



## SharePoint Online Hub Sites

<b>What does this guide cover?</b>	SharePoint Online Hub sites, their purpose and how they fit into your SharePoint Online site networks and 'flat' site structures
<b>Who is it aimed at?</b>	SharePoint Online Site Network Administrators and Business Owners

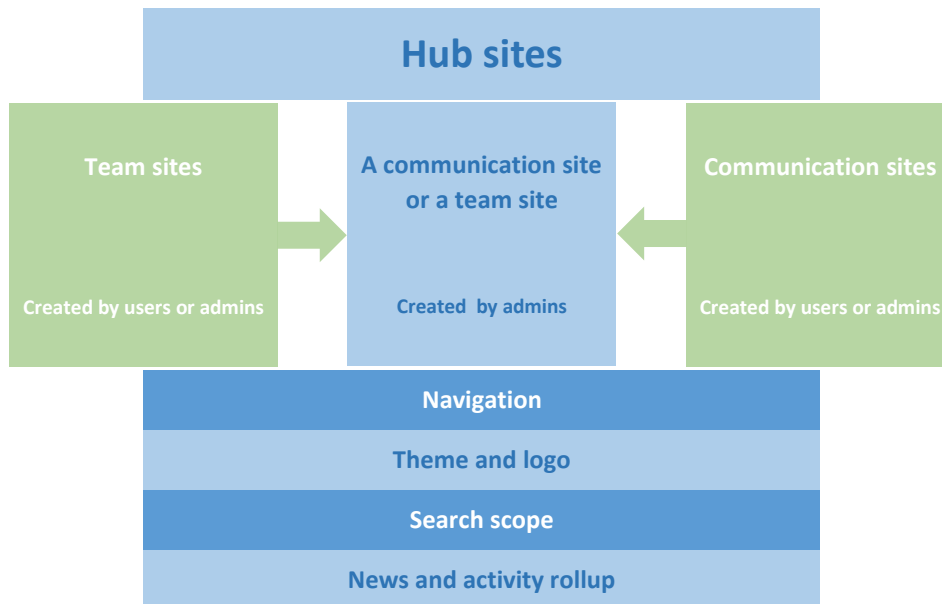
### Introduction

This document introduces the new SharePoint Online site type called the "Hub" site. Hubs are a useful way of interconnecting SharePoint Online sites with time-saving and automated features to assist in building an intranet in modern SharePoint.

### First of all, do I need a Hub?

Hub sites are not required to set up a site network in SharePoint Online. They offer functionality that binds together a site network but they are not necessary in a flat site architecture.

This [Microsoft technical article](#) explains how the three types of building blocks in SharePoint Online (Team, Comms and Hub sites) work together.



	Team site	Comms site	Hub Site
<b>Objective</b>	Collaborate	Communicate	Connect
Content authors	Site Owner(s) & Members	Site Owner(s)	SNA
Examples	Project team working together	Policies / intranet	Dept or college portal

# How do Nexus365 SharePoint Online Hub Sites differ from ‘standard’ Office365 ones?

We offer Hub sites “Out of the box” with just two minor changes:

- 1) We discourage the use of subsites in Modern site architecture, so any articles referring to the creation of, or the support of subsite creation in a Hub site should be discounted
- 2) Site Network Administrators (SNAs) usually control Hub sites, but will not be able to create their own sites from Hubs as this feature has been disabled, to ensure that all site requests go through the [Oxford Service Manager \(OSM\) system online](#) and adhere to the correct PRAS Structure / Naming conventions the University uses

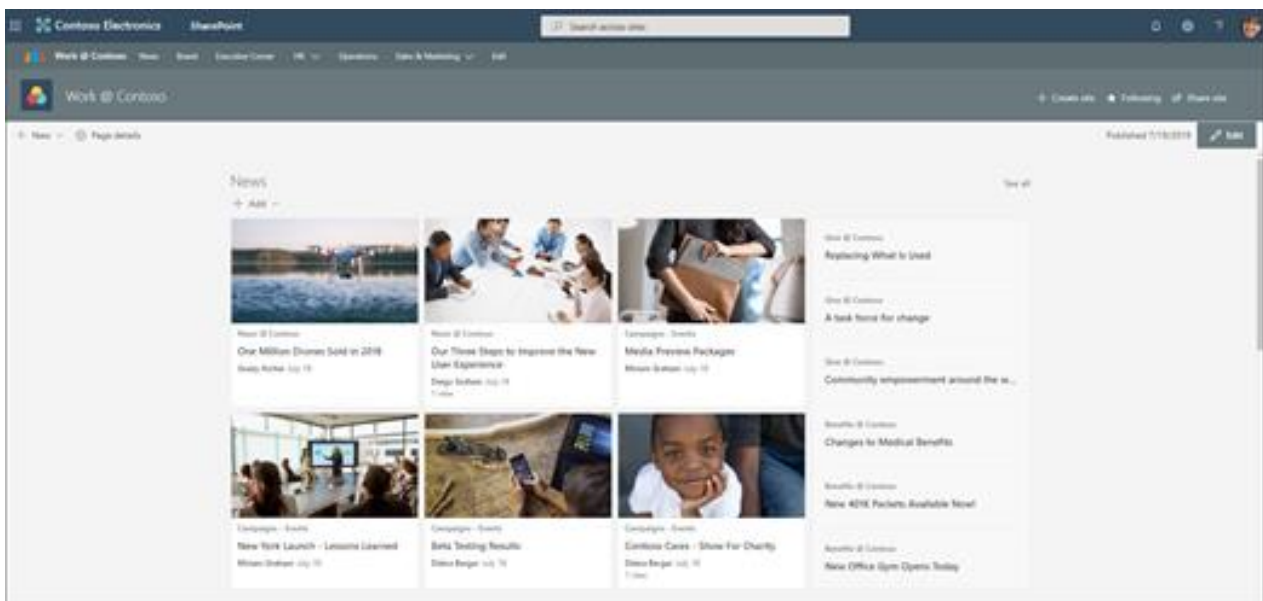
## What is a Hub site?

