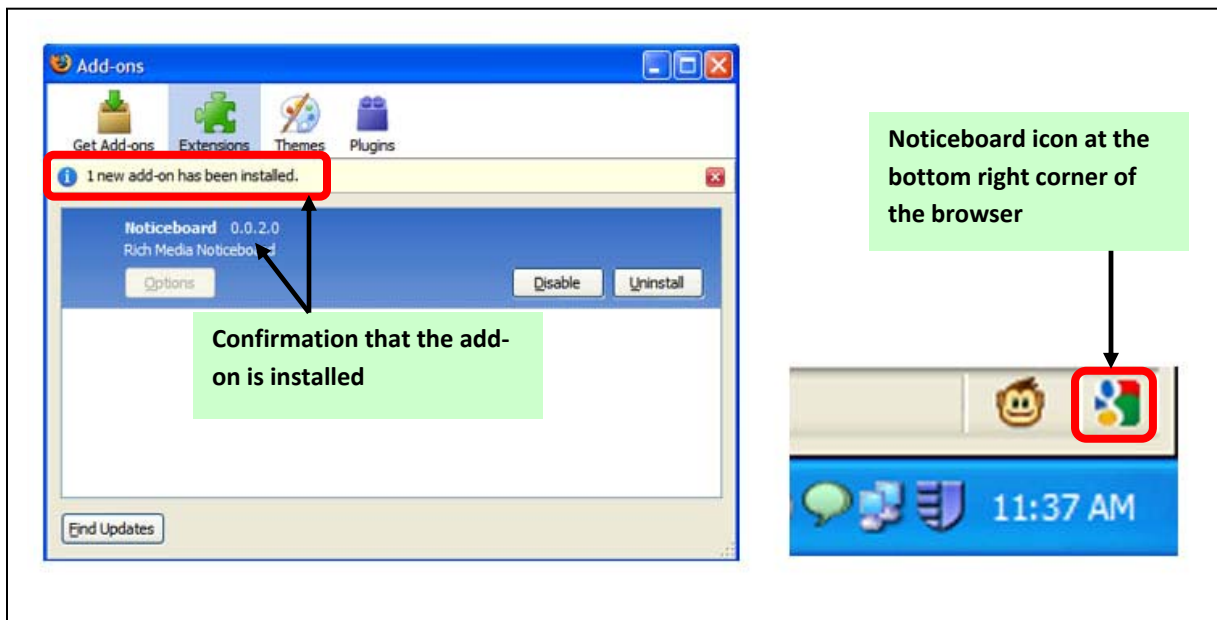
Creating the Gmail addresses for each of the villages

The administrator is responsible for creating one account for each village. You can also add your Gmail account to the Noticeboard and send audio messages to your contacts.

Refer to the document "Creating a Gmail Account" that is available at: http://mail.google.com/support/bin/topic.py?topic=12774

Setting up an Address book for created Gmail Accounts

- Login into your Gmail account (www.gmail.com).

- Click on **Contacts** that is present on the left hand panel. Then Click on ⊞. Enter a Name (of the Village), Email address, Phone number (if any) and address. Click on Save.
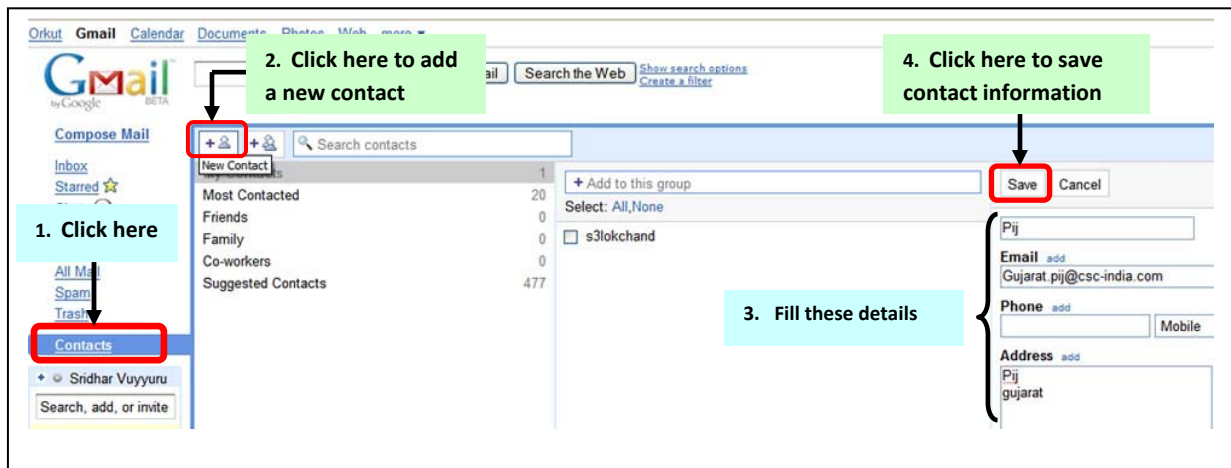
The contact details get stored and you can see a confirmation that the details have been added. The contact details can be edited by selecting the appropriate contact and clicking on Edit.
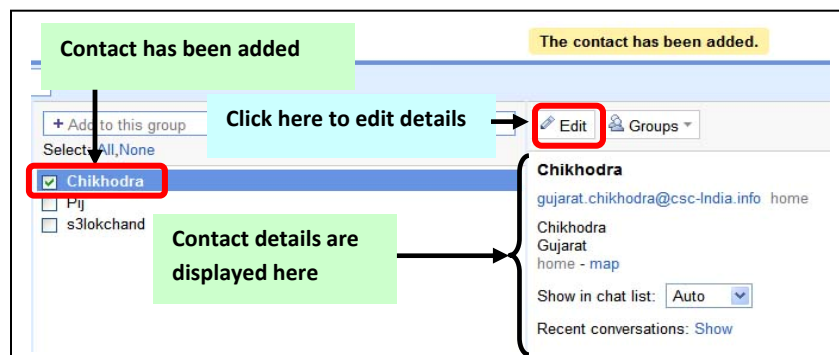
Configuring a Gmail Picture for an account

Adding pictures to a Gmail account that is relevant to a particular village will help people easily recognize where the message has been sent from.

