

Using a SharePoint Communication Site

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1. TERMINOLOGY

General Terms:

Communication Site – a private SharePoint website created for a specific group, with user-friendly web page editing tools that make it easy for group members to modify the site’s pages to “share news, reports, statuses, and other information in a visually compelling format” ([source](#)).

SharePoint – the web-based collaboration tool from Microsoft that the company uses as the platform for its intranet, and for document control, document sharing, and team collaboration purposes. SharePoint is the underlying platform for both the company’s file repository and for its communication sites.

Communication Site-Specific Terms:

Current Navigation – the side menu on a communication site’s pages

Global Navigation – the top (main) menu on a communication site’s pages

Page – a web page. A communication site is a collection of pages.

Section – a part of a page. Specifically, a row with a specific section layout (e.g. with one column, two columns, three columns, etc.). On communication site pages, sections can be added, modified, or deleted to achieve the desired overall page layout.

Web Part – a part of a section of a page. Web parts are the building blocks of a communication site page, and they can be added to, modified in, or deleted from sections to present the desired page content. There are different pre-built web parts for adding text, images, files, videos, and over 35 other types of possible content to a page.

2. BACKGROUND

SharePoint is a robust platform that makes it easy to collaborate and share files and other information centrally and securely. Within SharePoint, a *communication site* is a special feature that offers teams – whether they’re company departments, project functions teams, or project-specific groups – a convenient way to have their own internal website, and to be able to control their site’s appearance and content without needing to know HTML or other web design languages.

By adopting SharePoint communication sites as the preferred way for teams to collaborate, the company moves away from the previous, less secure setup where multiple copies of the same company documents were often saved in a variety of network and computer locations, and shared among team members by email.

3. INSTRUCTIONS

3.1 Overview

Think of a communication site as your team’s own private website, to design and modify as you wish, for the purpose of sharing information and documents within your team. Only those with site *owner* or *member* status will be able to edit the site, and only those with at least *visitor* status will be able to see it.

3.2 To create a new communication site

New communication sites are created by the company's Information Services department. To request the creation of a new communication site:

1. From the company intranet home page, click the **IS** link in the main menu.
2. On the IS home page, click the **Browse categories** button near the top of the page. This opens a drop-down list of choices.
3. From the drop-down list, select **Software & Application Provisioning**.
4. On the Software & Application Provisioning page, click the **SharePoint Service** box. This opens a new SharePoint Service Request window.
5. Use the form in that Request window to fill in the details of the new SharePoint site that you want, making sure to specify that you're requesting a *communication site*. Click the **Submit Request** button to send your request to IS.

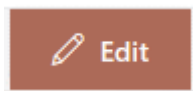
3.3 To modify a communication site's home page

Your new communication site home page will likely start with the "Topic" design, which has a number of *sections* (rows) containing some pre-built *web parts* (the building blocks within each section). Out of the box, the Topic design comes with the Hero, News, Events and Quick Links web parts, and a Comments area at the bottom.

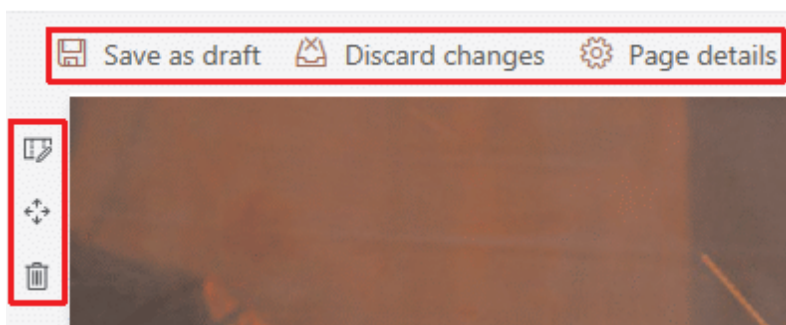
If you are a site member (or owner), you will see an **Edit** button near the top right corner of the home page, which means that you have permission to modify the page's contents. You can replace any of the pre-built sections and web parts with your own preferred layout and content.

To edit the home page:

1. In the top right corner of your communication site's home page, click the **Edit** button.



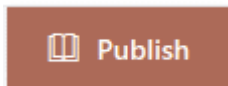
This puts the page into edit mode, changes the **Edit** button's label to **Publish**, and reveals new editing buttons at the top of the page and on the left side of each section:



Additionally, whenever you hover over any web part on the page, a grey band with editing icons appears at the bottom of the web part:



2. Edit the section or web part that you want to change (see below for detailed instructions on editing specific web parts).
3. Once you've finished editing the page, go back to the top and click the **Publish** button to save your changes.

