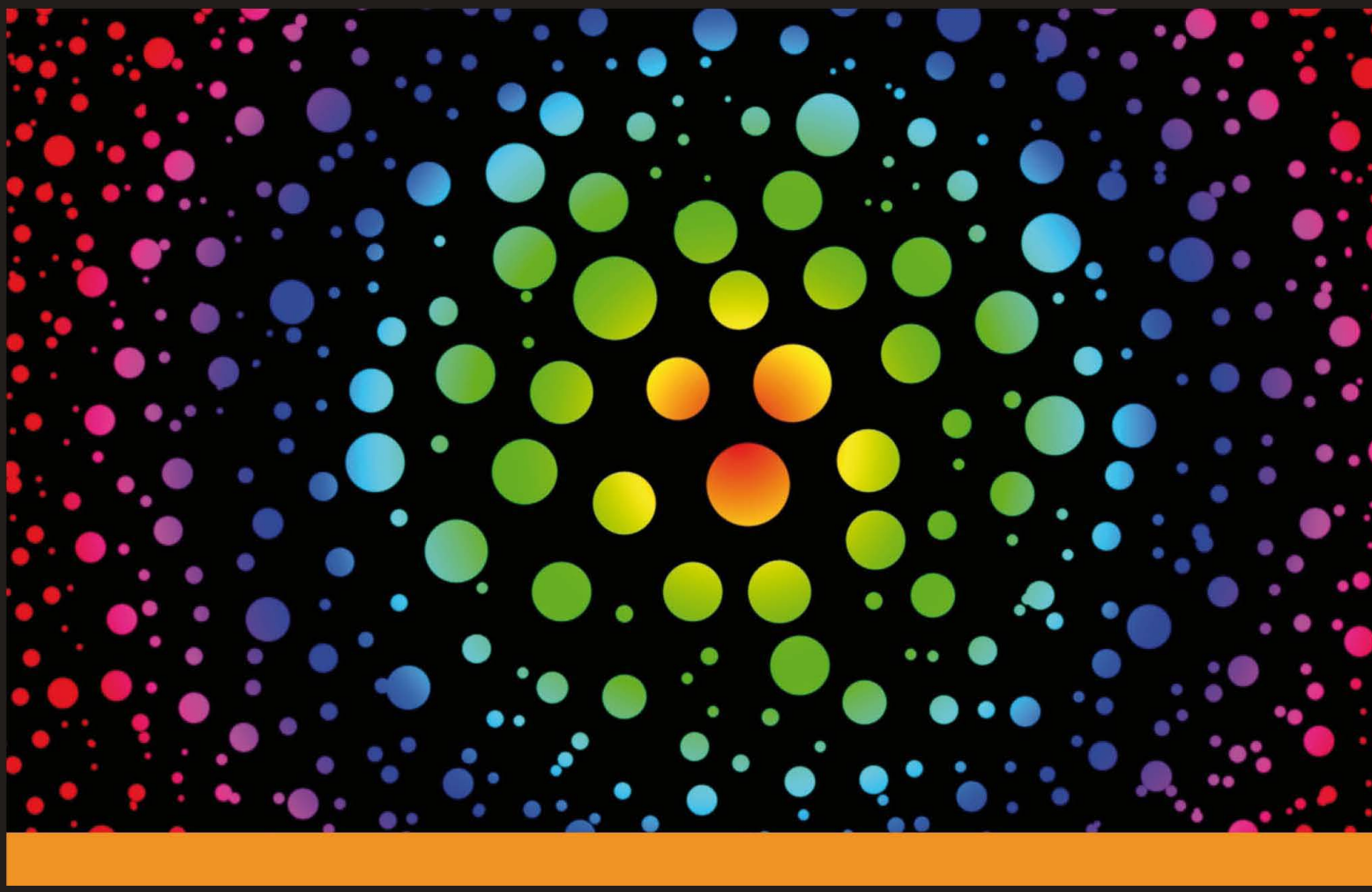

Yammer Starter

A concise, enjoyable look at using Yammer, the secure, fun-to-use private social network for your company, now from Microsoft

Ralph Roberts

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BIRMINGHAM - MUMBAI

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Yammer Starter

Welcome to the Yammer Starter. This book has been especially created to provide you with all the information that you need to get set up with Yammer. You will learn the basics of Yammer, get started with building your profile, and discover some tips and tricks for using Yammer.

This document contains the following sections:

- *So, what is Yammer?*: Find out what Yammer actually is, what you can do with it, and why it's so great.
- *Installation*: Learn how to download and install Yammer with the minimum fuss and then set it up so that you can use it as soon as possible.
- *Quick start*: This section will show you how to create a group.
- *Top features you need to know about*: Here you will learn how to perform five tasks with the most important features of Yammer. By the end of this section you will be able to connect with people across the company, create and share content, create networks for clients and partners, access your company or group's page on Yammer via mobile devices, and integrate with other applications.
- *People and places you should get to know*: The Yammer software project is centered around a user community. This section provides you with many useful links to the project page and forums, as well as a number of helpful articles, tutorials, blogs, and the Twitter feeds of Yammer super-contributors.

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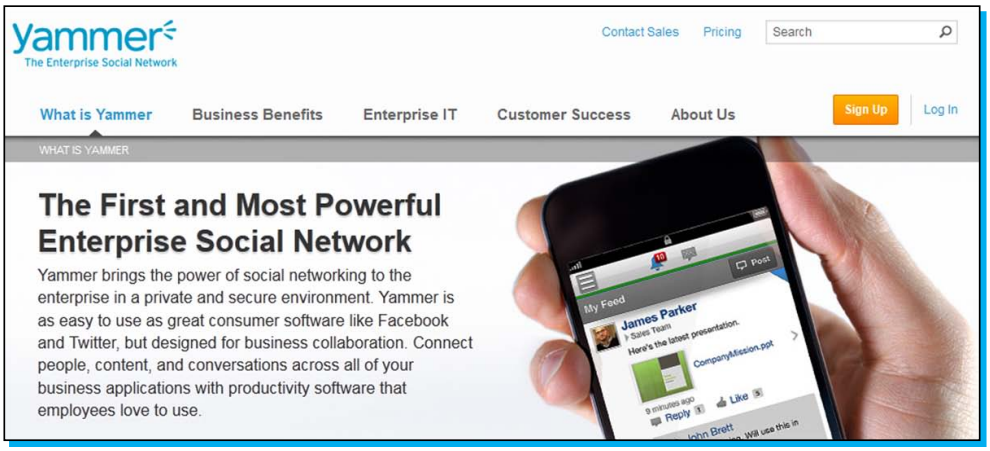
So, what is Yammer?

Yammer is a social network but with one huge difference. It's only for your company or other organization. In addition, it's private and it's secure.

Yammer is a powerful and easy-to-use means of secure intra-company communication. Now any business, regardless of size, can have its own private Facebook and Twitter accounts, all rolled up into one convenient package. At the same time, you can use external networks through Yammer to keep in touch with clients, customers, and so on. The following screenshot introduces you to these features:



Smaller divisions, groups, work teams, and the like can be set up and, of course, all those can interact with other groups. The possibilities are many and can revive companies—in today's economy, the revival of a company's way of doing business is all important.

Yammer provides four features which build on company spirit and efficiency (as emphasized on `Yammer.com`)

- Collaboration: Share with anyone, anywhere in your company. Post announcements, links, files, questions, photos, polls, events, praise, and more.
- Tap into experts (the collective brain of your company): Search for expertise, browse topics, or simply post a question and crowd-source the answers.
- Track important information: Get relevant content and conversations automatically delivered to you. Yammer intelligently surfaces information so you can focus on what matters.
- Organize into groups: Whether it's for a department, a team, or a project, create a group to bring coworkers around a shared goal. Manage content and security settings with advanced administrator controls.

Basically, a Yammer network for your company (be it large or small) enables employees to share with other employees and management easily and pretty much instantaneously, and it helps everyone make smarter decisions faster. If we have immediate access, via computer workstations or smartphones, to new products, company policies, and so forth, then productivity goes up, we feel better about the company and our job, and more things get done... better!

Also, because Yammer uses similar design principles as the consumer networks, a vast majority of us already know how to use it from the start. There's over a billion people on Facebook, a hundred million of us on Google+, and mostly everyone tweets on Twitter. Those things are fun. Now Yammer brings that same type of enjoyment and fulfillment in use to private networking.

Because it's so much fun, more employees will use it and more work will get done.

Installation

In the following eight easy steps you can install Yammer and get it set up on your system.

Step 1 – what do I need?

Before you install Yammer, you will need to check that you have all of the required elements as follows:

- A computer or mobile device with web-browsing software
- Access to the Internet (from anywhere)

It's really that easy. Your company's network is stored in the cloud. This means all of your coworkers, conversations, shared files, and notifications are available to you in a secure way from anywhere, not just your office.

Step 2 – downloading Yammer

The simplest way is for you to go to `Yammer.com` and enter your work e-mail into the online form shown in the following screenshot. This form is on the main page; we'll see the regular join/sign-up form shortly.

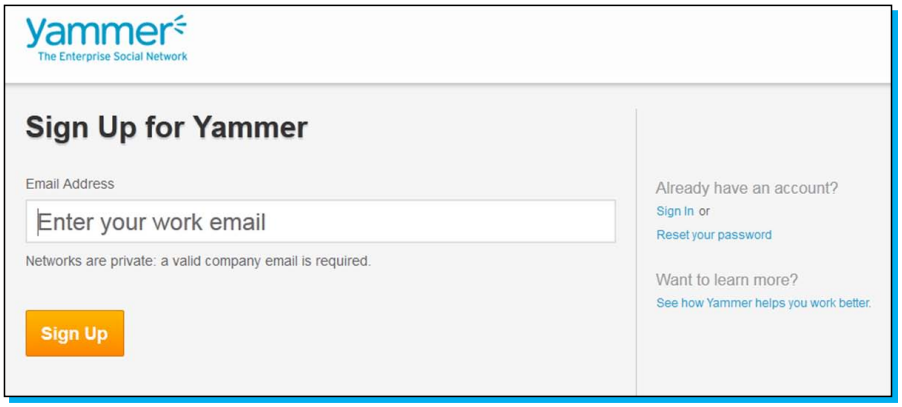
A private company network with only one member is a lonely place. You'll want to encourage fellow workers and your bosses to join as well.

There are two ways to get a Yammer account specific to your company: Go to the sign-up page (`http://yammer.com/signup`) and enter your company e-mail, or be invited by someone else in your company who's already on Yammer.

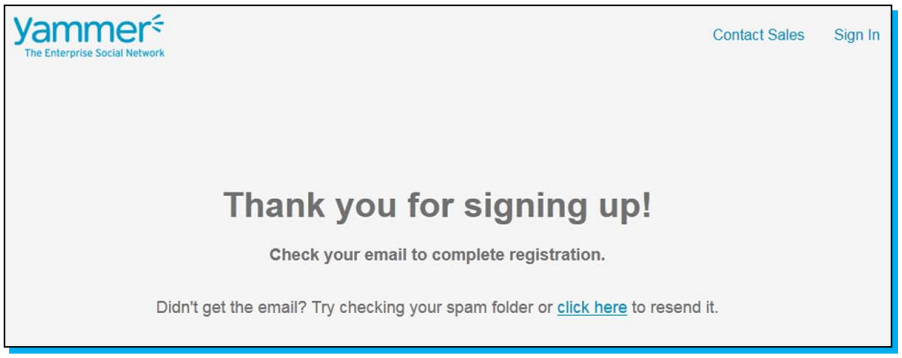
Step 3 – signing up

Click on the link in the e-mail and finish the sign-up process online.

The following screenshot shows the regular sign-up/sign-in page at `Yammer.com/signup`. As is noted on both this and the previous form, you must enter a valid company e-mail address. That's one of the methods used to keep these business social networks private.