To add a picture to a Gmail account,

1. Click on *Settings* and under the section 'My Pictures' click *Select a Picture*
2. Click on *Browse* and provide the path of the picture you want to add
3. Adjust the picture by dragging the handle provided.
4. Click on *Apply Changes*

5. You can see a photo that has been added to the My Picture section
6. Click on *Save Changes* which is located at the bottom of the page

IMAP Configuration Setup

Configuring IMAP from Gmail lets Noticeboard act as an interface for recording and sending voice mails to other accounts and also helps users listen to voice mails sent by others.

To configure IMAP
1. Click **settings** at top right corner.

2. Go to **Forwarding and POP/IMAP** tab.

3. Enable IMAP Access by selecting **Enable IMAP** radio button.

4. Click **Save Changes** to save changes you made.
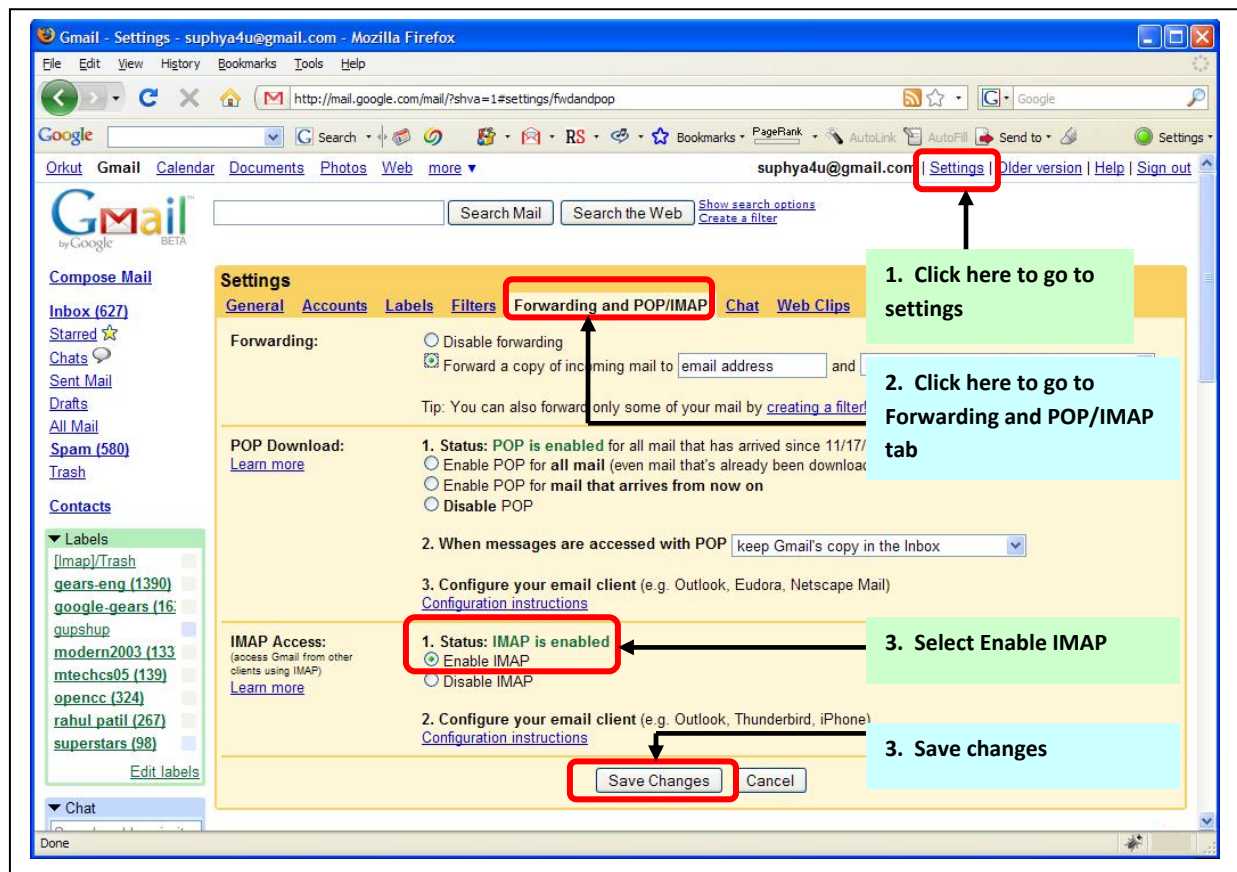
Configuring the Google Noticeboard browser extension

