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Using Altium Documentation

Modified by Jason Howie on Jun 16, 2018

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Altium NEXUS is an easy to implement, team-based PCB workflow solution designed to provide the transparency needed for engineering teams to collaborate with confidence. As with any new product offering, there will undoubtedly be questions as to what it is, and how it fits in with other design solutions from Altium. This page provides detailed answers to many of the frequently asked questions regarding Altium NEXUS.

FAQs are clustered into the following areas:

- [General](#)
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 - [Altium Designer and Altium NEXUS](#)
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General

[Will Altium NEXUS replace Altium Designer?](#)

No - Altium Designer has a rich roadmap and will continue to be aggressively developed to address new technology, design methodology, and features that enable designers to be more productive when creating new PCBs.

[When will Altium NEXUS be Released and Available?](#)

Altium NEXUS will be released alongside Altium Designer 18.0.

[Is Altium NEXUS just a combination of Altium Designer and Altium Vault Products?](#)

Altium NEXUS utilizes the platform of Altium Vault technology (AFS - Altium Foundation Server), but adds a lot of new functionality that does not exist in the current Altium Vault product. This includes, but is not limited to, workflow & process definition and configuration, integrated task management and notification, PLM Integration, and a host of other features.

[What is the difference between Altium NEXUS and the Altium NEXUS Server?](#)

- *Altium NEXUS* - is a Windows desktop application, built on the same platform (X2) as Altium Designer 18.0, and with the same capabilities. In addition, when connected to the Altium NEXUS Server, exposes new functionality in workflow management and collaboration.

- *Altium NEXUS Server* - is the core of the data and process management engine. It is a server product, that is installed on-premise (on central dedicated server) or used as a service. It is a natural descendant of the Altium Vault technology and platform.
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Existing Altium Vault Customers

[I cannot use cloud services. Would it be possible to host/install/manage my own instance of the Altium NEXUS Server?](#)

Yes. The Altium NEXUS Server will be available in two incarnations: On-premise (same as Altium Vault before - you install it on your machine inside of your organization) and cloud (i.e. a Software as a Service (SaaS) solution).

[What capabilities \(on-premise install, where-used, lifecycle management, license management, custom price source via ODBC, etc\) will I lose by switching to Altium NEXUS?](#)

Absolutely none! The Altium NEXUS Server has all the capabilities of the Altium Vault plus a lot more (including a fully functional Workflow engine and PLM Integration).

[How will I migrate to Altium NEXUS, if I already have an Altium Vault?](#)

You can simply continue to use your existing Altium Vault with Altium NEXUS, or migrate from your Vault to the Altium NEXUS Server. Technically, migration to the Altium NEXUS Server will be as simple as installing a new update to the Vault. We have put a lot of the effort to make that seamless and effortless.

[Since Altium Designer 18 will no longer have access to the Altium Vault, how can I convert the Vault into a library system usable with Altium Designer 18, and what will that library system be?](#)

There is no need to do that, all existing customers will have a transparent and effortless way of transitioning to Altium NEXUS. Install Altium NEXUS, and sign in to your existing Altium Vault, to carry on working as normal (a compatibility mode as it were, with you designing with the Altium NEXUS product, instead of Altium Designer).

[What is going to happen to Altium Vault?](#)

Customers and users of the Vault can switch to Altium NEXUS and connect seamlessly to their existing Vault with full data integrity and preservation of capabilities. There is no additional charge to customers who are on active maintenance subscriptions.

As a standalone product, Altium Vault 3.0 will be our last release with new capabilities, yet the Vault technology will continue to evolve and advance as a core part of Altium NEXUS. In the near future, Altium NEXUS will offer a server of its own that will expose new capabilities for collaboration, data management, and process management. These new capabilities are made possible through the integration and continued development of technologies from Vault, as well as recent Altium acquisitions of Ciiva, Perception Software, and more.

Altium NEXUS Server

[What are the hardware requirements for the on-premise version?](#)

Recommended

The following are the recommended system requirements to install and run an on-premise Altium NEXUS Server. Note that these recommendations are for 5 concurrent users.

- OS: Windows Server 2012 R2
- RAM: 16GB+
- Processor: Intel® Xeon® processor or equivalent (4 or more cores)
- Disk space: 200GB
- Database: Firebird

Minimum

The following are the minimum system requirements to install and run an on-premise Altium NEXUS Server. Note that these recommendations are for 5 concurrent users.

