Office and SharePoint 2010 User's Guide

Integrating SharePoint with Excel, Outlook, Access and Word

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The source code for this book is available to readers at www.apress.com. You will need to answer questions pertaining to this book in order to successfully download the code.

For my wife of 33 years, Susan, and our wonderful daughter, Natasha. I love you both.

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About the Author

Michael P. Antonovich graduated from Lehigh University with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering in 1976 and a MBA in 1980, but his career almost from the start evolved toward computers and application development. He started working with large mainframe systems but quickly developed a keen interest in microcomputers when Apple introduced its Apple II, for which he wrote his first book in 1983. Over the years, he has learned many different systems, applications, and programming languages, but the first development environment he felt really strong about was FoxBase and later FoxPro. During the 90s, he published four books on FoxPro before the Internet and SQL Server bug bit him.

In addition to his full-time jobs developing applications, he has conducted dozens of different computer training classes for companies and universities over the years. Since his first SharePoint book, Michael has become a regular speaker at many of the SQL Saturday, Code Camp, and SharePoint Saturday events in the state of Florida, having presented nearly two dozen sessions in the last three years. He also has been serving on the Information Technology Advisory Committee of Valencia Community College.

In 2003, he joined the IT team of Orange County Public Schools as they prepared to launch a major new student tracking system. But the lure of the Internet along with a "little" product called SharePoint pulled him back into Internet development in the fall of 2006, when he took on the task of heading up the technical team to develop a new SharePoint portal for the school district that would provide all users with a single, consistent, easy-to-use interface. Since then, his team has completed the refresh and branding of all district Internet and intranet sites. They also worked with representatives from each of the over 170+ schools in the district to create new branded sites that follow a common site template providing consistency in locating information across the schools. Currently, Michael's team is preparing for a refresh of the branding for both the schools and intranet sites to enhance the consistency between sites further and to take advantage of the new SharePoint 2010 features. They are also committed to expanding the number of applications embedded or run through SharePoint employee sites to help reduce the district's paper usage and improve operating efficiencies. Orange County Public Schools is the 10th largest school district in the United States.

About the Technical Reviewer

■**Razi bin Rais** is a Microsoft technology specialist with focus on Microsoft SharePoint Products and Technologies. Razi has extensive experience in designing, implementing and supporting enterprise solutions using Microsoft SharePoint Server. Razi has authored numerous articles published online and also worked with Microsoft MSL as a SME on several SharePoint 2010 courses. Razi is also a speaker for INETA and GITCA, and had led many sessions in several industry trade show conferences including the Microsoft TechDays, ISV innovation Days, Community Technology Updates and SharePoint Saturdays. For his community involvement and contribution, he has also been awarded the Microsoft MVP award for SharePoint Services since 2007. Razi blogs at http://razi.spaces.live.com and can be reached at razibinrais@live.com.

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Since the release of SharePoint 2007, the popularity of SharePoint has grown each year. With the new release of SharePoint 2010, Microsoft has further expanded the feature set. Some of the improvements include changing the way you connect to external data sources, adding the ability to display Visio diagrams directly in the browser, publishing Access applications to a web site and more. Visually, they have made editing the content of your pages more like working in Office with the addition of the ribbon interface. It is my belief that SharePoint is the biggest change to the way you and I work in our offices since … well … since Microsoft Office. Word showed us how to write and edit more efficiently on a computer screen than we ever could with a typewriter.

Over the years, Microsoft Office has become so pervasive that it is almost impossible to get an office job today if you do not have a firm understanding of at least Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. Perhaps now it is time to add SharePoint to that list of job requirements. SharePoint can help organize where you save your documents as well as how you archive them into Records Centers to preserve them. Sharing documents and other files with coworkers insures that there is only a single version of the truth. The need to print documents to send them to others is all but eliminated through the ability to create and use collaboration sites and SharePoint Workspaces. Creating applications quickly and with minimal programming has been enhanced with the ability to publish Access applications in SharePoint so that anyone with a browser can access and interact with them. The new Business Connectivity Services lets you gather data from many data sources creating a single view of the information important to you and your coworkers. Of course, you can still create your corporate web sites and even internal employee intranet sites using the same tools and methodologies you learn while working with your collaboration sites.