Now that we have installed the Firefox browser, the noticeboard browser extension, created an email account and setup contacts, we have to configure the browser extension on each machine so that, it can sign in into Gmail, get the messages and show them on the Noticeboard.
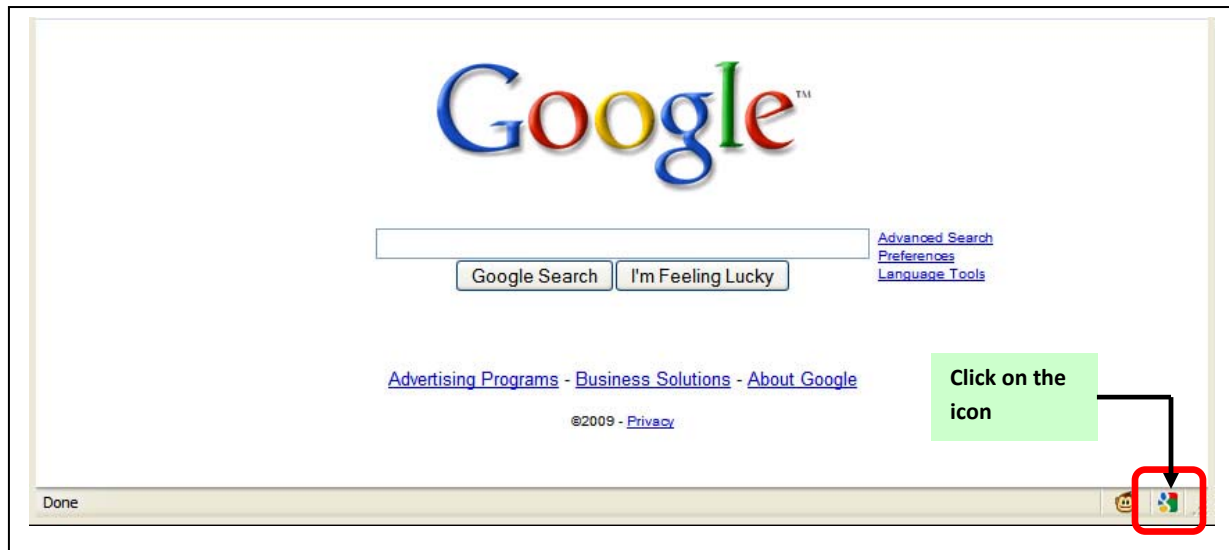
To configure the browser extension -

- Click on the Google icon at the bottom right corner of Firefox.

- A settings page is opened in a new tab. Fill the following fields -
    - Enter an e-mail address (Enter your Gmail id such as example@gmail.com)
    - Enter the password of the above email address
    - Choose a language from the drop box
    - Enter a number greater than 5 (This is the number of minutes after which Noticeboard automatically downloads new messages) and Click **Save**
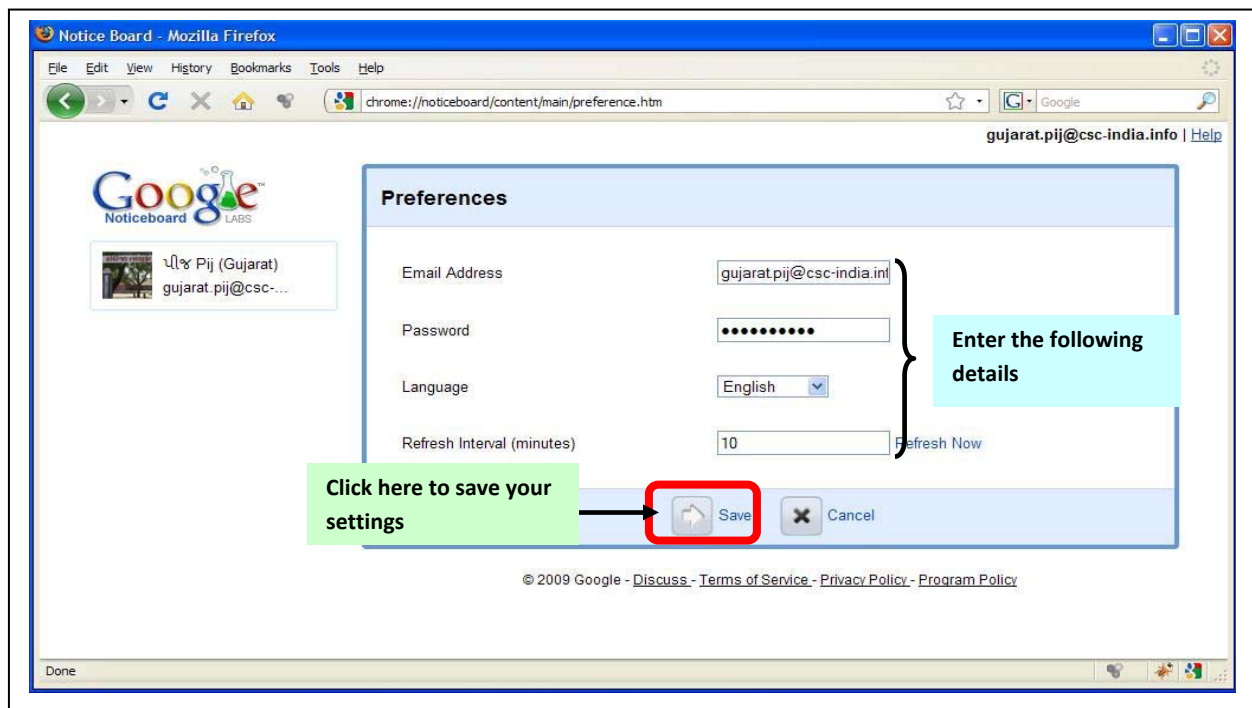
- Now you shall be prompted to restart your browser. Click **Ok**.
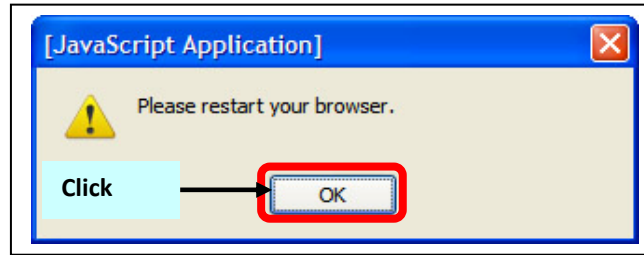

- Launch Noticeboard by clicking the icon at the right bottom corner of the browser, you will now be able to see the noticeboard message list with all the messages from your contacts. If your account is newly created, it is likely that there would be no messages in the inbox. As you keep using your account, the inbox gets populated with messages you received. This ensures that noticeboard has been configured correctly.

