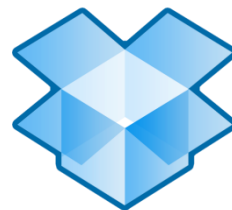




Providing Reliable Technology Solutions for Business

Dropbox Guide



A Complete Overview for Connect Users



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Chapter 1: Intro to Dropbox

What is Dropbox?

You're at the coffee shop. You need to access a file that has information about your work, but as you attempt to find the file you realize that you've made a mistake. You saved the work on your desktop computer, but you only have your laptop with you. You have no way to access the file.

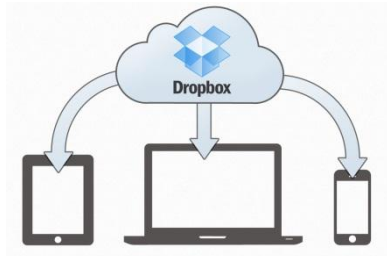
This problem, and others like it, is increasingly common today. It isn't unusual to own both a desktop and a laptop computer, and a smartphone on top of that. The convenience of being able to relax at a coffee shop while working on your laptop and checking movie times on your smartphone is attractive, but it makes organizing your files difficult. You may find yourself frequently emailing files to yourself, or dragging files back and forth from a USB drive. This only works as well as your own memory: if you forget to transfer files you will find yourself up a creek without a paddle.



Dropbox solves these issues by making it easy to synchronize files between computers. Installing Dropbox creates a special folder on your computer. Anything that you put in this folder is automatically synchronized with any other computer on which you've installed the service. The files you drop in for synchronization are also located on a remote server, which means you can download news files even when all of your other devices are turned off or offline.

Dropbox Clients for Everything

One of the greatest strengths of Dropbox is the large number of platforms its supports. Personal computers running Linux, OS X and Windows are all supported. This would normally be considered very good, but Dropbox takes things a step further by offering support for mobile devices.



The mobile devices currently supported include Android smartphones, iPhones, and iPads. All of the mobile Dropbox applications are every bit as free as the PC client and provide full functionality – although the types of files that can be successfully opened on your smartphone will depend on the smartphone's software support.

You can also access the Dropbox website at any time from any device that has a web browser. This makes it possible to access the files in your Dropbox folder without having to install the software – handy if you're at a friend's house and you want to show off some photos. Just log in and use the web interface.



Installation

The installation of Dropbox, on any device, is straightforward. You will be asked to create a Dropbox account during installation, or to enter your username and password if you have already signed up for the Dropbox service.

You will also have the option of changing the location of your Dropbox folder. The default location will be fine for most users, but you can place it in any folder that you'd like. You can also change the location of the folder later by accessing the Preferences menu.

Chapter 2: Syncing Files



Cloud Storage and Dropbox – What it all means

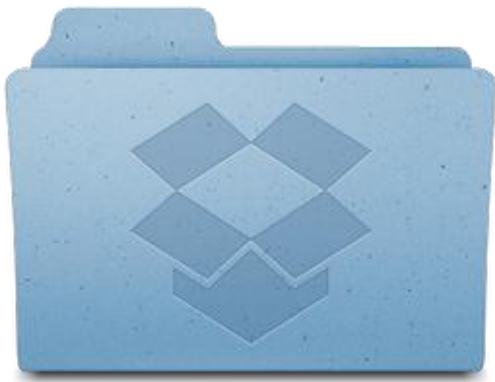
Dropbox is a cloud storage application, so understanding the basics of cloud computing will give you an understanding of how Dropbox works. Cloud storage is a term that unfortunately has been butchered as of late, but at its core the term stands for a very specific way of storing data.

Cloud storage is storage that is not locally hosted. The data is stored in physical media like any other data, but the storage media is a hard drive located in some far-off server farm instead of a hard drive in your computer. You'll never see the physical device that stores you data or interact with it directly. The information that you store is also located on all of your computers that have Dropbox installed, however. This creates a "cloud" of computers, each of which stores the same data and can send that data to any other computer that is part of the cloud. As a result it is no longer strictly accurate to simply say your data is stored on your PC. Instead, the data is stored in the cloud and can be retrieved from the cloud on any computer or mobile device that can access the Internet.

