



Windows SharePoint Services



Businesses who wish to improve productivity and give employees quick and easy access to the many different forms of information they need in order to work effectively together will benefit from this flexible technology.

FEATURES & BENEFITS

Get users up to speed quickly

Integration with familiar tools, including Microsoft Office programs, makes it easy for users to get up to speed quickly. For example, users can create workspaces, post and edit documents, and view and update calendars in SharePoint, all whilst working within Microsoft Office files and programs.



Easy to use tools for teams

Provide forums for brainstorming ideas, building knowledge bases or simply gathering information in an easy-to-edit format. There are also templates for blogs (weblogs) and wikis (web sites that can be quickly edited by team members – no special technical knowledge required).



Help teams stay on task

A variety of communication features let users know when actions are required or important changes have been made to existing information or documentation – including announcements, alerts, surveys, discussion boards and RSS.



Stay productive while mobile

Synchronization through Outlook 2007 enables users to manage documents, lists, calendars, contacts, tasks and discussion boards offline and then synchronize changes when reconnected to the network.

INTRODUCTION

Windows SharePoint Services is a versatile technology included FREE with Microsoft Windows Server 2003 that enables businesses of all sizes to increase the efficiency of business processes and improve team productivity. It enables people to work together in browser-based 'workspaces', allowing them to publish, store, share and keep track of information, workflows and documents. With a familiar, Web-based interface and close integration with everyday tools including Microsoft Office, Windows SharePoint Services gives people access to the documents and information they need.

Tech OP Ltd presents here 3 everyday scenarios to demonstrate how Windows SharePoint Services can make things easier for both your business and your users.

SCENARIO 1: FILE & DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Today, most companies organise files by using a folder structure and giving files descriptive names. Over time, it gets harder and harder to find a file when you need it:

The folder structure may be unintuitive or may have become outdated for current business needs:

- some files will be saved in inappropriate locations;
- copies of files may often be saved multiple locations;
- users often save copies of files on their own PC to make them easier to find;
- it takes longer to find files stored in the 'wrong' location.

There is nothing that will force another user to use the same file name every time:

- users waste time opening files to check they are the ones they need.

As you can see, the traditional folder structure can easily lead to file 'chaos', making workers less productive and more inefficient. For example, if there could be several copies of different versions of the same file in your system, then:

- how can you be sure you're looking at the latest version of a file?
- that all copies of a file have been removed when you delete a file?

You could invest in an expensive Document Management System but Windows SharePoint Services has built-in document management features that address all these as well as other issues. For example:

Built-in version history automatically keeps track of updates of files;

Notifications send e-mails when specific files are modified;

Custom file properties describe any type of information you want about files;

Workflow create a workflow that triggers when a new file is created or a file property is changed e.g. anytime a quote is created, the sales manager is informed;

Approval enforce a rule that all new files must be approved before going public;

Custom views sort / present files how you want; views can be personal or publicly available;

File locking lock a file for any period of time, whether it is open or not;

Document workspace automatically make a copy of a file and build a 'workspace' around it. This workspace can then have one or more users who are allowed to work on the file. When they are done, the new version is published back to its original location;

Security document level security can be set if necessary e.g. if you remove the 'Read' permission of a file, users will not be able to see it at all;

Undelete a file can be restored by the user directly.

FEATURES & BENEFITS

Solutions tailored for your business

The features available in Windows SharePoint Services provide a cost-effective foundation for creating Web-based business applications that can scale easily to meet the changing and growing needs of your business.



Customised workspaces

Using Windows SharePoint Services, you can provide custom scenarios for building workflows that address specific business processes or sets of tasks.



Secure your business information

With services for controlling access to information, policies can be set that enable security control to be set as 'deep' as down to individual items such as a single document.



Empower managers

Enable managers to initiate and control workspaces and tasks as well as manage the participation and access of others, all within pre-set parameters that will not compromise security.

SCENARIO 2: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Most projects share the following types of information among their members:

- Chart** a list of project tasks with start & due dates, displayed in a graphical calendar view;
- Documents** such as Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations etc;
- Members** a list of all the members in the project;
- Calendar** a list of events, such as meetings, conferences and project milestones;
- Contacts** a list of external contacts such as clients, partners and consultants;
- Tasks** a list of things to do, assigned to project members;
- E-mails** e.g. containing questions, status, and comments regarding the project.

The problem is that without specific project management tools, all this information is stored in several different places. Documents and files are stored in folders. A list of members may exist in an e-mail distribution list. Calendar events, contacts and tasks could be in public Outlook folders. E-mail is stored in each member's personal Inbox.

Each project member needs to know and remember exactly where each type of information is stored. If they do not, valuable time is wasted searching for the information. If a new member joins the project, you must explain to them where everything is stored. To make sure that the new member understands what has been going on, you must forward a copy of all e-mail related to this project - if you can find it.

To solve these problems, you need something that can store all this information in a single place - or at least make all the information available through a single source, which is what SharePoint does. You can create a SharePoint workspace for the project, add members to it, copy files and e-mails to it, give it an email address for members to use, give it its own calendar, task list, contact list and so forth.

SCENARIO 3: MANAGING MEETINGS

The most common complaints about meetings are that they are a waste of time, boring, too long, that participants are unprepared and that it's hard to follow up on tasks and activities afterwards. Even a small step forward to make meetings more effective is important. With SharePoint, you will be able to change meetings into something more positive.

Thanks to the integration of Outlook and SharePoint, you can simultaneously send a meeting invitation, book a conference room, and create a meeting workspace where you can host all the information regarding the meeting, including the following:

Agenda

Participants SharePoint automatically creates a list of all invited participants. The list is automatically updated so that everyone can see who will come or why someone declined;

Tasks a list of all the tasks agreed upon during the meeting;

Decisions a list of all the decisions agreed upon during the meeting;

Document Library for files with information that will prepare the participants for the meeting, as well as files created as a result of the meeting.

All this information is available to each participant directly when they receive an invitation. This means that the participant can easily access the agenda and any other documentation before the meeting takes place. If needed, the participant could amend these documents or add their own documents. When the actual meeting takes place, you could display the meeting workspace so that everyone can see it. No one will need a printed copy of the agenda and all related documentation will be instantly available. Any activities, tasks, or decisions that are agreed upon during the meeting can be entered directly onto the meeting workspace, so that no minutes are required. This all makes the meeting more interesting and engaging. If a participant afterwards needs to see what was decided in the meeting, they can simply look at the meeting workspace again.

For more information about Windows SharePoint Services, contact: