

gather

Gather GroupsSM: A Guide for Owners

How to set up and manage your group space, blog, or forum on Gather

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Creating a Group	4
Group Options.....	4
Group Type Templates.....	4
Group and Content Visibility	4
Member Permissions.....	5
Customizing a Group	7
Group Type Defaults	7
Group Homepage Layout	7
Module Options	9
Group Theme.....	9
Group Graphics	10
Group Owner View.....	10
Managing Your Group	11
Group Settings and Permissions	11
Moderators	11
Managing Group Members.....	12
Review Pending Members	12
Change Member Settings.....	12
Set Trusted Publisher.....	12
Remove and Block Members	12
Managing Group Content	14
Review Pending Content.....	14
Feature Content	14
Remove Content.....	14

Introduction

Gather GroupsSM are centralized spaces where Gather members can share ideas, information, and experiences around a common purpose. The groups functionality was designed to be versatile and easy-to-use so that any set of people can congregate in the group around any shared interest, activity, or event.

A group can be a fan club, a writers' workshop, a personal blog, a communication space – almost anything! It can be public and visible to all Gather members, or private and only visible to its members. The same goes with content: group members can share posts, photos, or videos with the group only or make content accessible to everyone.

Setting up a group is easy. Gather provides the tools for you to select the type of group you want to create, set permissions, and change the group homepage layout and presentation. You can also personalize your group with custom graphics and HTML.

This guide will help you get started and explain some of the more advanced group features, like content and member moderation, and optional group settings. Gather has also created a special group for group owners at groups.gather.com. Visit it for more updates and ideas on how to make your group a unique and frequent destination for visitors.

Ready to get started? Make sure you're registered for Gather, then read on to learn more about creating and managing your group.

Creating a Group

Learn about group setup options and how to create your group

Group Options

Any Gather member can create a group by completing just a few easy steps. You have several options to consider:

- group type templates
- group and content visibility
- member permissions

Group Type Templates

You can create any type of group on Gather, and every group can be customized once it's created. We've just given you some popular templates to get you started:

- **Interest** — Have an affinity for something special? Start a group for yourself and others that share your passion. Examples include a book club, fan club, or topical group, like baking or bowling.
- **Friends/Family** — Keep in touch with the people who matter most in your life in one central, private space. Use it to share photos with friends or family members, post holiday videos, and share stories.
- **Blog** — If you've ever considered starting your own blog, set one up using a Gather group. It can be about a hobby, personal cause, your experiences -- the possibilities are endless!
- **Planning** — Replace your email lists and keep everyone organized in one central place. Planning groups are great for sports teams, community groups, neighborhood associations, and any other team that needs to stay in touch and share information.
- **Custom** — If your group doesn't fit well into the standard templates, choose custom. We'll get you started with a basic setup that you can alter to fit your needs.

Remember: the type you choose will just set the original configuration. You take it from there!

Group and Content Visibility

When you create a group, you decide who's able to see the group and content shared. There are three options:

- **Public** — The group content can be viewed by Gather visitors and appears in site search results. Content shared with the group may also appear in search engines outside of Gather. If you're starting a public blog, want to attract a wide audience, or hope to meet new friends, you'll want to start a public group.
- **Semi-private** — All visitors can see the group, but only group members can view group content. With this option, site visitors will know that your group exists, but won't be able to see the content that's been shared unless they join.

- **Private** — Only group members can see the group and its content. You or the group's moderators must invite members to the group for them to participate.

Choose the setting that makes sense for your group content and audience. You can edit the group visibility setting after your group is created; however, content already shared with the group will keep its previous visibility setting unless it's updated.

Member Permissions

You set your group and member permissions when you create a group. The following options are available:

- **Content options** — You decide whether or not you'll allow adult-themed content to be shared with your group. Any and all of the four mature content settings — nudity, crude or indecent language, graphic violence, adult themes — should be selected if you'll allow this type of content. Keep in mind that anyone, including Gather members, who visits your group must have the same guarded viewing settings turned off in order to see your group. You can edit this setting later.
- **Group membership and invitations** — You decide who can join your group and who can invite members to it. The following options are available for how members can become part of the group:
 - > **"anyone can join"** — Your group will include a Join Group button so that Gather members can join your group, and any group member can invite others to join the group. This setting is perfect for blogs or interest groups that want to attract readers and members. (If you create a private group, this option is not available.)
 - > **"members join by group member invite"** — Only you and current group members can invite others to join the group. No Join Group button will appear on your group. This setting allows you to have a trusted set of members asking others to join.
 - > **"members join by owner invite only"** — Only you can ask others to join your group. This setting is the most restrictive and allows you to handpick others to be included.

You can change this setting later to further open or restrict membership. This change will be applied to members who join your group after you make the change.