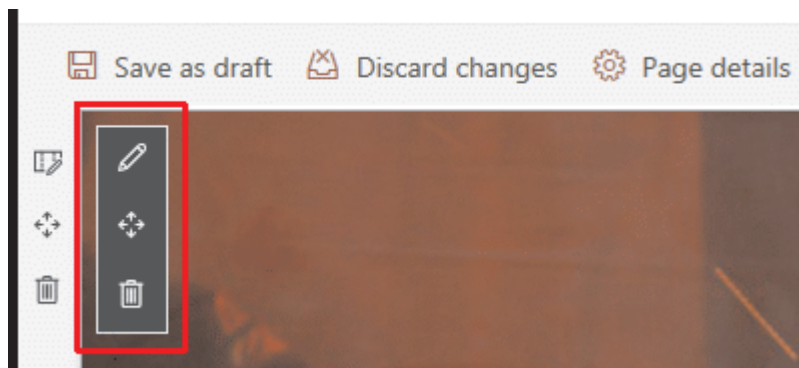


Alternatively, if you don't want to publish the changes that you've made, you can use the links in the top left area to either **Save as draft** (which keeps your changes but does not make them public) or **Discard changes** (which restores the previous version of the page).

3.3.1 To edit the Hero web part

The part at the top of the home page with the five large images arranged in tiles is known as the "Hero" web part. It comes pre-populated with default images, text and links that you change to show your own preferred images and content. To do so:

1. Enter page-editing mode by clicking the **Edit** button at the top of the page.
2. Hover over any of the images to reveal the 3 vertical web part-editing buttons in the top left corner of the Hero web part.



3. Click the top **Edit web part** button (with the pencil icon).
4. In the **Layout options** panel that appears on the right, you can change the number of tiles, or change the arrangement of photos from tiles to layers.
5. Hover over any of the images to reveal a bottom bar with 5 icons that you can click to **Move item**, **Edit details**, **Set focal point**, **Zoom in** and **Zoom out**.



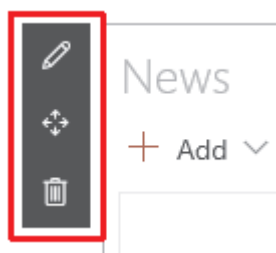
6. Click the **Edit details** (pencil) icon to open the **Link** panel on the right, where you can select a new photo, a new title, and a new link for that image panel.
7. If desired, use the **Set focal point**, **Zoom in** and **Zoom out** icons to fine-tune the appearance of your selected image.
8. If desired, use the **Move item** icon to change the positioning of the image's panel within the Hero layout.
9. Repeat steps 5-9 to make similar changes to the other photos in the Hero web part.
10. When the photos, titles and links of all panels have been set to your satisfaction, click the red **Publish** button to save your changes.

For more detailed instructions, see Microsoft's [Use the Hero web part](#).

3.3.2 To edit the News web part

The News web part provides an area on your home page where you can post news and announcements for team members. It has options for selecting the news source, changing the layout of the news items and applying filters to your news feed. To do so:

1. Enter page-editing mode by clicking the **Edit** button at the top of the page.
2. Scroll down and hover over the News web part to reveal the 3 vertical web part editing buttons in the top left corner.



3. Click the top **Edit web part** button (with the pencil icon). In the News panel that appears on the right, you can set the news source, the layout, and the filters for this web part.
4. To save your changes, click the **Publish** button.

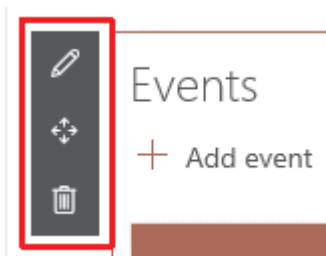
For more detailed instructions, see Microsoft's [Use the News web part on a SharePoint page](#)

3.3.3 To edit the Events web part

The Events web part provides an area for posting event dates relevant to team members. It has options for selecting the layout and the number and type of events displayed. To do so:

1. Enter page-editing mode by clicking the **Edit** button at the top of the page.

2. Scroll down and hover over the Events web part to reveal the 3 vertical web part editing buttons in the top left corner.



3. Click the top **Edit web part** button (with the pencil icon). In the Events panel that appears on the right, you can set the source, the events list, the category, the date range, the layout and the number of events to show at a time.
4. To save your changes, click the **Publish** button.

