

ROSS and SharePoint Workflows

This document provides background information about SharePoint workflows and how RepliWeb's ROSS v2.2 handles them throughout its replication and deployment process.

About Workflows

Workflows can add application logic to a site or application without having to write custom code. Using the Workflow Designer, one creates rules that associate conditions and actions with items in Microsoft SharePoint lists and libraries, so that changes to items in lists or libraries trigger actions in the workflow.

A workflow is always attached to exactly one SharePoint list or library. A workflow is associated with a task list in the current site, where relevant information is stored (for example, when a workflow uses the Assign a Form to a Group action - the information that workflow participants submit in the form is stored in items in a task list. In another example, when a workflow uses the Collect Data from a User action, task notifications for this workflow are provided by the associated task notifications). A single task list can be used in association with multiple workflows and along with non workflow information.

Workflow Replication

Being associated with content changes, it is logical to assume that while workflow definitions and associations to lists may be needed on both source and target farms, running workflow instances need to be 'alive' only where the content that is relevant to this instance changes (whether the source or the target of content replication, but not both). One would typically prefer not to be triggered twice on the same item (for example, when something changes in the source, then naturally changes on the target as part of the content replication process).

How ROSS 2.2 Handles Workflows

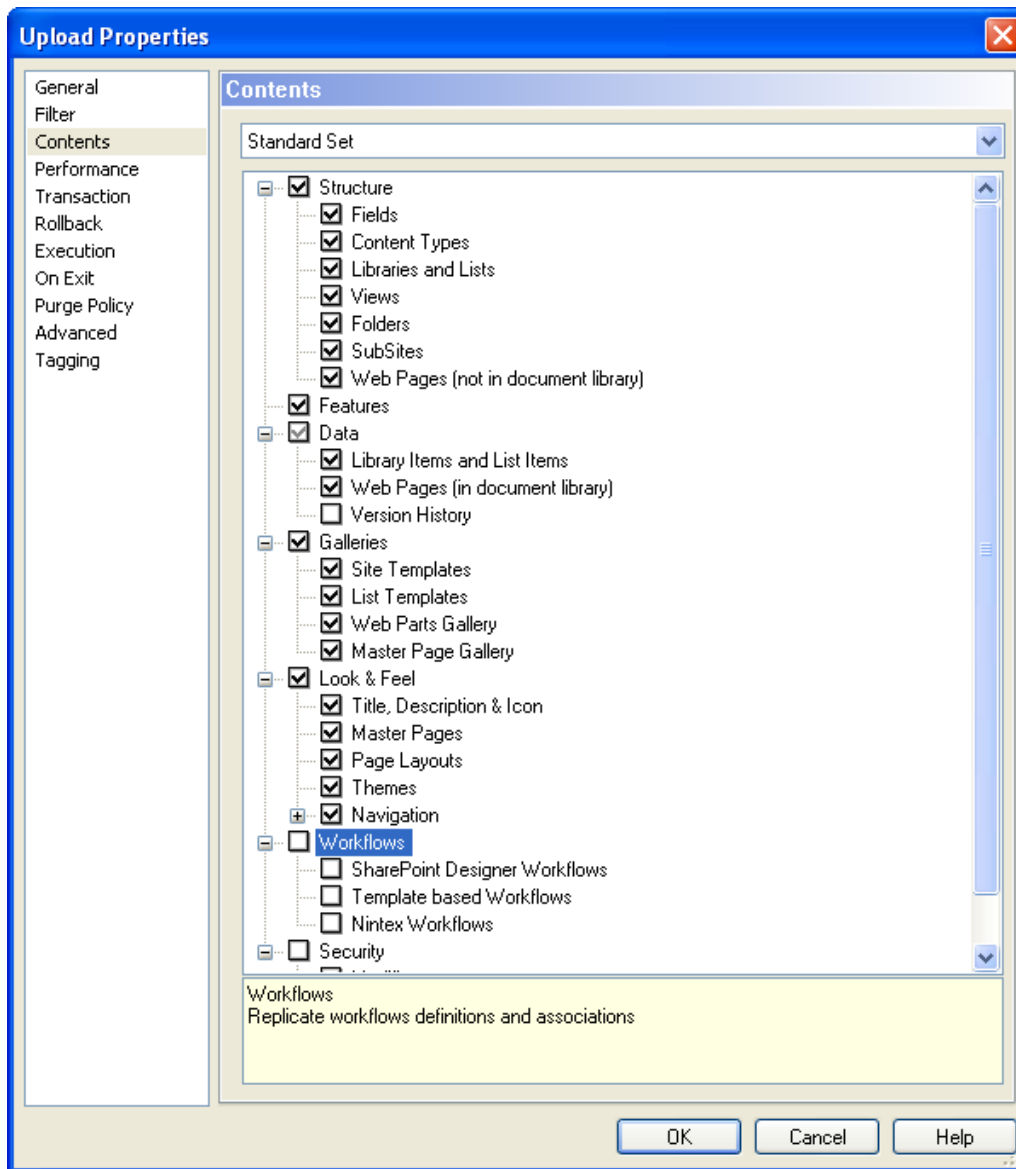
ROSS (RepliWeb Operational Synchronization for SharePoint) provides multi-stage deployment and multi-farm replication for enterprise SharePoint® environments.

As part of its coverage, ROSS version 2.2 supports the replication and deployment of sites and site collections, whether they have workflows set or not. When choosing to replicate workflows, ROSS sets up the target environment for using those workflows.

ROSS workflow replication consists of:

- Making workflows available on the target farm and ready to use on the same lists for which they were defined on the source farm. This is achieved through replicating the workflow definitions + association of the list to the workflow, as well as replicating the lists defined to hold the tasks & history of activated workflows + the association of workflows to them
- Keeping the source and target(s) separate as far as specific workflow instances, by not replicating the progress of a specific workflow instance (i.e. specific tasks & history items)
- ROSS 2.2 supports workflow replication including Workflows built using standard Microsoft tools (native SharePoint workflows + workflows that were built using SharePoint Designer and Visual Studio) and Workflows built using Nintex Workflow 2007
- Workflow replication is not a part of the standard set; by default this option is not checked in the Contents tab, and when not selected, ROSS does not replicate the workflow definitions nor the association to different lists

Complementary to the functionality described below, when a workflow is packaged as a solution (.wsp), ROSS supports deploying the solution to the selected target farm(s), making it available for activation and usage in the target environment.



Summary

ROSS enables seamless replication of sites and site collections containing workflows. Replication is done in accordance with typical staging to production requirements, keeping the target separated and clear from source-associated workflow instances. Workflow features that are encapsulated in solutions can be deployed for use in target environments using ROSS's Solution Deployment feature.

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