- **Member acceptance** — You also decide whether new members should be automatically accepted to the group or if each new applicant needs to be accepted or declined. With moderated membership, pending membership requests will appear in your group dashboard, and you can elect to receive email notifications when you receive new requests. Keep in mind that you can remove members from your group, so your selection here just depends on how much control you want over new members joining. You can change this setting later to add or remove moderation. You can also assign member moderators to help with accepting, declining, and managing group members by changing their member settings (see Moderators).
- **Sharing content** — As the group owner, you can always share content with your group, and you also determine which group members are allowed to share posts, photos, and videos. You can grant this permission to all group members when you create a group. You also decide whether the content they'll be accepted

automatically or if you'll accept or decline each content submission. As the group owner, you're able to remove content from your group, so your selection here just depends upon how much control you want to have over the content being added. You can also assign content moderators to help with moderating content by changing their member settings (see Moderators).

- **Messaging the group** — As the group owner, you have the option to use Gather messaging to send a message to all group members at once. They receive this message in their Gather mail inbox, which can be accessed from the My Gather page. You can grant this permission to all members. You can also grant this permission to individual group members by changing their member settings (see Moderators).
- **Posting group comments** — One of the available group homepage modules, the Conversation Space, allows you to have an ongoing discussion on your homepage. Only group members are permitted to participate in that module, but it's visible to all group visitors. You can choose whether group comments will be accepted automatically or if you'll review, then accept or decline each group comment. As the group owner, you're also able to delete comments from the Conversation Space, so your selection here just depends upon how much control you want to have over the conversation.

❖ Create Your Group

1. Once you're a member and signed in, choose the Groups tab in the main menu, then click the Create a Group link at the top of the right-hand column.
2. Select the type of group you want to create and who's allowed to see the group and its content.

The group type sets the initial group homepage layout and look, but you can customize the modules that appear on your group homepage and select a different theme later.

3. Name your group and set group permissions.

Give your group a name, unique group URL (e.g., groupname.gather.com), and description, and set the group permissions. The group URL you choose will be the web address people use to find you.

If the group URL you want is taken or you're looking for suggestions, click the "Want help choosing a URL?" link. You can enter up to four keywords to find available URLs for your group.

❖ Edit Group Settings

1. On your group homepage, click the "group settings" link in the dashboard.
2. Edit the necessary group settings and click Submit. Your changes will be applied going forward. If you change member and content moderation settings, any members or items currently pending moderation will still need to be accepted or declined.

Note that your changes will be applied to future members who join your group, not current members. Also, changing group visibility will affect the group, but not the content previously shared.

Customizing a Group

Learn about homepage layouts, module options, custom group graphics, and themes

Group Type Defaults

When you create a group, you select a group type as a starting point. The group type you choose adds different modules to your group homepage:

Group Type	Default Left-Column Modules	Default Right-Column Modules
Interest	Featured Recent Posts Recent Photos Recent Videos Content Comments Conversation Space	Members Group Tags Popular Tags
Friends/Family	Recent Posts Recent Photos Recent Videos Content Comments Conversation Space	Group Tags Stats Members Popular Tags Group Links
Blog	Featured Recent Posts (full view) Content Comments	Archives Group Tags Members Popular Tags Group Links
Planning	Announcement Recent Content Content Comments Conversation Space	Group Tags Members Group Links
Custom	Announcement Featured Recent Posts Recent Photos Recent Videos Content Comments Conversation Space	Group Tags Stats Members Popular Tags Archives Group Links

Once you've created a group, you can customize it any way you want. All modules are available to all group owners to use in their groups.

Group Homepage Layout

As a group owner, you can select which modules appear on your group homepage and customize the presentation (and, in some cases, content) of each module. The following group homepage modules are available for the left-hand column:

- **Featured Content** — This module lists featured posts, photos, and videos on the homepage. You can set the number of list items, from 1-10, and select features by editing the content settings for each post, photo, or video. The “first,” “previous,” and “next” links on the module let people browse up to the most recent 500 features.
- **Recent Content** — This module lists all recent posts, photos, and videos in a single stream. You can set the number of list items, from 1-10. The “first,” “previous,” and “next” links on the module let people browse up to the most recent 500 additions. The Recent Posts, Recent Photos, and Recent Videos modules are alternatives to this one.
- **Recent Posts** — In the list view version, you can display 1-10 headlines from the most recent group posts. The full view version adds the full content of the most recent posts with a synopsis from the latest comment.
- **Recent Photos** — You can choose to display 4-16 of the most recent group photos.
- **Recent Videos** — You can choose to display 4-16 of the most recent group videos.
- **Content Comments** — You can choose to display 1-10 of the most recent comments added to posts, photos, and videos in the group.
- **Conversation Space** — If this module is enabled, group members can leave group comments. You choose whether group comments appear automatically or have to be reviewed and accepted before they appear in the group. Group comments are visible to everyone on Gather.
- **Inbound RSS** — You can syndicate content headlines from other sites with RSS capability into Gather. You must provide an external RSS URL for this module to display content.
- **Announcement** — You can post messages to the group using this rich HTML module.
- **Custom HTML (left)** — This module lets you customize an area of the homepage with any valid HTML.