We have all heard of that utopia of a paperless society where information flows at the speed of light from its point of creation to each user who must review, approve, and use it. However, the electronic revolution of the 1990s and 2000s did not free us from paper. Perhaps the Internet was not the solution, although it was an enabling technology that made our vision of the office of the future possible. As a result, the rising tide of paper on most information workers' desks seems to have gotten bigger. Perhaps the tools of the last two decades were just not ready. Perhaps we were simply missing that keystone software tool that brings it all together into a compelling argument.

Is SharePoint that tool? I believe that it can be the enabler that brings our dream of a paperless society into reality.

Oh, you say you have heard of SharePoint, but thought that it was just a portal for a company's web site. Yes, it is that, but that is only one part of this many-faceted tool.

SharePoint sits on top of the many technologies. It borrows a lot from web development. However, it also integrates tightly into the Microsoft Office products, giving them the ability to accomplish goals like the following:

- Create shared document libraries that users can access from anywhere they can get an Internet connection or to work on those documents offline and then synchronize their changes with the document library the next time they connect to their corporate intranet.

- Present electronic forms that people interactively complete, rather than forcing them to download and print the form, write on it, send it back, and then have someone enter the data into a computer program interface.

- Store multiple versions of documents so a revision history can be retained or to archive a copy of a document into your company's permanent records archival center.

- Display business information in Excel-style pages, dashboards and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) lists that change interactively to help managers make better decisions.

- Use agile application development with Microsoft Access to meet the needs of various departments and groups within your corporate environment and deploy that application to run on the user's browser so they can truly access it anywhere. By deploying through Access Services on SharePoint, these applications are secure, backed up, and easily maintained, since they only have a single source for the data, the forms, and the reports.

In the last three years, a large number of IT people worldwide started using SharePoint. They are creating web sites and collaboration sites by the thousands every day. And that is good. However, SharePoint will not reach its full potential until every computer user who knows how to use Microsoft Office can also use SharePoint together with their favorite Office application, such as MS Word, Outlook MS Excel, or MS Access.

This does not mean you need to know how to install SharePoint or even how to configure it (although understanding a little of the configuration would not hurt). However, it does mean that you need to know how to create and use libraries, lists, and many other features. It means that you need to learn how to use Office tools like Word, Outlook, Excel, and Access to not only create and maintain your own files on a SharePoint site, but also to store files on a centralized server at your company that you can access from anywhere you can get an Internet connection. It should no longer make a difference whether you are connecting through your home computer or using your laptop and wireless connection at a resort while on vacation. You could even be at your local library using its public computers. Perhaps you will even access your information from your cell phone or tablet computer. Anywhere. Any time. The dream of connecting to your corporate data exists today and is only a connection away.

However, there is more than just accessing your files. You can share your files easily with your colleagues or even the project consultant who works in a different city. Let's create workflows without resorting to programming so that, when you create a document, you can automatically send it to someone else for review or approval. Let's see how to consolidate lists, calendars, and tasks from multiple sources. Let's discover how to create forms for others to use directly from their browser. But most of all, let's see how you can become more productive and efficient using your favorite Microsoft Office tools together with SharePoint, without needing to spend months learning how to program first.

The revolution in the way you will work in an office began three years ago with SharePoint 2007. Are you ready? You already know how to use the basic Microsoft Office tools. Now, let me show you how to leverage those tools to enhance your productivity and free you from that paper avalanche hanging off the side of your desk.

Who This Book Is For

This book is for those of you who have been using Microsoft Office perhaps for years to get your daily work done and now are looking for ways to share your work with your coworkers and to collaborate with them. You may not really want to learn programming. You would rather leave that for others. However, you are willing to use the tools and features that programmers make available to you if it makes your job easier or helps you get your work done quicker. Sure, maybe with some programming skills and some time (perhaps a lot of time), you could make SharePoint do many other things that it just cannot do out of the box. If that is your goal, there are many other excellent books on the market that will take you down that road. However, for now you just need to get the most out of your Microsoft Office tools as quickly as possible. Are you one of those people willing to learn a new tool if it makes your job easier, faster, and perhaps even fun? If that describes you, then you are (or can become) a power user of Microsoft Office. You can become that indispensable person in your office that other people come to when they need to do something in Office and SharePoint but don't quite know how to begin.

