How can I connect Microsoft Copilot to my knowledge base?

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Context

You use Microsoft 365 Copilot and want it to search and cite content from your KnowledgeOwl knowledge base, including a private knowledge base or one with restricted content. KnowledgeOwl doesn't currently have a native Copilot integration. In the meantime, customers have indexed their knowledge bases by adding Microsoft's Enterprise Websites cloud Copilot connector and giving it a basic auth reader account to log in with.

Customer-tested workaround
Customers have reported this setup working, and Microsoft's connector documentation lists basic authentication as a supported option. Microsoft manages the connector, so its settings, crawl schedule, and any changes to how it works are up to Microsoft.

We're currently working on a Microsoft Graph connector and an MCP server for KnowledgeOwl. To be added to those feature requests and stay posted, contact us.

Resolution

Set up a basic auth reader in KnowledgeOwl, then point the Copilot connector at your knowledge base.

Set up basic authentication in KnowledgeOwl

1. Go to **Security and access > Access & SSO**. In the **Login settings** section, under **Basic authentication**, check **Let designated readers log in with basic authentication**, and select **Save changes**.
2. Make sure the knowledge base allows self-administered reader passwords. Basic auth doesn't work with admin-managed passwords. Check **Password Management** in **Account > Readers > Settings**. If you've overridden the account-wide setting, also check the **Password management** section in **Security and access > Access & SSO > Direct login**. Refer to What's the difference between admin managed and self-administered reader passwords? for details.
3. Create a new reader for Copilot with a self-administered password. Self-administered passwords send a welcome email with a temporary password, so use an email address you can receive mail at.
4. Edit the reader and check **Basic Authentication** to **Allow this reader to log in via basic access authentication**.

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Give the reader access to only the knowledge bases and reader groups you want Copilot to index.

5. Test the reader. Open a private browser window, add `/basic-login` to your knowledge base's homepage URL, and log in with the reader's email address and password. For example, if your homepage is `https://yourkb.knowledgeowl.com/help`, go to `https://yourkb.knowledgeowl.com/help/basic-login`. After you log in, you should land on your knowledge base homepage. After three incorrect attempts, basic login blocks further attempts for 60 minutes.

Add the connector in Microsoft 365

1. Sign in to Microsoft 365 with an administrator account that can add Copilot connectors. Microsoft's documentation lists the AI administrator role as a prerequisite. A customer who tested this also needed the Search Administrator role, even though they were already a Global Administrator.

2. Add the Enterprise Websites cloud connector in Microsoft 365. Microsoft updates its admin screens often, so follow Microsoft's current instructions for adding a connector.

3. For the website URL, enter your knowledge base's `/basic-login` URL from the test above. If your knowledge base uses a custom domain, use that domain here and in the rest of your setup. The connector only follows redirects within the same domain.

4. Choose **Basic authentication** as the authentication type and enter the reader's email address and password.

5. Create the connection. If it doesn't save, try again. Customers have reported needing a few tries before it saved and started syncing.

6. When the first crawl finishes, ask Copilot a question your knowledge base answers and check that the answer cites your articles. Microsoft also lets you roll a connection out to a limited audience first if you'd like to test the results before everyone sees them.



Choose the content carefully
The connector logs in as a single reader, so index only content you're comfortable making available to everyone who can see results from that connection. Check in Microsoft who can see the connector's results.

Troubleshoot the connector

- **401 Unauthorized:** Log in at `/basic-login` in a private browser window with the same email address and password. If that fails, check that the knowledge base uses self-administered passwords, that the reader has **Basic Authentication** checked, and that the reader has access to the knowledge base.
- **Too many failed login attempts:** Basic login blocks a reader after three incorrect attempts. Wait 60 minutes, then try again with the correct credentials.
- **The connector does not support crawling of out-of-domain URLs:** The connector follows redirects only within the same domain. Use the same domain you use to read your knowledge base, such as your custom domain instead of the `knowledgeowl.com` address.

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- **The connection won't save:** Confirm the administrator account has the Search Administrator role, then try saving again.

If you're still stuck, contact us and tell us your knowledge base URL, the exact error message Microsoft shows, and whether the reader can log in at `/basic-login`.

Background

Crawlers like the Copilot connector usually can't complete a reader login form or an SSO login. The `/basic-login` page gives them another route. It responds the way HTTP basic auth libraries expect, logs in the basic auth reader, sets a session cookie, and redirects to your knowledge base homepage so the connector can crawl as that reader. Refer to Basic authentication for more about how it works.

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