After inputting your company e-mail address the following page appears:



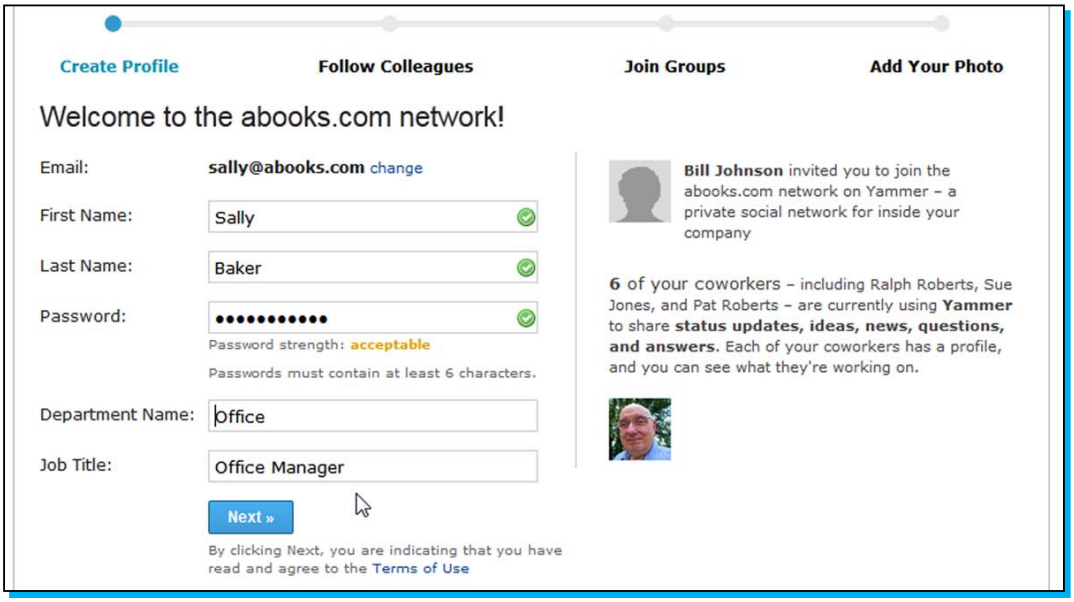
Step 4 – setting your password

Go to your company e-mail account and click on the link (see the following example of invitation e-mail). This returns you to Yammer where we will now set a password and begin filling out our profile.

```
abooks.com
Bob Young (Salesman, abooks.com) has invited you to join Yammer - a private social
network for inside your company.

Your coworkers are currently using Yammer to share status updates, ideas, news,
questions, and answers. Each of your coworkers has a profile, and you can see what
they're working on.  It's a better way for your company to stay connected!

https://www.yammer.com/activate/olkjzs-5y4ivho1jjh6xthr9i3a0yung?e=2&amp;m=893820076

------------------------------------------------------------
```

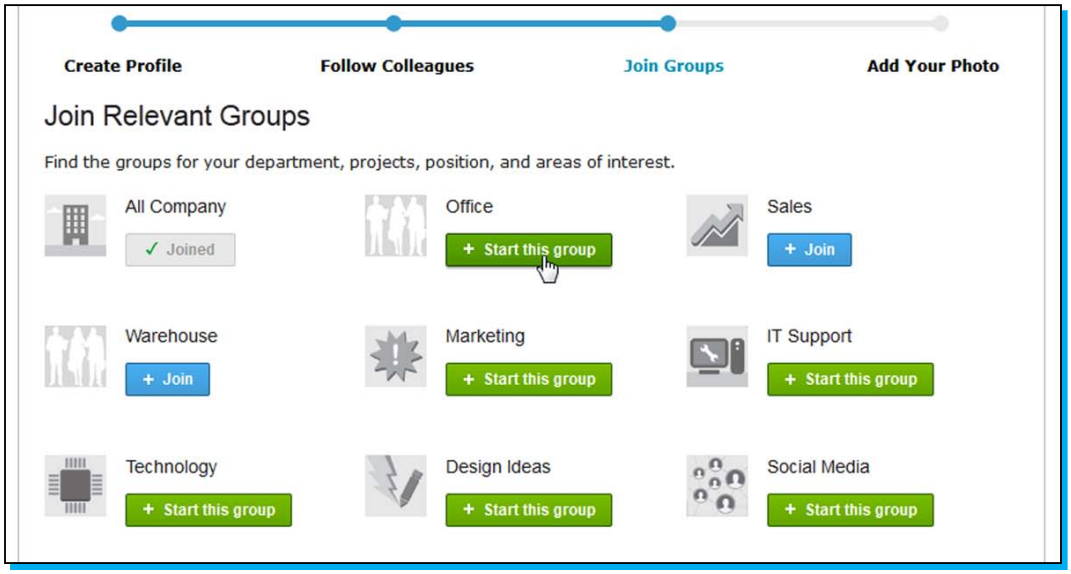
Step 5 – editing your profile

The link takes you to a short series of forms where you fill in profile information, your department in the company, and so forth. The following screenshot is the first place, where you enter your name, select a password, and detail your department and position.



Step 6 – inviting coworkers

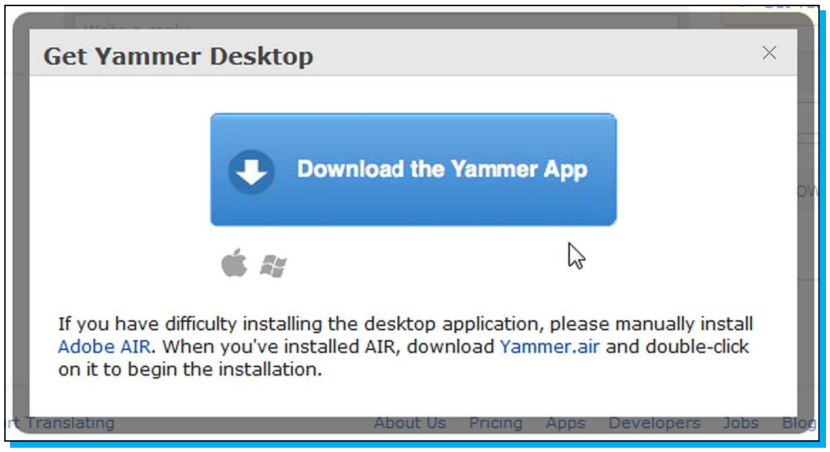
The next form gives you a chance to invite coworkers to join, and the following is the third form that lets you join the group for your department. As you are the first person from the **Office** department to sign up, just click on **Office** to start the group.



Step 7 – adding handy apps

Finally, you'll be offered a chance to also add two handy apps (applications) for keeping track of Yammer outside of web browsers (it is highly recommended you do so).

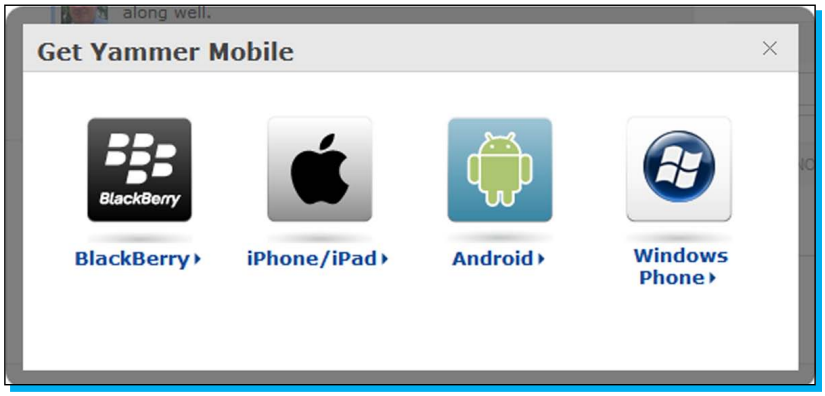
Click first on **Get Yammer Desktop**, then on the blue button as shown in the following screenshot:



This is a free app. Download and click as asked a couple of times in the dialog box that pops up, and your app is installed. It lets you keep track of the company's social network without having to have a browser open.

Step 8 – putting Yammer on your smartphone

Now, we can also get the Yammer mobile app (click on **Get Yammer Mobile** on the profile screen). Apps for the four major types of smartphones are available (free!). Just click on the appropriate one when the following box pops up:



And that's it!

By this point, you should have a working setup of Yammer and are free to play around and discover more about it.

Quick start – creating a group

A group can be of any size needed. Groups may be departments or divisions with thousands of employees, or a work team of four or five people. As of yet, there is no direct subgroup capability in Yammer (one group linked to another), but there can be as many groups as needed, each tasked to a specific job.

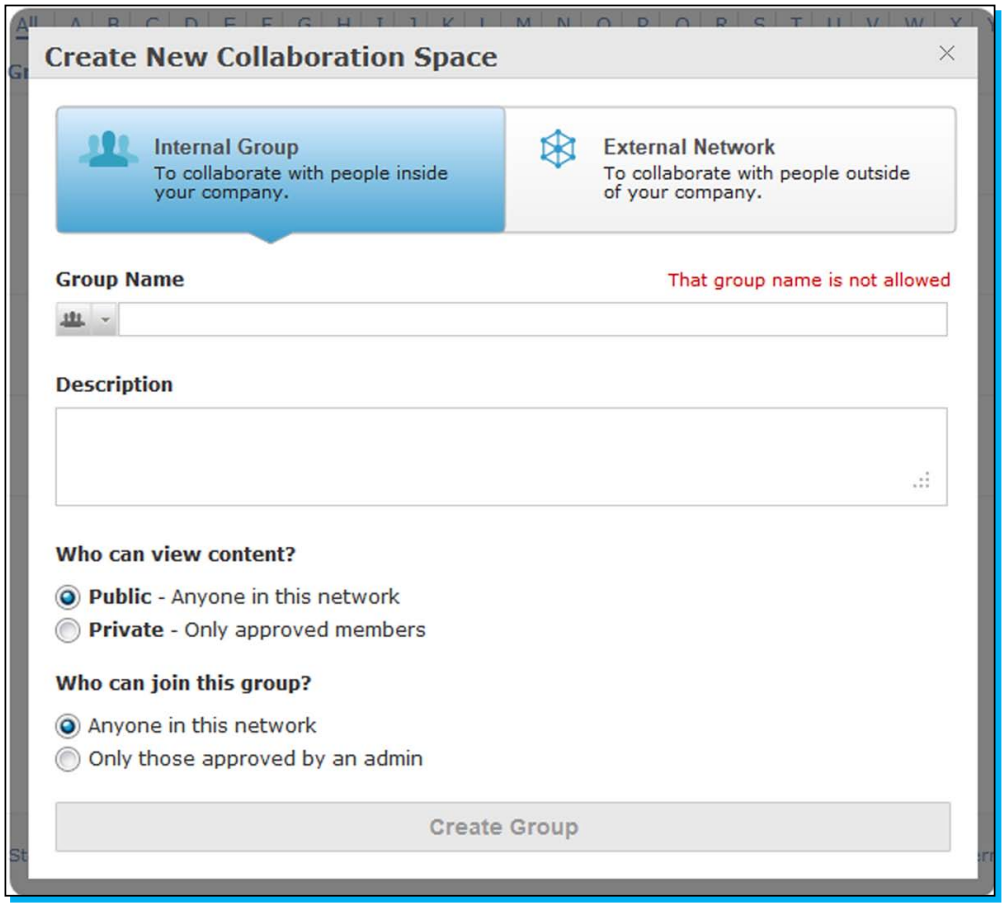
So, say, Accounting could have a general group and also any number of subgroups in the sense that those groups are limited to people in Accounting. These would be departments like Payroll, Auditing, Annual Report, Tax, and the like.

Groups may be public (anyone on the company's social network can see and join) or private (only the people invited can join). The latter type of group is useful for workgroups involved in secure or sensitive work. We will see how to create a new group and manage it with our fellows.

Step 1 – creating a group

1. Select **Groups Directory** | **Create New Group**.
2. Select **Internal Group** (to collaborate with people in the company) or **External Network** (for communication with people outside the company).
3. Enter an appropriate name in the **Group Name** box.
4. Type a description with enough information in it so that anyone can immediately understand what the group is for.
5. Set whether this group is public or private by checking the **Who can view content?** selection.
6. Set **Who can join this group?** by checking the radio button for anyone in this network (that is the entire company) or only those approved by the administrator of the group (this requires Enterprise or Premium versions of Yammer).
7. Click on **Create Group** to activate the new group.

The following is the **Create New Collaboration Space** dialog box, this being where you create groups.



Step 2 – inviting others to join the group

Clicking on **Create Group** enables this group for action and posts. This public group can now be seen by anyone via the **Groups Directory** collection and, of course, by the automatic post shown in the following screenshot:

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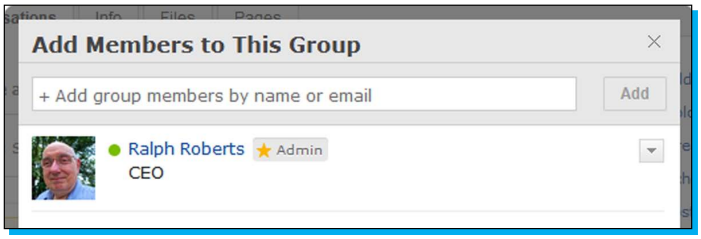
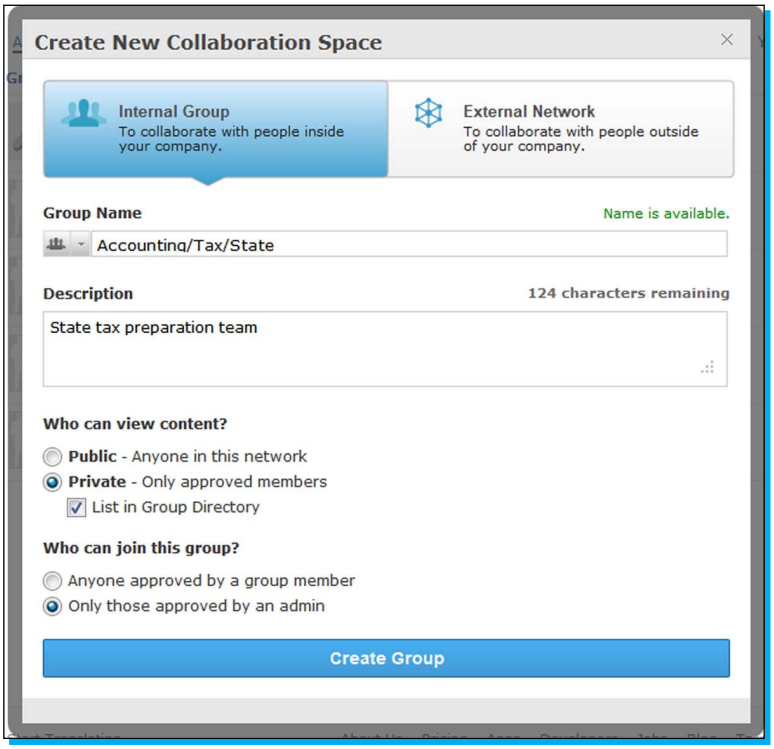
Right now you're the only member of this just-created group. So in addition to doing the previous automatic post, Yammer also asks who you want to invite to join the group. Choose here the people whose jobs make them useful members of the group. You can invite any number using the following form:



Anyone you invite must have a company domain e-mail address (like ours, `abooks.com`). And if not already a member, he or she must first join the company's Yammer social network before they can join the group you've just created.