- OS: Windows 7
- RAM: 8GB+
- Processor: Intel Core i3/i5 processor or equivalent (2 or more cores)
- Disk space: 200GB
- Database: Firebird

More detail can be found on the System Requirements page. **--coming soon**

[Do you plan to release Altium NEXUS Server SDK?](#)

Yes, as with the Altium Vault, there will be a corresponding Altium NEXUS Server SDK, published following the release. The Altium NEXUS SDK will be the same as that for Altium Designer (as they share the same platform).

[Since the Altium NEXUS platform uses external data sources \(Ciiva\), what is the bandwidth requirement between the on-site server and the internet \(access to live stock data, pricing data, etc\)?](#)

Altium NEXUS Server capabilities are identical to those for Altium Vault 3.0. Both of them optionally can load data from our Global Parts Database (combined Octopart+Ciiva indexes).

[What PLM systems will Altium NEXUS integrate to?](#)

Altium NEXUS will support a *Publish to PLM* feature that can be specified as part of your workflow. Windchill version 11 will be the first supported PLM with others to follow.

[Will the NEXUS Server support Oracle as the backend database?](#)

Yes, absolutely. As with the Altium Vault before it, the Altium NEXUS Server will support the choice of either Firebird (the default) or Oracle as its backend database.

[Can I install both Altium Vault 3 and Altium NEXUS Server on the same machine?](#)

No, this is not possible. Since the Altium NEXUS Server is effectively the successor to the Altium Vault,

installing it on a machine upon which the Altium Vault currently exists will simply update your Vault to the NEXUS Server.

Altium Designer and Altium NEXUS

[So Altium NEXUS is an extension for Altium Designer - a replacement of Vault Explorer?](#)

No, Altium NEXUS is a separate application, built on the same X2 platform as Altium Designer (and therefore with **identical schematic/PCB design capabilities**) with additional functionality focused on Team Collaboration and Process Management.

[Is any of the Schematic/PCB design functionality different in Altium NEXUS compared with Altium Designer?](#)

No - Altium NEXUS and Altium Designer contain the exact same functionality as it pertains to schematic and PCB design.

[Is connection to the Altium Public Vault still possible?](#)

Yes, the Altium Content Vault will remain available to users of Altium Designer 18.0 (with greater improvements scheduled to come along in AD18.1). Connectivity to your own, existing Altium Vault however, is available only after installing and running Altium NEXUS, unless you upgrade your Vault to an Altium NEXUS Server.