With this said, it should be noted that Dropbox is still not a cloud service if the strictest definition is used, because the synchronization of files on the service ultimately relies on the central server. If the Dropbox servers went down the entire service would be rendered useless until the servers came back online. The data would still be in the cloud– all of your computers have your files – but there would be no way to transfer the files between computers or place new files in the cloud until the server was restored.



The Dropbox Folder



With that technical bit out of the way, let's get down to brass tacks and take a look at the most fundamental feature of Dropbox: the Dropbox folder. The account that you create with Dropbox automatically includes a Dropbox folder (you can only have one per account) that shares files with other devices that have the Dropbox client installed and connected to your account.

If you happened to watch the promotional video on the Dropbox website you'll know that they refer to their service as a "magic pocket" that is always with you and contains whatever you place in it. This is an apt description. The folder itself looks like a completely normal folder and will be displayed as such on your computer.

Anything that you place into this folder is automatically made available in the Dropbox folder of any other computer or device that is associated with your account. You don't have to do anything to make this synchronization occur: just drop the file into the folder the rest happens automatically.

Your Dropbox folder will contain two separate sub-folders when you first open it. The first is called Photos. The Photos folder's use is obvious – it is meant to store photos! Dropbox includes a Photos folder by default because the service lets you view your photos online by navigating to www.dropbox.com/photos and entering your login information. The photos that you have placed into your Photo folder will be listed in your web browser. The sub-folders in the main Photo folder will be displayed as albums and photos that are not organized into sub-folders will be displayed individually. The second pre-configured folder is the Public folder. This folder is designed to make sharing individual files easy.

The default Photos and Public folders are important to Dropbox's functionality and should not be deleted. You can, however, add as many other folders as you'd like. The structure of your folders will be automatically replicated on other devices on which you've installed Dropbox. For example, let's say I create a new folder on my desktop PC called Stuff, and inside that folder I create a sub-folder called Things. A new folder called Stuff will be automatically created on my laptop, and a sub-folder called Things will automatically be created inside it.

File Sync Details

Dropbox uses an automatic method of file synchronization. When you place a file into the Dropbox folder the client on your computer immediately and automatically attempts to send that information to the Dropbox server, which in turn immediately and automatically attempts to make the information available to all of the devices you have installed the client on.



Your folder is tied to your account, not to the client software installed on a device. You can only have one main Dropbox folder per account, and a device will only be able to receive the files from your folder if you both install the client and log in to your account. The client will normally only allow one active account at a time to prevent users from circumventing the storage caps placed on the various free and paid accounts.

While Dropbox automatically tries to sync all of the devices you're using, there is only one way that it can do so: the Internet. A device that is not connected to the Internet, or which has a poor quality or slow connection, won't be able to send or receive files from your folder.

File Sync on Mobile Devices

As mentioned earlier, Dropbox is not limited to Windows, OS X and Linux based computers. The company has rolled out clients – or apps, as smartphone lovers like to call them – for the iPhone, iPad and Android based smartphones.



The basic nuts-and-bolts are a bit different from the computer clients. Once you've downloaded the app you'll need to log in to your Dropbox account or set one up if you don't already have one. However, because of the space limitations, it isn't ideal (or possible, in many cases) for your device to download the entire folder; instead, the default settings of the apps only let you view your folder.

If you'd like to actually download a file you need to mark it as a "favorite" – only then will the app make that file viewable while offline. Because the Dropbox apps never actually download your folder or its contents (unless a file marked as a favorite) these apps require an active Internet connection. Wireless, 3G or 4G will be suitable for this task, but if you don't have access to the Internet via any method of connection you will only see your "favorites."







Exercise caution when downloading files from your Dropbox account, keeping the data limit on your wireless plan in mind. Many plans have limits of just a couple gigabytes a month. That will let you view numerous mobile websites, but you can blow through that cap in a matter of hours if you're continually downloading files from Dropbox to your device.