In creating a private group (refer to the following screenshot), we can make it a private network and choose whether or not it is listed in **Group Directory**. Certainly an Accounting department, as in this example, would want to keep taxes, payroll, and other sensitive information confidential.



To reiterate some basic concepts—posts are the lifeblood of any social media network and groups (or circles like in Google+) is how we control the flood of posts. It's okay, even fun, to wander aimlessly around on Facebook or Google+ or any other consumer network, but a work network needs a bit more efficiency. So choose and set up groups to best fit the needs of your workplace.

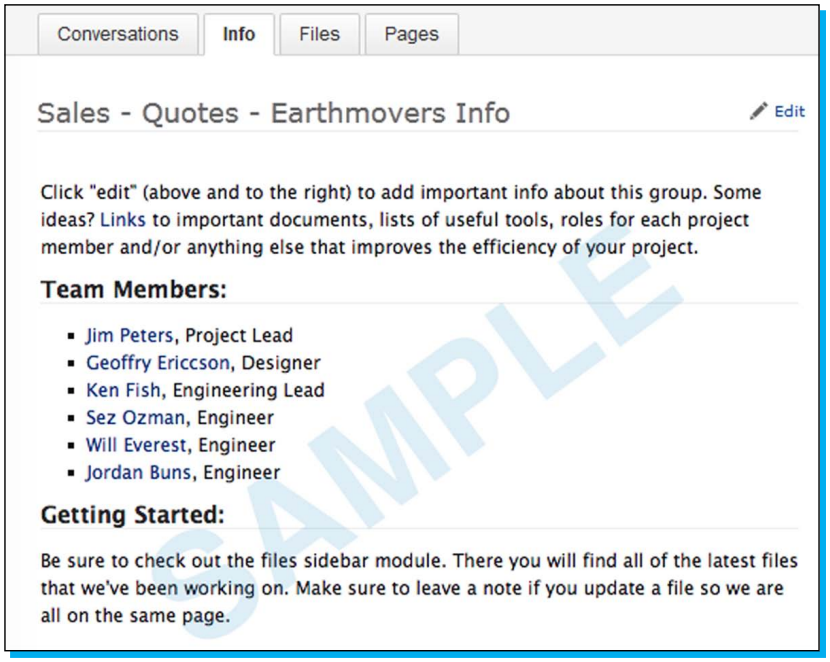
Step 3 – adding initial content

Creating a group is just a first step. Useful information pertaining to its purpose should also be included and added on an ongoing basis. This is not just a place for a selected subset of the company to have conversations but the conversations on a particular topic.

At the top of every group's listing (refer to **Groups Directory**) we find four tabs: **Conversations**, **Info**, **Files**, and **Pages**. These provide a place us to add information and/or encourage others to do so.

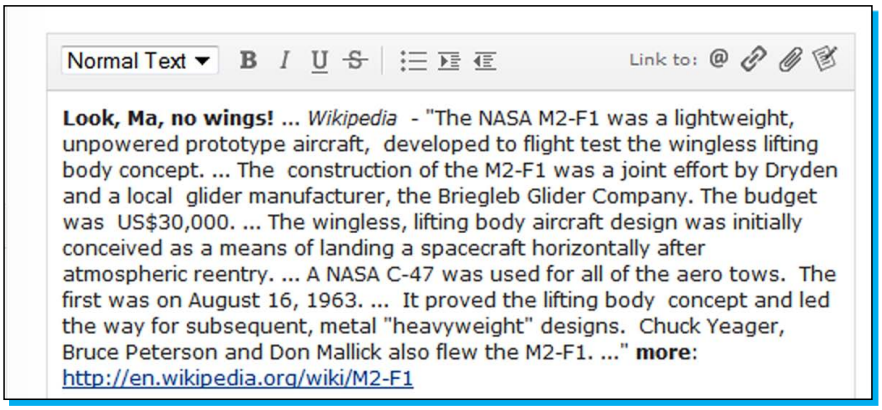
Now here's what the four tabs do:

- **Conversations**: These are like posts in the main feed except the posts you do here get seen only by members of the group.
- **Info**: This lets us enter text describing the group, listing its important members, and providing instructions on how to use the group. You can see this in the following screenshot:



- **Files**: These allow the members of the group to upload files useful for the group. These files might be Word documents or other word processing files, PDF files, spreadsheets, videos, photographs, or whatever other data format might be needed. To upload a file from your computer just click on **Upload a File** and you will get a standard dialog for choosing files on your local system as follows:

- **Pages:** This option lets us create web-like pages that can be seen by the group. We can even cut and paste from websites or various documents, and it will retain the formatting such as bold, italic, and web links that work (shown in the following screenshot). We can also link to persons on our company network, websites, files, or other pages on Yammer.



Taking the time to make sure the necessary documents and other data gets added to groups, makes them ever so much useful.

To join or leave a group

Let's take a quick look at getting in or out of a group. Go to **Groups Directory** and find the group. Move your cursor over the **Joined** or **Join** button and it will toggle (depending on its state) to let you join or exit the group. Private groups, of course, require the administrator's approval but joining public groups takes place immediately.

Deleting groups

Often, however, groups turn out to be redundant or its task is no longer needed. This would be especially true, perhaps, of a bunch of groups created for a specific project. That project done, someone might be tasked with archiving the posts and clearing those groups for deletion.

In the case of premium groups which cost the company money, unused groups need to be terminated in a timely manner.

To delete a group perform the following steps:

1. Go to that group's page (listing in **Groups Directory**).
2. Click on the **Settings** button next to the **Joined** button.
3. On the **Settings** dialog box, click on the **Delete Group** link at the bottom-right corner.

Note that you must be the group administrator, or the network admin of a premium network in order to delete a group.

Before even thinking about deleting a group, make sure you (or someone) has saved any important data.

Tapping into your company's collective brain

The following screenshot is a promotional bit from the Yammer website but it sparks a thought that has bearing on this definitely huge advantage of a company social network—access to the experts!

In mostly every company someone knows the answer to whatever bug, breakage, malfunction, perplexing software, and so on that plagues you.

A company Yammer network lets us find these experts and pick their bulging but friendly brains. This type of interaction is already going on in the company but Yammer magnifies it by giving us access to a wider pool of experts.

What does this do to the efficiency of the company? It increases it markedly by saving lots more hours of wasteful hair-pulling frustration when problems stymie us. Multiply this type of useful interaction via a social network reaching throughout the company and we have a stronger, more agile company.

Yammer is good for business.

Obtaining a consensus

Another way of using Yammer is in getting agreement over various courses of action.

For many decades companies have made use of suggestion boxes because smart managers realize that no one knows the business better than those who do it day in and day out. Think of Yammer as a suggestion box on steroids. and It can be, it should be.

Here's one of the simplest examples of getting a consensus using Yammer (and one that should be used often)—polls, such as the one shown in the following screenshot. You can probably guess the winner on that one—all of the above!

Management strategies

There are four areas emphasized on `Yammer.com` where a social network benefits from an overall management strategy. They are worth emphasizing here and putting in practice in all our companies:

- Lead with precision and impact: This means the sharing of management's vision with everyone in the company, getting employees behind a common mission, setting trends, and driving company culture. All of these make better managers and a happier, more motivated workforce.
- Engage with employees: This lets management see and experience what's happening in real time and interact with all levels of the company. This will identify problems faster and let you know who to reward and who to give more responsibility to.
- Inspire innovation: This lets the management connect with and encourage employees to share great ideas anytime, anywhere.
- Energize top talent: Uncover hidden talent and nurture future leaders while encouraging everyone to achieve, recognizing and rewarding their achievements, and finding hidden talent while nurturing future leaders.

Top features you'll want to know about

The most basic reason for having a private social network is to enhance connections between the company's employees—you, me, everybody. The old cliché about coworkers interacting around the water cooler now extends literally across continents.

To do this, Yammer uses a model very similar to that of other social media networks like Facebook, Google+, Twitter, and so on. If you've used or just seen any of those in use, you have a head start. If not, you'll find all this easy to pick up.

Yammer, in letting us interact with people all over the company, empowers us both as individuals and the enterprise as a whole. Let's see the ease with which communication between one or more persons, groups, the entire workforce is accomplished with Yammer.

Connecting with people across the company

Now we can begin to use Yammer. Our first task is to log in to the company's private Yammer network as follows:

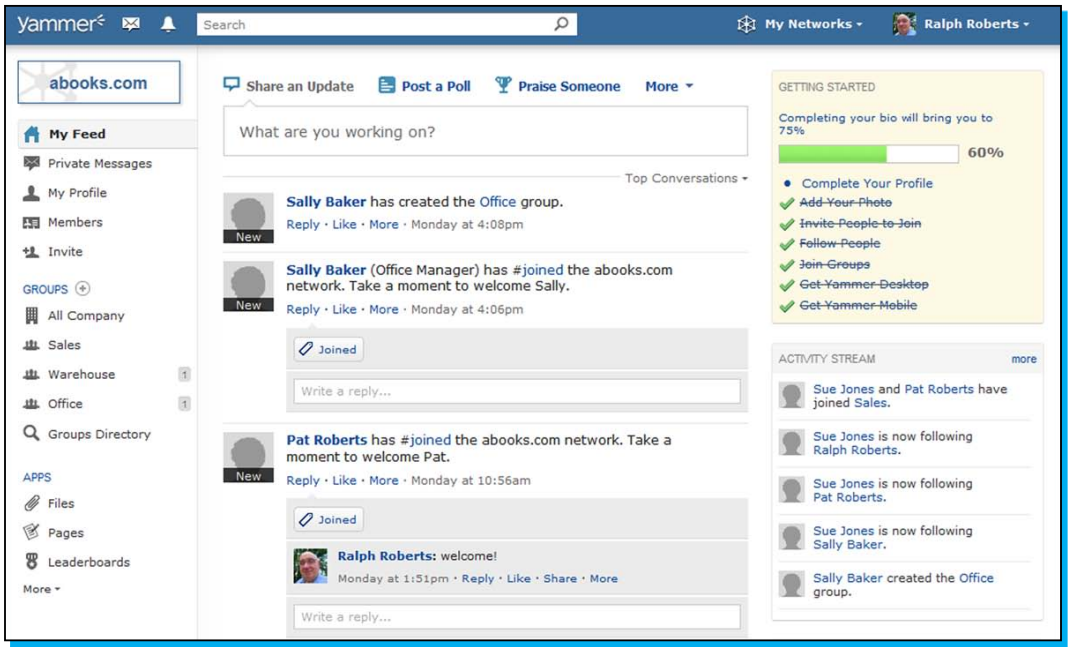
1. Simply type `yammer.com` into the URL address box in our favorite browser such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Safari. Yammer works equally well in all those.

Note in the address shown in the following screenshot that the `https://` element has automatically been added to the front of the address rather than the more usual `http://` element. The additional "s" shows us a secure connection has been established.

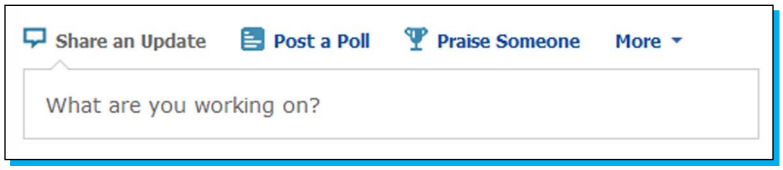
2. Enter your company e-mail address and password in the login boxes which are now on the screen.

Should you already be logged in, the main screen opens without requiring any additional input.

The main screen of Yammer as shown in the following screenshot is called the **My Feed** screen. The term "feed" refers to the stream of messages appearing in the middle part of the screen. These messages or posts come from people in the company that you are following (that is they asked Yammer to let you see their messages) or people in the groups you belong to.



The most important thing for a company's private social media network is to connect. You do that with the input box at the top of the feed column (center column of this main page screen), and which is pictured in the following screenshot:



Here we can try out following options:

- **Share an Update**
- **Post a Poll**
- **Praise someone**

... and under **More** (a drop-down menu), you will get the following options:

- **Ask a Question**
- **Post an Event**
- **Make an Announcement**

Six ways giving us a lot of power to make connections.

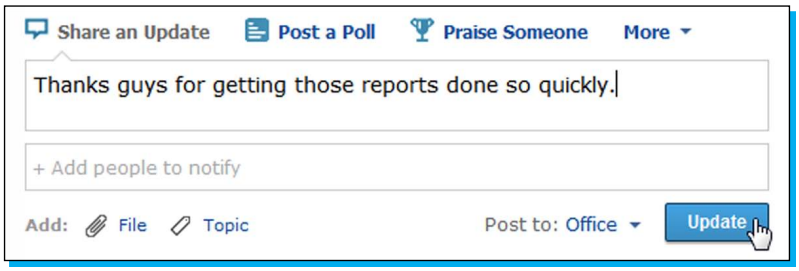
Here's how you post:

Click in the textbox with the gray letters reading **What are you working on?** — and this post box works exactly the same as **Write Something...** on Facebook, **Share what's new...** on Google+, or **Compose new Tweet...** on Twitter. If you know how to post on those three or any of the many other social networks, you already know the most important part of Yammer.

Now we can work on some tasks.