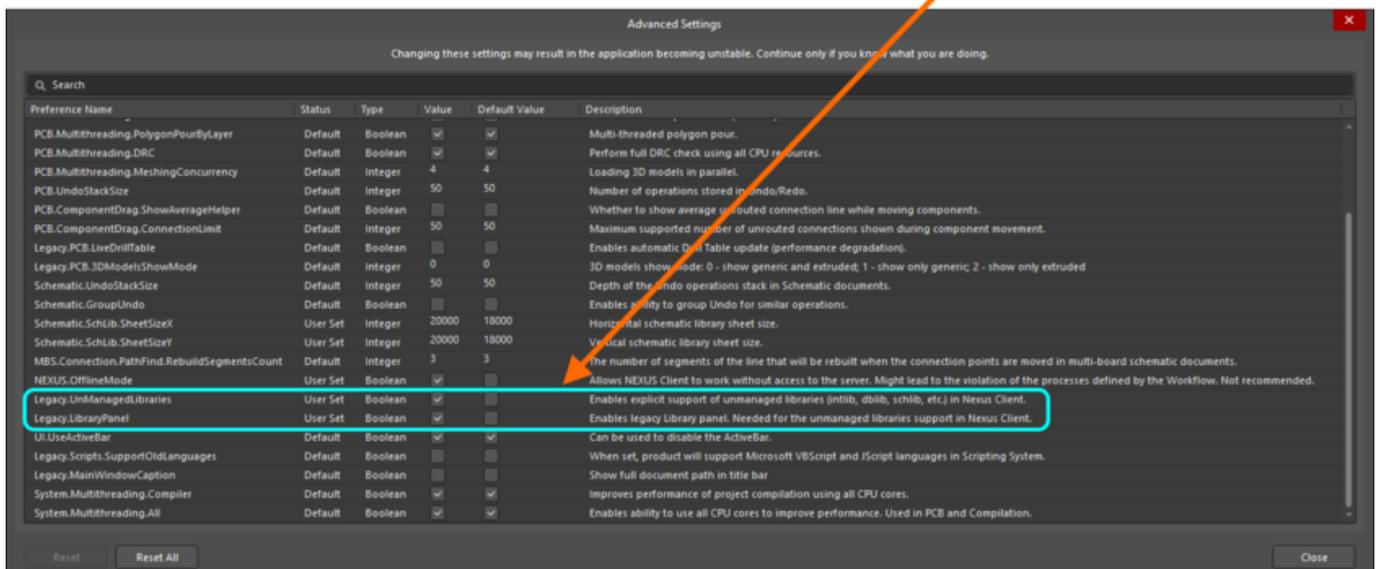
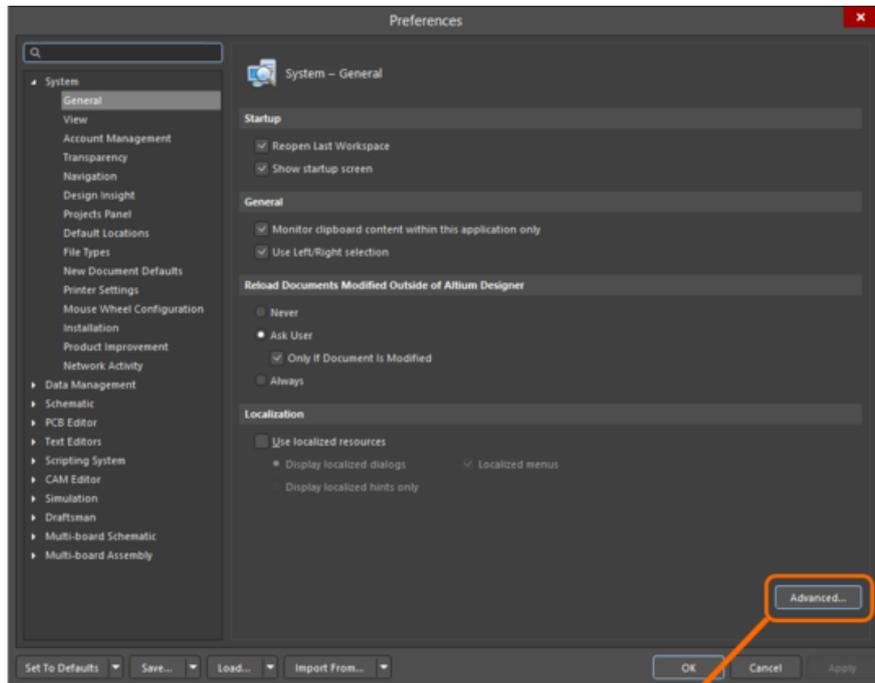
[Will older versions of Altium Designer \(16.x, 17.x\) be able to connect to the Altium NEXUS Server?](#)

Yes, to allow continued design of projects started and maintained in either Altium Designer 16.x or Altium Designer 17.x, these older versions will work as before - with ability to connect to an Altium Vault or Altium NEXUS Server (with the exception of new functionality of course). Starting from Altium Designer 18.0, there is no possibility to connect to an Altium Vault, but you will be able to connect to an Altium NEXUS Server. Connection to an Altium Vault will only be available by installing and running Altium NEXUS.

[I've switched to Altium NEXUS, but can no longer use unmanaged libraries \(SchLib, PcbLib, IntLib, DbLib, etc\) - is this not possible now?](#)

Use of unmanaged content is disabled by default in Altium NEXUS, as it is not recommended. You can restore this functionality by enabling the following options in the *Advanced Settings* dialog - accessed by clicking the **Advanced** button, on the **System - General** page of the *Preferences* dialog:

- `Legacy.UnManagedLibraries`
- `Legacy.LibraryPanel`



Enable older, unmanaged component management methodologies, as well as the *Libraries* panel, as part of the advanced settings for your Altium NEXUS installation's general system preferences.