With the release of both a new Microsoft Office 2010 suite and SharePoint Server 2010, this could be your best time to take that next step in productivity at your office. You can lead the way to increased collaboration between project and department staff members, build the content for your company intranet and Internet sites, and go green by reducing the use of paper in your office by using electronic forms redirected with workflows. Perhaps you dream of a day when you will not need a single sheet of paper on your desktop to get your work done. Perhaps your dream is to enable your coworkers to collaborate from anywhere around the world. Perhaps you dream of a day when you can work from home without having to commute hours each week to and from your office or burn more of our precious oil sitting in traffic jams. If this sounds like I am describing you, then this book is your starting point toward that future.

Contacting the Author

You can contact the author by email at `mike@micmin.org`. I will be establishing a blog, at `www.micmin.org/blog.aspx`, to go along with this book; there from time to time I will post additional tips and tricks related to collaboration between Microsoft Office and SharePoint 2010.

■ ■ ■

An Overview of SharePoint

This book first went on sale as Microsoft introduced SharePoint 2010, a remarkable follow-up to the highly successful SharePoint 2007 product. It is hard to believe that it was only three years ago that SharePoint 2007 debuted as enterprise-level application solution for organizations deploying various combinations of internet, intranet, and extranet sites. It was so successful that Gartner placed SharePoint 2007 in its 2008 leader's quadrant for Horizontal Portal Products, Enterprise Content Management, and Information Access Technology. By heavily leveraging Microsoft's Office family products, the SharePoint environment allows teams to work together and collaborate even when separated across the country or the globe.

SharePoint 2010 continues in that fine tradition by enhancing its collaboration features. Throughout the latest release of this product, you will find many improvements over 2007; some little items, others fairly major. Together these improvements make SharePoint 2010 your platform of choice for deploying any web-based information or applications web site for your company or customers.

There are many opportunities to exploit SharePoint's features. For some, you need a fair amount of programming expertise. However, for power users of Microsoft Office, you can easily manipulate many of the features directly through the interface with little to no coding experience. In this book, I will focus on helping you extract the most benefit from SharePoint using familiar Microsoft Office tools such as Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. I will also help you explore some of the lesser-known tools such as InfoPath to build and deploy forms, Groove (renamed SharePoint Workspace) to create custom local collaboration groups that integrate with SharePoint, and SharePoint Designer for those who may want to do a little custom branding or create their own custom page layouts. Overall, this book concentrates on collaboration-type activities as opposed to Internet site development. However, many of the same techniques used in collaboration sites apply just as well when working with web pages, web parts, libraries, and lists.

In this chapter, you will first discover the basic hierarchy consisting of site collections and sites used in SharePoint site development. Think of it as creating the framework of a new building. Next, you will see how to build out that framework with pages, libraries, lists, and more. You will also learn how to set permissions for users and how to define and inherit permissions from one site to another. You will gain an understanding of how permissions affect what a user can do within a site, from creating new content to just viewing someone else's content. Next, you will build a document library and learn how to use Microsoft Word to add and edit documents stored in that library. Then I will show you how to preserve the integrity of your editing with the Check Out and Check In facility for documents. Finally, you will explore the use of versioning to keep track of changes and to control what information others can view.

Subsequent chapters explore SharePoint's other features, from lists through web pages, but in all cases, you will discover how to integrate your current knowledge of Microsoft Office tools with your SharePoint activities. My goal is not to make you a SharePoint administrator or even a SharePoint programmer; rather, my goal is to make you a power user when it comes to working with SharePoint and Microsoft Office.

For those of you who may have used Windows SharePoint Services 3.0 (WSS 3.0) for collaboration within your company, you may be pleased to know that WSS lives on but with a new name, SharePoint Foundation 2010. Although I will not single out features of SharePoint Foundation 2010, much of what I cover in collaboration applies to that product as well. In fact, Microsoft is currently expected to market at least several different versions of SharePoint 2010:

- SharePoint Server 2010: Intranet Scenarios

  - Enterprise Client Access License

  - Standard Client Access License

- SharePoint Server 2010: Internet/Extranet Scenarios

  - SharePoint Server 2010 for Internet Sites, Enterprise

  - SharePoint Server 2010 for Internet Sites, Standard

- FAST Search versions

  - FAST Search Server 2010 for SharePoint

  - FAST Search Server 2010 for Internet Business

- Entry Level/Pilot solutions

  - SharePoint Foundation 2010

  - SharePoint Online

  - SharePoint Online for Internet Sites

Site Collections, Sites, and Sub-sites

SharePoint organizes content around a container structure referred to as a site. In fact, when you first install SharePoint on a server it creates a site used to manage the entire *SharePoint farm* called Central Administration. However, other than your SharePoint administrator, most users typically never interact with Central Administration. A site can contain sub-sites and those sub-sites can contain additional sub-sites. The top-level site defines the overall site collection. You may begin your interaction at this top-level site or at one of the sub-sites in the site collection. A SharePoint installation can have multiple site collections. To support SharePoint, you may need more than a single server to support the database, indexing, searching, applications, etc. All of these servers together constitute a SharePoint farm.