A Hub site is actually just a standard SharePoint Online site, and can be a [Communications Site](#) or a [Team Site](#).

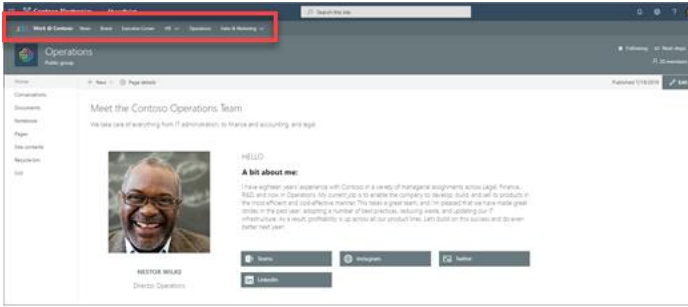
Once a Hub Site is requested through the [Oxford Service Manager \(OSM\) system online](#), we will create the site and nominate it as a Hub Site for you. Hubs are usually controlled by the Site Network Administrator, and SNAs are the only people who can join or detach other SharePoint sites to or from their Hubs. At any time, the SNA can also nominate other SharePoint Online “Power Users” in their Unit or Department to have the ability to join or detach sites to Hubs too if they need to delegate this task.

## What are the key features of a Hub site?

The key features of Hubs are shared navigation, aggregation of content from “member” sites joined to the Hub, common search across the Hub and all “member” sites, and a consistent look and feel for Hubs and all “member” sites.



## Shared Hub Navigation



The Site Network Administrator can make changes to the “Top Bar” navigation in a Hub. This will instantly be reflected in the “Top Bar” Navigation of all “Member” sites automatically. This is great for building up a site network of interconnected sites very quickly and having a navigation point back to your hub all managed from one place.

### Search commonality for the Hub and its “member” sites

Searching using the Hub’s “Search” box will allow you to search across the Hub and all associated sites. Permissions in “member” sites will be honoured, so users will only see search items that they are allowed to see and will only be able to access content and links that they are allowed to access.

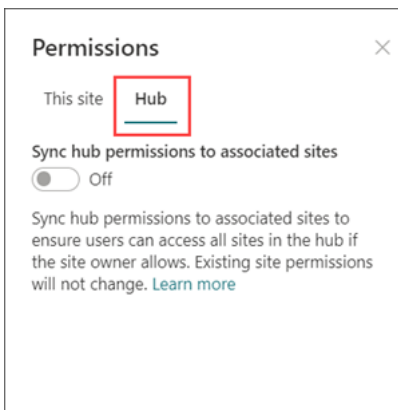
### Aggregation of content

Hubs can “pull in” content from associated “member” sites with special web parts. For example, the “News Roll Up” web part can collect together news items from any “member” sites, while the “Associated Sites” web part can actually list and display those sites in a neat ‘visual’ modern web part. “Highlighted Content” uses Delve to display the most relevant content from Hubs and their “member” sites, and “Events” can do the same for SharePoint Calendars, so there are lots of options for bringing in content from your “member” sites to display in Hubs.

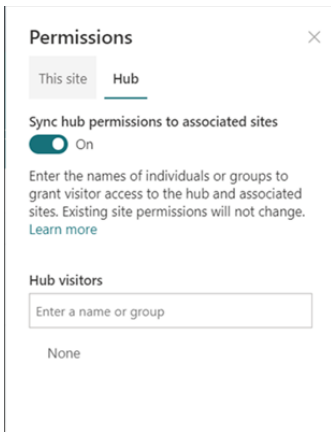
## Hub site Permissions

Hubs do not automatically cascade permissions down to their “member” sites so all sites have their own unique permissions. However there is an optional setting in Hub sites that allows you to nominate a ‘visitor group’ that can cascade down to “member” sites for broad ‘read only’ access to a selection of sites associated with the hub, so this is worth investigating as it may save you a lot of work in setting up a ‘visitor’ level of access in individual hub joined sites.

