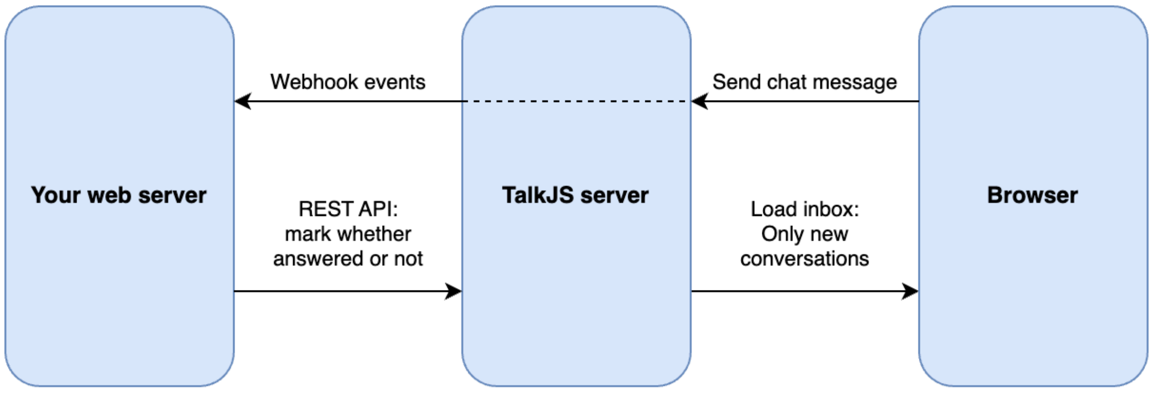
How to mark a conversation as answered

When keeping track of incoming messages, it's important to separate answered and unanswered conversations in your inbox. For example, a support team may want to filter for conversations where the customer is waiting for a reply.

TalkJS makes it easy to add custom data to your conversations so that you can automatically track which conversations have been answered. In this tutorial we'll walk you through how to do this, using TalkJS's webhooks feature and REST API.


Your web server
TalkJS server
Browser
Webhook events
Send chat message
REST API: mark whether answered or not
Load inbox: Only new conversations

To follow along, you'll need:

- A free TalkJS account. TalkJS provides a ready-to-use chat client for your application.
- An existing TalkJS project using the JavaScript Chat SDK. See our Getting Started guide for an example of how to set this up.
- An installation of Node.js along with the npm package manager. We'll use this to create our webhook server.

We'll build up the feature step by step in the following sections. If you would rather see the complete example code, see the Github repo for this tutorial.

Getting notified about new messages

First we'll enable TalkJS webhooks, which allow the TalkJS server to notify your server when a message is sent. Webhooks let you use an event-driven architecture, where you get told about events when they happen rather than having to constantly check for new messages. There are lots of events you can listen for, but we're only interested in new messages being sent.

Webhooks are server-side only, so we'll need a web server. We'll be using Express in this tutorial, but feel free to use your favourite web server library instead:

```
import express from "express";
```

```
const app = express().use(express.json()); // creates http server

app.listen(3000, () => console.log("Server is up"));


app.post("/talkjs", (req, res) => {
 console.log(req.body);
 res.status(200).end();
});
```

This script sets up a POST endpoint at `/talkjs` that monitors incoming events from the TalkJS server.

For TalkJS to communicate with your server, you must expose it to the internet. This can be very difficult when developing locally, with endless firewalls and port-forwarding to set up. Instead, we'll use ngrok to create a secure tunnel to your local server. See our tutorial on How to integrate ngrok with TalkJS for instructions on how to install ngrok.

Once you have installed ngrok, run the following command:

