CHAPTER 4

Deploying the Search Center

After completing this chapter, you will be able to

- Understand the out-of-the-box search user interfaces
- Deploy the Basic and Enterprise Search Centers
- Redirect the universal search box to a search center
- Add search Web Parts to a Web Part page

Before we can move forward with introducing the pieces of the search user interface, we need to outline the steps of setting up and deploying the search center. The search center is a site in SharePoint 2010 that provides search results and can be modified to meet an organization’s particular search needs.

This chapter will introduce the templates available for deploying search to a SharePoint site collection. It will then highlight the differences between the different search centers and present step-by-step instructions on how to deploy each type. It will close things out by deploying Web Parts to standard pages.

Understanding the Search Center

Strictly speaking, the search center is not a required element for search to function in SharePoint 2010. Individual search Web Parts can be added to any page on a site and perform a variety of search tasks. Also, SharePoint comes with a default results page that will display results from the queries to the standard search box on all pages. However, a good starting point for setting up and testing search is to use the search site templates provided and create a search center to which queries will be redirected.

Before that can be done, though, one must follow a short set of steps. Once SharePoint has been installed, some content added, and the first initial crawl run, the administrator can go to the default site collection and search. The search can be performed by the search box that appears on the top right of every page in the default SharePoint site collection and will appear on new site collections as they are created (Figure 4-1). It can be modified or removed by modifying the design elements of the site collection, but that will not be covered in this book.
Figure 4-1. The search box

If a search is performed from this search box, the search query will be passed to a search results page and search results will be displayed. However, this search results page, called \ OSSSearchResults.aspx, is the default search page and will display the results for the given site collection. However, most site administrators will want to create a custom search and results page that users can access both via the search box and via a search page. Although the individual Web Parts can be added to pages to create a totally custom search and results page anywhere within a site collection, this custom search and results page is usually deployed as a site under the site collection using either the Basic or Enterprise Search site templates.

There are several advantages to this. By creating a search center with a search site template, the SharePoint administrator can do the following:

- Give users a site to navigate to for search instead of using the search box to get to the results page
- Customize the search experience with advanced search capabilities
- Access search preferences
- Utilize tabs to create a custom search scoping experience
- Share a search center across sites or collections
- Separate search by collection

Basic vs. Enterprise Search Centers

There are two site templates for search delivered with SharePoint 2010: the Basic Search Center and the Enterprise Search Center. The Basic and Enterprise Search Centers vary in several ways and both are included in the standard license for SharePoint. If the SharePoint Server Publishing Infrastructure feature on the site collection has not been activated, then the Basic Search Center is the only functional option. The Enterprise Search Center template will appear but will cause an error if chosen (see more in the section on deploying the Enterprise Search Center).

Note The Enterprise Search Center is the SharePoint 2010 replacement of the “MOSS 2007 Search Center with Tabs” publishing site template. The Basic Search Center is the SharePoint 2010 equivalent of the “MOSS 2007 Search Center Lite.”