

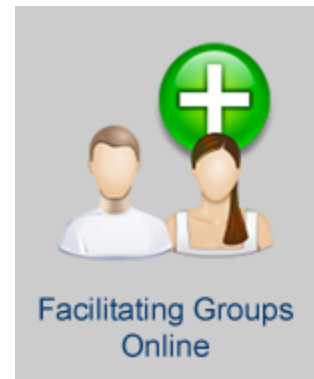
Facilitating Groups Online

Description

Working together is no longer confined to a physical place. Collaborating with virtual groups online is an essential skill for everyone, and students can benefit greatly from the online interaction with their peers.

Guiding Questions

- How can I manage groups online?
- How can I collaborate with groups online?
- What other resources can I use to further develop my skills?



Managing Groups

One of the challenges you face when you work as a group online is how do create a group? As an educator, do the groups need to be managed by yourself, or can the students form their own groups?

In this module, we'll discuss two approaches to forming groups:

1. Office 365 Groups

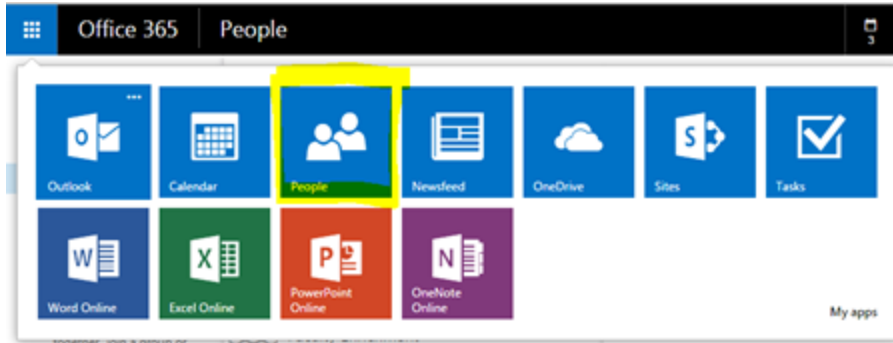
Many institutions use Office 365 as a communications platform. With everyone connected using this platform, creating a group is easy - but it is managed by the group owner. It's also a way for students to create their own groups.

2. D2L Groups

This is an example of how groups are managed in a Learning Management System (LMS). Each LMS handles groups a little bit differently. In the LMS, the instructor is responsible for setting up the groups, but also has visibility into what the groups are doing. In addition, groups are able to submit assignments as a team rather than individually.

Office 365 Groups

Office 365 Groups are managed under the People tab of the Office 365 menu. An Office 365 group provides a space for shared conversations, files, and a group calendar.

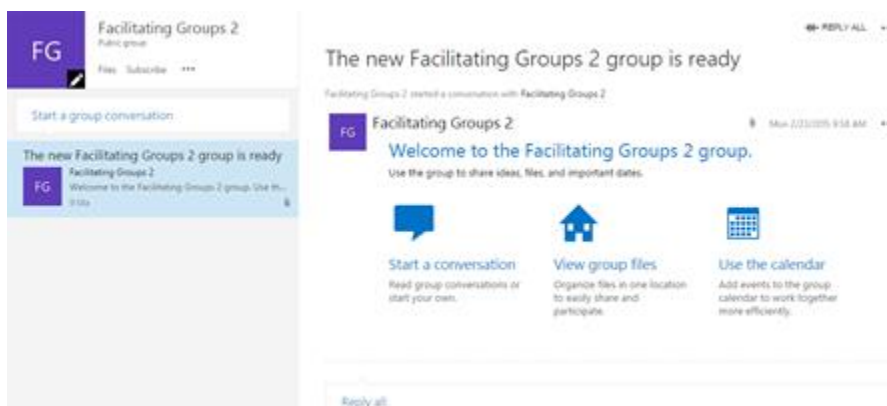


Creating Groups

1. Click on People from the Office 365 menu.
2. Provide a name and description for the group. Group names can only be used once.
3. By default, all groups are public. To make the group Private, change this setting. ****Note: this setting can't be changed once the group is created.**
4. Subscribing members to receive group conversations in their inbox will allow the group discussions to be converted to an e-mail as well.