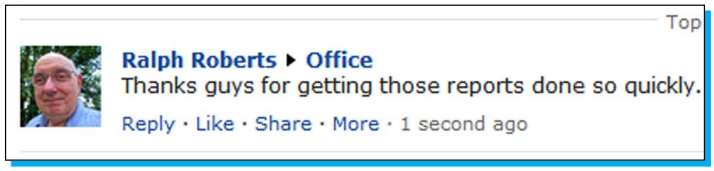
Step 1 – posting an update

To post an Update (the default action) just type your message as follows into the box:



That's almost all. Well, okay, we do need to specify who it goes to. In this example-a thank you note to the office staff — I chose the **Office** group (the drop-down menu shows the groups, click on the little arrow to see them all). Then just click on the **Update** button and it's done.

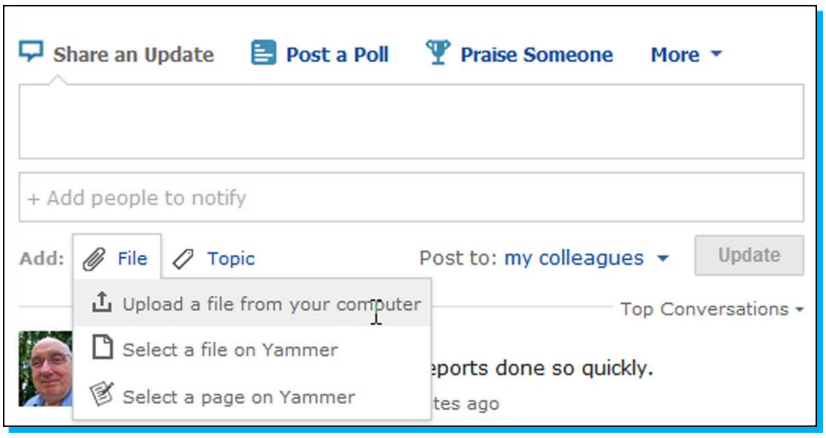
The published post looks similar to the following screenshot and appears in my feed (as I posted it) but also in the feeds of everyone in the **Office** group, who enjoy their well-deserved pat on the back.



Step 2 – posting a photo or other graphics

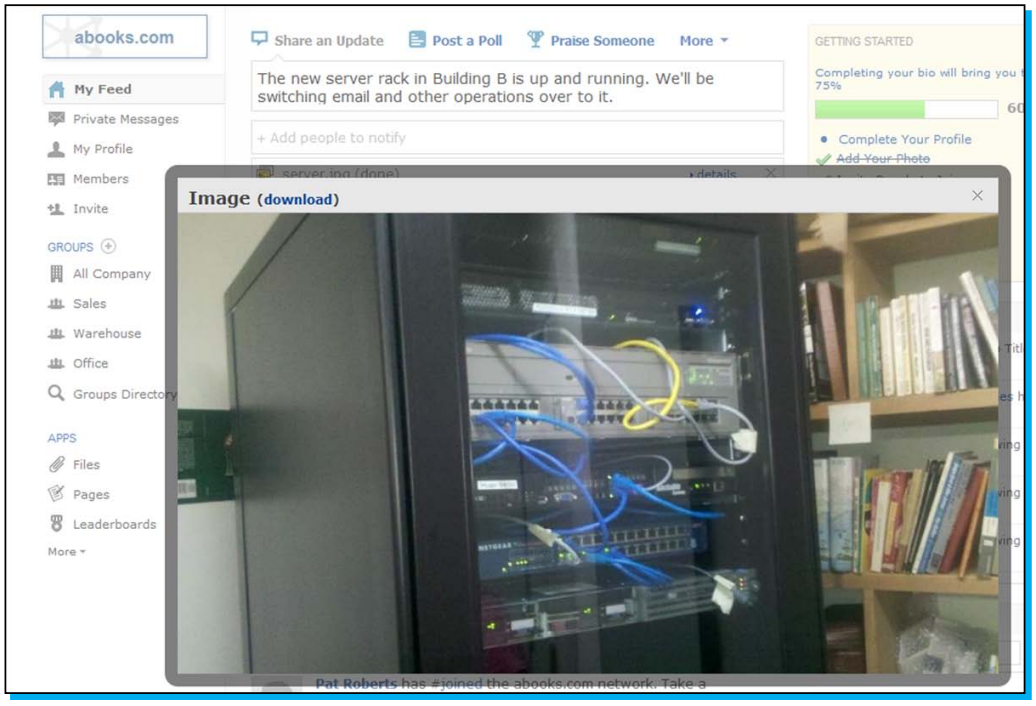
An old cliché concerns a picture being worth a thousand words. Actually, due to inflation, a picture is worth about 1500 words these days.

There are many reasons to add photos, charts, figures, drawings, and so on to posts. To do so, click on the **File** tab below the post box (it appears when you click in the post box to start a message). Here you can upload a file (photos are a type of file), select one from those that might already be in your company's Yammer network, or select a page on Yammer. Use the top selection to upload a photo (highlighted in the following screenshot):

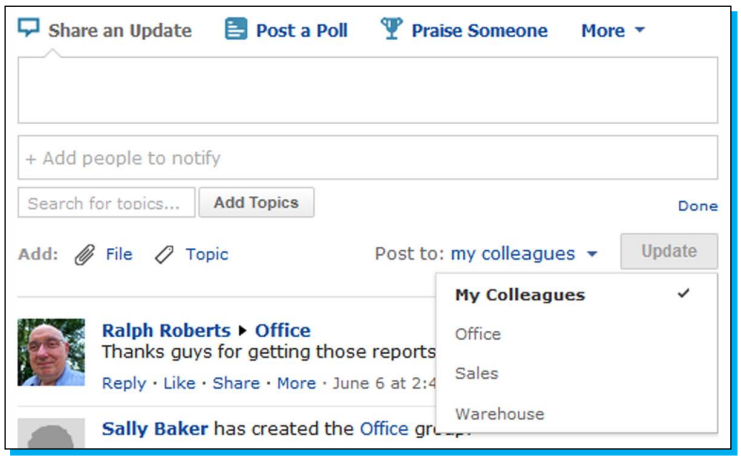


In this post I want to let everyone in the company know about the new server rack (which we actually recently added). So I type a short message, click on **Upload a file from your computer** (which opens the standard file selection dialog box provided by your specific operating system). Then I choose and upload a file as you do in any other application.

I select the group (over in the left-hand side column) **All Company,** which by default, makes the post visible to the entire company. The picture is represented by a small thumbnail attached to the post. Clicking on the thumbnail expands it as shown in the following screenshot:



Clicking in the post box also reveals as shown in the following screenshot, **+Add people to notify** (this lets us search for specific people to message) and **Search for topics...** (this lets us find or create topics like shipping, production, or any other word or term that narrows down what your post is about). We also see the group selection drop-down menu, and the **Update** button that publishes your post.

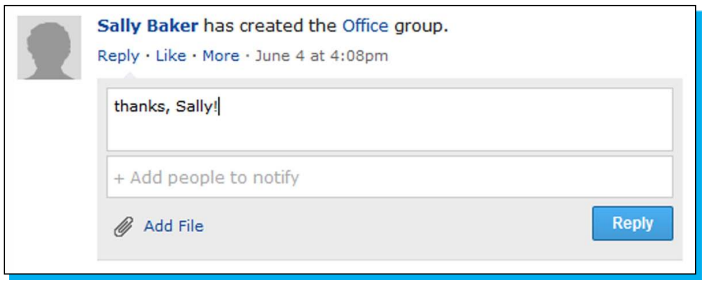


Step 3 – commenting and complimenting

The third type of post is praising someone. There are two ways of doing this:

1. Originate: Above the posting input box click on **Praise Someone** (see the following screenshot). Enter their name and what you are praising them for.

2. In addition to creating posts, we want to comment on other peoples' posts similar to the following screenshot. Just click on **Reply** to open the box for typing. You can also add a photo or other type of file, just like when posting an original message, or search for other people (use the paperclip icon with **Add File** next to it for that).

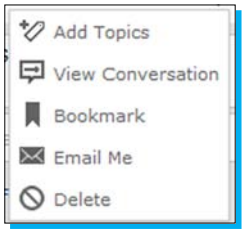


Step 4 – yes we LIKE that

If we want to just show approval, we click on **Like** (see the previous section and, yes, it is the same thing as on Facebook). We can also search for other people to add (that is we share Sally's post with them).

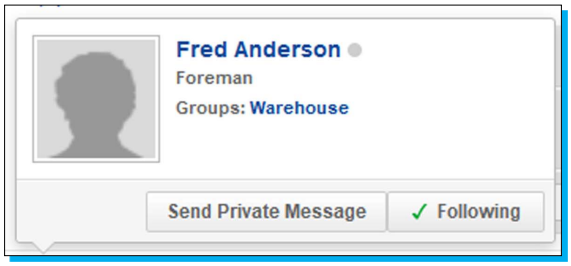
Step 5 – learning more

There are many options you would like to see that are shown in the following screenshot and described as follows:



- **Add Topics:** This option lets us further categorize the post (when your company has thousands upon thousands of posts, you'll really appreciate the topics, which help narrow down the posts to those of a particular interest)
- **View Conversation**: This option lets us see all the posts related to this one so we can follow the thread of the conversation
- **Bookmark**: This is just that, it lets us easily find this post again
- **Email Me**: This sends a copy of the post to your e-mail
- **Delete**: This deletes the post (if you have the administrator's permissions to do so)—use it carefully

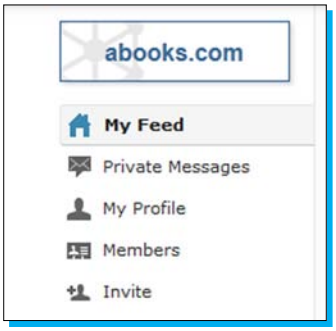
Moving the cursor about a persons name who has created a post reveals information about him or her, plus gives you a link to send them a private message. A green check shows you are following them. If not you can follow them by clicking on the button. It toggles to following so you can *unfollow* people also.



Step 6 – exploring the layout of Yammer's main screen

The feed is the large, center column of this main Yammer page, but what about the columns on the left- and right-hand sides?

Look at the left-hand side column first. As shown in the following screenshot, the top of the column shows the company network we're on (in my case, `abooks.com`).

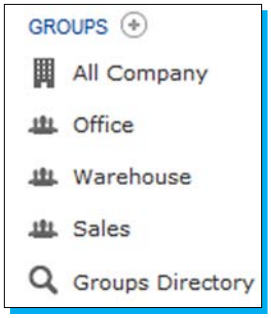


The buttons in the top section of the left-hand side column provide these functions:

- **My Feed**: This option is in essence a Home button—clicking on it returns to the main feed page (where you post and perform the other actions we've been discussing), and also clicking on the company name box brings up the feed page.
- **Private Messages**: This option allows us to securely message someone (or several people of our choice) without anyone else in the company being able to see it.
- **My Profile**: This is where we put stuff about ourselves; photo, position, and so on, to let others know about us and which we started filling out in the last chapter.

- **Members**: This supplies a directory of everyone on the company's Yammer network. In a large company, this is an invaluable resource for finding people quickly.
- **Invite**: This lets us ask someone not already on the company's network to join as a company e-mail address is required.

Now, we look at the next section down on the left-hand side of the feed page that is **GROUPS**.



The selections let us accomplish the following actions, all related to groups:

- **All Company**: This action, when clicked on, shows the posts that have been sent to the entire company (i.e. using **All Company** as we did earlier).
- The middle portion of this section, a varying number of lines between **All Company** and **Groups Directory**, show groups specific to your company and to which you belong. Clicking on one of these groups changes the feed in the center column to show posts from only that group.
- **Groups Directory**: This shows all groups; we can search and join one or more by clicking on its membership button (which appears when selecting the group). We also get data on each group as to the number of members and how active it is (messages being posted).

The lowest section on the left-hand side, **Apps**, will be covered in detail later in the book.

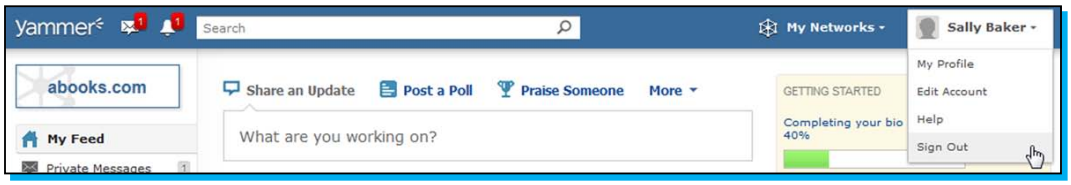
Now look at the right-hand side column on the main feed screen. It is also in sections but the ones showing are subject to change. These are mostly informational and do the following:

- **Getting Started**: This monitors your progress in filling out your profile, making suggestions as to what is needed next—it goes away when your profile is 100 percent finished.
- **Activity Stream**: This shows us the most recent happenings of the people and groups we are currently following. Click on **More** in that box for additional history.
- **Suggested People**: This is a list of people that from its knowledge of the company structure Yammer thinks you should follow, and this item is only there when there are potential candidates for your consideration, that is, it's not always there.

- **Suggested Groups**: This appears whenever there are groups Yammer believes you might want to join.
- **Invite**: This gives us another place to invite others in the company to join the network. Click on **More** in this box to invite a lot of people at once and remember everyone needs to have a company e-mail address.
- **Online Now**: This shows who else (among those you follow) is on the network.

Step 7 – receiving notifications

At the top of the Yammer screen is a useful bar with several items on it as shown in the following screenshot:



To the right-hand side of the Yammer logo are two notification icons. The first shows we have one private message and the second (the bell icon) indicates the system has a message for us also. Just click on the icon to see them.

