KNOWLEDGE BASE ARTICLE

How Notifications Work in Discussions: Subscriptions, Mentions and Power Automate

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Overview

Discussions splits notifications into two parts. The **web part** records who wants to hear about what: it keeps a **list** of subscriptions, lets users follow a board or a topic with a chosen frequency and marks the people mentioned in a post. The **delivery** of e-mail is left to a **Power Automate** flow that the **site** owner runs in their own **tenant**. The web part itself never sends mail and never asks for the `Mail.Send` permission or any other **Microsoft Graph** permission; the data the flow needs is in ordinary **SharePoint** lists on the site.

This article describes that contract: what the web part guarantees in the lists, and what a flow has to do with it.

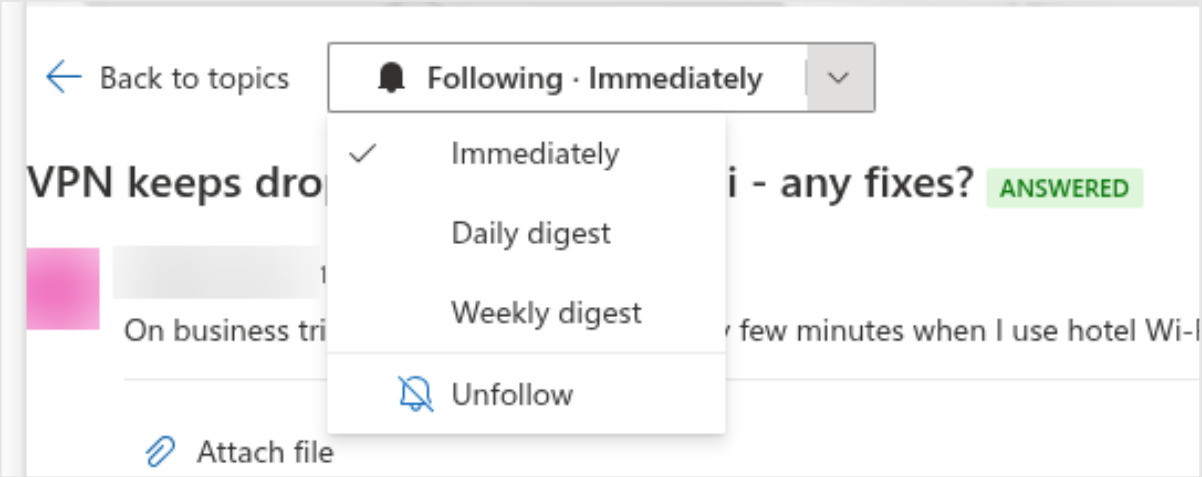
Warning

In version 26.10.2 the Power Automate flow template is not shipped. The web part saves subscriptions and mentions as described below, but no e-mail is sent until a flow exists in your tenant. The contract in this article is what such a flow is built on; a ready-to-import template and its setup article are planned for a later release.

What the web part does

Following a board or a topic

Users who can post (the **Add Items** permission on the site, included in Contribute and Edit) see a **Follow** button in the command bar of the board and in the header of every topic. One click follows with the frequency **Immediately**; the drop-down part of the button offers **Immediately**, **Daily digest** and **Weekly digest**, and **Unfollow**. When a user follows, the button reads **Following** with the selected frequency. The author of a new topic is subscribed to it automatically with **Immediately**. Read-only visitors have no button, because they cannot write to the subscriptions list.



The Follow button with its frequency menu

Each follow is one item in the **Discussions Subscriptions** list, one per user and target: following the same topic again with another frequency updates the item instead of adding a second one, and **Unfollow** deletes it. Turning notifications off therefore means deleting one's subscriptions; there is no separate "mute" flag. The user guide is in KB10404. Following Boards and Topics: Subscriptions and Digest Frequency.

Mentions

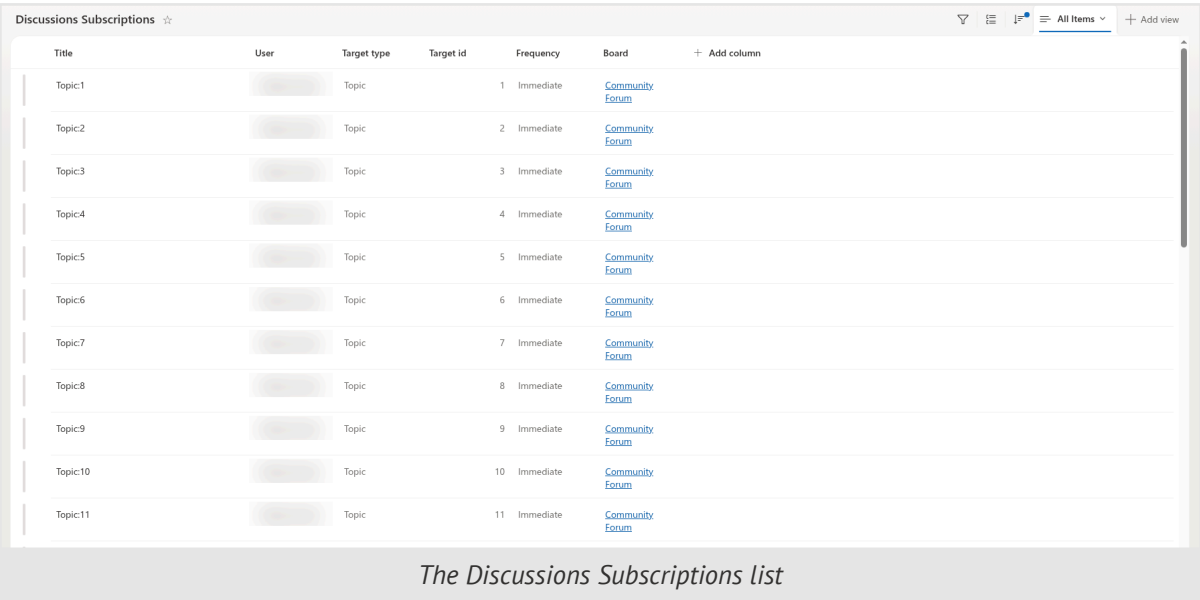
When a user types `@` in the editor and picks a person, the web part inserts a link into the body of the post in the form `<a href="mailto:…" data-mention-id="{siteUserId}">@Name</a>` and, at the same time, adds the person to the **Mentions** person column of the topic or reply. The column is the signal for a flow: it does not have to parse HTML to find out who was mentioned. Mentions can be edited together with the post; the column is rewritten with every save. See KB10403. Using @Mentions in Discussions.