SharePoint Farms

Some of you may have heard the term SharePoint farm and wondered what they were talking about. Surely, they don't grow SharePoint in the fields outside of Redmond, Washington. Rather, the SharePoint farm is a name given to the collection of all of the servers that make your SharePoint installation work. At its simplest, you could build a farm with a single server on which you have everything installed. Small companies may get along fine with a single server installation. However, as your site grows, you may find the need to move SQL Server to a separate physical server. Next, you might add separate web servers. Then, as your site continues to grow, you might need a separate server for searching or indexing your sites or perhaps a server to host other applications that you want to run from within SharePoint. As you can see, your server needs can grow from single machines to multiple machines sort of like... well… like weeds on a farm.

You create site collections only from within Central Administration. Your SharePoint administrator can create multiple site collections within what is called a web farm and may define different site collections for different purposes. All other SharePoint users typically cannot create their own site collection but must work within the one given to them from their SharePoint administrator. Therefore, I will not go into creation of site collections in detail in this book.

A site collection forms the container in which you build all sub-sites. Your organization may have one site collection or they may have many, perhaps one for each department or each division. However, no matter how many site collections you have, you build each of your other sites as sub-sites beneath one, and only one, of these site collections. Interestingly, the site collection must contain at least one site referred to as the *top-level site* of the site collection, and from within it, you can display pages, lists, and libraries. It is from within any site that you can build a sub-site, another container inside the larger container. This may remind you of nested Russian dolls, but that image is incomplete. Unlike nested Russian dolls, a site can have more than one sub-site directly beneath it. To that extent, the hierarchy is more like a family with each parent site having no children, one child, or multiple children. Figure 1-1 shows typical but very simple site hierarchy architecture in SharePoint.
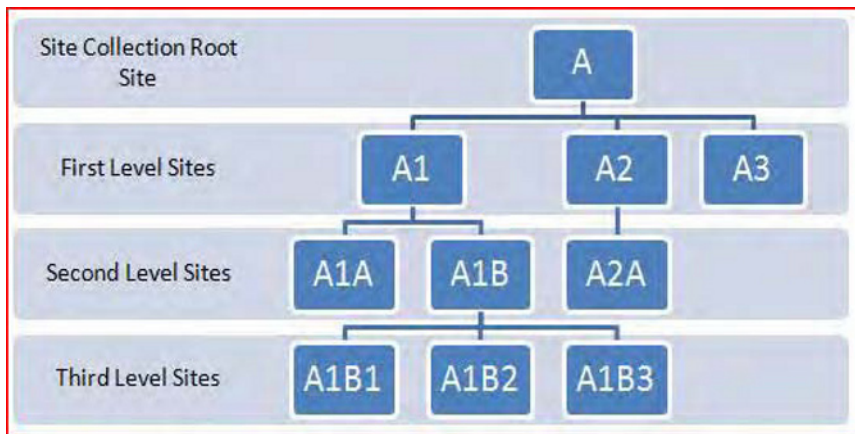
Figure 1-1. Site architecture

Another interesting thing about site collections is that each site collection can be stored within a separate database in SQL Server or you can combine multiple site collections within a single database. Storing each site collection in a separate content database makes it easy to back up and restore individual site collections. Storing multiple site collections in a single database means that there are fewer backup jobs for the DBA to manage. Using separate databases means that each database could reside on a different drive through partitioning. So is it best to place all of your site collections within a single SQL database or should you place each site collection in a separate database? The answer is not clearly one or the other. It is not that black or white. Rather it probably is a little of both. SharePoint administrators try to limit the number of site collections in each database depending on the amount of activity each site is going to get and its expected size. They do this for the following reasons:

- Improved performance within SharePoint may occur by grouping sites within one database that are read more often than updated.

- Data can be retrieved faster if you spread databases across multiple disk drives.

- Keep the number of site collections in some content databases small if the data updates frequently and the loss of data could be critical. This also makes backups and restores faster because each database is smaller.

