Create a public knowledge base with some private content

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If you want to have some of your knowledge base's content available to everyone, and some restricted to only certain people, you're looking for a mixed public + private knowledge base.

Best use cases
Product documentation, Support/troubleshooting documentation, Multi-department knowledge bases that include public-facing content

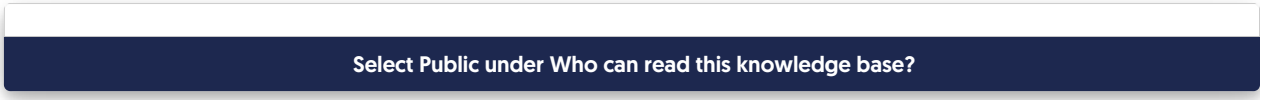
Worst use cases
Fully proprietary or confidential information, Fully public information

To make some content private on your public knowledge base, you can create a reader group (or groups), restrict content to the appropriate group, and require readers to log in to get access to the reader group restricted content.

Set who can read your knowledge base to public

First, we must set who can read the knowledge base to public:

1. Go to **Security and access > Access & SSO.**
2. Under **Who can read this knowledge base?**, select **Public:**



3. Select **Save changes.** If the **Make your knowledge base public?** modal opens, select **Make it public.**

Refer to Create a public knowledge base for more considerations for default public knowledge bases.

Add reader accounts and restrict "private" content to reader group(s)

To mark content as private, you'll restrict it to one or more Reader Groups. You must also log individual readers in

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and add them to the group(s) you created.

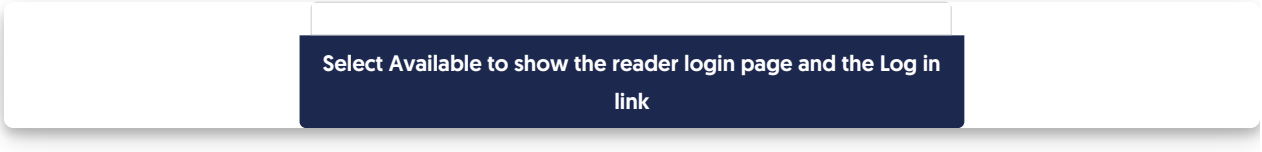
You can log readers into your knowledge base in a few ways:

- **Use KnowledgeOwl reader accounts:** Create and maintain reader accounts directly in KnowledgeOwl without having to integrate with any other tools. A KnowledgeOwl admin will create, update, and delete reader accounts and add/remove readers to/from reader groups as needed, reset passwords, etc.
    - For this option, set **Direct login** to **Available** so readers have a reader login page and a Log in link. Refer to Add a reader login/logout link below.
    - If you see **Send readers who aren't logged in to** in the **Login methods** section of **Security and access > Access & SSO**, make sure it's set to **Reader login page**.
- **Use some form of Single Sign-On (SSO):** Integrate KnowledgeOwl with your existing identity provider so people can use the same login information they use for your other tools. Set up SAML, OpenID Connect, remote auth, or Salesforce SSO in **Security and access > Access & SSO**, under **Login methods**. For a mixed knowledge base, set SAML or OpenID Connect to **Available** rather than **Required for all readers**, since Required sends every reader who isn't logged in to your identity provider. Then set **Send readers who aren't logged in to** to the login method you want readers sent to when they open restricted content or select the Log in link.

Add a reader login/logout link

To add a reader login/logout link to your knowledge base:

1. Go to **Security and access > Access & SSO**.
2. In the **Login methods** section, select **Set up** (or **Manage**) next to **Direct login**.
3. Select **Available**:



4. Select **Save changes**.

If **Send readers who aren't logged in to** is set to SAML, OpenID Connect, or your remote login URL, the Log in link in your knowledge base header goes there instead, and readers with KnowledgeOwl reader accounts can still log in at the reader login page.

If you don't see a Login/Logout link, the reader login link was probably removed from your knowledge base. To re-add it:

1. Go to **Customize > Style (HTML & CSS)**.
2. In the **Customize HTML, CSS, and JS** section, select **Custom HTML**.
3. Select **Top Navigation** from the **Select HTML section to edit** dropdown.
4. Below the preview pane, select **Custom HTML**, then select the dropdown that appears and select **Top**

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Navigation.

5. **The login link will be added wherever** `[template("login")]` **appears. If you don't see this template anywhere, refer to Default Top Navigation HTML for the formatting to re-add it and Save.**

If your knowledge base was previously entirely private

If your knowledge base was previously entirely private, review the sections below for settings you may need to change.

Make images and files public

Mixed public and private knowledge bases can't require login for images and files. In **Security and access > Access & SSO**, if the **Images and files** section says **Only logged-in readers can open images and files.**, select **Use public links...** and then **Convert to public links.** Refer to Require login to view files/images for more information.

Make certain features public

Certain features may require adjustments to use in a public knowledge base:

- **Subscriptions:** If you want public readers to be able to subscribe to categories for updates, there's a separate setting you need to turn on in **KB settings > Subscriptions.** Refer to Set up public subscriptions for more detailed instructions.
- **Comments:** If you want public readers to be able to submit comments on your public knowledge base, make sure **Only allow logged in readers and authors to leave comments** is unchecked in **KB settings > Comments.** Refer to Set who can submit and view comments for more information on this setting.

Public knowledge base security setup considerations

Since public knowledge bases can be found by anyone (or any bot) on the internet, you'll want to consider the features you're using and the spam protection or other directives you want to provide to encourage or prevent certain uses. Review these settings and discuss them with your security team:

- **Protect your contact form from spam:** Public knowledge bases are the most at risk for spam, and the contact form is the most likely place you'll see spam. In **Customize > Contact form**, check the box to **Use spam protection on ticket submissions** to help prevent contact form spam. Refer to Set up contact form to send emails to one or more addresses for more information on this setting.
- **Choose a spam protection format:** Make sure your knowledge base is well-protected for the features you're using. Refer to Spam protection for more information.
- **Create a custom robots.txt file:** Set your robots.txt file in **KB settings > Domain** to determine which AI agents or training models (or other services) can and can't access your knowledge base. Refer to Customize your robots.txt for more detailed instructions.

Public knowledge base optimizations

Lastly, make sure your knowledge base is optimized for the types of search/AI optimization you care about. Review these options in **KB settings > Domain**:

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- **SEO settings:** For optimum SEO, check all three boxes (Generate a publicly available sitemap, Ensure that page titles do not exceed 55 characters, and 301 redirect URLs ending with a trailing slash to non trailing slash). Refer to Generate your sitemap and Domain settings for more information on these settings.
- **Custom llms.txt:** For optimum AEO/GEO, create a custom llms.txt file that AI tools can access and create a process to maintain or update it. Refer to Create your llms.txt for more detailed instructions and guidance.

If your knowledge base was previously entirely public

If your knowledge base was previously entirely public, review the sections below for settings you may need to change:

You may need to update your llms.txt file to reflect only the publicly-available content. Refer to Create your llms.txt for more information.

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