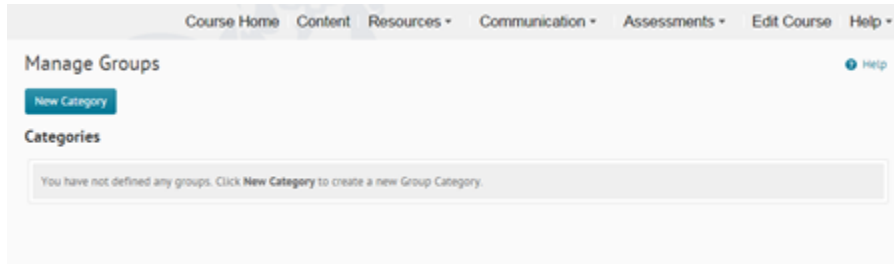
Using the Group Tools

From the Group page, you can start a conversation, view group files, or use the group calendar.



D2L Groups

This is an example of how groups can be used in a learning management system. For this example, we are using D2L. To manage groups in D2L, from on the main menu, click on **Communication | Groups** or **Edit Course | Groups**.



Creating Groups


1. To create a group, you must first create a group category. By creating a category, it will allow you to have the system set up groups automatically.
2. Provide a name and if desired a description of the group category.
3. Next select the Enrollment Type:
 - a. **# of Groups - No Auto Enrollments**
Will create for example 3 groups, and you will need to manually enroll students.
 - b. **Groups of #**
Will create groups of for example 3 students. If there are 21 students in the class, 7 groups will be created.
 - c. **# of Groups**
Will create for example 4 groups. If there are 20 students in the class, 4 groups of 5 students will be created.
 - d. **Groups of # - Self Enrollment**
Will allow students to enroll themselves in a group up to a limit for example 5 students per group.
 - e. **# of Groups - Self Enrollment**
Will allow students to enroll themselves in one of for example 4 groups.
 - f. **# of Groups # - Self Enrollment**
Will allow students to enroll themselves in one of for example 4 groups, but not to exceed for example 4 students per group.
4. Next, select the number of groups or users.
5. In the advanced properties, you can have new students automatically enrolled, and have the users randomly selected into the groups.
6. Finally, you can create a workspace for each team.
 - a. Set up group discussion area - will be prompted to create on the next screen.
 - b. Set up lockers - group space for sharing files (does not allow for online editing of files.)
 - c. Set up dropbox folders - for shared assignments. I prefer to set this up as I set up the grade book.


Category Information

Category Name *

Teams

Description





Enrollment Type

of Groups - No Auto Enrollments ▼

- # of Groups - No Auto Enrollments
- Groups of #
- # of Groups
- Groups of # - Self Enrollment
- # of Groups - Self Enrollment
- # of Groups of # - Self Enrollment

Additional Options

∨ Collapse additional options

Create Workspace

- Set up discussion areas ?
- Set up lockers ?
- Set up dropbox folders ?

Save

Cancel

Making Group Assignments

1. Create the assignment in the grade book.
2. Navigate to the content area in the course.
3. Create a dropbox folder. Select **Group Submission Folder**.

Course Home Content Resources Communication Assessments Edit Course Help

Create a Dropbox Folder in "Module 1"

Group Project

Individual submission folder
Individual submission folder
Group submission folder

Instructions

Parag B I U Font F Size

Publish Save as Draft Cancel

4. Next, assign the grade item to the dropbox.

Group Project

Instructions

Add Instructions...
> Add Attachments

Activity Details

✓ Required: Automatic
Participants submit a file to dropbox folder to complete this activity.

Add dates and restrictions... ✓ Published

Options

Unlimited files
All submissions are kept

Assessment

Points

10

Group Project

Save Cancel

5. When you look at all the dropboxes, you'll notice the group icon associated with it.

Dropbox Folders

New Folder More Actions

Bulk Edit

Folder	Total Files	Unread Files	Flagged Files	Due Date
No Category				
Group Project	0	0	0	

Bulk Edit

Making Group Discussion Board Assignments

In D2L, group discussions need to be handled differently. Each group needs to have its own discussion board and grade item created separately.