Placing your own images as a subject

People using noticeboard can put in their own images and use them as their subject icons. Place the images in the folder called **icons** located at **C:\Documents and Settings\<user-name>\ApplicationData\Mozilla\Firefox\Profiles\rrkfkp0k.default\extensions\{8EA7EBA6 -0071-4d82-9AB7-20EDC5367693}\ chrome\skin\icons.** Once the images are placed here you can see them in the subject area of the Noticeboard.
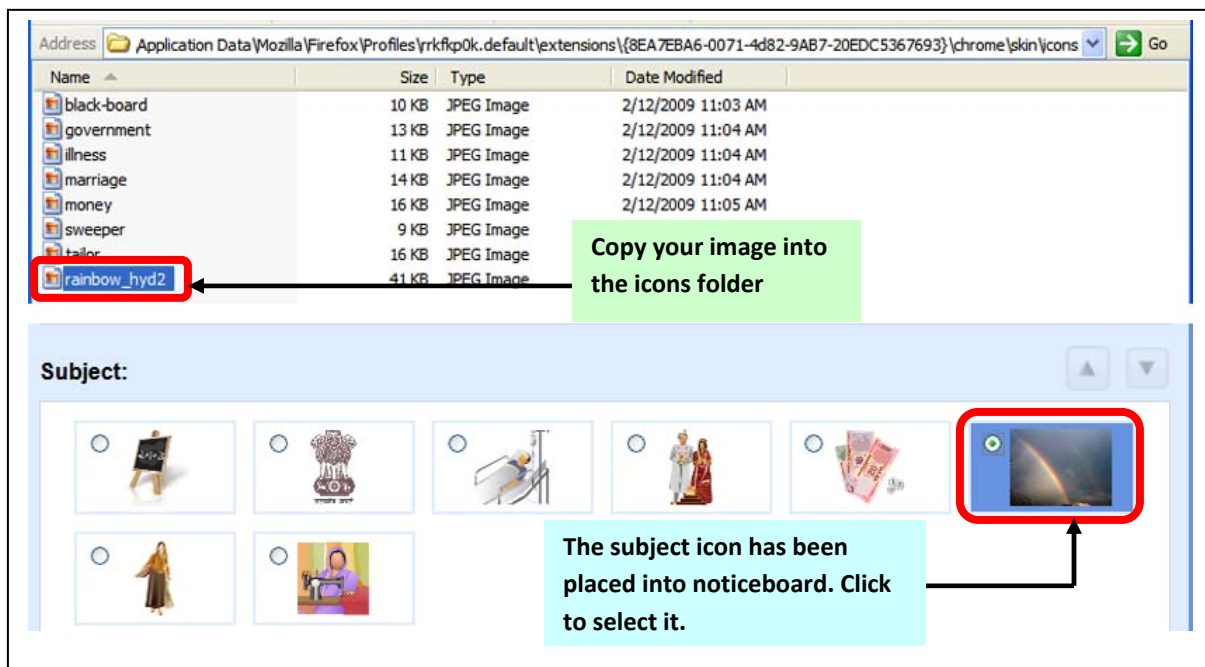
Setting up your microphone

Before recording a message it is important to ensure that the microphone and speakers are working properly. Follow the steps below for setting up the microphone -

➤ See that the microphone is properly connected to the computer.

- You now have to test, if your voice is getting recorded properly - Go to **Start** -> **All Programs** -> **Accessories** -> **Entertainment** -> **Sound Recorder**, to open sound recorder application
- Click on the red button to commence recording. Speak into the microphone.
- If you see green line fluctuating, then your microphone is working fine.
- Press the stop button
- To listen to what you have recorded, Press the **Play** button.
- You should be able to hear your recorded voice.
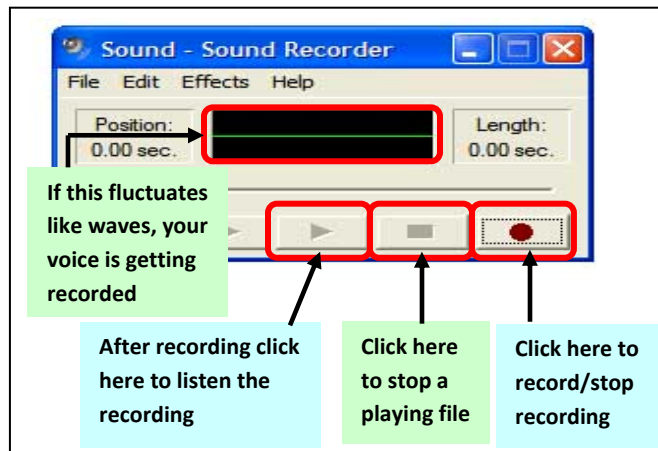
Now that your microphone has been set up, you can record and send voice messages through Noticeboard.