Chapter 3: The Web Interface

Logging in and Exploring the Web Interface

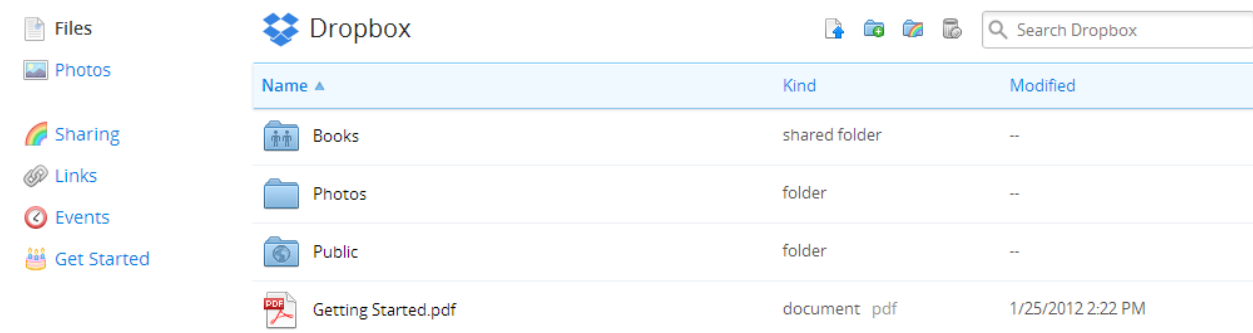
Dropbox clients make it easy to handle the sharing of files in your Dropbox folder, but the web interface is a critical part of the service's overall functionality. It makes it possible to access your folder on a computer without installing a client, and is also responsible for controlling some of the service's settings.





The web interface can be accessed by going to Dropbox.com and logging in to your account. Once you've logged in you will be brought to page with five tabs on the left side. The tabs are, from top to bottom: Files, Photos, Sharing, Links, Events, and Get Started.

 Files	You'll find that the Get Started tab is opened by default if this is your first time logging in to the web interface. This tab doesn't control any critical functionality but instead acts as a basic tutorial. You can see a video introduction to Dropbox's features and perform a variety of basic tasks, such as placing files in your folder and installing Dropbox on various devices.
 Photos	
 Sharing	
 Links	
 Events	
 Get Started	If you complete all of the basic tasks in the Get Started tab you will be rewarded with an extra 250MB of storage space. Hurray! After you performed those tasks you can further increase your storage limit by referring friends. You earn 250MB for each friend who joins up, to a limit of 8GB.

Accessing Files and Folders with the Web Interface

The Files tab in the web interface will bring you to your Dropbox folder. This folder is exactly the same as the folder on your devices; any files that you've placed into your folder on your computers are accessible through this part of the web interface.



Name ▲	Kind	Modified
 Books	shared folder	--
 Photos	folder	--
 Public	folder	--
 Getting Started.pdf	document pdf	1/25/2012 2:22 PM

When you click on a file in the web interface your browser will make an effort to open it. This is simple if the file in question is a common text or image file, but your success with more complex files will obviously be limited.

You can download files using two different methods. If you simply want to download a single file you need to hover your mouse over the file in question. The file will become highlighted and a drop-down menu will appear on the right. If you click that arrow a list of options will appear, one of which is the

Download File option. It does what you'd expect. You can also download an entire folder using this method: folders are retrieved as .zip files

Multiple files in a folder can be retrieved by clicking on the checkboxes to the left of the files you want to download. Once you've selected the files you can click on the More Actions drop-down menu in the upper right and then click Download Items.

You can also manage files and folders just as you would in a normal local folder. You can place files into a folder by clicking on the file and dragging it to the folder you'd like to place it in. It is also possible to delete, rename or move files by highlighting them with your mouse cursor and then using the drop-down menu on the right. New folders can be created and files can be uploaded by using the toolbar that appears just below the My Dropbox icon.

Events, Sharing and Help!

The fifth tab of the Dropbox web interface is the Events tab. This shows you all of the recent activity that has taken place on your account. This includes a wide variety of data such as the addition and deletion of files, moving files, adding and removing folders, sharing files and folders, linking computers to your account and more.

