KNOWLEDGE BASE ARTICLE

How to Add and Configure the Discussions Web Part

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Overview

This article explains how to place the **Vitextra Discussions web part** on a modern **SharePoint Online** page, create or select a board on first run, and tune the web part in its property pane. It assumes the Discussions package has already been deployed to the **App Catalog** of your **tenant** and, if you use a tenant App Catalog, that the app has been added to the **site**.

Tip

If the web part is not yet available on your site, deploy it first - see KB10035. How to Install a Vitextra Product in SharePoint Online and KB10361. Tenant App Catalog vs. Site Collection App Catalog: Where to Deploy Vitextra Apps. Discussions requests no **Microsoft Graph** API permissions, so there is nothing to approve in the **SharePoint admin center**.

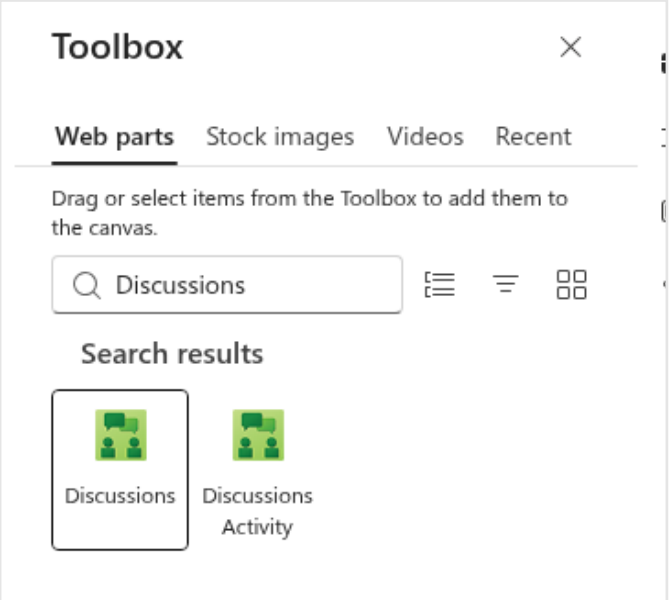
Prerequisites

- To edit the page you need to be able to edit pages on the site - a member or an owner.
- To create the **first board on a site** you need the **Manage Lists** permission, because the web part creates its lists at that moment. Site owners and users with the standard *Edit* permission level have it; *Contribute* does not include it.
- Once the lists and a board exist, any page editor can add the web part to another page and select the existing board.

Adding the web part to a page

1 Open the page where you want the board and switch it to edit mode with **Edit** in the top-right corner.
2 Hover over the area where the web part should go and click the round **+** (Add a new web part) button.
3 In the toolbox, start typing **Discussions** and select the **Discussions** web part from the **Communication and collaboration** group. Do not confuse it with **Discussions Activity**, the feed of recent topics.

The web part is added to the page and, because it is not yet linked to a board, shows the **Not Configured** screen.