Step 8 – searching

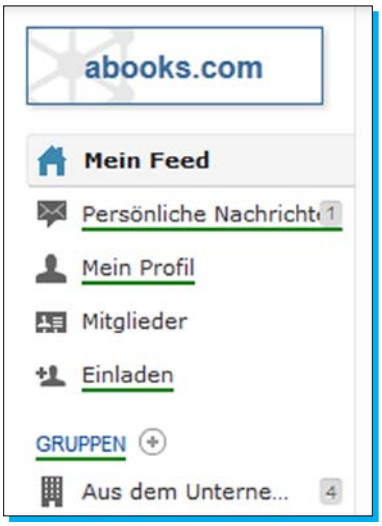
The **Search** box allows us to search the company network for people, topics, and the like.

Step 9 – using the bottom line

On the very bottom of the Yammer screen, we find the line pictured as shown in the following screenshot:

All the links on the right-hand side in the previous screenshot are general links to Yammer's site. Feel free to explore those and learn more about the Yammer concept as well as keeping up with the latest news and features about Yammer in general.

The **Start Translating** feature will be of use if you are more comfortable in a language other than English. It's still being tested as this is written but nonetheless useful. The following example uses German. Many other languages are available. Click on the link to see a list.



Using all of the instructions in the previous sections to post, join groups, follow people, send private messages, and so on gives us a head start in using Yammer on a daily basis. A few times posting or doing these other actions and you'll quickly be an expert.

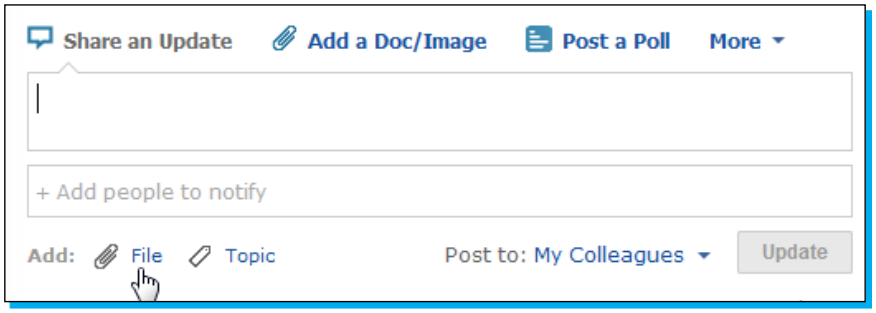
Creating and sharing content

The word content covers a lot of ground, important ground in any type of social network but especially so in your company's private social network. Content includes text, pictures, videos, and documents of all types. This content adds richness of experience that makes the network more enjoyable and, of course, a lot more useful.

We can, for example, include photos of new products or of employees doing things, all that makes the accompanying text easier to understand and so forth. Why do newspapers and magazines have so many pictures? Because almost certainly the majority of people will not read great globs of pure text and also comprehend faster, easier, and sometimes only with the help of visual elements.

Step 1 – entering information for posting

The following screenshot shows the basic posting box where we make media magic. To get it simply click in the input box with the gray **What are you working on?** text in it. This box appears in your feed and various others places, such as in **Groups**.



Step 2 – attaching files

To attach a file, click on one of the File links (in the previous screenshot, there are two, both with paperclip icons). The top link was added to Yammer as this book was being proofed.

You can attach various types of files, such as PDF files, image files, video files, Microsoft Office files, and so on. The way the attachment is displayed in the feed depends on the type of file. Enter the filename.

Step 3 – including media

To include a picture or web page from the Internet, just copy the URL (you can get an address of a photo by right-clicking on it and selecting **Copy Image Location**).

To upload a video from your computer, click on the **File** link next to the paperclip icon and upload just like you did for a photo or indeed, any attachment. Videos are often much larger than any other type of file, so this may take a while.

While it's easy enough to upload a video from your computer to Yammer, it's not effective in saving time nor space in storing such long files on Yammer. A great solution to that problem is using YouTube, Vimeo, or the many other video sharing services out there. In the case of YouTube, the video can be made private so that only the people you allow can watch it. And the beauty of it is all you have to do in sharing such a video on Yammer is cut and paste its URL (address) as we did for photos and web pages previously. Yammer automatically generates the thumbnail and adds the description from YouTube.

There is no limit to the number of files you can attach to a post. But if the files cover several different topics, we'd want to break them into separate posts. Each post should be only one topic.

The maximum size for a single file attachment is 100 MB for free networks and 5 GB for premium networks. If you're posting a lot of long videos, for example, you need the 5 GB capacity. But 100 MB is more than sufficient for most files we all work with.

Step 4 – viewing attached media

A small progress bar appears while Yammer uploads and processes attachments. Wait until this is finished before clicking on the **Update** button to post.

Any file attachment that is not an image will be visible as a link under your message, which people can click to download. Any image attachment will be visible as a thumbnail under your message. To view the image, users can click on the thumbnail. When viewing the expanded image users can click on the download link to download a copy of the image.

While some of the consumer social networks, Google+ for example, enable displaying large graphics without having to click on the thumbnail, Yammer does not. Yammer is meant to be more work-related.

Any video attachment will be visible as a thumbnail under your message. Users can click on the thumbnail to watch the video inline. Supported video types are: `.wmv`, `.avi`, `.mpeg`, `.3gp`, `.flv`, `.mov`, `.mp4`, `.mpg`, `.ogm`, `.mkv`, `.ogv`, `.ogg`.

Clicking on the link shows the file assuming the necessary software is installed on the reader's computer. For example, something like Adobe Reader to see PDF files, Word to open `.doc` files, and so forth. Yammer does not change files in any way, it just uploads and attaches them to our posts for sharing.

Step 5 – accessing uploaded files

All uploaded files to your network are accessible by clicking on the **Files** link in the left-hand side column; well, the ones that are public. Not the ones attached to posts in a private group unless of course you belong to that group.

To access them go to the **Apps** section at the bottom–left corner of the feed page. Click on **More** to expand the menu to see **Images**, **Videos**, and more.

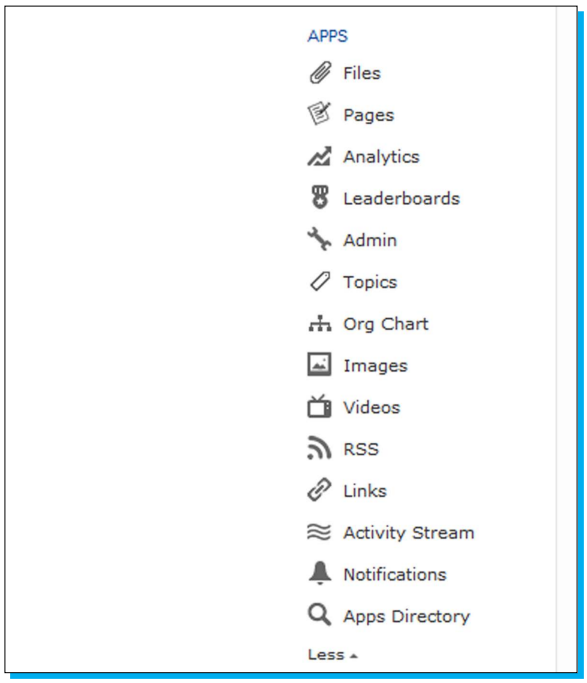
Step 6 – deleting files

To delete a file, you must delete the message it is attached to.

Adding apps

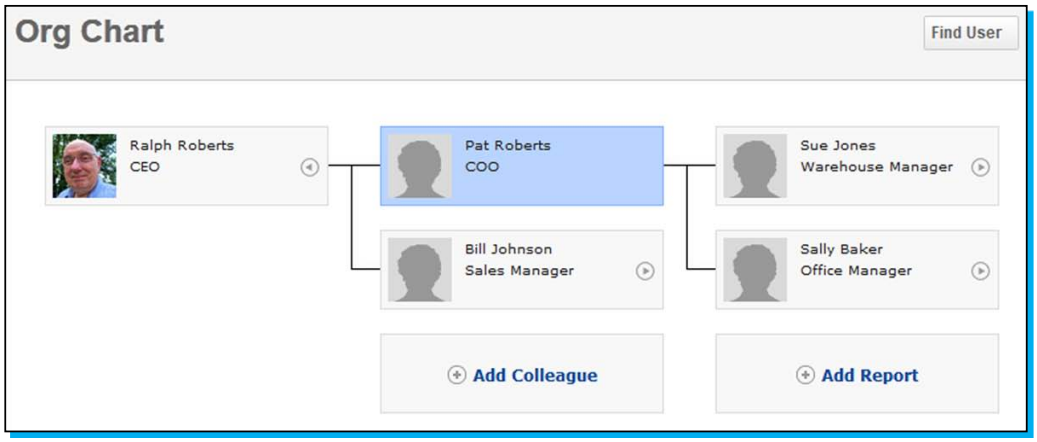
Apps is short for applications. So the **Apps** section gives us an expandable menu of various applications. The menu is located in the bottom part of the left-hand side column on the feed page.

Click on the **More** button at the bottom of the collapsed (default view) section to expand this menu. Click on **Less** at the bottom of the expanded menu to collapse it again. The following screenshot shows the expanded menu.



On the **Apps** menu previously described, the following options are given :

- **Files**: This brings up the **Files Directory**.
- **Pages**: This, which we met in the previous chapter, provides the **Pages Directory**.
- **Analytics**: This gives us a page of statistics about the network and its growth.
- **Leaderboards**: These tally statistics about members of the network, encouraging more participation by showing who posts the most messages, who is the most popular, and so on.
- **Admin**: This is a very important section in the premium versions of Yammer.
- **Topics**: These we've already covered; this selection lists the topics already on the network.
- **Org Chart**: This depicts the structure of your company. The following screenshot shows how it looks.
- **Add Colleague**: This is self-explanatory.
- **Add Report**: This is where the structure is generated by setting up who reports to whom.



- **Images** and **Videos** bring up those respective directories.
- **RSS** (**Really Simple Syndication**): This subscribes to outside content.
- **Links**: This opens the **Links Directory**.
- **Activity Stream**: This shows what people in your groups or that you follow have been doing.
- **Notifications**: This bring up the **Notifications Directory**.
- **Apps Directory**: This has tons of additional enhancements to Yammer.

Sending content to specific groups

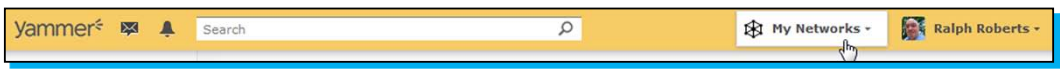
Before you post, consider who the message is appropriate for. In the left-hand side column of the feed page, select that group and only then do your post. If you have something for only one person, a private message is probably better than wasting everyone else's time and space. In short, be considerate, be smart; think before posting but yes, by all means post and participate.

Making networks for clients and partners

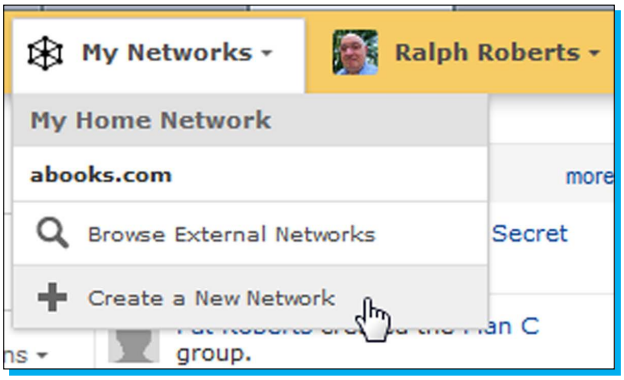
External networks allow people outside the company to communicate with various people in your company. These networks look and work like your company's private network but are separate and thus protect the sensitive internal company data on the main network.

Step 1 – creating external networks

At the top of the Yammer feed page, and on lots of other pages as well, there is a tool as depicted in the following screenshot:

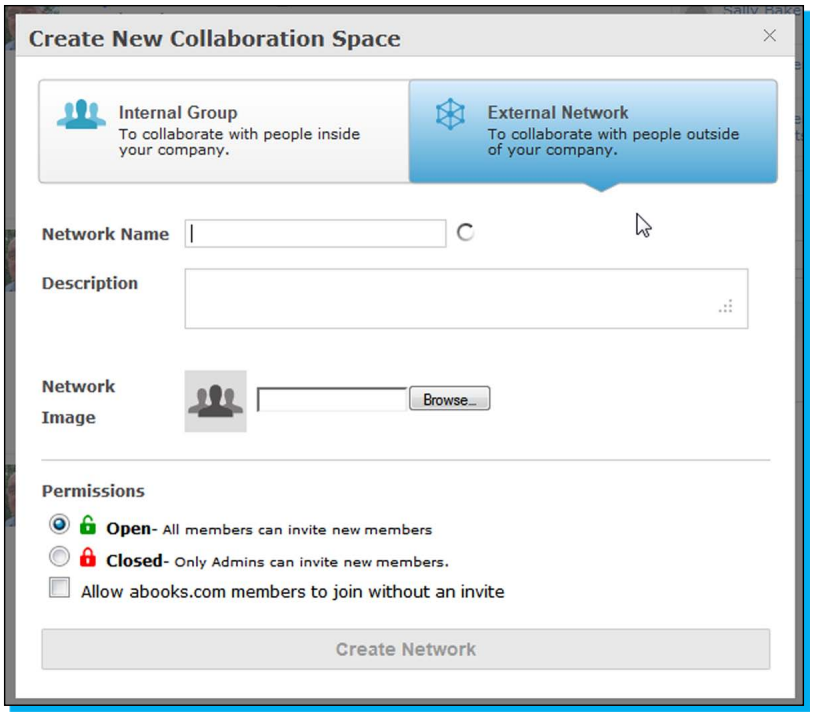


Click on the **My Networks** button to see the drop-down menu as shown in the following screenshot. Click on **Create a New Network** to create one.