Exploring Noticeboard

Noticeboard is a simple to use application that helps to communicate over the Internet using a shared public noticeboard metaphor. Using the Noticeboard, we can directly record voice snippets and post them as notices on one or more Noticeboards. Typically each Noticeboard is associated with a community such as people residing in a particular village or members of an NGO. Each Noticeboard is associated with a unique email address. After a one-time set up, the Noticeboard should be usable by people with no prior computer experience. Since messages are primarily voice based, even literacy is not a pre-requisite.

Inbox

For the scope of this User Guide let us assume that your account has been in use for some time. You can see a list of messages both old and new in the Inbox on your noticeboard. If there are several messages on the frame, you can click on the arrows to scroll up and down to view them all.

Settings

The **Settings** tab on the top right hand corner of the inbox lets you configure or add another email id to the Noticeboard. See the section *"Configuring the browser extension". (*Note*:* You can only see messages from the currently configured email account.)

Messages

All the messages in the inbox show the date when it was sent, along with the number of threaded messages. Threads are conversations (replied messages) that are clustered as one message under a given category or subject. For more details on threads kindly refer the link: http://mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=5900.   A   threaded message is denoted by ⬜ in the inbox. For e.g. if there are four messages in a thread it is depicted as shown in the image below
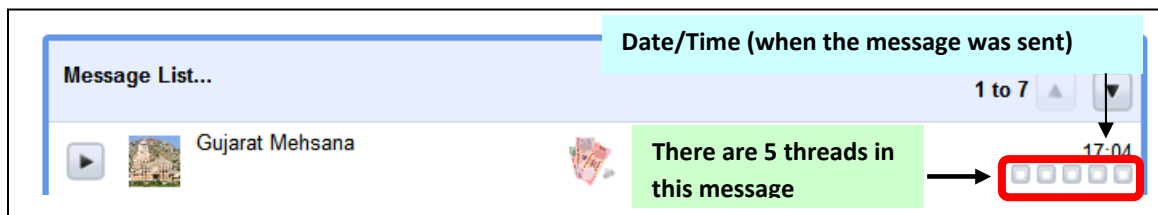
Listening to and Viewing Messages

If a message sent to you is a recorded voice message, you can listen to it by clicking on the play button ▶ from the inbox (located on the left hand side of your message). The icon next to the message is the subject of that message. Please ensure your headphones or speakers are connected to the computer properly and are working. As the message is playing, the button changes to ■ and you can stop the message any time you want by clicking on it. (**Note***:* The play button plays only the recent message of the thread)
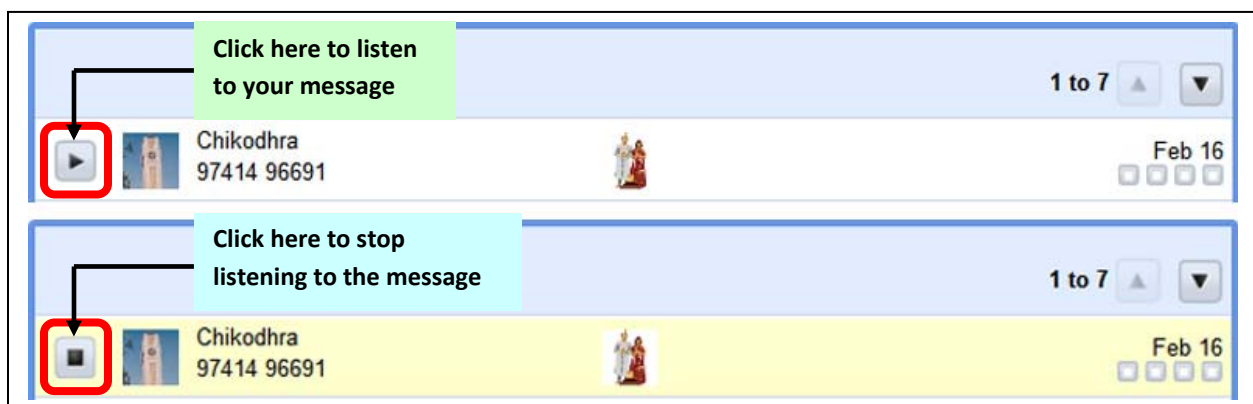
To view a message and its threads, click anywhere on the message. You will be taken to the list of all the messages in the thread. You can choose to play individual messages by clicking on Play icon next to the message or you can listen to all of them one by one by clicking on the **Play all** button located on the top left corner of the frame.

You can reply to any message by recording a voice message or entering text in the text box provided. To send your message click **Send**. (Note: You can send a message which is a combination of both text and voice)