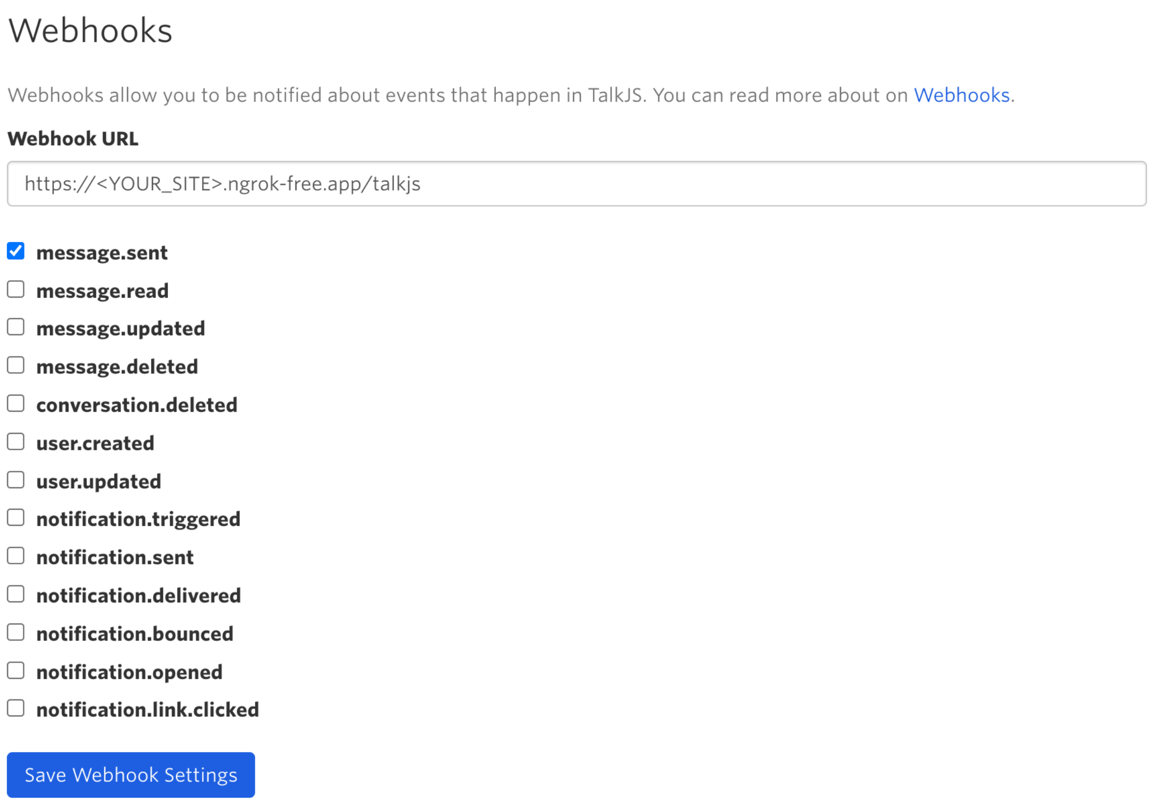
```
ngrok http 3000
```

This command starts a secure tunnel to your local port `3000`. The output should include the URL that ngrok exposes:

```
Forwarding                    https://<YOUR_SITE>.ngrok-free.app ->
http://localhost:3000
```

You're now ready to enable webhooks. You can do this in the TalkJS dashboard under **Webhooks**. Paste the URL above into the **Webhook URL** field, including the `/talkjs` path: `https://<YOUR_SITE>.ngrok-free.app/talkjs`.

Then select the **message.sent** option:


Webhooks

Webhooks allow you to be notified about events that happen in TalkJS. You can read more about on Webhooks.

Webhook URL

https://<YOUR_SITE>.ngrok-free.app/talkjs

- [✓] message.sent
- [ ] message.read
- [ ] message.updated
- [ ] message.deleted
- [ ] conversation.deleted
- [ ] user.created
- [ ] user.updated
- [ ] notification.triggered
- [ ] notification.sent
- [ ] notification.delivered
- [ ] notification.bounced
- [ ] notification.opened
- [ ] notification.link.clicked

TalkJS will now send a web request to your server when a message is sent. To test this, write another message in your chat UI. You should see the event in your server’s console:

```
{
  createdAt: 1683276915840,
  data: {
    conversation: {
      createdAt: 1683275536667,
      custom: [Object],
      id: '15966c817cb1473d9b0a',
      // ... more fields here ...
    },
    message: {
      // ... message fields here ...
    },
    sender: {
      // ... sender fields here ...
    }
  },
  id: 'evt_AVL7tDG9V7CPSXBfG4',
  type: 'message.sent'
}
```

Test the TalkJS REST API

Next, we'll react to the events by calling the TalkJS REST API to add custom data to conversations. We'll use this to set the `answered: true` property on conversations where the latest message is from the support team. This lets us filter out these conversations from the support inbox, so we only see unanswered messages.

In this tutorial we will use the node-fetch module to make API requests, but you can use another library if you prefer.

```
import fetch from "node-fetch";

const appId = "<APP_ID>";
const secretKey = "<SECRET_KEY>";

const basePath = "https://api.talkjs.com";
const path = basePath + "/v1/" + appId + "/conversations/";
```

This imports the node-fetch module and sets up the URLs you will need to call. Fill in the app ID and secret key with the values from your TalkJS dashboard. Make sure you protect that secret key and never expose it in frontend code – it has full admin access to your TalkJS account.

As a first test of the API, try running a GET request to get all conversations. Add the following to your script below the `const path = ...` line:

```
const response = fetch(path, {
 method: "get",
 headers: {
   "Content-Type": "application/json",
   Authorization: `Bearer ${secretKey}`,
 },
})
 .then((res) => res.json())
 .then((data) => console.log(data));
```

Now run the script. You should get a list of all your conversations:

```
{
  data: [
    {
      createdAt: 1683275536667,
      // ... more fields ...
    },
    // ... more conversations ....
  ]
}
```

Mark conversations as answered

This time, instead of a GET request, we'll use a PUT request to update the conversation data when a sent message event arrives at your local server. The conversation data includes a `custom` field which you can use to add an extra `answered` property.

In this example, we'll assume you are using TalkJS's Roles feature to define support and customer roles for users. You will then see these roles in the `role` field of the user data you receive from the sent message event. Alternatively, you could use the custom data for each user to indicate whether they are a member of the support team, and check that property here instead.

Either way, we'll set an `answered: "true"` property on the conversation if the new message is from support, and an `answered: "false"` property otherwise.