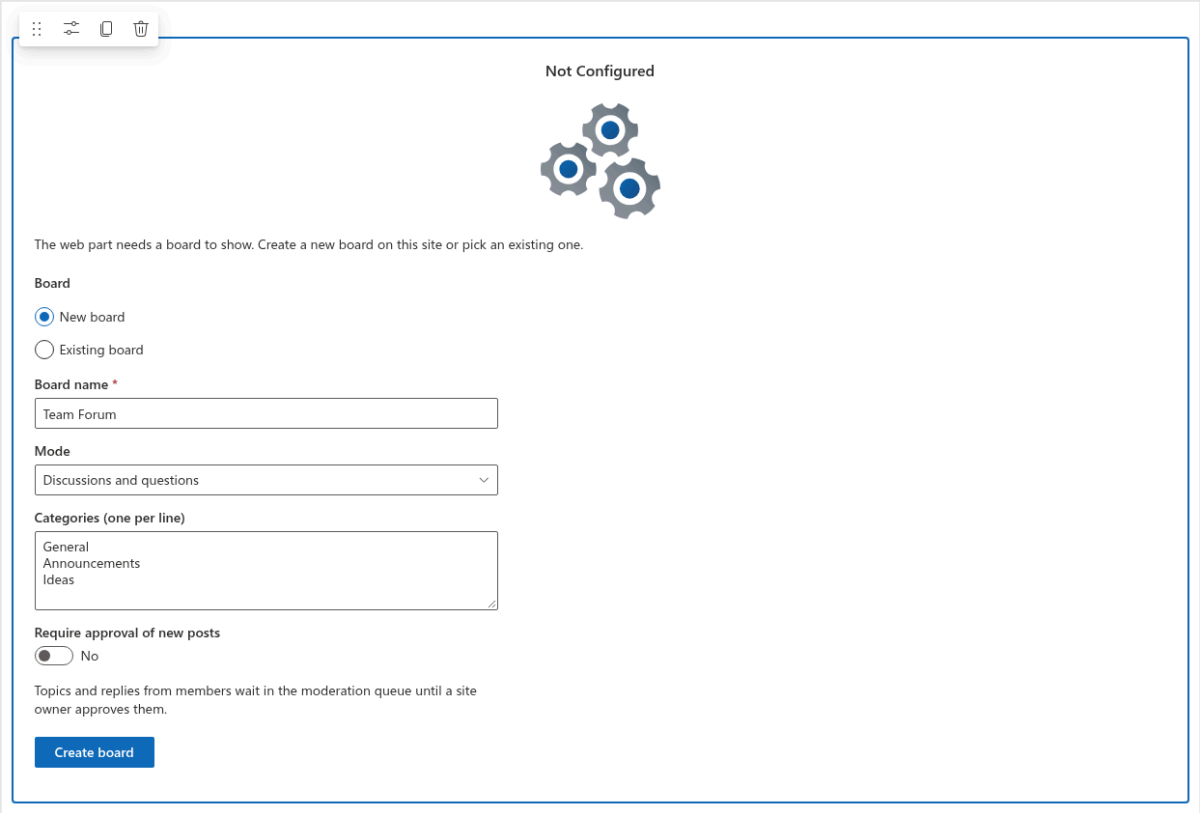


Adding the Discussions web part

First run: create or select a board

The **Not Configured** screen explains that the web part needs a board to show and offers two options under **Board**:

- **New board** - fill in the **Board name**, pick the **Mode** (*Discussions and questions*, *Discussions only* or *Questions and answers only*), optionally **list** the **Categories (one per line)**, decide whether to **Require approval of new posts**, and click **Create board**. The board is created and the web part switches to it immediately.
- **Existing board** - select a board that was created earlier on this site from the **Board** drop-down and click **Use board**. This option is preselected when the site already has boards; when it has none, only **New board** is available.



Creating a board on the Not Configured screen

The board settings - mode, categories and approval - are explained in KB10392. Creating Your First Board: Modes, Categories and Approval.

Warning

If the site has no Discussions lists yet and you do not have the **Manage Lists** permission, the web part shows *You do not have permission to create lists on this site. Ask the site owner to set up the board.* Ask a site owner to create the first board; afterwards you can link the web part to it with **Existing board**.

What is created on the site

When the first board is created, the web part provisions four site-level lists and one library and links them to the web part: **Discussions Boards**, **Discussions Topics**, **Discussions Posts**, **Discussions Subscriptions** and the **document library Discussions Assets** (inline images). The lists are created with the names of the user interface language of the person who creates them, with versioning enabled, and appear in **Site contents**. All boards of the site share the same lists, so a second board does not create new ones.