We shall now see in detail how to record and send messages in the section **Creating and Sending Messages**.
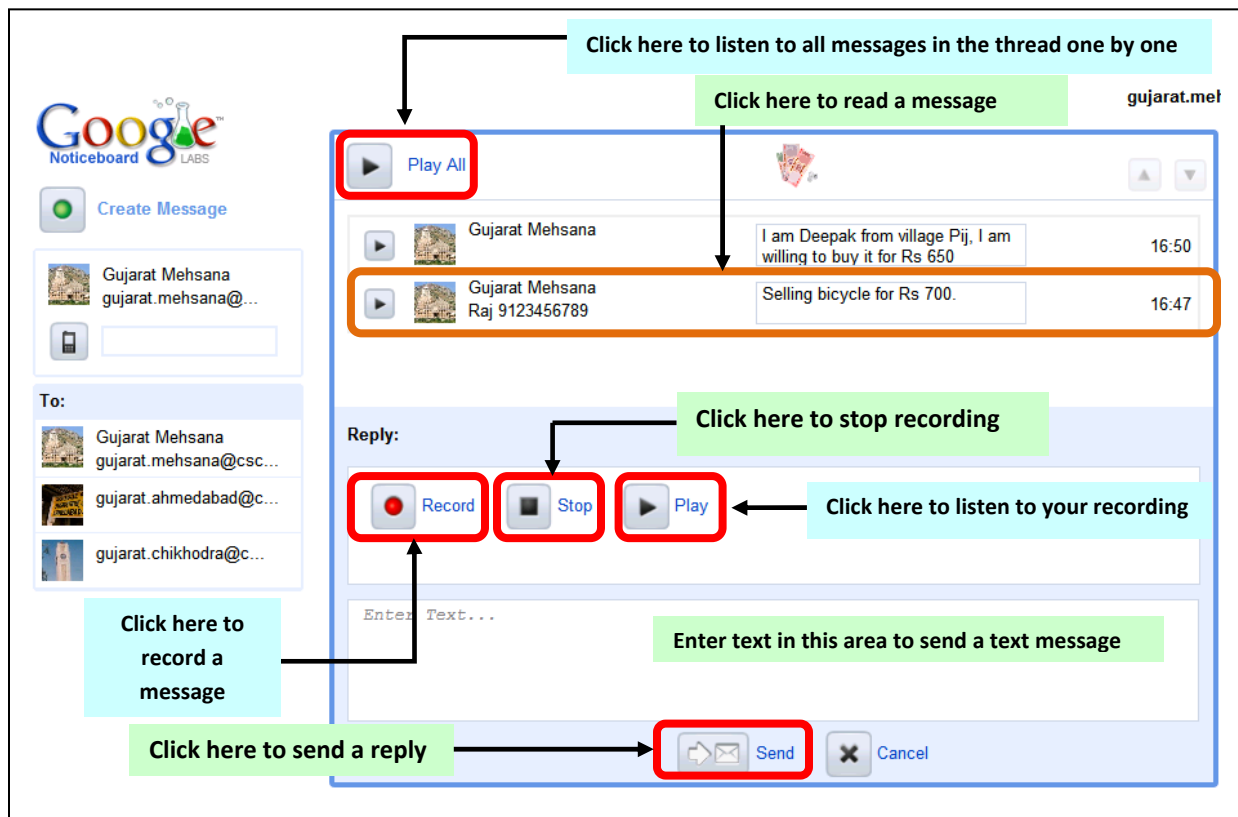
Select recipients of your message from a list of contacts displayed. You can select them by checking the boxes next to the contacts. If there are more contacts you would like to add and can't see them in the visible frame scroll up or down the contact list by clicking ▲ ▼.

All the selected contacts are highlighted and added to the panel on the left hand side. Click on **Next** to compose or record your message.

Contacts can be selected by checking the boxes or by clicking on a contact

Click here to scroll up and down for selecting more contacts

Selected recipients are shown here

Click here to continue
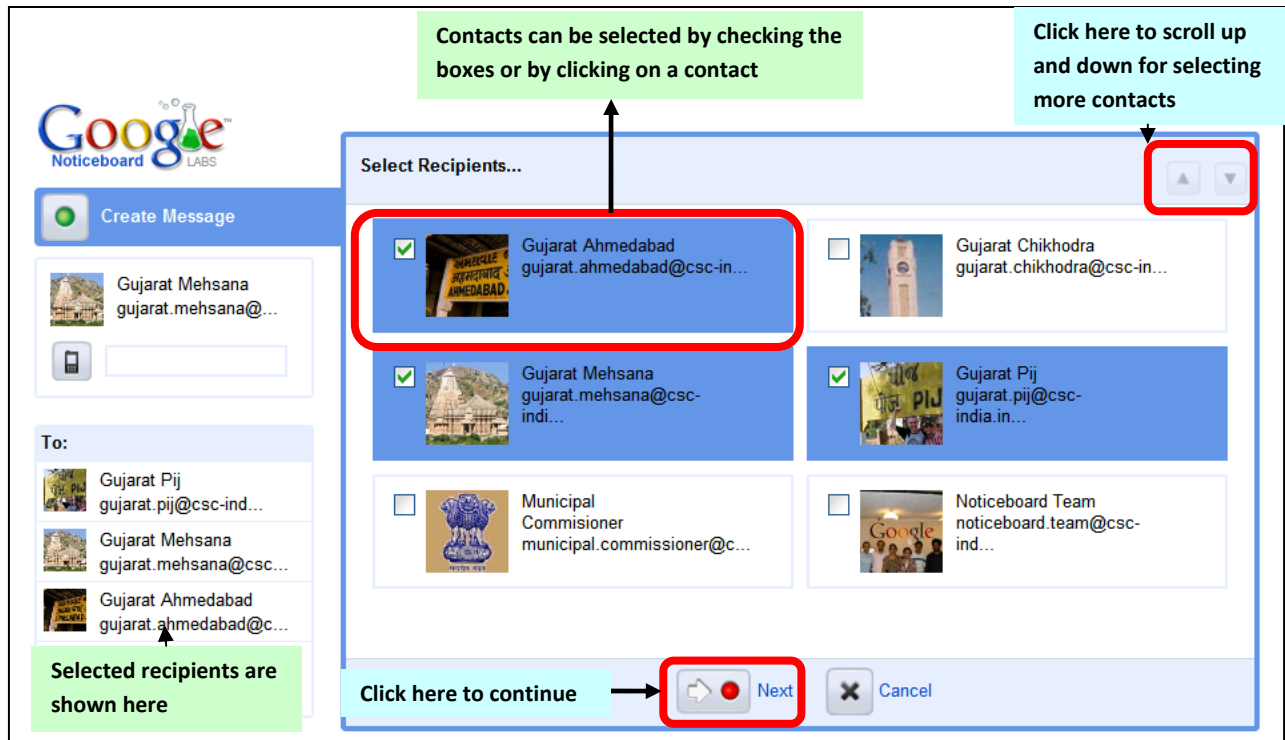
- If you are using an account of a village, it would be ideal to identify yourself to the recipients of your message. You could enter your name or a mobile number in the text area provided beneath the *Create Message* button. A key pad is provided for you to easily enter your phone number. To activate the keypad, click on the mobile icon 📱 . You can enter a maximum of 15 alpha-numeric characters.