For more detailed instructions, see Microsoft's [Use the Events web part](#).

3.3.4 To edit the Quick Links web part

The Quick Links web part provides an area where you can 'pin' your team's most important links to other pages, documents or sites. It has options for selecting the layout and appearance of the links. To do so:

1. Enter page-editing mode by clicking the **Edit** button at the top of the page.
2. Scroll down and hover over the Quick Links web part to reveal the 3 vertical web part editing buttons in the top left corner.



3. Click the top **Edit web part** button (with the pencil icon). In the Quick Links panel that appears on the right, you can choose a layout (compact, filmstrip, grid, button, list or tiles) and an icon size.
4. Hover over any of the links in the Quick Links web part to reveal a bottom bar with 3 icons that you can click to **Edit**, **Reorder** or **Remove** that link in your layout.
5. Click the **Edit** (pencil) icon to change the address, the title and the thumbnail of the link.
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 for each of the other links in this web part.
7. To save your changes, click the **Publish** button.

For more detailed instructions, see Microsoft's [Use the Quick Links web part](#).

3.3.5 To disable or enable comments

Depending on its settings, your communication site may have a Comments area at the bottom of each page. This feature can be turned off or on. To do so:

1. Enter page-editing mode by clicking the **Edit** button at the top of the page.
2. Scroll down to the Comments area at the bottom of the page.
3. To disable and hide comments on the page, toggle the Comments switch to Off.



4. To enable and show comments on the page, toggle the Comments switch to On.



5. To save your changes, click the **Publish** button.

3.4 To add, move or remove a section

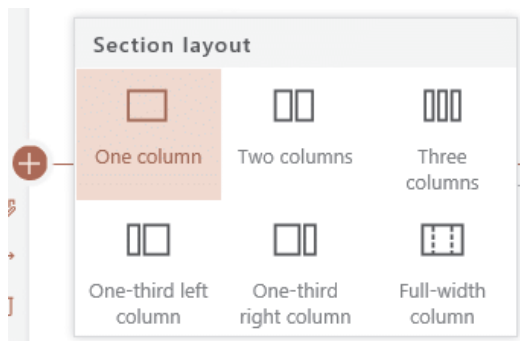
Your communication site home page isn't restricted to the default layout that it starts with. You can easily add, move or remove sections and web parts to create your own custom layout.

3.4.1 To add a section

1. Enter page-editing mode by clicking the **Edit** button at the top of the page.
2. Hover over the thin horizontal dotted line above or below an existing section. When you do, a red circle with a "+" will appear on the left side of the line.



3. Click the "+" (or anywhere on the horizontal line). This opens a **Section layout** window.



4. Click to choose the column number or layout that you want the new section to have. This inserts a new empty section below the line, with the layout that you selected.

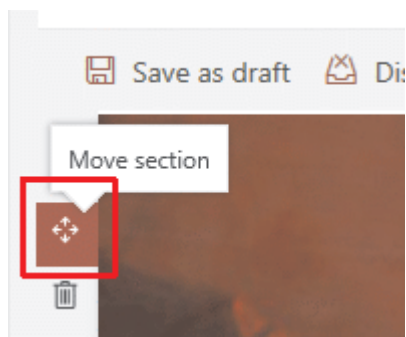


5. In the top centre of each column in the new section, there is a grey circle with a “+” that you can click on to add a new web part to that column.
6. When you’ve added all the web parts to every column of your new section, save your changes by clicking the **Publish** button.

For more detailed instructions, see Microsoft’s [Add or remove sections and columns on a page](#).

3.4.2 To move a section

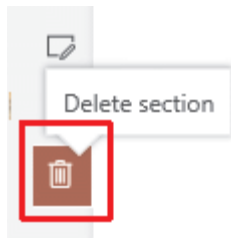
1. Enter page-editing mode by clicking the **Edit** button at the top of the page.
2. On the left side of the section that you want to move, locate the **Move section** icon, which highlights when you hover over it.



3. Click and drag the **Move section** icon to move the entire section up or down on the page, and release the mouse button to place the section in its new location.
4. To save your changes, click the **Publish** button.

3.4.3 To remove a section

1. Enter page-editing mode by clicking the **Edit** button at the top of the page.
2. On the left side of the section that you want to remove, locate the **Delete section** button, which turns red when you hover over it.



3. Click the **Delete section** button. This opens a **Delete Confirmation** window asking you if you're sure you want to delete the section and all of its contents. If you are, click **Yes**.
4. To save your changes, click the **Publish** button.