The following group homepage modules are available for the right-hand column:

- **Group Tags** — Including a list of tags descriptive of the group’s content can help visitors browse your group and ensure it shows up when users search for groups. Up to 20 tags display on the group homepage, and you can edit them at any time. As content about those tags is added to the group, the number of related content items will appear next to each tag, and people can click any tag to see a list of that content.
- **Popular Tags** — As content is added to the group, the popular tags module displays up to 20 tags most common on the content in the group. Visitors can click each tag to see a list of the related content.
- **Recent Members** — This module displays the latest Gather members who joined the group.
- **Archives** — Useful for a blog or for indexing content, this module lets users click a past month and display all the content that was shared with the group in that month. Up to 12 months may appear, depending on when content was added.

Gather Groups: A Guide for Group Owners

- **Stats** — This module shows the number of group members, as well as the number of posts, photos, videos, and content comments added to the group in the last 7 days.
- **Group Links** — You can list up to 50 links to other favorite groups, member profiles, or external sites. The first 8 links will appear and the user can select to see the rest.
- **Custom HTML (right)** — This module lets you customize an area of the homepage with any valid HTML.

The group information and ads that appear in the right-hand column are required and cannot be moved.

❖ Edit Group Home Layout

1. On the group homepage or any secondary-level page, select group layout in the dashboard.
2. Drag and drop modules onto or off of the layout area, then save your changes. Your updates will be shown immediately on the group homepage.

Module Options

Each homepage module has settings or edit options that you can use to further customize each module.

- **Module Settings** — You can change the settings (such as the number of items that display) on modules that include content from Gather. Simply click the settings link, then modify the settings and save.
- **Custom Modules** — Some modules allow you to supply the information that will be displayed in them, as well as the module title. Custom modules will be “turned off” when you add them to the group homepage to allow you to edit and preview them before you turn them on to make them visible to others. Click “edit” to update the module and save. Be sure to turn on the module when you’re ready for others to see it.

The Inbound RSS, Group Links, and Group Tags modules require you to enter specific information, but you can also edit the module title. The Announcement and Custom HTML modules let you use the standard text editor used to create posts to add unique content to your group homepage. The capabilities available when you share posts are also available here.

Group Theme

You can select a visual theme or “skin” to change the look and feel of your group. The theme applies to the group navigation, homepage, and subpages, and to the group tagspaces and search results.

❖ Edit a Group Theme

1. In your group dashboard, select “group layout,” then “group appearance.”
2. Scroll through the theme carousel and choose the theme to apply, then save your changes. The new theme is applied immediately.

Group Graphics

To customize your group and give it personality, you can change its visual presentation using the following options:

- **Group Banner** — To give your group a unique look, you can create a custom group banner. The banner will appear at the top of your group pages between the Gather site navigation and the navigation for your group, and will replace the banner ad that appears there by default. The banner must be a JPG, GIF, or PNG image that's exactly 990 pixels wide by 220 pixels tall. For best results, the image should be 72 dpi. It will be covered in part on the top and bottom by Gather's navigational features. In addition to meeting Gather's User Terms of Service (TOS), all banners must adhere to the following guidelines:
 - > The group banner space may not be used for commercial purposes. No group owner will be allowed to sell or profit from this space without prior written consent from Gather.
 - > The banner may not infringe on any patent, trademark, copyright, trade secret, or other proprietary right of any party, unless you are the owner of the rights or have the permission of the owner to post such content.
 - > The banner may not contain adult content, and Gather retains the right to remove any banner that is objectionable or otherwise violates Gather's TOS.
- **Group Icon** — You can upload an icon to represent your group. The icon will appear in your group area, as well as on the Gather Groups page, if your group is listed. Your group icon must be a JPG, GIF, or PNG image that is a maximum of 6 MB. Square images work best; otherwise, your icon may be scaled or truncated.
- **Group Background** — You can upload a JPG, GIF, or PNG image up to 300 pixels wide that will be tiled to add a background to your group. Your custom background will replace the default background associated with the theme applied to your group.

❖ Add or Edit Custom Group Graphics

1. In your group dashboard, select "group layout," then "group appearance."
2. Browse for the group banner, icon, or background you want to upload.
3. Upload the graphics, then save your changes. Your images will appear on your group pages once it has been processed.