- Special site collections created for shorter-term projects can be more easily archived and removed when they are no longer needed if you store them in their own site collection.

When considering which site collection should hold which site, you might be interested in grouping sites with similar user permissions together in one site collection so that you can manage the permissions at the top level of the site collection. You could then allow each sub-site to inherit the permissions of its parent. Only if a sub-site needs its own unique permissions would you need to break inheritance and define custom permissions.

So what goes into a site other than child sites? Each site you create supports groups of related pages, libraries, and lists. Think of this as your site's content that you can view using a web browser. In terms of content, a site typically focuses on specific topics, groups of people, or related activities. Each site has a home page, called its *default page*, which is the first page users see when going to the site. This default page usually provides navigation to the other pages in the site, either through menus or links. Each subsequent site page supports content ranging from lists to libraries to plain text and images. Once created, together they form what looks like a traditional web site.

SharePoint calls users who have the ability to change content within a site *content creators*. As a content creator within SharePoint, you have the authority to control the appearance and content of pages. No longer must you submit content changes to a web design person or web master and then wait for him to incorporate the changes into your organization's web pages. If you defined the site for collaboration, you may work with groups of people within your organization who also have permission to update lists, documents, and even content pages.

As mentioned previously, a site can have one or more *sub-sites*. While a sub-site inherits many of its properties from its parent site, you can also give it its own identity, properties, and objects. You use sub-sites to divide further the focus or topic of the higher-level site. For example, if one site represents a department, a sub-site might represent a project or a team within that department.

While you typically store all content for a site within that site, there is no reason why you cannot reference content from sub-sites. In fact, the top-level site (the first site at the root of the site collection) has several *special object collections*. One is called Site Collection Images and the other is Site Collection Documents. Both are libraries specifically designed to share files across any of the sub-sites within that site collection.

Perhaps you're thinking that creating a site from scratch sounds a little intimidating. Indeed, before SharePoint, the prospect of creating sites to support an entire organization would probably require a team of developers and months of time. However, SharePoint streamlines the process of building sites by providing a collection of *templates* for pages and for various object types that you can place on those pages to help get you started. Of course, as you progress in your SharePoint knowledge, you can add to these templates with your own or those from third-party developers. While this book focuses on collaboration sites, let's start with a quick overview of all the site types you can create out of the box with SharePoint. I'll begin with collaboration sites.

Site Collection Templates

SharePoint 2010 provides five types of site collection templates, as shown in Figure 1-2. Each template provides a unique starting point for creating a new site collection. However, just because each site collection template initially defines specific unique features and web parts, it does not limit your subsequent customization of the site. In fact, SharePoint allows you to customize a site created with one template with features and web parts found in another. You can even create your own custom templates starting from one of the supplied templates. So let's see what each site collaboration template type provides by beginning with the collaboration type templates.

Collaboration Templates

Collaboration templates help you create sites that support a high degree of interaction between the users who have access to those sites. In fact, most people who go to collaboration sites go there to add information or respond to existing information, not just to look at what is there. SharePoint 2010 provides six different templates that it classifies as collaboration style templates that it uses to create a top-level site in a new site collection. You can also use most of these as sub-sites. Figure 1-2 shows the available collaboration templates. Let's take a brief look at each of them.

Template Selection

A site template determines what lists and features will be available on your new site. Select a site template based on the descriptions of each template and how you intend to use the new site. Many aspects of a site can be customized after creation. However, the site template cannot be changed once the site is created.

Select a template:

| Collaboration | Meetings | Enterprise | Publishing | Custom |

Team Site
Blank Site
Document Workspace
Blog
Group Work Site
Visio Process Repository

A site for teams to quickly organize, author, and share information. It provides a document library, and lists for managing announcements, calendar items, tasks, and discussions.

Figure 1-2. *Collaboration templates*

Team Site

A team site template serves as a fast, out-of-the-box starting point for content created by and for work teams. For that reason, it may become your favorite site template for building collaboration sites. It provides a common area for creating and sharing of information using document libraries and lists. It lets you establish project calendars, track individual and project tasks, and facilitate discussions among the team members.

Figure 1-3 shows the home page of a team site created by the SharePoint administrator to be the top-level site in a new site collection. I have made several additions to it so I can identify the different areas of the page that you need to become familiar with, as I will refer to them often throughout this book. As you begin work in this chapter, I will assume that your SharePoint administrator has created a team site for you to use in order to practice your new skills in this and subsequent chapters. If not, go ask for one now. I'll wait.