1. In the gradebook, and an item for each team for each graded discussion.

Edit Item: Group 1 - Discussion 1

Properties **Restrictions** **Objectives**

General

Type
Numeric

Name *

Short Name

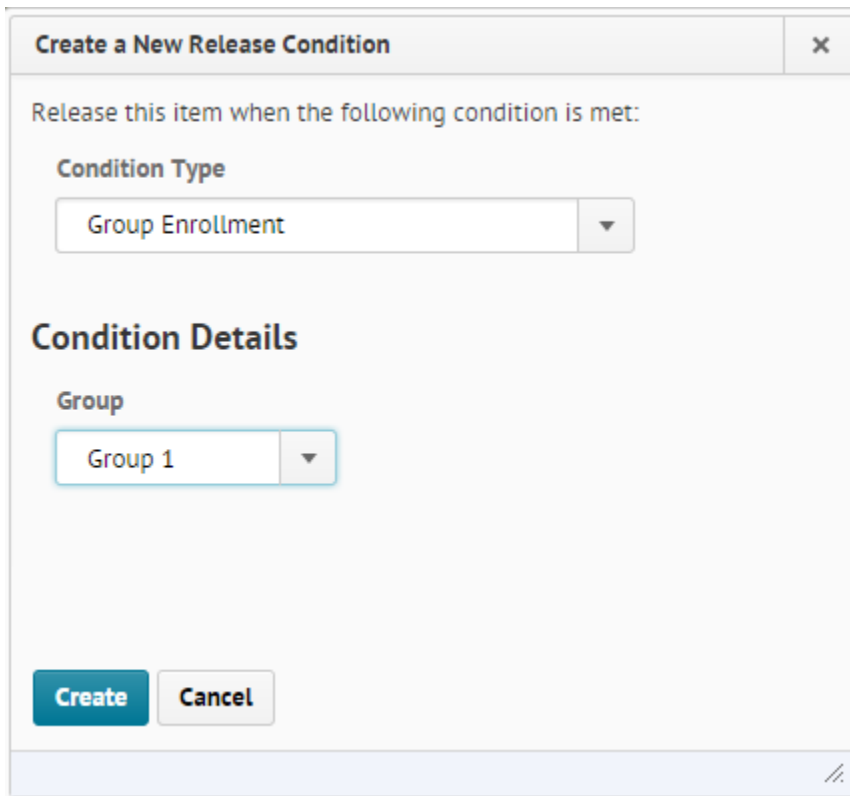
Category
Discussions [New Category]

> Show Description

Grading

Maximum Points *

2. Under the Restrictions tab, **Create and Attach** a new release condition. Select **Group Enrollment**. Select the group.



Create a New Release Condition [X]

Release this item when the following condition is met:

Condition Type

Group Enrollment [v]

Condition Details

Group

Group 1 [v]

Create **Cancel**

3. Create the Discussion Forum for all the discussions.

5. Click on the Restrictions Tab. Select '**Restrict this topic to the following groups and sections.**' Select the appropriate group/team.

Edit Topic - Team 1 - Module 1 Discussion

Properties Restrictions Assessment Objectives

Release Conditions

Hide Topic Release Conditions

Attach Existing Create and Attach Remove All Conditions

There are no conditions attached to this item.

Group and Section Restrictions

Hide Topic Group and Section Restrictions

Restrict this topic to the following groups and sections ?

Add Groups and Sections

Remove All Group and Section Restrictions X

Only members of the following groups and sections may access this item:

Teams: Group 1 X

Save and Close Save and New Save Cancel

6. Edit the topic again. Under Assessment, associate the discussion with the grade item.

Edit Topic - Team 1 - Module 1 Discussion ▾

[Properties](#)
[Restrictions](#)
[Assessment](#)
[Objectives](#)

Assessment

Grade Item

Group 1 - Discussion 1 ▾ [New Grade Item] ?

Score Out Of

10 ?

Rubrics

Add Rubric

No rubrics selected.

[Create Rubric in New Window]

Posts

Allow assessment of individual posts ?

Calculation

-- Select a calculation method -- ▾ Include unassessed posts

[Save and Close](#)
[Save and New](#)
[Save](#)
[Cancel](#)

7. When you look at the list of discussions, you'll see that the discussion has group/section restrictions.

Team ▾

Hide Topics for Team

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
Team 1 - Module 1 Discussion ▾ Group/section restrictions Includes assessment.	0	0	

Collaborating with Groups

There are wealth of resources for collaborating in groups now available online, and more are being created all the time.

In this section, we're going to focus on two areas:

- **Working with the Cloud**
Tools and applications to make it easy to work online.
- **Connect with Videoconferencing**
Using videoconferencing as a way to connect.

Working with the Cloud

What is Cloud Computing?

Very simply, cloud computing is the sharing of files and applications via the Internet. We've been doing that for a long time, but the services have become much more sophisticated and the term "cloud" is a way to distinguish these more sophisticated services. You may want to consider cloud services if you have a need to:

- **Access Files**
Access to files anytime, anywhere, from any device.
- **Share Files**
Share these files with others in a way they can access them anytime, anywhere, from any device.
- **Run Applications**
Ability to access and run applications anytime, anywhere, from *many* devices.

Office 365

Many institutions are moving to using Office 365 as a platform for e-mail. Office 365 also comes with other services that makes it easier to work in the "cloud." These include OneDrive for storing files, access to Office Apps (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote), calendar, contact list, task lists, sites (web pages on SharePoint), and newsfeed. Institution accounts are set up and managed by the institution.