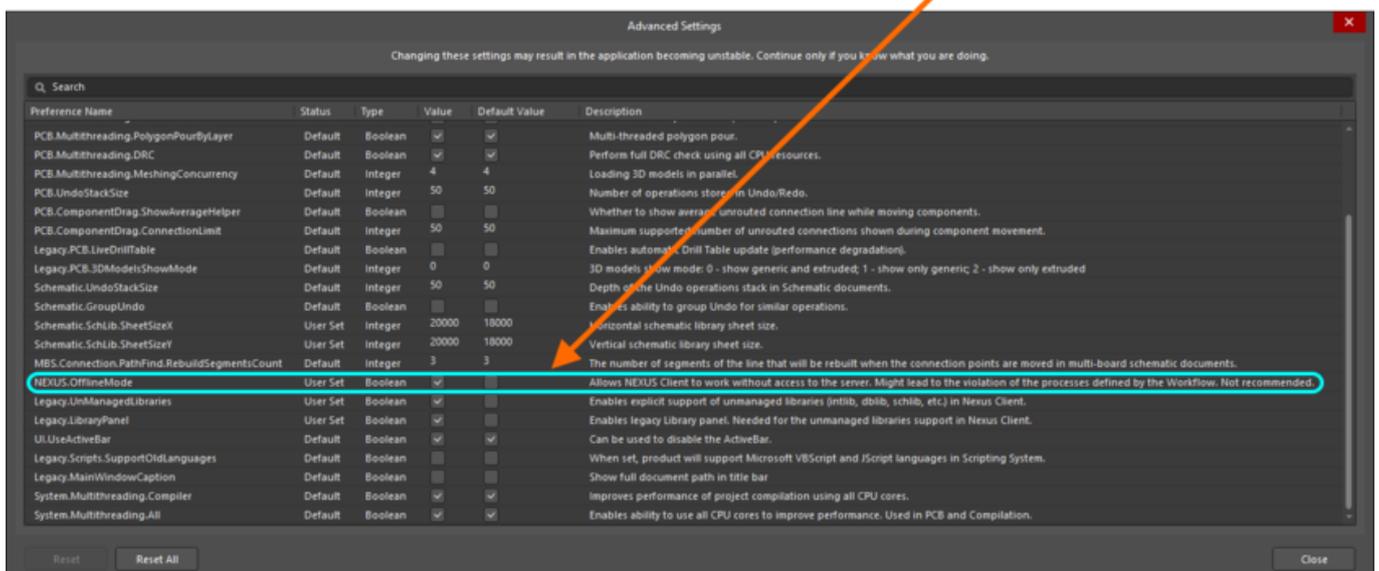
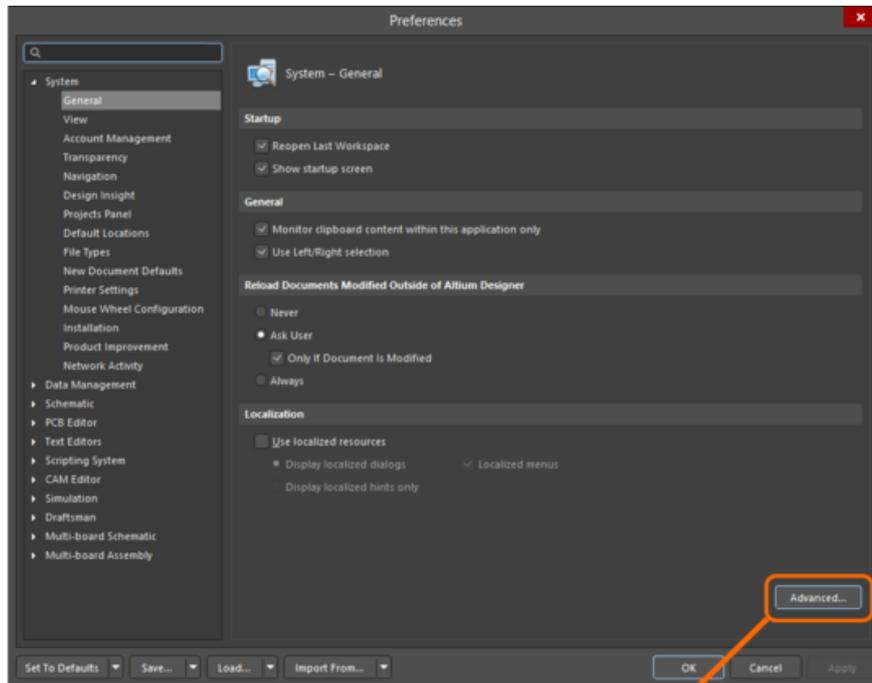


You will need to restart Altium NEXUS for the changes to these settings to take effect.

[Altium NEXUS will not run without being connected to a server - is there an offline/unconnected mode?](#)

By default, Altium NEXUS will only launch/continue to run, while you are signed into your managed content server (existing Altium Vault, or Altium NEXUS Server). Offline (unconnected) mode, if it is permitted by your organization's policies, can be enabled by enabling the following option in the *Advanced Settings* dialog - accessed by clicking the **Advanced** button, on the **System - General** page of the *Preferences* dialog:

- `Nexus.OfflineMode`



Enable offline (unconnected) mode, as part of the advanced settings for your Altium NEXUS installation's general system preferences.