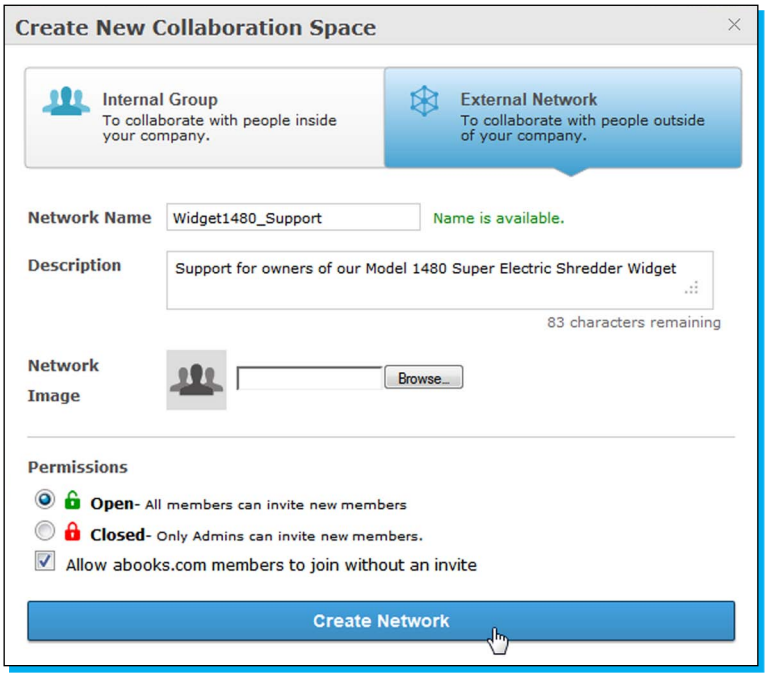


Step 2 – configuring a new external network

The **Create New Collaboration Space** dialog box pops up. Select the **External Network** button. So we're ready to name and configure our new external network.



Pretend our company manufactures a Model 1480 widget and we want to create a support service for our customers of that particular product. We name the new external network (in the **Network Name** box) `Widget1480_Support`. We also type a description. In **Network Image**, we could add a photo icon of the product. We will see the resulting screen that looks like the following screenshot:



Now looking at the bottom part of this screenshot, we have three **Permissions** choices. We can have a wide open network by letting all members of the external network invite new members, or we can have a closed network, where only the administrator of the external network (usually the person who created it) can invite new members. Decide which of those is appropriate when you create the network.

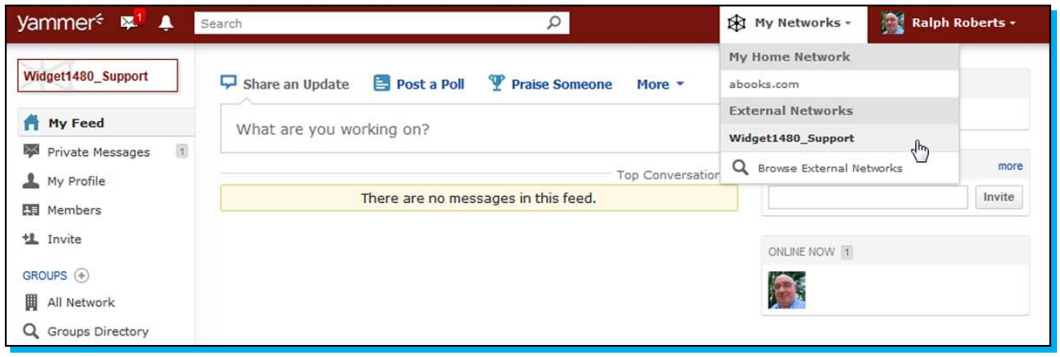
The last choice is whether to allow employees (members of the internal network) to join without an invitation. This option is independent of the two above it.

Step 3 – going live

Click on the **Create Network** button and the new external network is live and ready for business.

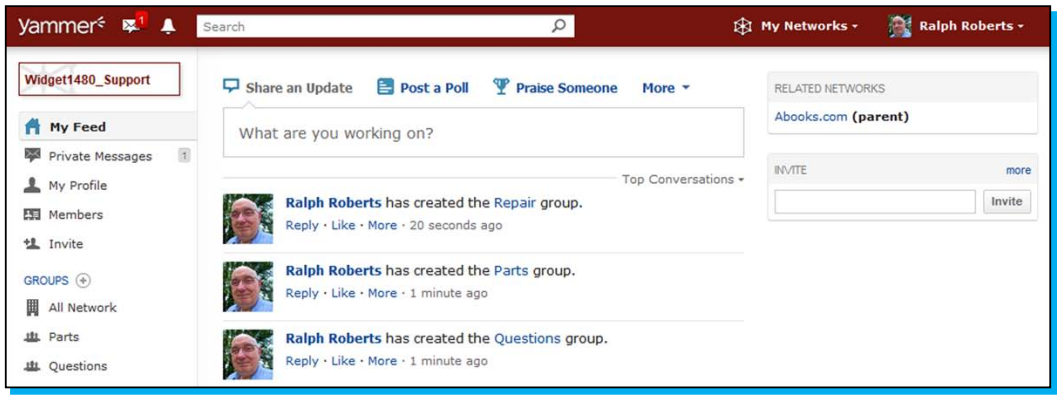
In the following screenshot we see this new network. It looks much the same as our internal network with most of the similar features working almost in a similar way. However, the top tool bar is of a different color and every message, document, image, member, and so on are different from the internal network. In short a whole new Yammer opens to the outside to the extent the administrator allows.

Navigate between networks by clicking on **My Networks,** then the network you want as shown in the following screenshot:



Step 4 – adding groups

At the time of an external network's creation, we should also set up some basic groups. In the following example (as this is a product support group), we might add **Repair, Parts,** and the more general **Questions**.



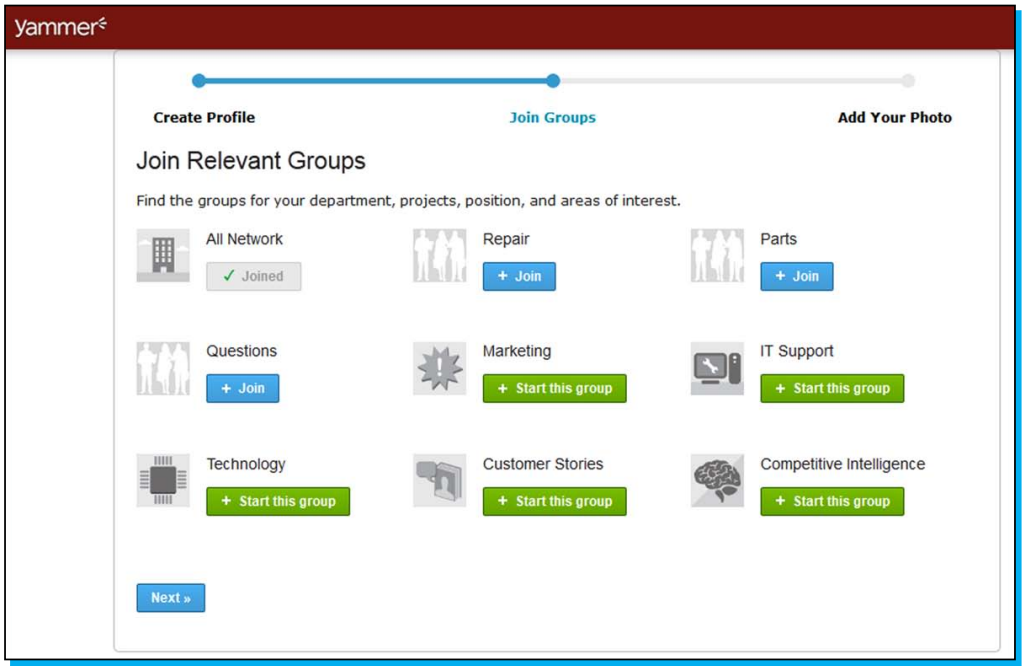
Step 5 – inviting customers, vendors, and others outside the company

There are three ways people can join an external network:

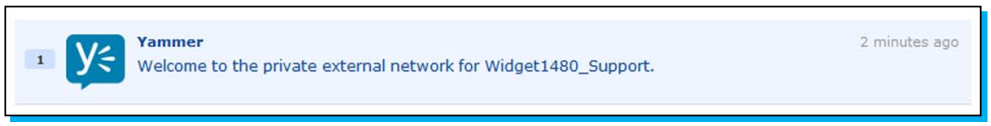
1. Accept an invitation from the administrator of an external network (the only way to bring in people from outside the company).
2. Request to join from the **External Network** directory in your company's internal Yammer network.
3. Request an invitation from the administrator of external network by visiting the external network's landing page.

We invite customers and others from outside the company to join this network by typing their e-mail address in the **Invite** box and clicking on the **Invite** button.

When the invitee gets his message and accepts, he goes through the same process of creating a profile as we did after joining the company's internal network. The new people can join groups (as shown in the following screenshot) and even create groups if the administrator of the network allows that privilege. Also to have groups your Yammer must be on one of the premium plans.



On completing the run though of their profile, your invitees receive the welcome message here. Now they can invite others to join (if it's an open network).



They are also offered the desktop Yammer app, plus they can download the app for Apple, Android, Blackberry, or Windows smartphones. Now think about this! You've got customers downloading apps to your external networks and putting them on computers and phones where they will constantly be exposed to your product! Is life good or what?

When creating your external networks, you'll want to also invite the appropriate people from within the company so that customers, clients, fans all have someone to interact with.

Step 6 – deleting an external network

A company of any size will be creating and using (if they are realizing the power of Yammer) hundreds or even thousands of external networks. Some of these networks will go on for years, others will lose their reason for existing, become redundant, or otherwise be a candidate for deletion. No problem. Here's how to get rid of it.

First, only the administrator of an external network can delete it.

To do so, go to the external network home page (use the drop-down menu on the toolbar at the top of Yammer's page) then follow these steps:

1. Click on **Admin** in the left–hand side column.
2. Scroll to the bottom of this page.
3. Click on the **Delete External Network** link.

Why have external networks?

Many reasons exist for having external networks. According to the Yammer site, here are a few of the most compelling ones:

- Companies can create secure **B2B** (**Business to Business**) external networks to communicate with partners, customers, vendors, consultants, and advisors
- Global conglomerates can create external networks for subsidiaries and divisions to link together separate business units
- Other organizations, such as industry associations, schools, clubs, and conferences can create secure external networks to meet their communication needs

Who can be invited to join external networks?

Basically you can invite anyone you like. Membership in external networks is not restricted to specific e-mail domains. You can build external networks, Yammer stresses, around specific B2B relationships, topics, projects, or products, and invite the appropriate people to them.

Just as a Yammer internal network multiplies the connectivity and hence efficiency of your company, external networks multiply that enhancement out into the world. Yammer should excite the vision of any enterprise leader; it's a new world.

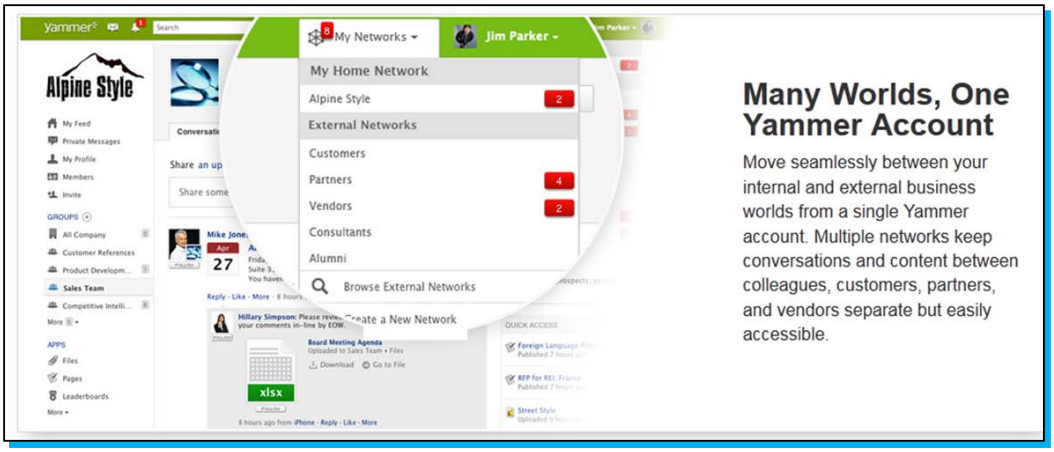
Can I create a private external network?

No. All external networks appear in the External Networks directory. The only possible exception is when an administrator in a premium version of Yammer decides not to show the **External Networks** directory itself.