[Office Online](#) is also provided by Microsoft for free for individuals. A Microsoft account is used to set up and manage the service.

Google

Google has a range of different "cloud" services available for free. Using Google is an option if you prefer to store your information external to your own institution, or if you move to different institutions frequently. Google accounts (based on your Gmail e-mail address) are set up and managed by the individual.

Dropbox

If you just want to store and access files from anywhere, or to share files with colleagues, Dropbox is a popular option.

Online Applications

There are several different options to explore. In this module, we'll look at RealtimeBoard and Wikispaces.

Office 365

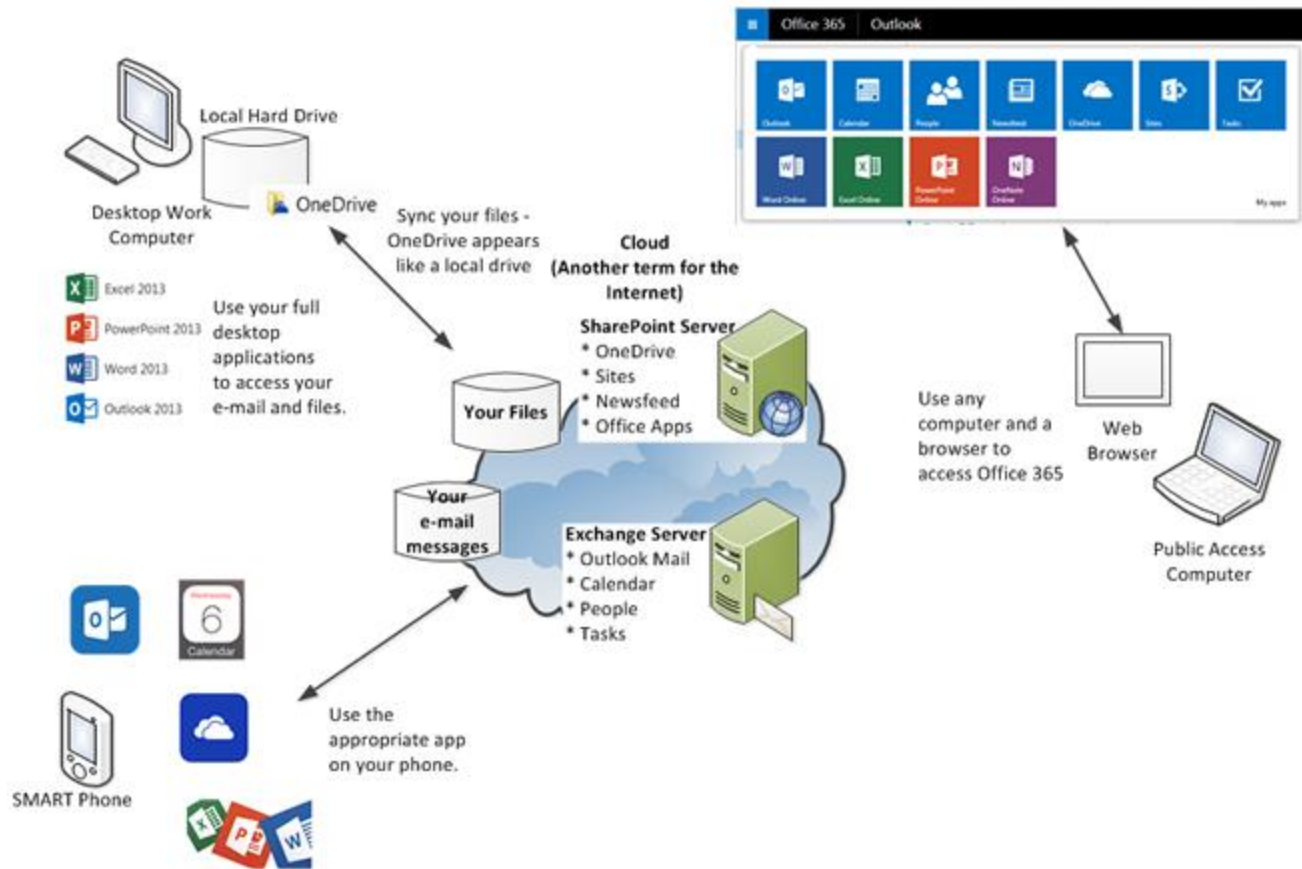
Office 365 can be purchased as an individual, but is often provided by your institution. For this module, we'll assume you are using an institution account.



