

Adding Pages to an Office SharePoint Server 2007 Search Center Site

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Introduction

This post is the last in a series of five posts on the Office SharePoint Server 2007 Search Center. Previously, we have discussed, “Using a Search Center in Office SharePoint Server 2007,” “Customize the Search Page in an Office SharePoint Server 2007 Search Center Site,” “Customize the Advanced Search Page in an Office SharePoint Server 2007 Search Center Site,” and “Customize Search Results Pages in an Office SharePoint Server 2007 Search Center Site.”

One of the search customization tasks that is certain to be required will be creating additional search pages for your SharePoint Server 2007 Search Center, especially if you have a central Search Center for all users. That is the focus of this post.

The Search Center “light” template supports the collaboration features of Windows SharePoint Services 3.0, but only contains three pages by default:

- The Search Page
- The Advance Search Page
- The Results Page

As shown in Figure 1, these pages were created by the site definition in the root of the site, not in a library. This location does simplify the URL since there is no container other than the site itself. But it also prevents you from accessing the page’s aspx file from the UI so that you cannot just copy the pages as needed.

Rarely will you need a full set of customized search pages. The order of types of search pages that you will probably need most often will be the reverse of the bulleted list above with the custom results page being the one created most often.

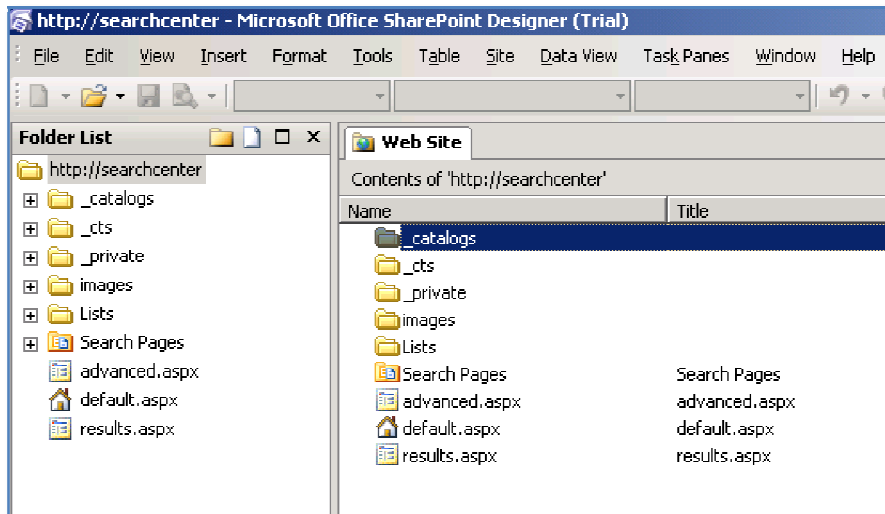


Figure 1 SharePoint Designer view of a Search Center contents

Using “Create” Page

You may think the easiest method of creating pages would be through the SharePoint create pages. While this is the method used for other types of pages, there are several drawbacks to this method.

First, while the Search Center supports libraries, it has none by default. When you create a page, you must have a document library available in which to store it.

Next, all the search pages are custom Web part pages with zone placements designed specifically for their functionality and the results page has the most complex zone structure. There are no templates to match these pages when you create a page in the UI.

Finally, placing the pages in a library complicates the URL structure for users. As long as they do not have to type the URL, they will be happy. But users prefer simple URLs.

However, placing the pages in a library does make setting permissions for the pages easier and makes copying the pages easier than when they are at the root of the site.



TIP: Do not name the document library that you create to store your pages as “Pages.” You will not be able to activate publishing on a site that already has a library named “Pages” because the publishing features needs to create a Pages library with some special functionality.

Using SharePoint Designer

While SharePoint Server 2007 provides the additional Search Center with Tabs publishing site template which has page layouts for creating search pages, the Search Center template provided by Microsoft Search Server 2008 only provides standard web zone page templates.

For this "light" version of search center in particular, SharePoint Designer offers many advantages in creating search pages over the UI. This will not be a very deep training in SharePoint Designer. However, we will discuss the advantages of SharePoint Designer so that you can make intelligent choices on how you will need to create custom search pages for the Search Center Lite sites.

First, you can just copy the existing pages to a new page with a unique name in SharePoint Designer eliminating the problem of not have a page template with the appropriate zone design. As shown in Figure 2, a simple drag and drop with the Right Mouse Button produces a context menu that permits copying a page in SharePoint Designer.