You will need to restart Altium NEXUS for the change to this setting to take effect.

[Is there a Creo interface?](#)

Yes, PTC Creo CoDesigner will be part of Altium NEXUS. In fact, we are actively looking for Beta testers who are willing to test that functionality.

[Is there a SOLIDWORKS interface?](#)

Yes. In Altium Designer this is available through installation of the SOLIDWORKS PCB Connector extension, available from the **Purchased** tab of the **Extensions & Updates** page. In Altium NEXUS, this functionality is facilitated through the *Collaboration* panel.

[I'm confused, which servers can be connected with which versions of the design software?](#)

The following table summarizes which servers/vaults can be connected to, based on the version of Altium Design Software you are using.

Design Software\Server	Altium NEXUS Server 1.0	Altium Vault	SOLIDWORKS PCB Services	Altium Content Vault
Altium NEXUS 1.0	✓ ¹	✓ ¹	✓ ³	✓ ²
Altium Designer 18.0	✓ ¹	✗	✓ ⁴	✓ ²
Altium Designer 17.1 (or earlier)	✓ ¹	✓	✓ ⁴	✓ ²

1. 'Compatibility Mode' - only basic functionality available (component, design, and release data management).
2. Only public components consumption (same as before).
3. While technically possible to connect to this server from Altium NEXUS, CoDesigner functionality is not supported. An Altium NEXUS Server is required for ECAD-MCAD Collaboration.
4. Only CoDesigner functionality, same as before (i.e. no data management).

Altium Designer and Altium NEXUS can both be used without a Server. By default, Altium NEXUS will only launch/continue to run, while you are signed into your managed content server. Offline (unconnected) mode, if it is permitted by your organization's policies, can be enabled by enabling the `Nexus.OfflineMode` option in the *Advanced Settings* dialog - accessed by clicking the **Advanced** button, on the **System - General** page of the *Preferences* dialog.

Licensing

[What if I don't want to switch to Altium NEXUS?](#)

From Altium Designer 18.0, you will no longer be able to connect to your existing Altium Vault. The Altium NEXUS 'compatibility package' gives you the same core design functionality found in Altium Designer 18.0, while allowing you to continue using your existing Altium Vault. Alternatively, you could upgrade your Altium Vault 3 to an Altium NEXUS Server - the functionality for the two servers is the same.

If for some reason you would like to stay on the current version of Altium Vault 3 and Altium Designer 17.1, you can do that too, but in both cases the Altium Vault will no longer receive feature enhancements, only maintenance.

[What is the cost to switch to Altium NEXUS?](#)

Altium NEXUS has a "compatibility mode", which is equivalent to Altium Designer connected to Vault. There is no cost to transition to this product.

About Altium NEXUS

[What is Altium NEXUS?](#)

Altium NEXUS is an easy to implement, team-based PCB workflow solution designed to provide the

transparency needed for engineering teams to collaborate with confidence. Even though Altium NEXUS includes all the various industry leading PCB domain editors required to create a circuit board, its core DNA is enabling design teams to work together.

Design collaboration is enabled through user roles and managed data (library and design), while providing process automation and a framework to configure common electronic design activities and workflows. This provides organizational transparency to design data changes and workflow states through role based notification. By using Altium NEXUS, companies will have the ability to manage their PCB data, improve communication as it relates to multidisciplinary engineering, and configure and automate workflows replacing existing manual processes - resulting in the reduction of design respins and delivery of higher quality products in a shorter period of time.

Altium NEXUS 1.0 introduces new technology in PCB data management, design collaboration, and process and workflow control, making it the most comprehensive circuit board design solution while taking the risk out of integration and deployment.