Collaborating with important business contacts

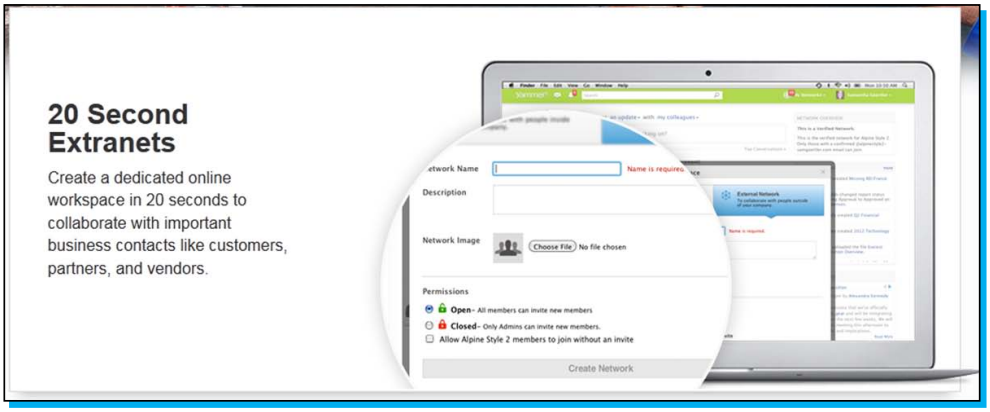
The wondrous power of external networks cannot be overemphasized! The following is one of the graphics of `Yammer.com` with a number of those advantages listed.

"Many Worlds, One Yammer Account" does a good job of summing up this power.



There are some sample external networks in the previous screenshot: customers, partners, vendors, consultants, alumni. But that's just a start. Any group your company (or organization) wants to reach out to can be included.

And they are so easy to pop into place. Yammer claims you can set one up in twenty seconds.



Accessing your company or groups via mobile devices

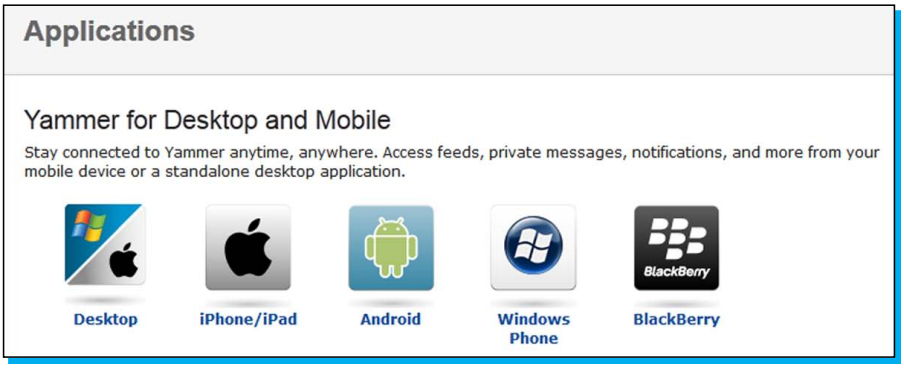
Step 1 – getting the right Yammer mobile app

From the web site of Yammer we can find out how to do it manually. This way is helpful if you're away from computer access to your company's network. Here are those instructions, pick the one for the appropriate type of device.

- To download the iPhone application, go to the **App Store** in iTunes on your iPhone and search for `Yammer`
- To download the iPad application, go to the **App Store** in iTunes on your iPad and search for `Yammer`
- To download the Blackberry application, go to the **Blackberry App World** and search for `Yammer`
- To download the Android application, open the **Google Play** app on your phone and search for `Yammer`
- To download the Windows Mobile application, go to the **Windows Phone Apps Marketplace** and search for `Yammer`

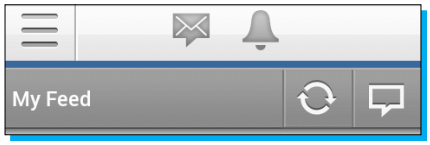
Another method of getting these apps, if you have access to your computer, is by expanding the **Apps** section (on the lower-left side on the Yammer main feed screen and other screens), then clicking on the **Apps Directory** link at the bottom. This brings up the **Applications** screen and the mobile apps are listed at the top.

The **Desktop** app, by the way, is not a mobile app. It's the application for your desktop (Windows or Mac).



Clicking on the icon shown in this screenshot for your type of mobile device brings up a page with more information about the app for the device. Also there's a link to download and install the app.

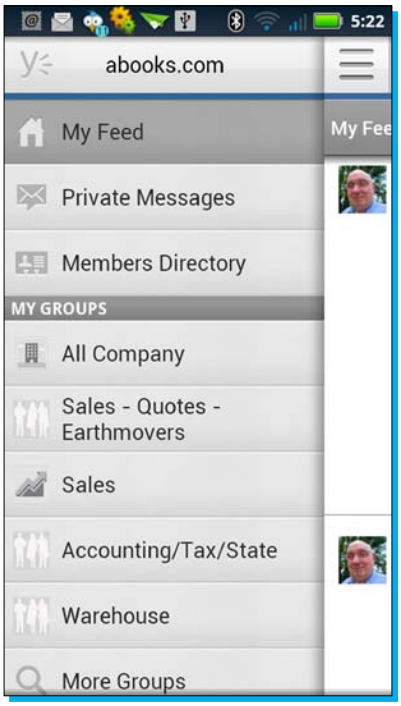
Step 2 – navigating and receiving notifications



The silver bar with the three parallel lines on the left-hand side is for navigation and notification. The two icons on the right-hand side of the bar in the following screenshot show notifications from your company's Yammer network.

The first are your private messages and the second are notifications. If a number appears in the little envelope icon, you have new private messages. If a number is in the bell icon, you have new notifications. Tapping on the envelope icon brings up your message history (old messages) and on the bell, old notifications.

The three parallel lines at the left-hand side brings up a navigation menu as shown in the following screenshot. Scroll down to see all of it.



Using the navigation menu in this screenshot, we have access to not only the internal company network but also external networks. Whatever you have access to on your work computer can also be accessed from the mobile app.

Next down is a gray bar as we have here. The **My Feed** part is just a label. Below it, of course, is your feed just like the middle column on the computer at work. The menu we looked at above corresponds to the left-hand side column on the main Yammer feed screen on your computer.

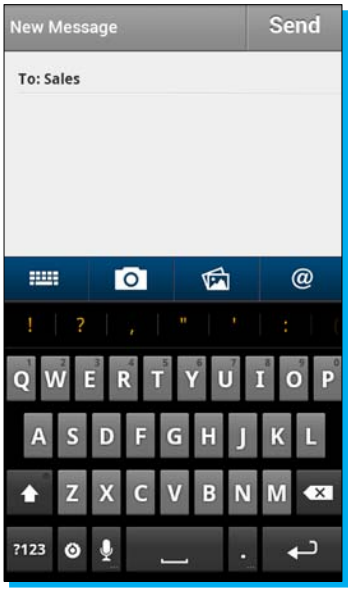
The two buttons on the right-hand side, the arrows in a circle and the square cartoon balloon icon, will both be used often, hence their greater visibility. The circle arrows button refreshes your app, checking your company's Yammer network for new posts, messages, notifications, and so on.

And the rightmost icon is used for sending private messages.

Use Yammer on mobile the same way as the Yammer on your work computer.

Step 3 – posting a message

To post a message to a group, tap on the rightmost icon and get an entry screen as shown in the following screenshot with the keyboard already activated, ready to enter a message. When you've finished typing, the **Send** button posts it on the company's network.



Just above the keyboard are four icons. From left to right they:

- Toggle the keyboard on or off
- Let you take and send a photo attached to the post (show what a great time you're having!)
- Select photos already on your phone or pad, or attach other types of files
- Add other people to send this post to

Step 4 – replying to a message

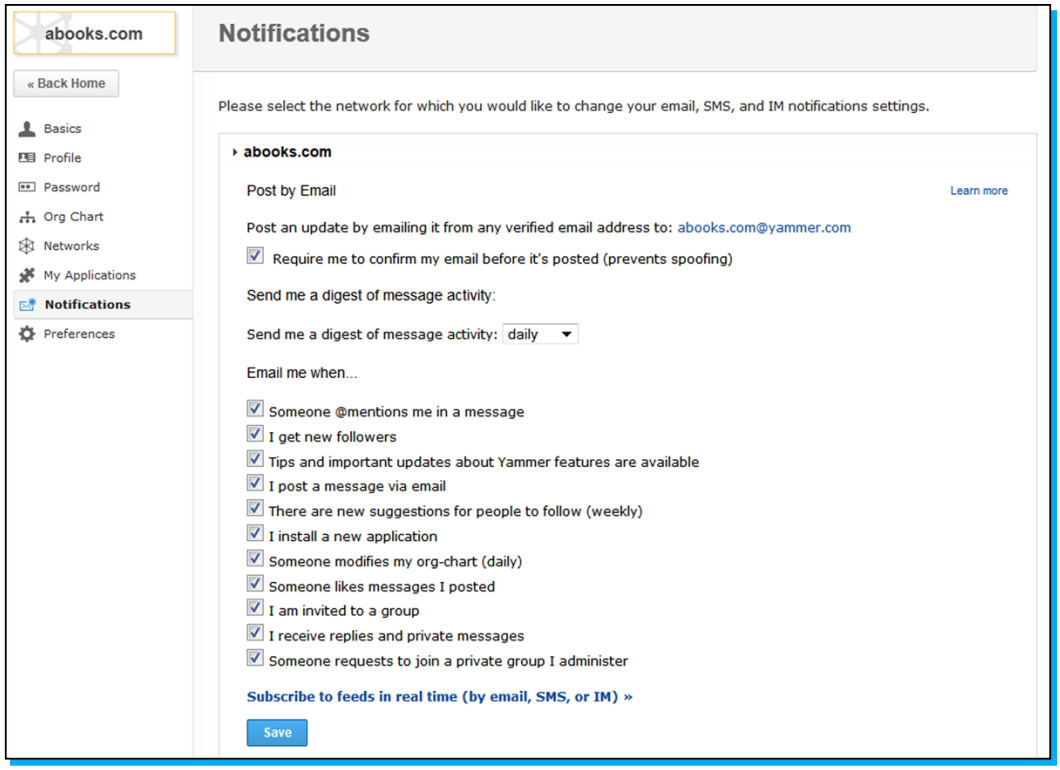
If you wanted to reply specifically to a message, just tap on the **Reply** link under the message. The same entry screen comes up, but when **Send** is hit, the message is posted as a reply instead of a new post.

Step 5 – receiving SMS or e-mail from your networks

The big thing on mobile devices is **SMS** (**Short Message Service** or texting). To receive various types of information from your company's Yammer network texted or e-mailed or sent with **IM** (**Instant Message**), you need to activate it from your work computer.

While logged in to your Yammer company network, go to `https://www.yammer.com/account/notifications` and select the internal or external network you want sending things to your mobile device.

The screen which looks similar to the next screenshot appears in your browser. All the options showing on this screen are for your work computer. You might want to check them while you are here and change them as you like. Then click on the **Subscribe to feeds in real time (by email, SMS, IM)** link just above the **Save** button.



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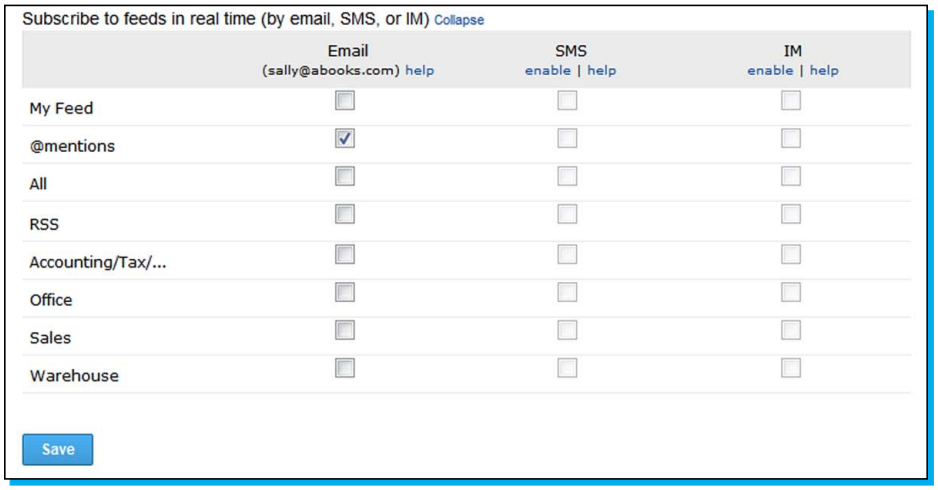
We stay on the same screen but additional choices, as shown in the following screenshot, unfold to our view:



On this new form, check the choices you want and save it. You can come back and make changes any time you like.

For SMS in the U.S., Yammer currently supports the following carriers: AT&T, Boost Mobile, CellularOne, Nextel, Sprint, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, Virgin Mobile, and Verizon. Many prominent international carriers are also supported.

There is no extra charge to send or receive SMS updates to Yammer but you will be charged according to the SMS plan with your carrier.

Integrating with other applications

Yammer can interact with other software, pull in data already existing in your company, and other good stuff. That's what the word **integrating** means. Yammer gives access to invoices, customer lists, parts lists, inventory databases, and all that other information companies accumulate and which we need to consult from time to time, be it often during the day or even just every now and then. When we need access, we need access.

Twitter

The Twitter integration with Yammer is already in place, we just have to activate it by a simple entry in our profile. To do so, follow this procedure:

1. In the top bar on the main Yammer feed page, click on your name.
2. On the drop-down menu click on **Edit Account** (yes, the first menu item is **My Profile** but that's just to look at it, we want to edit your profile).

3. In the left-hand side column of the page that comes up, click on **Profile** and go down the new page until you find "Twitter username".
4. Type your Twitter username in the box. Mine is `ralphr`, feel free to follow me.