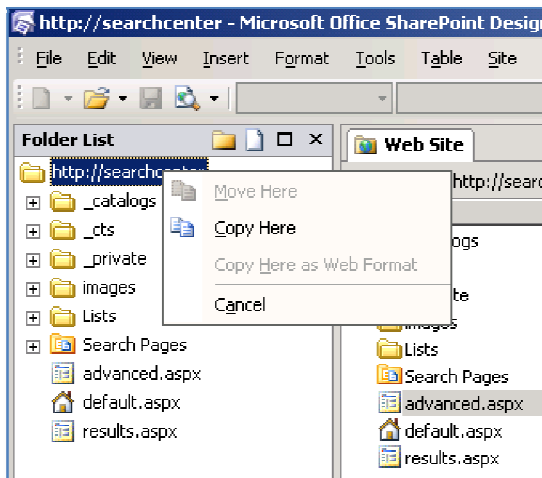


Figure 2 Copying a Page in SharePoint Designer

You can place the newly created pages in the root of the site along with the current pages as long as they have unique names. You can also create folders within the site to organize the pages within the URL and permit the pages to have the same familiar names. However, these pages and folders will inherit the permissions from the site.

Right-clicking on the Site URL and expanding **New** exposes the ability to create a new folder or a new document library as shown in Figure 3. Either would have the same impact on the URL but neither the folder nor the page files would not be available to manage in the UI.

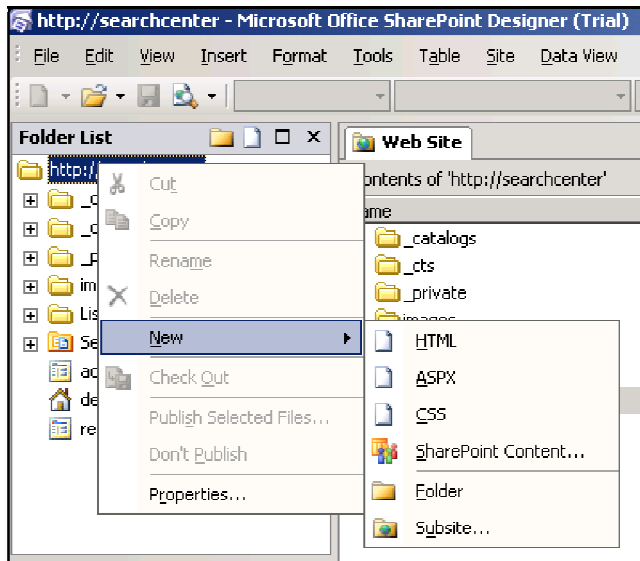


Figure 3 Create New Content in SharePoint Designer

Customizing New Search Pages

Now that you have created the new search pages, they can be customized through the UI. Just open the pages by typing in the URL and choose Edit Page from Site Actions as usual.

If the page was created from the UI, you will need to add the appropriate Web parts to the zones that you have chosen. Each page will need at least one Core Results Web part. If the page was created by copying an existing page with SharePoint Designer, you may be removing Web parts instead of adding them. In either case, you will need to customize the properties of the Web parts on the page to meet the unique requirements of your environment.

For instance, you may need a way for users to search for internal content without having results from the Internet returned by federated locations. One way would be to create a custom search page where the query Web part was configured to use a custom results page that had no federated location Web parts.

Another would be to create a special shared scope that only included internal content either by URL or content source rules and configure that scope to use a designated results page with no federated location Web parts. With this solution, users would get the same results using that scope no matter where they constructed the query.