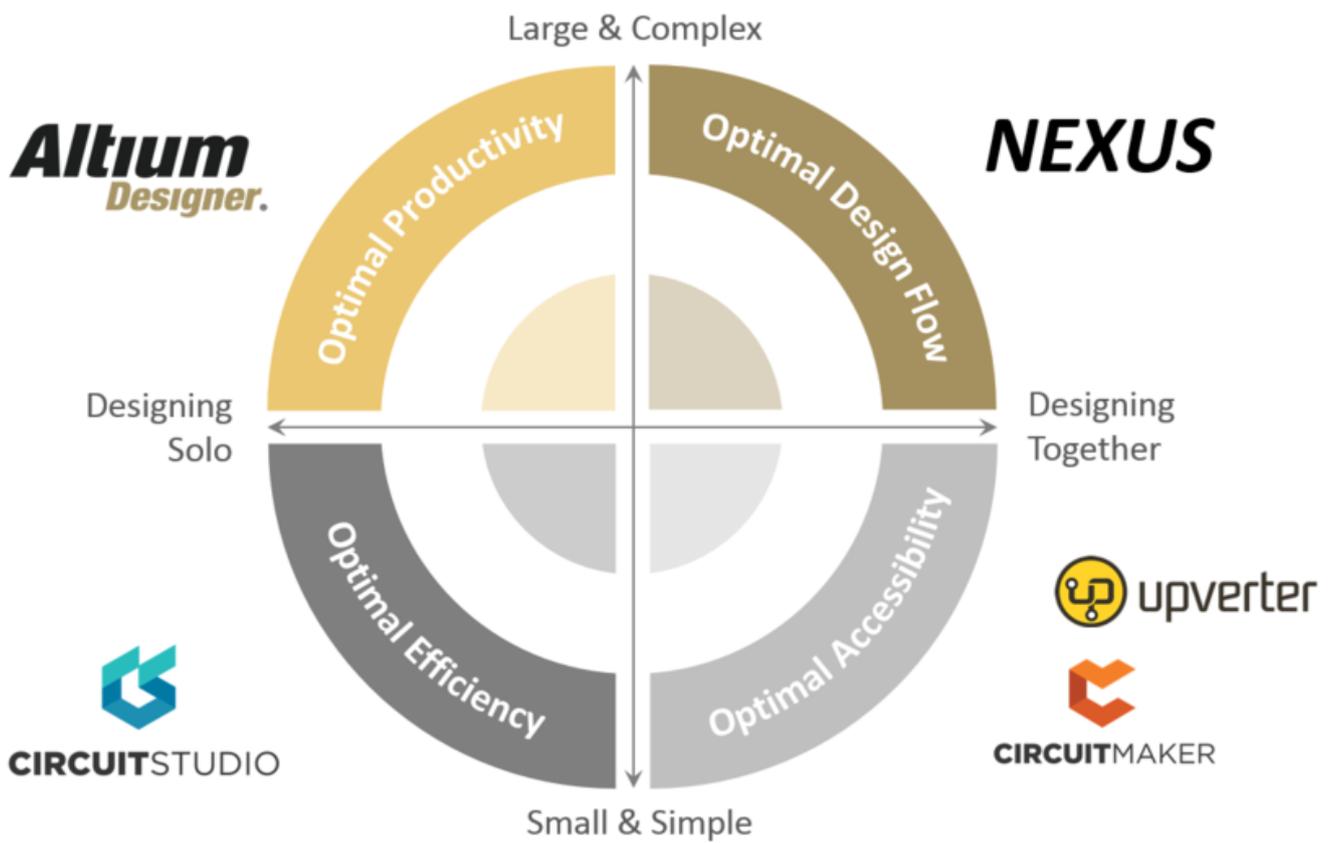
[Is Altium NEXUS a PLM system, or intended to replace a PLM system?](#)

No, Altium NEXUS is focused on managing the design and workflow data as it relates to the PCB design work in progress. This includes the management of PCB library, project, templates, design release, workflow and process configurations, and the revisions, history, and metadata associated to this content. Altium NEXUS manages and centralizes the PCB design information making it easy to publish this content to a PLM system.

[Why did Altium make Altium NEXUS?](#)

Most electronic products are not made by a single designer and require the interaction of multiple individuals. Communication across groups, both engineering and non-design related, is challenging often relying on email, meetings, or ad-hoc systems to track progress and changes. Many companies have adopted business enterprise systems only to realize the cost, overhead, and usability of such environments in the engineering space hinders design progress. This is because these systems were never designed with the engineer in mind and legislate a methodology that does not align with an electronic workflow.

Altium NEXUS was developed to address current communication and interaction limitations during the PCB design process. It enables collaboration during design authoring and throughout the management of the PCB workflow. Altium NEXUS was architected to not only align with the engineering team, but also all participants that contribute to the PCB design. Processes are configurable, allowing you to conform the workflow to how your company operates, rather than changing your organization's process to match the system. Its focus is on how you design by making it easier to work together. The figure below highlights the suite of Altium products and how they align based on design type and participants.



Altium's products and how they align based on design type and participants.

Source URL: <https://www.altium.com/documentation/display/ADES/NEXUS+-+FAQs>