You may never need to use the Events tab, but it comes in handy if you want to take a look at your recent activity in order to remember a change that you made or find a file that you've misplaced. The Events page can show up to 50 events at a time, and you can also sort events by date.

The third tab from the left is Sharing. This is where you'll find all of the options related to sharing files with Dropbox.

Chapter 4: File Sharing

The Basics of Dropbox File Sharing

One of the major features of Dropbox is file sharing, a natural extension of the service. Dropbox already syncs all of the files that you want to make accessible for your own use on any device. Why not also make it easy to share those files with everyone else?

Obviously, the storage limits on Dropbox accounts are going to limit what you can do with this feature. This is not meant to be a service that you use to share your music folder or your favorite movie. The file sharing features are simply meant to make it easy to share limited amounts of information with your friends or coworkers. The introduction video on the Dropbox.com front page suggests using the service to share travel photos with friends – a great example of what the service is for.







There are two ways to share the information in your Dropbox folder: through the use of the Public folder and by sharing a folder with specific email addresses.

Public Folder File Sharing

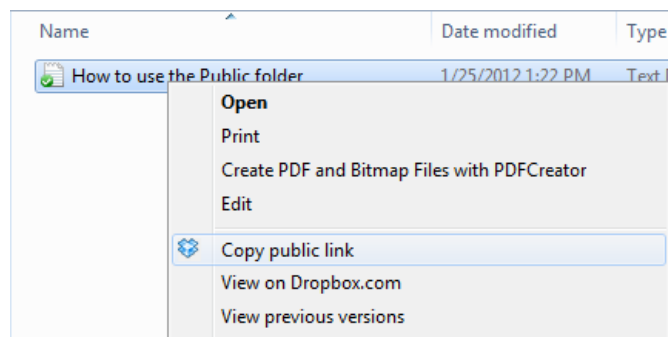
Let's say that you want to share a single photograph with a bunch of people. Perhaps the photo is related to an event you went to and you want to share it with everyone on your Twitter account.

This is what the Public folder is all about. As explained in earlier, the Public folder is automatically part of your Dropbox folder when you start an account. It is the only folder that automatically creates a public link to every file it contains.

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
 Books	9/24/2013 2:34 PM	File folder	
 Photos	9/24/2013 2:34 PM	File folder	
 Public	9/24/2013 2:34 PM	File folder	
 Getting Started	1/25/2012 1:22 PM	Adobe Acrobat D...	241 KB

The term “public” is a bit loose here. Anyone who has a link to a public file can share it with anyone they'd like, and it is theoretically possible that someone could guess the link to a file in your Public folder even if you never shared that link with anyone. That's not likely, however – files in your Public folder can generally be considered private until you share them. Still, if you took some photos of yourself streaking down Main Street during a night of drunken debauchery it is probably a good idea not to place them in your Public folder.

You can find the link to a file in your Public folder in two ways. If you have a Dropbox client installed on PC, Mac or Linux computer you can right-click on the file, navigate to the Dropbox menu, and then click Copy Public Link. This will place the link to your file in your clipboard so you can paste it into any web browser. Files that your browser can open, such as videos and pictures, will open automatically. Files the browser can't open will be available for download instead.

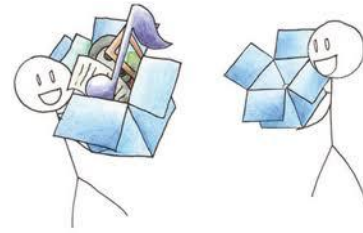


Sharing files in this manner is also possible if you're using the web interface. Simply open the Public folder and then place your cursor over the file you want to share. Click on the drop-down menu that appears to the right and then click on Copy Public Link. The link won't be copied to your clipboard automatically: a prompt displaying the full link address will appear in your browser.

Please note that files in your Public folder may take a few moments to become available. If you place a file into the Public folder and try to view it immediately you might be greeted by a 404 File Not Found message. Don't fret; check back after a few minutes.