The Discussions Subscriptions list

Column	Internal name	Value
User	`VtxUser`	The subscriber (person column)
Target type	`VtxTargetType`	`Board` or `Topic`
Target id	`VtxTargetId`	The id of the board item in **Discussions Boards** or of the topic item in **Discussions Topics**

Column	Internal name	Value
Frequency	`VtxFrequency`	`Immediate`, `Daily` or `Weekly`
Board	`VtxBoard`	Lookup to the board, also for topic subscriptions, so that all subscriptions of one board can be read with one filter
Title	`Title`	`Board:{id}` or `Topic:{id}`, for readability in list views

The values of the choice columns are stored in English regardless of the interface language; the display names of the columns follow the language of the person who created the lists. The list lives on the same site as the board and inherits the site permissions, which is why posting rights are required to follow.



The Discussions Subscriptions list

Events a flow reacts to

All events are ordinary item events of the two content lists; a flow uses the standard SharePoint triggers *When an item is created* and *When an item is created or modified*.

Event	List	Condition
New topic	**Discussions Topics**	Item created with **Approval status** =

Event	List	Condition
		`Approved`
Topic approved by a moderator	**Discussions Topics**	Item modified and **Approval status** changed to `Approved`
New reply	**Discussions Posts**	Item created with **Approval status** = `Approved`
Reply approved	**Discussions Posts**	Item modified and **Approval status** changed to `Approved`
Best answer accepted	**Discussions Topics**	**Accepted post** changed from `0` to the id of a reply
Mention	Both lists	**Mentions** contains users
Item waiting for moderation	Both lists	Item created with **Approval status** = `Pending`

On a board without approval every new item is created as `Approved`; on a board with **Require approval of new posts**, items from members are created as `Pending` and become `Approved` when a moderator approves them, which is the moment the subscribers should be told. Rejected items never produce a notification.

Note

The lists can be renamed by the site owner, because the web part recognises them by column ids. A flow should therefore reference the lists by their **id** (GUID), not by title, and should read the column values by internal name (`VtxApprovalStatus`, `VtxMentions`, …).

Who receives what

The recipient rules of the contract:

1 **New topic** - the subscribers of the board: items with **Target type** = `Board` and **Target id** = the **Board** of the topic.

2 **New reply** - the subscribers of the topic (**Target type** = `Topic`, **Target id** = the **Topic** of the reply) plus the subscribers of the board of that topic. The author of the reply is excluded.
3 **Best answer** - the author of the accepted reply and the subscribers of the topic.
4 **Mention** - the users in the **Mentions** column of the item. They are notified regardless of any subscription and its frequency; a mention cannot be switched off by the mentioned person.
5 **Waiting for moderation** - the members of the site owners group, who are the moderators of the board.

Frequencies

- **Immediate** - a flow with the trigger *When an item is created or modified* sends one e-mail per event to the subscribers with this frequency.
- **Daily** and **Weekly** - a scheduled flow collects the topics whose **Last activity** falls into the period and sends one summary per subscriber. A reply updates the **Last activity** of its topic, so a digest built on topics covers new replies as well.

Links in the e-mail

A topic opens through the page that hosts the Discussions web part with the query parameter `?topic={Id}`, where `{Id}` is the id of the item in **Discussions Topics**. The web part does not store the address of its page anywhere in the lists, so the page address is a parameter of the flow. The same deep link is used by the Discussions Activity web part and is described in KB10407. Sharing a Link to a Topic in Discussions (Deep Links).

What a flow has to do

Summarised, a delivery flow built on this contract:

- runs in the context of a site owner or a shared mailbox of your tenant - the sending identity is yours, not Vitextra's;
- triggers on the item events of **Discussions Topics** and **Discussions Posts** listed above, by list id;
- reads **Discussions Subscriptions** filtered by **Board** (and **Target type** / **Target id**) to resolve the recipients, and the **Mentions** column of the item for mentioned users;
- excludes the author of the item and de-duplicates a person who is both subscribed and mentioned;
- builds the link from its own page-address parameter and the topic id;
- for digests, runs on a schedule and groups the topics by subscriber.

Tip

Because the subscriptions and mentions are plain list data, the same contract works for channels other than e-mail - a Teams chat message or an Adaptive Card sent by the flow uses the same recipients and the same link. Only the final action of the flow changes.

Terms

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.

Power Automate
Microsoft Power Automate is a cloud-based service that allows users to create automated workflows between applications and services. It enables the automation of repetitive tasks and processes, such as data collection, notifications, and approvals, without the need for extensive coding knowledge.

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.

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.