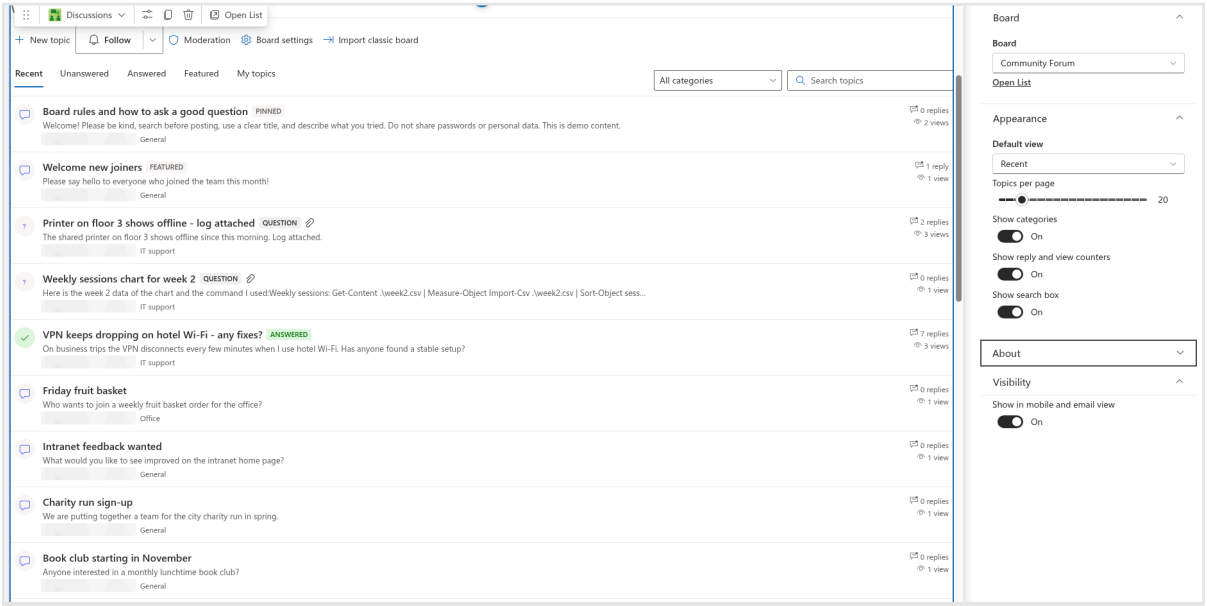
The web part recognises the lists by the ids of their marker columns rather than by

name, so you may rename them later. If the site already has lists created by an earlier version of Discussions without the subscriptions list or the assets library, the web part completes them: when a moderator (a user with the **Manage Lists** permission) opens a page whose web part was configured before those lists existed, the missing lists and columns are created automatically - edit mode is not required. Board setup does the same: **Create board** and **Use board** always bring the lists up to date for a user with **Manage Lists**, so columns introduced by later versions are added too. Other users only look up the existing lists.

On a page that is only being viewed and has no board selected, visitors see a short message asking an editor to open the page in edit mode and complete the setup.

Configuring the web part

Select the web part and click the **pencil (Edit web part)** icon to open the property pane. The settings are organized into three groups.



The property pane of the Discussions web part

Board

- **Board** - the board shown by this web part. The drop-down lists the first 500 boards of the site, sorted by title, so one page can show *IT Help Desk* and another *HR Questions* while both use the same lists.
- **Open List** - opens the **Discussions Topics** list in a new tab. The same command is available in the toolbar of the web part in edit mode.

Appearance

- **view** - the view that opens first: **Recent**, **Unanswered**, **Answered**, **Featured** or **My**

topics. The default is *Recent*. For a Q&A board it is common to open *Unanswered* so that experts see open questions first. On a board in the *Discussions only* mode the *Unanswered* and *Answered* views are hidden.
- **Topics per page** - how many topics are loaded at once, from 5 to 100 in steps of 5 (default 20). A **Load more** button fetches the next page.
- **Show categories** - shows the category drop-down above the list and the category of each topic (on by default). The drop-down appears only when the board has categories.
- **Show reply and view counters** - shows the number of replies and views next to each topic (on by default).
- **Show search box** - shows the search box that searches topic titles (on by default).

About

Shows the license status, product version and tenant information, and offers the trial and activation actions.