Office 365 comes with a suite of web applications:

- Outlook
- Calendar
- People
- Newsfeed
- OneDrive
- Sites
- Tasks
- Office Apps: Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote

The diagram below gives an example of how Office 365 may be configured to work within your institution. Configurations can vary widely, so this is just meant to illustrate key concepts.



1. On your work desktop computer,
 - a. Sync your files with OneDrive. It will appear like a local drive.
 - b. Use the full version of your desktop applications (Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Outlook).
2. On your phone,
 - a. Use the appropriate app: Outlook, Calendar, OneDrive, Office Apps
3. On any public computer,
 - a. Use a browser to access Office 365.

RealtimeBoard

RealtimeBoard (<http://realtimeboard.com/app/>) is a regular office whiteboard enhanced for a better online experience. There are three things that we like to point out about it:

1. Each board is endless, so you can add hundreds of files and objects without losing productivity. It's all about being able to see the big picture!
2. It's available in your browser, and everything is stored online.
3. You can invite your entire team and collaborate in real time.

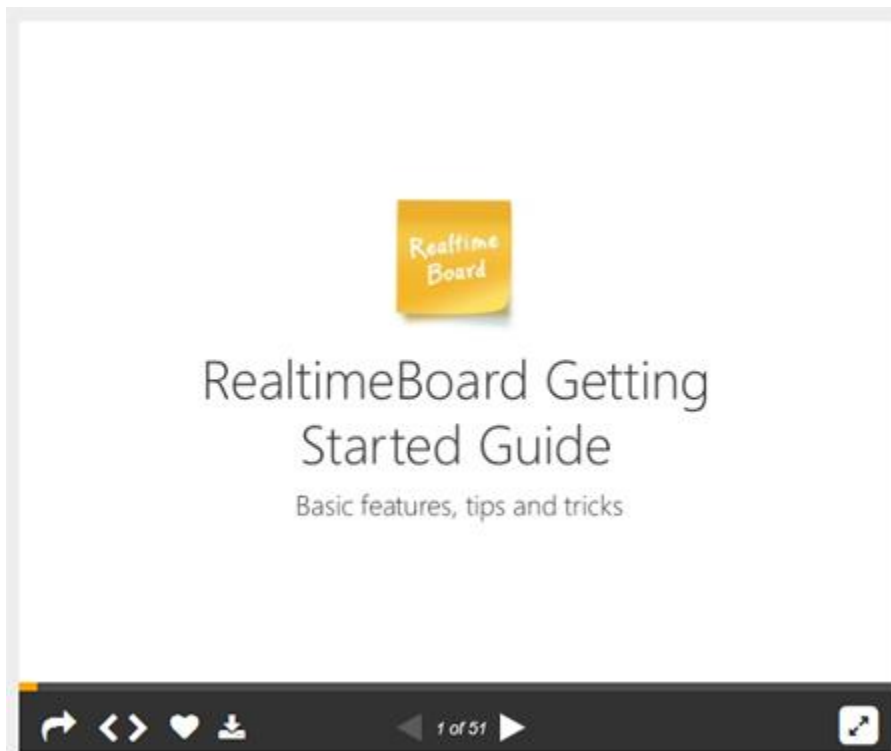
It is available by subscription, but is free to teachers and students.

The interface explained



Learning the Basics

RealtimeBoard has posted a beginner's guide on Slide Share. I recommend switching to full screen when viewing this presentation.



<http://www.slideshare.net/RealtimeBoard/realtimeboard-beginners-guide>

Wikispaces

Introduction

Wikispaces is a very popular online application for creating and using wikis. In addition, they've optimized their system for use by educators.



Use in the Classroom

Wikis are versatile tools and can be used in a variety of ways:

- to introduce a topic activate a student's prior learning
- communicate knowledge
- allow students to apply what they know
- use higher order thinking skills: analysis, evaluation, and creation/synthesis
- promote interaction and collaboration
- promote self-assessment and reflection
- encourage writing and peer evaluation
- provide a tool for classroom management

They can be used to promote interaction or can be used individually by students. Why would you use a wiki rather than a blog or discussion board - read more for a [Comparison of Blogs, Wikis, and Discussion Boards](#).

How to Use Wikispaces

Visit this site on Wikispaces for short how-to videos on creating your own wiki.
<https://www.wikispaces.com/content/wiki-tour>

More Resources

- **How to Succeed in a Virtual Group – Handout for Students**
[https://secure.netsolhost.com/www.facultysupport.com/resources/How to Succeed in a Virtual Group.pdf](https://secure.netsolhost.com/www.facultysupport.com/resources/How_to_Succeed_in_a_Virtual_Group.pdf)