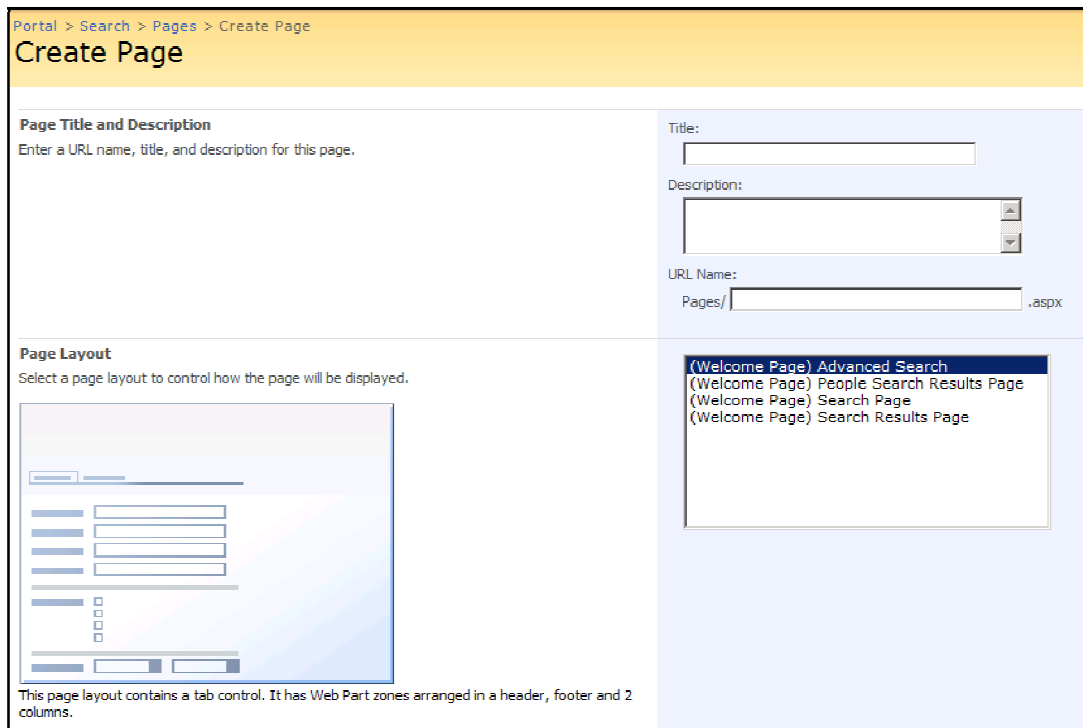
Customizing the Search Center with Tabs

With the publishing features activated that are required for the Search Center with Tabs sites, the sites are designed for customization. The advantages of the Search Center with Tabs fall into three different approaches:

- All three search pages templates provided within the UI are really page layout templates for the publishing process.
- All pages are stored in a publishing Pages library with full publishing approval processes and workflows. This is a distinguishing mark of the URL where the query page is appears as "sitename/pages/default.aspx" instead of the "sitename/default.aspx" of the standard search center of Microsoft Search Server 2008.
- Within the page layouts of the search pages are a special Field Control which organizes links to other search pages within customizable tabs. The link information used by the tabs filed control is stored in one of two link lists:
 - Tabs in Search Pages
 - Tabs in Search Results Pages

Creating new search pages

To create new search pages, you may use the Create Page link in the Site Actions list of a Search Center with Tabs site or the New > Welcome Page menu of the publishing Pages library to open the page shown in Figure 4. All search pages are based on the Welcome Page layout.



Portal > Search > Pages > Create Page

Create Page

Page Title and Description
Enter a URL name, title, and description for this page.

Title:

Description:

URL Name: Pages/ .aspx

Page Layout
Select a page layout to control how the page will be displayed.

(Welcome Page) Advanced Search
 (Welcome Page) People Search Results Page
 (Welcome Page) Search Page
 (Welcome Page) Search Results Page

This page layout contains a tab control. It has Web Part zones arranged in a header, footer and 2 columns.

Figure 4 Create Page page

Creating New Tabs

In the edit page mode, the Tabs field control exposes links to management pages for Adding new tab links or Editing existing tab links as shown in Figure 5.

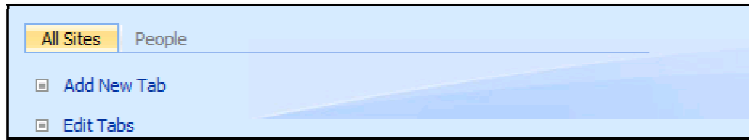


Figure 5 Tab Field Control

After the custom set of search pages are created, the query page can be referenced with a custom tab. The query Web part can then point to the appropriate custom results page and the Advanced query link can point to the appropriate custom advanced query page.

This combination of UI tools for creating custom search pages plus the control that presents a strip of tabs within the pages presents a search center that can be quickly and easily customized for multiple search business needs.

Accessing Custom Pages

Let's review some of the ways that these custom pages in either search center can be accessed:

- Site collections can be configured to use a custom set of search pages.
- Scopes, both local and shared can be configured for a specific results page.
- Query Web parts can be configured to use a specific results page.
- **More Results** links can point to custom results pages.
- Advanced Search links can point to custom advanced search pages.
- Links placed anywhere within your pages or link lists can point to custom query pages.
- Favorite links in IE can be pre-populated with links to custom query pages using Active Directory group policies.
- IE and Desktop Search can be configured to use custom query pages.
- Office applications can be configured to use Search pages by URL.

Additional posts in this series include

- Using a Search Center in Office SharePoint Server 2007
- Customize the Search Page in an Office SharePoint Server 2007 Search Center Site

- Customize the Advanced Search Page in an Office SharePoint Server 2007 Search Center Site
- Customize Search Results Pages in an Office SharePoint Server 2007 Search Center Site

More Information

For more training on using search and other End User related topics, see the following training courses available at [Mindsharp](#):

- [Office SharePoint 2007 Power End User](#)
- [Office SharePoint 2007 Site Collection Administration](#)