Click here to activate the key pad

Type your name or enter a phone number here to identify yourself

Click here to save the number & close the key

To enter a phone number, click on these

Recording a Message

You can record your voice messages in Noticeboard using a microphone. Before recording make sure your surroundings are noise free. Speak loudly and slowly so that your message is recorded clearly. Brief messages are ideal as they ensure small file size and can be delivered to recipients even on internet connections with lower bandwidths. To begin recording -

- Click the **Record** button
- Speak into your microphone. As you speak you can see green, yellow, orange and red lights flicker depending on how loud you speak. This indicates that your voice is being recorded correctly
- After you have completed recording click **Stop**
- You can listen to the message that has just been recorded. Click **Play**
- If you want to change your message click **Record** again and follow the above mentioned steps.
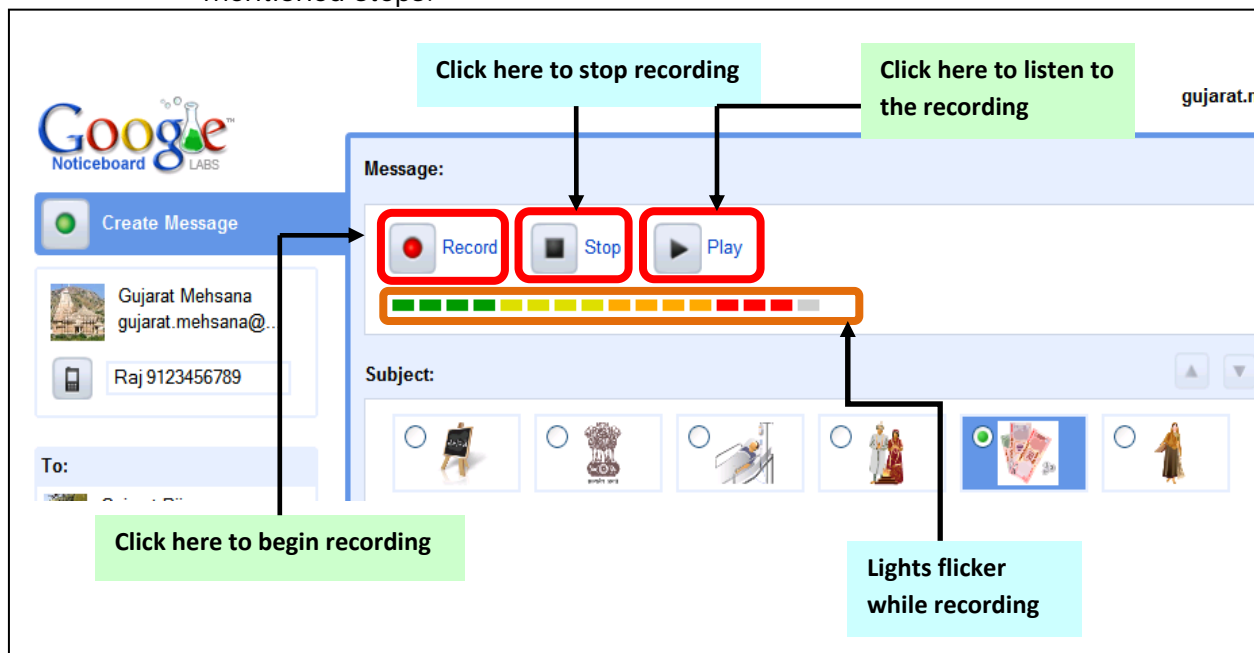

Selecting an icon as a Subject to your message

It is important for every email or message to have a subject. A subject gives information of what the message is about. For convenience, Noticeboard has provided icons as subjects so that a recipient can easily know what the message is about. Here are a set of icons have been displayed in the notice board that covers a range of subjects. Some of these icons are

- Black Board – Messages pertaining education or schools
- Government of India - Ashoka Emblem – Messages pertaining to Government related matters
- A patient – Messages pertaining to hospitals or health care
- A Marriage – Messages pertaining to Matrimony

- Money– Message pertaining to Business, Buying/Selling
- A Sweeper – Messages pertaining to cleanliness, sanitation
- A tailor- Messages pertaining to cottage industries.