■ **Note** A team site created within SharePoint includes a My Site link in the My Profile drop-down menu of your user name found in the upper right of the screen. Your profile page then contains links to tags and notes that you may have created. It also contains links to your organization information, colleagues, and memberships. Of course, the amount of information stored in your profile page will depend on whether users at your organization choose to use the profile features. The **Site Actions** button appears on the upper left side of the screen for those users who have permission to use one or more of the options in the resulting drop-down menu. Users who can only view the site will not see this button. The following examples assume that you have the necessary permissions to edit site content. Anything described here that you cannot see on your site is probably due to permission settings, and you should ask your SharePoint administrator if you can get those rights at least within your practice site collection.
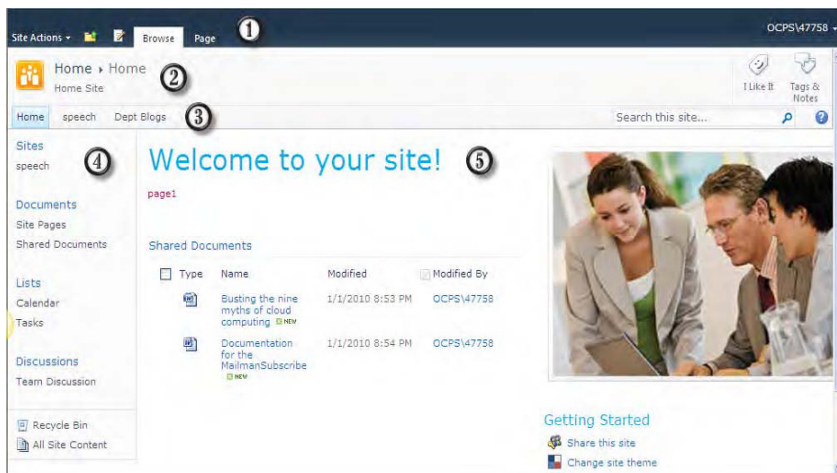
Figure 1-3. *The major sections of a SharePoint page*

1. The top banner of the site begins with the Site Actions drop-down menu on the left side. This menu only appears for users who have edit rights within the site. Next is the Navigate Up icon displayed as a folder with an up-pointing arrow. Clicking this option from any page shows the site hierarchy from the top-level site to the current page. You can click on any of the intermediate levels to navigate immediately to that level. The next icon looks like a page with a pencil on it; this is the Edit icon. This icon lets you edit the current page, assuming you have the necessary permissions. This icon also activates the Editing Tools for the page and opens the Format Text ribbon allowing you to immediately start making changes to text on the page. When in edit mode for the page, this icon changes to a Save link. Next is the word **Browse**, which represents the default display mode for the page. Clicking **Browse** while editing a page hides the ribbons but leaves the page in edit mode. Clicking the word **Page** opens the page in edit mode like the Edit icon but displays the Page ribbon, which includes various actions that you can perform against the page itself. Finally, on the far right of this banner SharePoint displays the name of the currently logged-in user. If you access the site anonymously, you will see the words Log In instead. Your user name serves as a drop-down menu that includes options that allow you go to your profile, change your settings, sign in as a different user, and even sign out of the site.

■ **Tip** The site developers in some organizations have multiple accounts representing different permission sets so that they can log in and view pages as other users would see them. For example, members of the IT department may have a second account that allows them to manage any site in the entire SharePoint farm.

2. The Title Area begins on the left with the site logo followed immediately by the name of the site and then by the name of the page. Beneath the site name, SharePoint displays the site description. On the right side of the title area, you will find several buttons depending on the options your SharePoint Administrator has turned on. The first one shown in this image allows you to add a suggested tag to the page, such as the one shown here that simply says that you like the page. If you want to tag the page with your own text string or if you would like to add a note to the page, click on the **Tags & Notes** button found on the far right. This button opens a dialog that has two tabs, one for tags and one for notes. You can add public and private tags on the first page. Tags typically consist of individual words or short phrases. Most people use tag words to identify related content. The page creator may then create a page with the new tag cloud web part, which displays the tag words in various sizes based on the frequency of their use. When a user clicks on a tag in the cloud, it displays a list of the pages where people entered those tag words so users can find related content. The second option of this button lets you create notes about the page. Notes differ from tags in that notes are more likely to consist of sentences or even paragraphs commenting on the page.