Here’s what you will see in the “Permissions” section of your Hub site when you go to site settings:



Permissions are divided between “This Site” (the site you’re on) and the Hub permissions. Clicking the “Sync hub permissions to associated sites” then opens up a further people picker window:



In the people picker, you can add individual users, Office365 groups or any unit-level groups you would like to grant visitor (i.e. “Read Only”) access to throughout your hub and site network. Note that any areas locked off to visitor access in those “member” sites will still be locked off, they will only see items that are given access to site visitors (again, not to be confused with external users, “Visitor” access in SharePoint Online terms is “Read Only” access).

Note that you will need to flip this switch in any “member” sites as well as the hub, and the setting can also be switched off at any time, should the role of a “member” site change (or, for example, should it be moved from one unit’s Hub site to another).

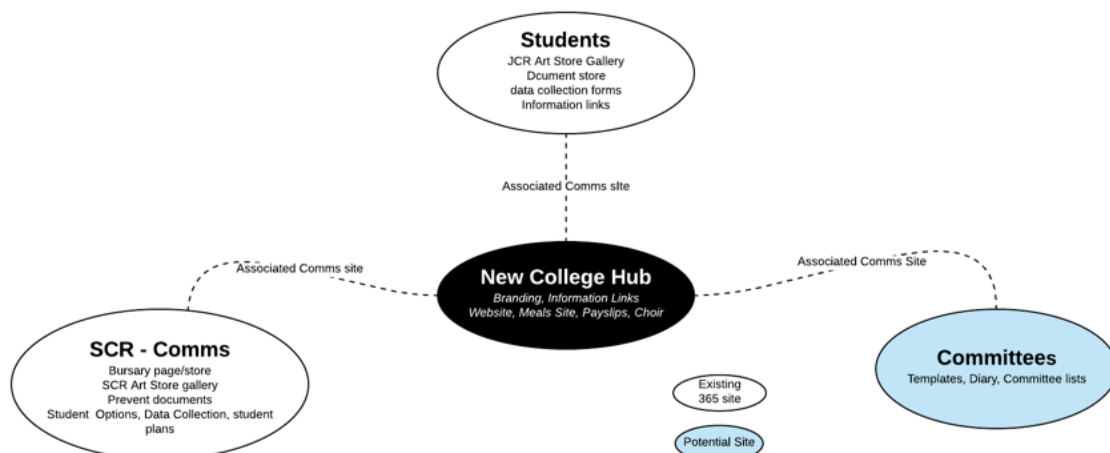
[SharePoint Online Hub Sites: what are they and what do they do?](#)

## Hub site notes and best practices

We have been working with Hub sites for a while and have the following best practice advice and additional support notes for the use of Hubs.

- Only request a Hub site if you think you need one. There are a finite number of Hubs in an Office365 Tenancy (there are currently 2100 allowed, so divided between the number of PRAS entities, that works out at no more than 7 hubs per entity). If the Nexus Team believe you’re asking for more hubs than they think you need, they will point this out to you. To remind you, you do not need a Hub site in order to use SharePoint Online, just to use the features described above.

This is an example of how a hub can be used to join sites together in a college:



- Hubs are usually useful as a 'gateway' into a collection of sites. For example, you could set up an Intranet that has the "Hub" site set as a comms site where your users 'land' to begin their SharePoint Online Journey
- Hubs should not really be used to store content, rather they should instead be used to aggregate content from elsewhere. Commonly, Hubs are kept very simple with simplified permissions. Normally we would not expect anyone to try and build a Hub as their only primary site, and try to stuff it full of content, libraries, lists etc. Hubs are better used as a portal for your information, not a replacement for your old Site Collection / subsites model from on-premise SharePoint.
- Lastly, Hubs can be 'downgraded' to normal sites at any time, but please understand that any hub features, aggregated web parts etc. will cease to function at that point as well as any cascading visitor permissions set up at the hub. All associated sites joined to the hub will also be detached automatically and will also lose their hub links and aggregated visitor group access
- Sites can be joined and detached from Hubs at any time by the Site Network Administrator. They can also be detached from one hub and moved to another should the need arise. If, for example, a cross departmental site fell under Finance, but then needed to move to GLAM, it could be detached from the Finance Hub and joined to the GLAM hub, picking up the Hub settings from the GLAM hub at point of joining.
- You can manage what users see on the Hub navigation links, based on whether they have access to the link or not using 'Audience targeting'. Please refer to [this SP Guide for Audience targeting](#) to learn how to achieve this.