Click on any icon that is relevant to your message and it gets selected as your subject.
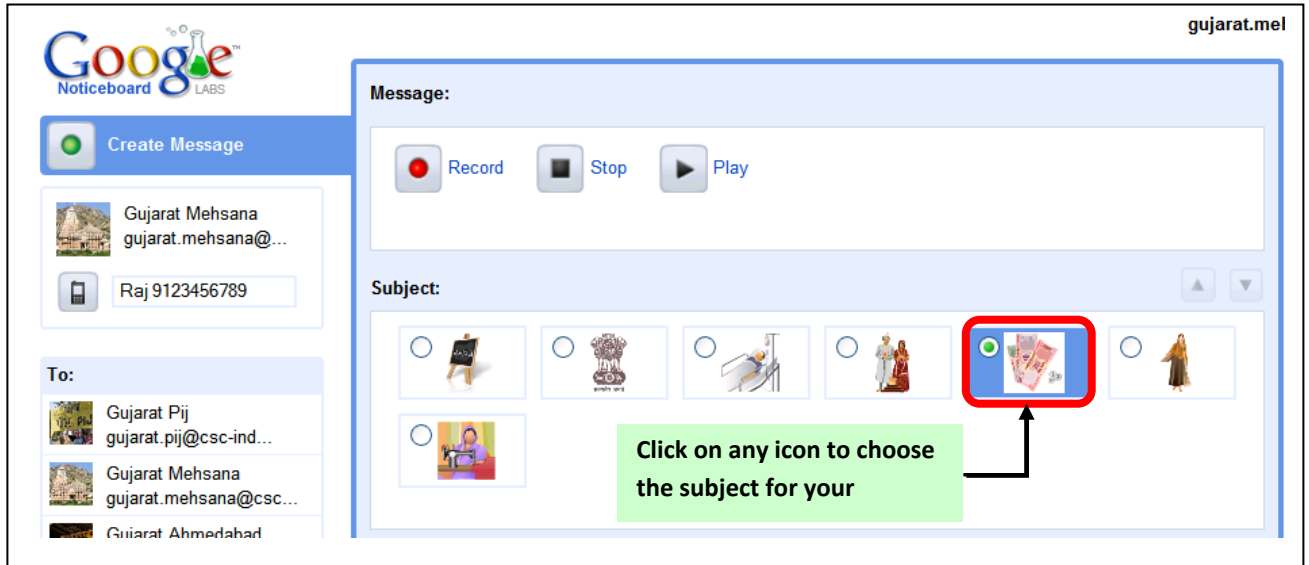
Adding text messages and sending it

In Addition to sending recorded messages, you can also send text messages. Type in your message in the textbox and record your audio message by clicking on record. If you missed adding any recipient, you can click **Back** to go back to 'Select Recipients' screen and add/delete and recipients. To discard the message, just click *Cancel*. Now click on *Send* to send your message.
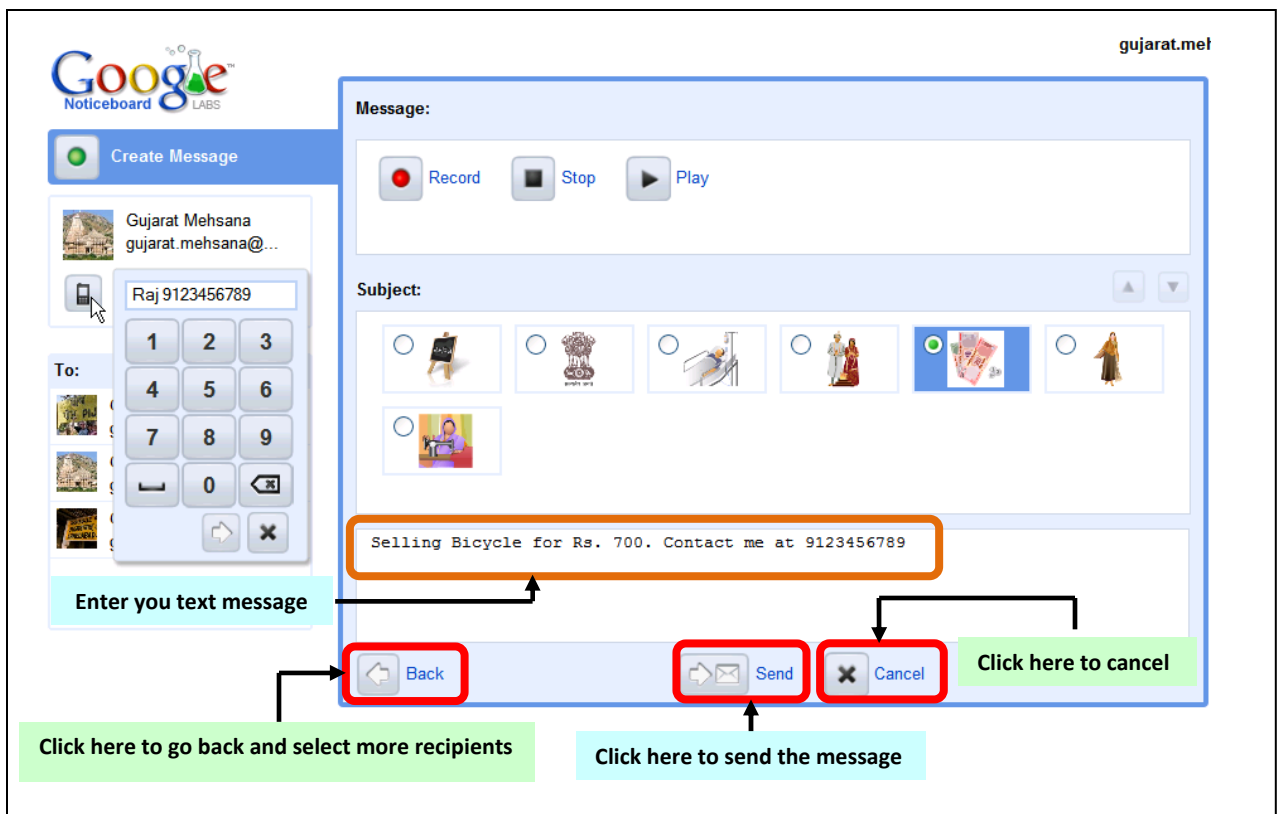
Contact Info

In case the administrator has questions regarding noticeboard or is facing trouble with the application the Google Noticeboard *team* can be contacted at
indialabs+noticeboard@google.com