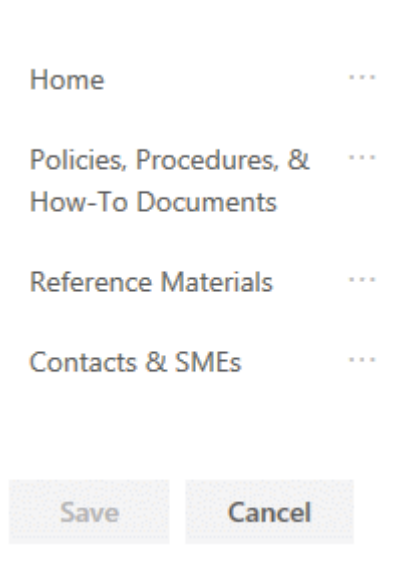
3.5 To change the top menu

If you want to modify the site's global navigation, you can change the links that appear in the main menu. To do so:

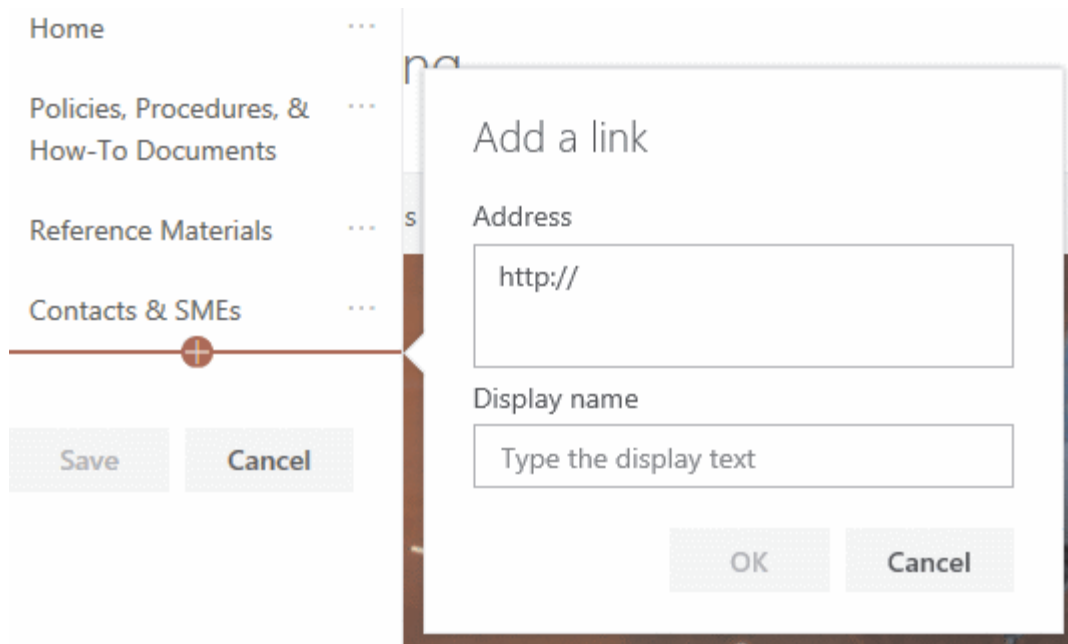
1. Click the Edit link at the right of the top menu.



2. This opens a column on the left side of the page that lists each of the current menu items as a list.



3. To change one of the existing links, click the name of the menu item to change its address or display name, and click the three dots beside the name to **Edit**, **Move up**, **Move down**, **Make sub-link** or **Remove** the link.
4. To add a new link, hover over the top or bottom edge of an existing link to reveal a red line and circle with a "+". Click the line to open the **Add a link** window and enter the address and display name of the new menu item.



Click OK to close the Add a link window, and Save to close the left column. Your changes will now be shown in the top menu.

For more detailed instructions, see Microsoft's [Customize the navigation on your SharePoint site](#).

4. FURTHER RECOMMENDED READING

Microsoft offers detailed instructions on how to use SharePoint communication sites. For more information on the various steps described in this document, see:

- [What is a SharePoint communication site?](#)
- [Add or remove sections and columns on a page](#)
- [Using web parts on SharePoint pages](#)
- [Use the Hero web part](#)
- [Use the News web part on a SharePoint page](#)
- [Use the Events web part](#)
- [Use the Quick Links web part](#)
- [Add a page to a communication site](#)
- [Customize the navigation on your SharePoint site](#)