Connect a bot to channels

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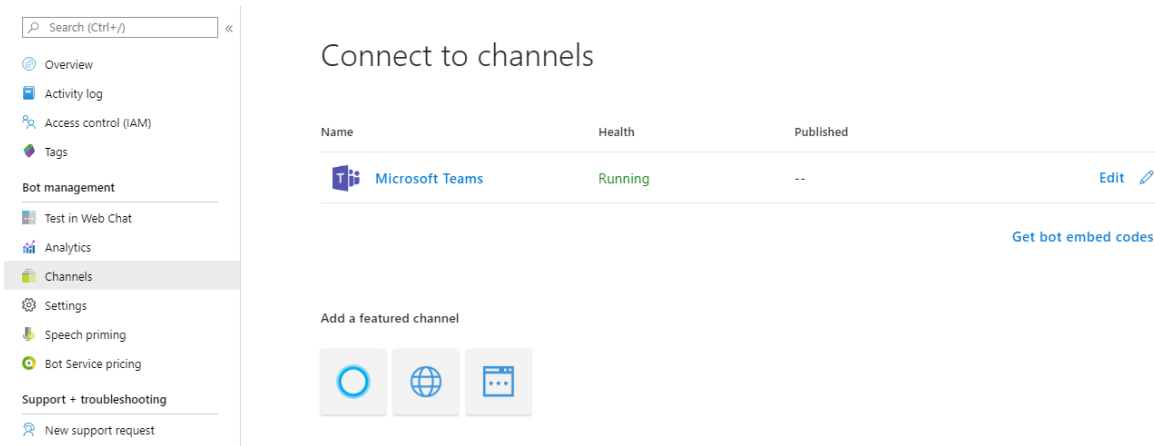
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A channel is a connection between the bot and communication apps. You configure a bot to connect to the channels you want it to be available on. The Bot Framework Service, configured through the Azure portal, connects your bot to these channels and facilitates communication between your bot and the user. You can connect to many popular services, such as Alexa, Cortana, Facebook Messenger, Kik, and Slack, as well as several others. The Web Chat channel is pre-configured for you. In addition to standard channels provided with the Bot Connector Service, you can also connect your bot to your own client application using Direct Line as your channel.

The Bot Framework Service allows you to develop your bot in a channel-agnostic way by normalizing messages that the bot sends to a channel. This involves converting it from the bot framework schema into the channel's schema. However, if the channel does not support all aspects of the bot framework schema, the service will try to convert the message to a format that the channel does support. For example, if the bot sends a message that contains a card with action buttons to the email channel, the connector may send the card as an image and include the actions as links in the message's text.

For most channels, you must provide channel configuration information to run your bot on the channel. Most channels require that your bot have an account on the channel, and others, like Facebook Messenger, require your bot to have an application registered with the channel also.

To configure your bot to connect to a channel, complete the following steps:

1. Sign in to the [Azure Portal](#).

2. Select the bot that you want to configure.

3. In the Bot Service blade, click **Channels** under **Bot Management**.

4. Click the icon of the channel you want to add to your bot.

After you've configured the channel, users on that channel can start using your bot.

Publish a bot

The publishing process is different for each channel.

Cortana

Bots are published to Cortana from the dashboard and are used to power Cortana skills. Publishing a bot submits it for review. Cortana skills can be deployed for your own use, deployed to a small group, or published to the world.

Skype

> ⓘ **Note**
>
> As of October 31, 2019 the Skype channel no longer accepts new Bot publishing requests. This means that you can continue to develop bots using the Skype channel, but your bot will be limited to 100 users. You will not be able to publish your bot to a larger audience. Current Skype bots will continue to run uninterrupted. Read more about **why some features are not available in Skype anymore**.

Bots are published to Skype from the configuration page. Publishing a bot submits it for review. Before review, the bot is limited to 100 contacts. Approved bots do not have limited contacts and you may opt to have the bot included in the Skype bot directory.

Skype for Business

> ⓘ **Important**
>
> Skype for Business Online will retire on July 31, 2021. Skype for Business Online customers should see no change to the service before the retirement date. Read **Skype for Business Online to Be Retired** for more details.

Skype for Business bots are registered with a Skype for Business Online tenant by a Tenant Administrator.

To view the status of a review, open the bot in the Bot Framework Portal and click **Channels**. If the bot is not approved, the result will link to the reason why. After making the required changes, resubmit the bot for review.

Additional resources

The SDK includes samples that you can use to build bots. Visit the Samples repo on GitHub to see a list of samples.

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👍 Yes   👎 No