Replace your previous `app.post` method with the following:

```
async function setAnswered(isSupport) {
    return fetch(path + conversationId, {
     method: "put",
     headers: {
       "Content-Type": "application/json",
       Authorization: `Bearer ${secretKey}`,
     },
     body: JSON.stringify({
        answered: isSupport ? "true" : "false"
     }),
  });
}

app.post("/talkjs", async (req, res) => {
  const data = req.body.data;
  const role = data.sender.role;
  const conversationId = data.conversation.id;

  await setAnswered(role === "support");
  await res.status(200).end());
});
```

This method calls the API when the server receives a new message event, and sets the `answered` property to `"true"` if the message is from support and `"false"` otherwise.

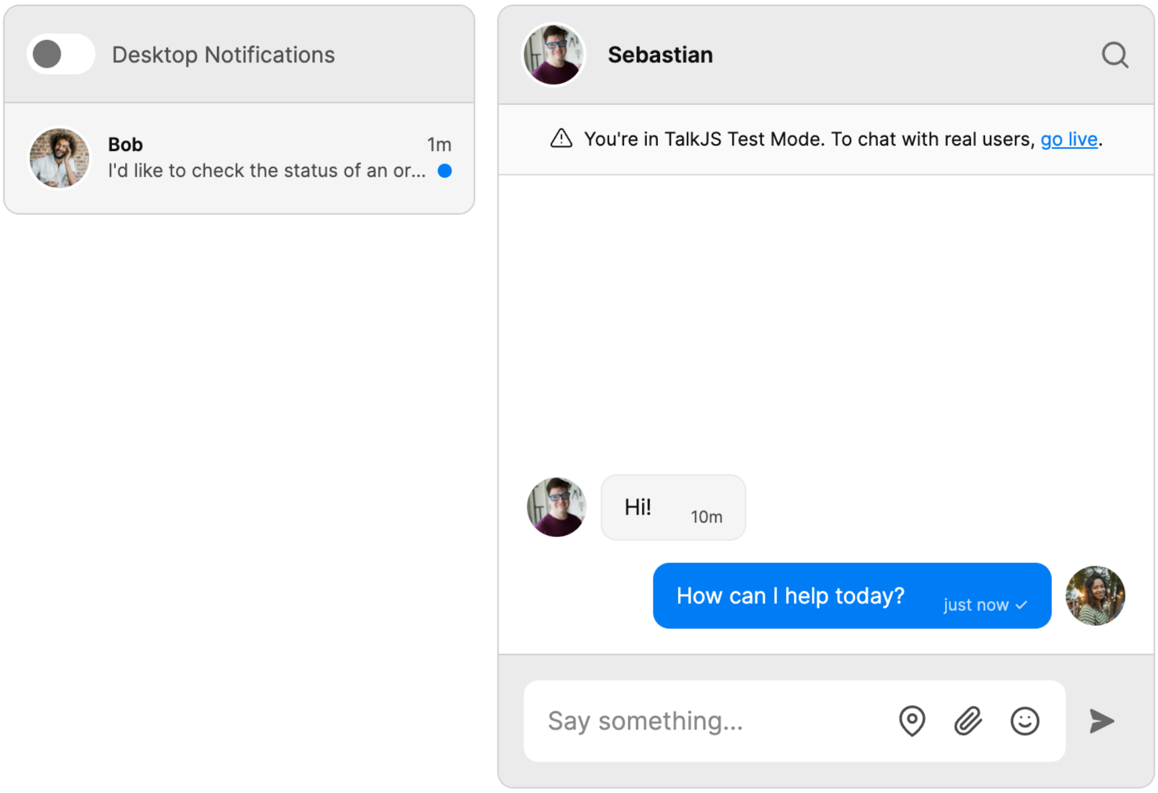
Filter the inbox

Finally, we want to filter conversations so that only unanswered ones appear in the inbox. To do this, use the `setFeedFilter` method.

Add the following line before mounting your inbox, to only show conversations where `custom.answered` is not true. This means that any pre-existing conversations that are missing the `answered` property will still appear:

```
inbox.setFeedFilter({ custom: { answered: ["!=", "true"] } });
```

You should now see only unanswered messages in your conversation list on the left hand side of the screen:


Desktop Notifications

Bob 1m
I'd like to check the status of an or...

Sebastian

You're in TalkJS Test Mode. To chat with real users, go live.

Hi! 10m

How can I help today? just now ✓

Say something...

Conclusion

You now have a working demonstration of how to filter an inbox for unanswered messages! To recap, in this tutorial we have:

- Set up a web server to receive webhook events from the TalkJS server
- Called the REST API to add custom data to mark conversations as answered when a new message is sent from support
- Filtered the chat inbox so that only unanswered messages are displayed

For the full example code for this tutorial, see our Github repo.

If you want to learn more about TalkJS, here are some good places to start:

- The TalkJS Documentation helps you get started with TalkJS
- TalkJS tutorials provide how-to guides for many common TalkJS use cases
- The `talkjs-examples` Github repo has larger complete examples that demonstrate how to integrate with other libraries and frameworks