Sharing Files with Individuals

The Public folder is awesome if you want to make a file publically available via Twitter or Facebook, but it's not so awesome if you want to share a somewhat private file or if you want to share a huge number of files with specific people. Fortunately, Dropbox also lets you share any sub-folder in your Dropbox folder with individuals of your choosing.



Unlike the Public folder, which is made available by default, there are not any default folders set aside for sharing with specific individuals. In order to do this you need to create a brand new sub-folder. As with most things in Dropbox, you can do this either by creating the sub-folder in the local copy of your Dropbox folder or you can create it using the Dropbox web interface. The new folder will then sync with the service. You'll need to right-click on the folder and then navigate to the Dropbox options menu, under which you'll find the Share This Folder option. This will open up the Dropbox web interface.

At this point you will need to enter the email address of everyone you'd like to share the folder with. You can also add a message that will be sent in the body of the email. Once you're done click the Share Folder button. The people you've shared the folder with **will have to sign up for a Dropbox account to view it.**

You can also share folders in the web interface by clicking the Share a Folder button on the toolbar. You can create a new folder, or share an existing one. After you click the Next button you'll be taken to the same prompt explained in the paragraph above.

The person who receives the shared folder will have to accept the folder once they've signed up for and/or logged into their Dropbox account. All file actions are available to everyone who has access to a shared folder. In other words, anyone you've shared the folder with can delete everything in the folder. This will be recorded in the Events tab of the web interface and can be rolled back.

While you can't restrict what other people can do to the files you share, you can kick people out of the shared folder at any time. You can accomplish this by going to the Sharing tab in the web interface, clicking on the Options link, and then clicking on the Members tab. A list of everyone with access to the folder will appear. Simply use the drop-down menu next to an individual's name to give them the boot. You can also unshare the folder by clicking the link at the bottom of that webpage.

Chapter 5: Online Backup



The Pros and Cons of Online Backup

As the introductory video suggests, you can use Dropbox as a backup service. Online backup services are common these days – if Dropbox didn't offer file syncing it would be in direct competition with companies like iDrive and Carbonite.

Using Dropbox for the task of backing up data has both pros and cons. The main advantage of online backup is the fact that your files are hosted at a remote location that is entirely separate from your physical location. Most people who back up data transfer it to an external hard drive. That's fine, but what if your house burns down or there is a flood? Your equipment would be ruined and your data would go with it.

You can also use Dropbox to backup information that is located on multiple computers with a single service. This is much more convenient than plugging an external hard drive into your desktop, transferring, unplugging it, plugging it into your laptop, transferring, and – I think you get the picture.

Of course, there are some disadvantages as well. Backing up large amounts of data is difficult because of the storage limitations on a Dropbox account. Even the \$19.99 monthly plan only offers 100 gigabytes of storage, which is nothing if you want to backup music and movies. Another problem: your backup is tied to an account that could theoretically be hi-jacked.



Handling Space and Security

Dropbox's relative ease of use can make it an appealing method of backing up information, but storage space is an issue. None of the available accounts, free or paid, offer a massive amount of storage.

The limited storage space is not insurmountable, however. One way to overcome it is by making heavy use of .zip files. Zip files are compact folders

that compress files, reducing the storage space they consume. The trade-off is accessibility – you have to decompress the files in the .zip folder before you can open them. Most modern computers can handle this task in seconds, but the time required to unzip a folder will depend on the level of compression and the speed of the computer you’re using.

Another way to side-step the storage space limitation is to be selective about what you back up. Do you *really* need to backup the software installed on your computer? Do you *really* need to backup every single image or music file you have on your computer? Sorting through your files and picking the ones that are important can be difficult, but it will reduce the data you need to backup.

Security is also an issue that can impact Dropbox (and any other online storage service). Storing your information online is handy and provides an off-site backup that you can access in the event of a major catastrophe. However, backing up your data online makes it accessible to anyone who knows your username and password. You can improve your security by choosing a password that would be difficult to guess and limiting access to Dropbox to secure connections, but there is always going to be some risk involved. Dropbox may not be the best choice of backup solution if you need to backup sensitive data, such as bank e-statements or last year’s tax returns.