Changing the board itself

The property pane selects *which* board is shown; it does not change the board itself. Moderators - users with the **Manage Lists** permission, usually site owners - change the board in the web part: click **Board settings** in the command bar above the list of topics (next to **New topic** and **Moderation**). The **Board settings** panel contains **Board name** (required), **Description**, **Mode**, **Categories (one per line)** and **Require approval of new posts**. Click **Save** to apply the changes at once, or **Cancel** to close the panel without saving. The page does not have to be in edit mode.

Note

The settings of a board are stored as an item of the **Discussions Boards** list. The **Board settings** panel is the usual way to change them; editing the item directly in the list still works as an alternative. What each setting means is explained in KB10392. Creating Your First Board: Modes, Categories and Approval; the full list of settings is in KB10425. Discussions Web Part Settings Reference.

Editing the web part title

As with standard **SharePoint** web parts, Discussions has an editable title above the board. Click the **Web Part Title** area while the page is in edit mode and type your heading - for example, *IT Help Desk* or *Ask the HR team*.

When you are done, **Publish** (or **Republish**) the page. Members of the site then see the **New topic** button and can start the first topic; site owners also see **Moderation** and **Board settings**, and in edit mode **Import classic board**.

Tip

To show the latest topics of the board on the home page of the site, add the **Discussions Activity** web part - see KB10415. Showing Recent Discussions on Any Page with the Discussions Activity Web Part. To open the same board in **Microsoft Teams**, see KB10393. How to Add Discussions to Microsoft Teams. If the web part shows *Not Configured*, *The selected board was not found* or a permission message, see KB10429. Troubleshooting Discussions: Not Configured, Board Not Found and Permission Errors.

Learn more about the product: *https://vitextra.com/en/products/discussions*

Terms

App Catalog
The App Catalog is a special SharePoint site that stores apps for SharePoint, Teams, and other Microsoft 365 services. Global or SharePoint administrators can upload and manage applications from the AppSource marketplace, custom-developed apps, or third-party apps for the organization's internal use. There can be only one tenant-level App Catalog in a tenant; site collection app catalogs can be added for individual site collections.

Document Library
A special type of list that stores files, folders, and information about them. Like a list, a document library can contain personal or shared views, item-level permissions, and so on.

List
A list is a storage unit in SharePoint. A list can contain columns of different types, content types, and views. A document library is a special type of list and therefore inherits the functionality of a list.

Microsoft Graph
Microsoft Graph is a REST API secured with Microsoft Entra ID (formerly Azure Active Directory) and OAuth 2.0. It provides a single endpoint for accessing data and services in Microsoft 365, such as SharePoint, Outlook, OneDrive, Teams, and others.

Microsoft Teams
Microsoft Teams is a chat-based collaboration platform for business communications with features for online meetings, live events, and document sharing.

SharePoint
SharePoint is a web-based collaboration platform that provides content management, document management, workflow applications, search, and other tools that empower employees and teams to work together. SharePoint is also a secure place to store, organize, and access shared information.

SharePoint Admin Center
The SharePoint admin center is the web portal where SharePoint administrators

manage sites, sharing and access settings, the App Catalog, storage, and other SharePoint Online settings for the tenant.

SharePoint Online
The cloud version of SharePoint, a web-based collaboration platform within Microsoft 365 that provides an extensive range of capabilities to store, share, and manage the digital information, content, and knowledge of an organization.

Site
A SharePoint site is a container for information within the SharePoint platform. Sites typically offer features such as document libraries, lists, calendars, discussion boards, and workflows, facilitating collaboration, communication, and document management within teams or across departments. Sites can be customized and configured to suit the specific needs and workflows of an organization.

Tenant
A Microsoft 365 tenant is a dedicated instance of Microsoft 365 services. The tenant holds the organization's information, such as users and domains (Microsoft Entra ID), configurations, subscriptions, and services. An organization receives a tenant by signing up for Microsoft 365 services.

Web Part
A web part is a primary building block of functionality or content placed on a SharePoint page. Some web parts support customization, such as configuring the web part or changing its appearance.