3. The Top Link Bar lists the sub-sites defined under the current site. When a user creates a new site, they have the option of whether to include the site in the top link bar of the parent site. They also have the option of whether to use the parent's top link bar or to begin a new top link bar beginning with the current site. Even though this removes the link to the parent site on the Top Link bar, the user can still return to the parent site by using the Navigate Up icon mentioned in the top banner. On the right side of the top link bar, you will find the Search and the Help buttons.

4. The Quick Launch area located along the left side of the page provides one-click access navigation to selected sites, documents, and lists. Depending on your permissions, you can customize what appears in this area and the Navigation Bar.

5. The Main Content area takes up the rest of the page. SharePoint divides this area into one or more content sections. You can add content in each area consisting of text libraries, lists, and other web parts to customize your page.

Blank Site

The blank site template is SharePoint's version of a blank sheet of paper. The person creating a site with this template must build the site's page content from scratch. Until you have developed some familiarity with the other built-in site templates and have experience customizing them with the available web parts, you may want to skip over the blank site. On the other hand, experienced site developers often prefer the blank site template because they do not have to waste time deleting or moving web parts and features that they do not want to use or that they want to appear elsewhere. Instead, they can focus on building what they do want.

Document Workspace

SharePoint provides a document workspace template designed around creating a place where a group can work collaboratively on a single document. It facilitates this through a document library along with task lists for to-do items and lists to track resources consisting of both people and things. These sites are generally temporary and when work is finished on the document, it is published to a document library on another site after which the site administrator or SharePoint Administrator deletes the workspace.

Blog

Blog sites generally exist for an individual or team to post major ideas or observations. Blog sites usually do not allow users to edit prior postings by others, but users can post comments to individual blog entries. Blog entries typically appear in reverse chronological order, making it easier for readers to see the most recent entries. Newsgroups, a close analogy to blogs, have a similar structure but typically post entries in a chronological hierarchy beginning with the initial entry.

 Bloggers (blog site contributors) typically use blog sites to discuss their projects or favorite subjects, or to provide additional information or viewpoints on what they are working on or just about themselves. In fact, most of the people who created entries on newsgroups now use blog sites instead. In addition, many organizations use internal blog sites to document their work effort on projects by creating daily or weekly entries detailing the progress made since the last entry. For those *Star Trek* fans

out there, you can think of a blog site as a written analogue to the Captain's Log. Maybe a future release will add voice-to-text translations for blogs.

Group Work Site

This template is another groupware alternative to allow teams to work together. It includes a group calendar to track schedules, circulation, phone-call memo lists, task lists, and a Document library.
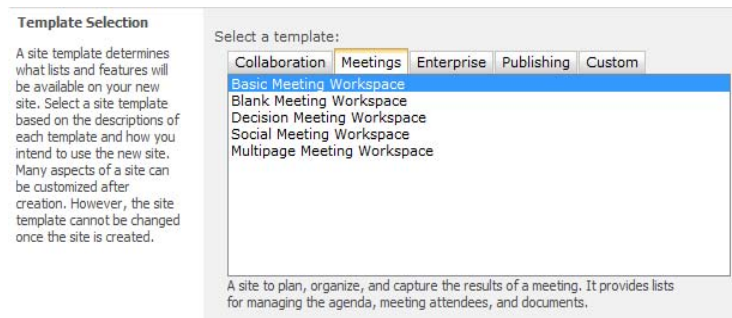
Visio Process Repository

The Visio Process Repository template allows teams to view, share, and store Visio process diagrams. It provides, by default, a versioned document library for storing the Visio diagrams as well as lists to manage announcements, tasks, and discussions related to those diagrams.

Meeting Templates

Meeting templates comprise the second template type and provide predefined configurations that include specific web parts in the default site template to support tracking information related to meetings. SharePoint refers to these sites as *workspaces* rather than sites because they provide tools, web parts, and resources specifically oriented toward facilitating the activities of workgroups for a relatively short-term activity. Once that activity is complete, you can archive and delete the site. Meeting workspaces include lists and documents, links, and team member information.

While each meeting template has a unique combination of web parts that defines its character, always remember that you can customize the appearance of your meeting workspace to include web parts typically found in other templates. So let's look at the provided meeting templates as listed in Figure 1-4.

Figure 1-4. Meeting templates