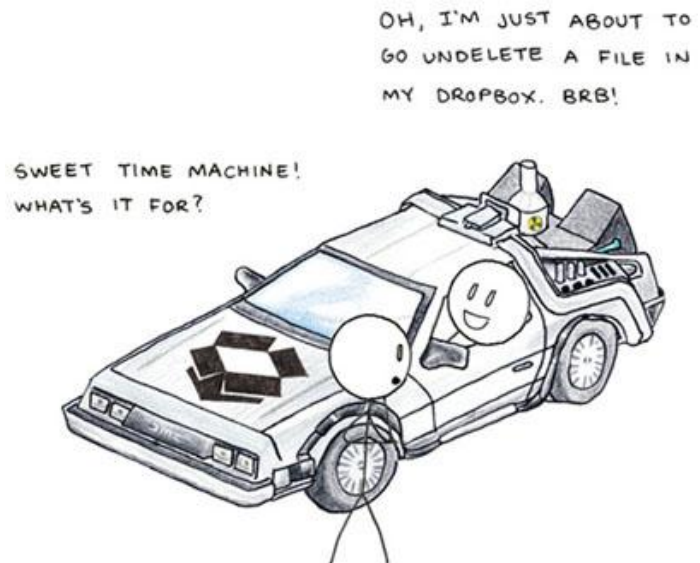
Using the Undo/Undelete Feature

One of the reasons why Dropbox can be a nice backup solution is it is easy to use undo/undelete functionality. Accessed via the web interface, this feature lets you reverse changes that you make to a file in your Dropbox account. This lets you retrieve a file if you accidentally delete it.

One way to undo a file deletion is through the Events tab of the Dropbox web interface. The Events tab, as explained earlier, lists recent actions that impacted your account, including the deletion of files. This is represented by a small red-and white

X icon and the text “You deleted [filename].” If you deleted multiple files on the same day that text will be followed by “and other items,” which can be clicked to reveal all of the files (or folders) deleted on that day. You’ll then be able to restore files by clicking on the radio button listed next to the appropriate file and clicking the Restore button. Alternatively, you can attempt to simply view the file.

You can also view deleted files while you are browsing your folders if there are any available to be retrieved. This is done by clicking the Show Deleted Files button. Files in this view will show how long ago they were deleted, but folders will not show that information. If you deleted multiple files you may need to use the Show Deleted Files button to retrieve everything that was deleted.



Chapter 6: Getting Started with Dropbox

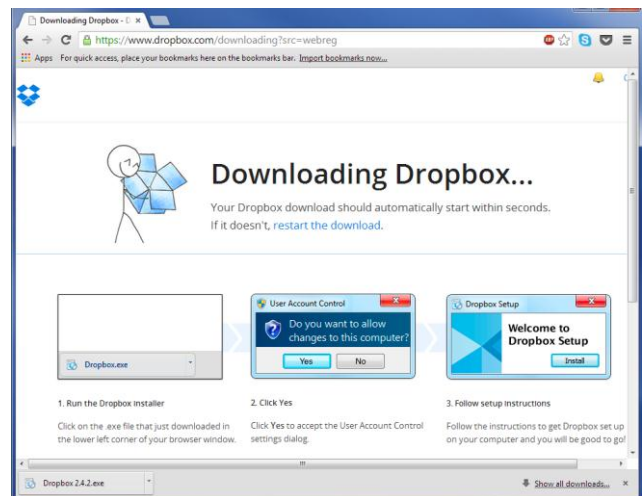
What makes up Dropbox?

By now you know what Dropbox does but let's look into what makes up Dropbox to better understand how to use it. Dropbox is software that links all of your computers together via a single folder. It's the easiest way to back up and sync files between computers and is composed of three different applications.

- **The Dropbox Desktop Application** is software that watches a folder on your desktop computer and syncs any changes to the web and to your other computers.
- **The Dropbox Website** allows you to access your files on any computer from a web browser. You can also use the Dropbox website to share your files or folders with others.
- **The Dropbox Mobile App** allows you to connect to your Dropbox from your pocket, so you can take your files with you wherever you go.

