

Increase productivity by using the 2007 Office collaboration programs



Edited By John Pierce

The expert authors of this book have decades of experience among them. Each author has contributed essential chapters into this single-volume compilation: Jim Boyce (Outlook 2007), Jeff Conrad (Access 2007), Mark Dodge (Excel 2007), Stephanie Krieger (Advanced Documents), Mary Millhollon and Katherine Murray (Word 2007), S.E. Slack (PowerPoint 2007), Craig Stinson (Excel 2007), and John Viescas (Access 2007). Contributing Editor, John Pierce, is a former writer and editor for Microsoft Corporation. He is the author of *Microsoft Office Access 2003 Inside Track* and *Microsoft Small Business Kit*.

To learn more about this book, visit [Microsoft Learning](#).

The phrase *effective collaboration* strikes me as one of those corporate-speak terms, like *synergy* or *think outside the box*. They are terms that became popular because they meant something important, but are now used so much for so many different reasons that you might begin to wonder if they really mean anything at all. So, what does *effective collaboration* mean in the real world in which you live? Literally, of course, it just means working productively with others. But, for this article, effective collaboration means much more than that. It means:

Sharing ideas and content more easily.

Having more dynamic ways to communicate about projects.

Getting better results with less work.

Managing and tracking content more easily.

Collaboration in business so often takes the form of documents — from project management to budget planning, business pitches, or legal matters. This article introduces key solutions for more effective document collaboration and provides a quick reference for getting started with the method of your choice.

Understand and use the 2007 Microsoft Office system collaboration environments

Document collaboration tools are evident throughout the 2007 Office release programs. Surely features like enhanced document reviewing tools and content integration between Microsoft Office Word 2007, Microsoft Office Excel 2007, and Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007 all support collaboration. But, what about dedicated collaboration tools? That is, programs that enable you to share and collaborate on documents across your team — whether that team is within your department, across your company, on a client site, or anywhere at all.

The dedicated collaboration tools in the 2007 Office release are Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services and Microsoft Office Groove 2007. Both of these technologies enable you to share and manage documents across a team and track related tasks, schedules, and resources. Although the capabilities of Windows SharePoint Services and Office Groove 2007 overlap, both have their individual strengths.

Windows SharePoint Services shared workspaces are where you can share content and information with any size group inside your computer network. This is a powerful and customizable technology that can be used on its own or with other SharePoint Products and Technologies. If your company runs Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007, for example, Windows SharePoint Services can integrate even more powerfully with your 2007 Office release programs — such as by managing Office PowerPoint 2007 Slide Libraries where users can efficiently reuse content from decks created across your team or organization.

Windows SharePoint Services provides productivity tools like task management and discussion boards, but it is also an ideal place to share and manage completed documents because they're stored in a central, secure, and easily accessible location.

Groove is where you and your team get the work done. Groove workspaces are designed for smaller groups (up to 30) but can be used by any size group. And, they can be automatically accessed by anyone you designate both inside and outside of your computer network, such as consultants with whom you need to collaborate. You can also access your Groove workspace from anywhere, whether or not you are connected to your network. Groove is designed for working together throughout your project, with productivity features such as a Meetings tool that enables you to both plan and hold team meetings, and a Chat tool for instant messaging with members of your workspace.

NOTE Although both Windows SharePoint Services and Groove workspaces can be accessed by approved users outside of your network, doing this in Windows SharePoint Services requires additional steps (such as creation of an extranet).

In the 2007 Office release, Groove and Windows SharePoint Services also work effectively together, because you can easily publish completed documents from a Groove workspace to a Windows SharePoint Services shared workspace, where it can be securely stored and indexed for easy access. So, if you have access to both Groove and Windows SharePoint Services, when should you use each? Although your requirements might differ from project to project, here is my recommendation in a nutshell.

If you need to be able to work on a project easily from anywhere with a team that does not share the same network, you want a Groove workspace.

If a large number of people on your network or extranet need to easily access a wide range of content, you want a Windows SharePoint Services shared workspace.

Use the following overviews to help you determine the best workspace for your work style and your particular project.

Small business or individual? Go live.

If you think you can't use Windows SharePoint Services or Groove because you're not part of a large company, think again. You have a number of options, but one of the best and least expensive ways to go is to subscribe to one of the new Microsoft Office Live services.

Office Live Collaboration and Office Live Essentials are subscription options offering a mix of programs and tools, and both include your own secure, fully hosted SharePoint site.

For home and small business users who buy software through retail outlets rather than through the volume licensing agreements that larger companies use, Groove is available in the new retail suite, Microsoft Office Ultimate 2007. But, if you don't need all the programs in the Ultimate suite, you might want to try the new Office Live Groove subscription service that offers the same functionality as Office Groove 2007.