

Set up great, meaningful SharePoint libraries

The beauty of SharePoint is how it can bend and flex to the individual end-user's wants and needs. Here are a few options to consider when setting up your SharePoint libraries.

Shared documents or not shared documents

The best approach is to get rid of the Shared Documents library and challenge the team to specifically define what its document libraries should be. Otherwise, Shared Documents tend to become the "junk drawer." After a while, it's worse than what you may have had on shared network drives. While you can have folders, many people just opt for dumping documents in the library, hoping search will find them later.

Ab Jackson, author of *How to Organize Your Life & Get Rid of Clutter*, says, "Don't ask where to put it. Ask, where am I going to find it?" Think about how you access your documents, and then build libraries around that.

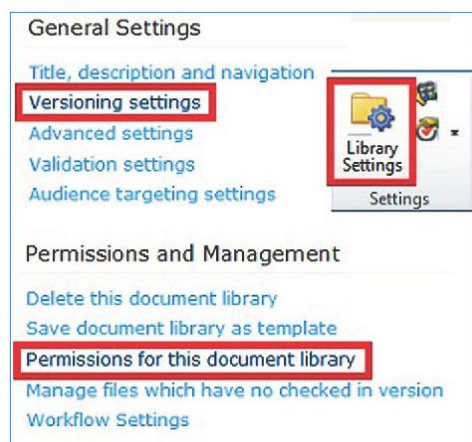
How much control?

You'll want to consider two types of control when creating a document library.

First, who should have access to the content? If the content itself is not secret or confidential, there is no reason why the entire organization can't have read access to it.

Second, who should be allowed to add or change the content, and with what restrictions? For example, should an author be permitted to submit documents to a library pending approval? Should documents that have not yet been approved be visible to only a select few people? Permissions for the library in general can be set under Permissions and Management.

Other controls are set up in Versioning Settings, such as whether versioning should occur (minor and major versions), content approval for submitted items and draft item visibility.



How should change occur?

You can make check in/check out mandatory in Versioning Settings to make sure that two people cannot make modifications at the same time.

There is a new way that controlled change can occur with SharePoint 2010 and Word 2010, co-authorship. If check in/check out isn't required, two or more users can open the file for edit from SharePoint and may edit different paragraphs at the same time. Once a user starts typing in a paragraph, it becomes locked until that user refreshes it to SharePoint. This all happens with a simple click of the Save icon which, when documents are opened from SharePoint show a recycle arrow on top of the icon. The Navigation Pane in Word gives you an idea of what sections are being edited or which have already been changed since your last save.

So, be brave! Get rid of Shared Documents and start setting up your Team Site with meaningful, intentional libraries instead of creating one more catchall.