Signing Up for Dropbox

1. Go to the Dropbox website (www.Dropbox.com) and click on the "Sign Up" button.
2. From here you will be asked for your information. Fill out the form and click the "Sign Up" button again.
3. Next the Dropbox desktop application will start to download in your browser. From here the next steps will appear in your browser of how to install the desktop application.

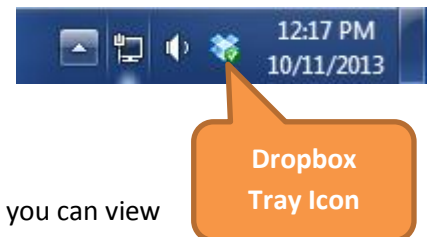


Dropbox Desktop Application

Once the Dropbox desktop application is downloaded to your computer, you will see the Dropbox icon located on the tray of the Windows task bar. You can access Dropbox from here or within your applications folder.

If you double click on the icon, the desktop application will open and you can view your files and folders from here. From the desktop application you can create, share, and manage your folders. Anything that you do in the desktop application, such as upload files, will sync with the Dropbox website and will be stored in the cloud.

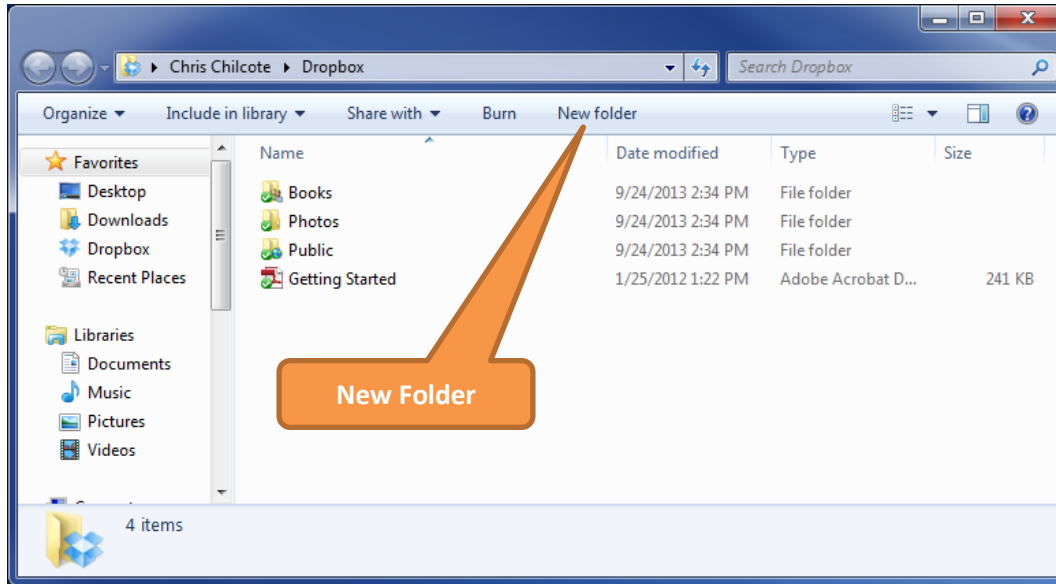
You can also right click on the tray icon which gives you the option to view your desktop Dropbox folder, go to the website, view recently updated files, and change settings for the desktop application.