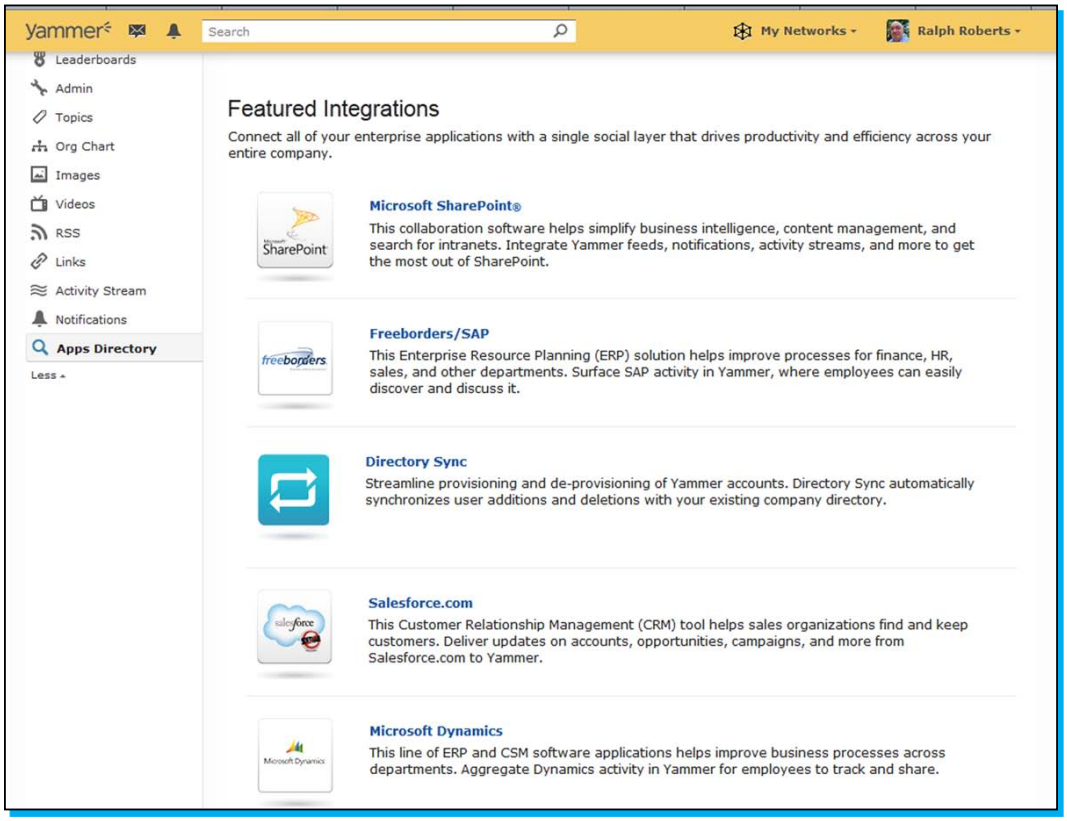
Once these steps are followed, whenever you want one of your tweets to also appear on your company's Yammer network, just add the hash tag `#yam`.

E-mail

An even more useful integration already in place is e-mail. At the top of group pages (when you've selected a group via the **Groups** section in the left-hand side column of the feed page), an e-mail address appears at the top of the center column (the group feed column).

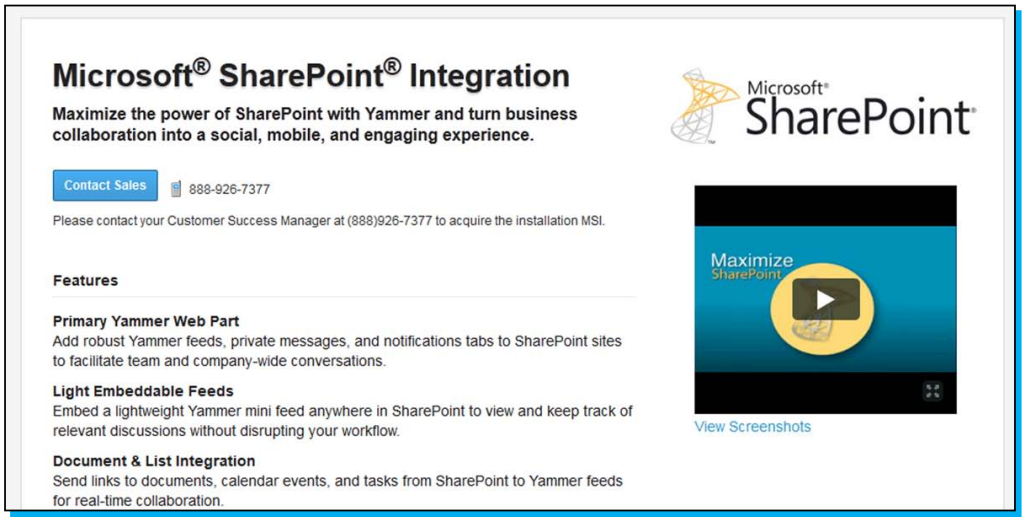
Other apps

Expand the **Apps** menu (in the lower-left hand column of the feed page), then click on **Apps Directory** at the bottom. You'll get a long list of available applications, part of which is shown in the next screenshot:

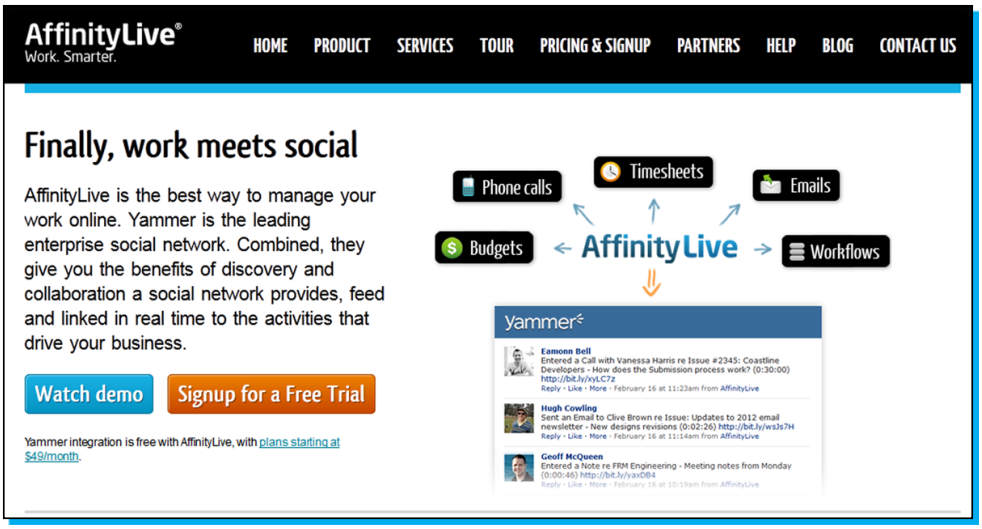


Take for instance, Microsoft SharePoint. **SharePoint** is a combination of software and servers that lets people in a company collaborate in the creation and editing of documents, reports, and much more. If your company uses SharePoint, then it most likely already has thousands of documents and other files in this system. The Yammer app to integrate a SharePoint system into Yammer makes that wealth of content available on the Yammer network.

Click on the SharePoint logo in **Apps Directory**, as depicted in the previous screenshot, and you will get a page (as shown in the next screenshot) with more information and how to get and install this integration app.



Another integration of existing data is provided by AffinityLive, software that can be tied into Yammer. The result is billed as "Finally, work meets social." More information may be had by clicking on the AffinityLive listing in **Apps Directory** (which gives you the page which looks similar to the next screenshot).

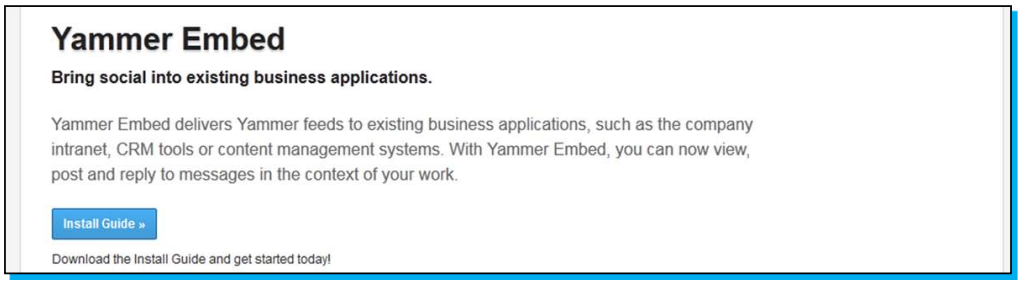


There are a lot more apps available and more coming. Check the **Apps Directory** out from time to time to keep up with these and to see what might be beneficial to your company for integration of data, and so on.

Yammer Embed to access older data

Every company has legacy systems as well. Older forms of software and types of files that may be no longer supported by their manufacturers. Yammer gives us a couple of solutions for accessing data in those systems.

The first method is Yammer Embed. It lets us (or someone from IT anyway) install Yammer feeds in business software such as the existing company intranet, CRM tools, or content management systems. Get it from the **Apps Directory** page.



The second method more likely than not requires a programmer. The programmer can use the Yammer JavaScript API to bridge systems into Yammer. The logical course here is to first talk with the support people at Yammer about the best way to achieve what your company might need.

You can also use directory sync, there's an app for that also, to pull in older files but there must be a program on the user's computer which recognizes those formats.

Universal search

Just within the past couple of weeks, as this is being written, Yammer came out with **Yammer Universal Search**. More information will be available in the **App Directory** and elsewhere by the time you are reading this. For now, here's Yammer's description of it.

> *With all the different knowledge management tools in use today, companies end up locking away lots of valuable data in information and communication silos across the business. As a result, employees often spend hours searching aimlessly for content stored across multiple apps, file servers, and databases. With Yammer's new Universal Search engine, there's a better way to quickly find everything you need in one place. Now, users can search across applications behind the firewall and in the cloud from a single search bar.*

Other connections

I'm sure other connections to external sources including social media networks are coming. Facebook and Google+ are integrations I'd personally like to see. And of course, there are several already existing apps in **Apps Directory** to outside services. Check those out.

People and places you should get to know

If you need help with Yammer, here are some people and places which will prove invaluable:

Official sites

- Homepage: `Yammer.com`
- Manual and documentation: `yammer.zendesk.com/home`
- Blog: `blog.yammer.com/blog/`

Articles and tutorials

Select a list of up to five of your favorite articles and tutorials.

- A two minute video from Yammer about the latest updates: `vimeo.com/47335249`
- Social Networking for Business: `http://rippleit.com/social-networking-for-companies`
- It Adds Up: How Accountants Use Yammer: `http://www.rachmiller.com/?p=2530`
- Do Enterprise Social Media Platforms Actually Help Productivity?: `http://tech.li/2012/04/do-enterprise-social-media-platforms-actually-help-productivity/`
- Microsoft Completes Its $1.2B Yammer Acquisition: `http://techcrunch.com/2012/07/19/microsoft-completes-its-1-2b-yammer-acquisition/`

Twitter

- Follow Yammer on Twitter: `http://twitter.com/#!/yammer`
- For more information on Open Source, follow Packt at `http://twitter.com/#!/packtopensource`

About the author

Ralph Roberts is a decorated Vietnam veteran and worked with NASA during the Apollo moon program. He built his first personal computer in 1976 and has been writing about them and on them since his first published article *Down with Typewriters* in 1978. He has written over 100 books along with thousands of articles and short stories. His bestsellers include the first U.S. book on computer viruses (which resulted in several appearances on national TV) and *Classic Cooking with Coca-Cola®*, a cookbook that has been in continuous print for the past 17 years and sold half a million copies.

Ralph is also a video producer with over 100 DVD titles now for sale nationally on places such as `Amazon.com`. He has also produced hundreds of hours of video for local TV in the Western North Carolina area and sold scripts to Hollywood producers. Previously for Packt, Ralph wrote *Celtx: Open Source Screenwriting*, *Google App Inventor*, and *Google Plus First Look*. Ralph and his wife Pat live on a farm in the mountains of Western North Carolina with two horses.

About the reviewers

David Greenstein is an IT professional who has been in the industry for over fourteen years. He is a consultant who has specialized in social and collaborative technologies and has enjoyed a career helping medium and large enterprise customers realize their goals through his thought leadership and subject matter expertise. David has a real passion for working with customers, assisting them as they progress through their own social business transformations as a trusted advisor. Beyond his career, David is a proud husband and father of four. He also enjoys cooking, recreational sports, and experiencing the diversities of life through travel.

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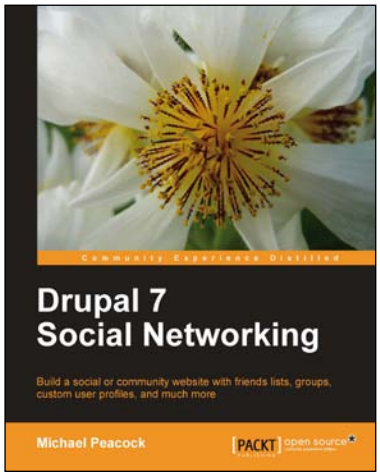

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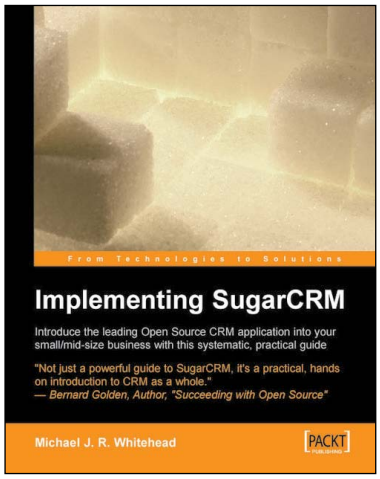

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