Group Owner View

As the group owner, you see your group homepage with special module controls, dashboard options, and modules that are turned off. To view the group as members will see it, use the "member view" option in the group dashboard.

Managing Your Group

Learn how to edit group and moderator settings

Group Settings and Permissions

After your group is created, you can edit the group and member permissions you originally set. Changes to group and group content visibility; content options; membership and invitation settings; and member, content, and group comment moderation will apply to the entire group going forward. Changes to content sharing, group messaging, and group comment posting permissions will only be applied to members who join your group after the change. You can edit permissions for existing group members on each member settings page.

❖ Edit Group Settings

1. In your group dashboard, select "group settings."
2. Edit the graphic, then save your changes. Your changes will take effect immediately.

Moderators

If you choose to review members, content, or group comments, you can select group members to assign as member moderators, content moderators, and group comment moderators to help you with these tasks:

- **Member moderators** — These moderators have access to the pending member list and to the member settings page for every member. They can approve or decline new members, remove and block group members, and change the content sharing, invitation, and group messaging permissions for individual members. They can also assign other moderators.
- **Content moderators** — These moderators have access to the pending content list and permission to feature, un-feature, or remove content that is added to the group.
- **Group comment moderators** — These moderators have permission to accept or decline group comments that are added to the Conversation Space, if that module is enabled. They can also remove group comments from this module.

❖ Set Moderation Permissions

1. In the group dashboard, choose "manage members," then search for the member you want to serve as a moderator. You can also locate the individual in your group members list.
2. Choose "member settings" for the member.
3. Change the member settings and save your changes. Your updates will take effect immediately.

Managing Group Members

Learn how to moderate members and update member settings

When you create a group, you decide whether members can join automatically or if pending members must be accepted or declined. You can change this setting later on the group settings page.

Review Pending Members

If you have member moderation turned on for a group, either you or a designated member moderator must accept or decline each member that applies to join. The number of pending members will be displayed in your group dashboard; select "manage members" to see pending membership. The dashboard on your My Gather page also displays an alert if you have group moderation tasks.

Change Member Settings

Group owners and member moderators can change the member settings for individual group members. On any member or search results list in the group, choose "member settings." Edit the settings and save your changes.

You can also select the "manage members" link in the dashboard of your group to search for a member in the group. A "member settings" link also appears on that results list.

Group owners also have the option to assign administrative privileges to other group members. This setting gives group members access to options only available to the group owner, including group layout and group settings. Note: Group moderators and administrators cannot assign administrative rights to other members; only group owners can grant administrative privileges.

Set Trusted Publisher

You can change the member settings for individual group members so their content doesn't need moderation. On any member or search results list in the group, choose "member settings." Edit the settings and save your changes.

You can also select the "manage members" link in the dashboard of your group to search for a member in the group. A "member settings" link also appears on that results list.

Remove and Block Members

As a group owner or member moderator, you may remove members from your group. If you remove someone, he or she may join at a later time; if you block someone, that person is not eligible to rejoin unless the owner or a member moderator removes the block. Keep in mind that if a member is no longer part of the group, his or her content will remain in the group unless it's removed by the owner or a content moderator.

❖ Remove or Block Members

1. In the group dashboard, choose "manage members," then search for the member you want to remove or block. You can also locate the individual in your group members list.

Gather Groups: A Guide for Group Owners

2. Choose "member settings" for the member.
3. Click "remove or block member" below the member's icon.
4. Change the member settings and save your changes. You can manage blocked members on the Manage Members page.

Managing Group Content

Learn how to moderate content and update content settings

As a group owner, you can feature or remove any content that gets added to your group. Likewise, if you moderate content, you can either accept or decline each post, photo, and video that members submit.

Review Pending Content

If you have content moderation turned on for a group, you or a designated content moderator must accept or decline each content item that is submitted to the group. The number of pending items will be displayed in your group dashboard; select "manage content" to see pending content. The dashboard on your My Gather page also displays an alert if you have group moderation tasks. Content shared by the group owner and content moderators does not get submitted for moderation; it is automatically added to the group.

Feature Content

To feature content in a group in the Featured module on the group homepage and in the featured list in your group navigation, you must be the group owner or a content moderator. (Remember that the Featured module must be active on your group homepage for the selections to appear there.) Go to the group's homepage and click Manage Content; from there you can search for the content you want to feature. Click the feature or un-feature link next to the selected content to change the settings.

You can also use the feature and un-feature links that appear on the featured, posts, photos, and videos lists in the group.

Remove Content

As a group owner or content moderator, you may remove posts, photos, or videos that were previously accepted either automatically or through moderation. On any content list or search results list in the group, simply click "remove" next to the appropriate item. This will remove the content from your group.

You can also select the "manage content" link in your group dashboard to search for content currently in the group. A "remove" link also appears on that results list.