Creating Folders in Dropbox

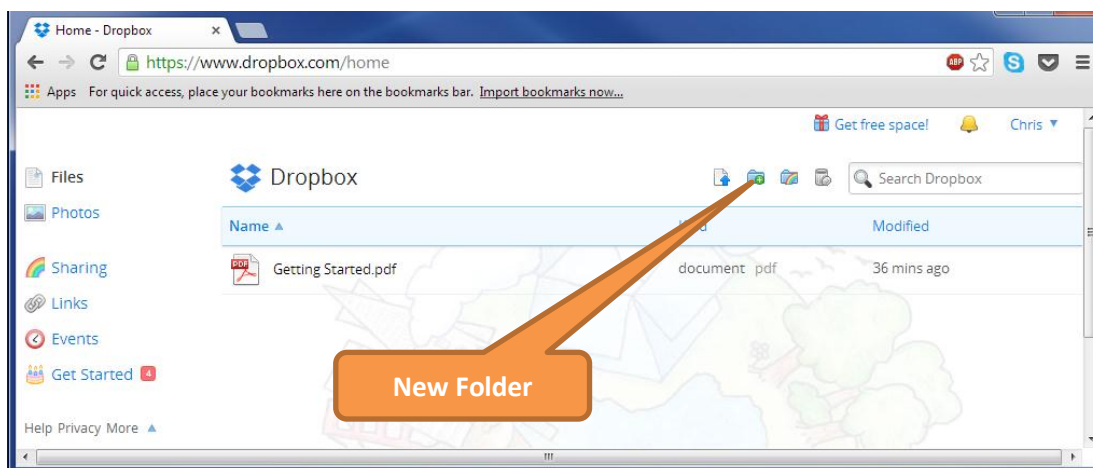
On Your Desktop

Creating folders in Dropbox from the desktop application is the exact same as creating new folders on your computer. Simply go to your Dropbox folder on your desktop and click the New Folder option at the top of the window. From the desktop Dropbox folder you can create, delete, and manage folders as you normally would in Windows.



On the Dropbox Website

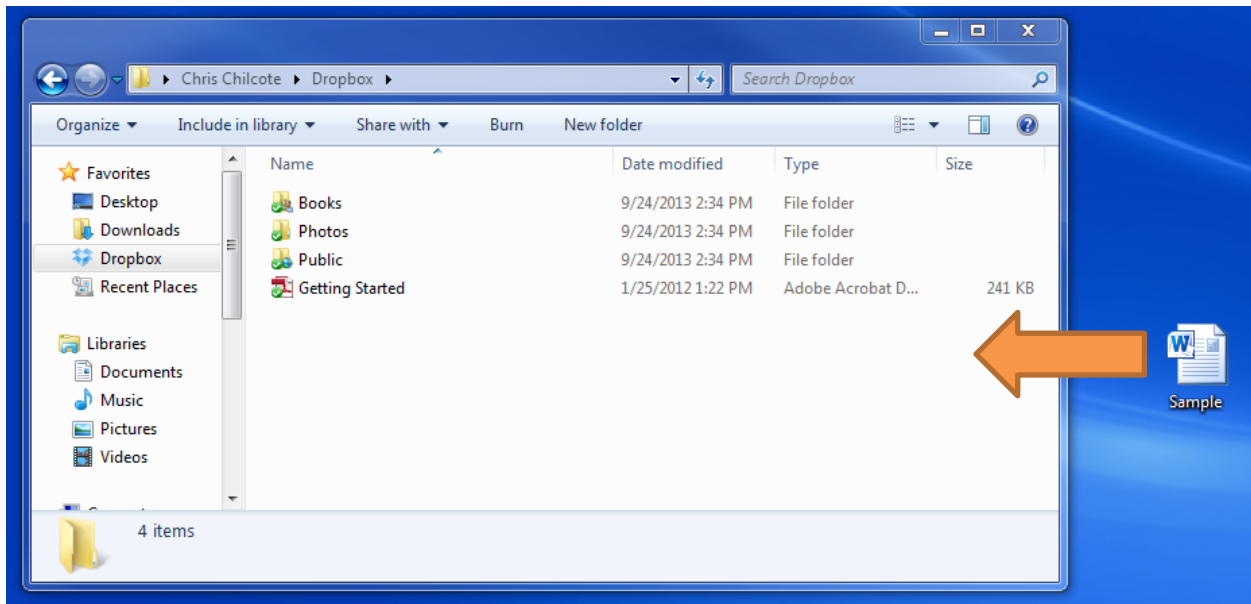
To create a folder from the Dropbox website make sure that you are in the Files page of your Dropbox website and click on the New Folder icon. From here a new folder will appear and you will be asked to name the folder. Once created, you can do a number of things by right clicking on the folder.



Uploading Files to Dropbox

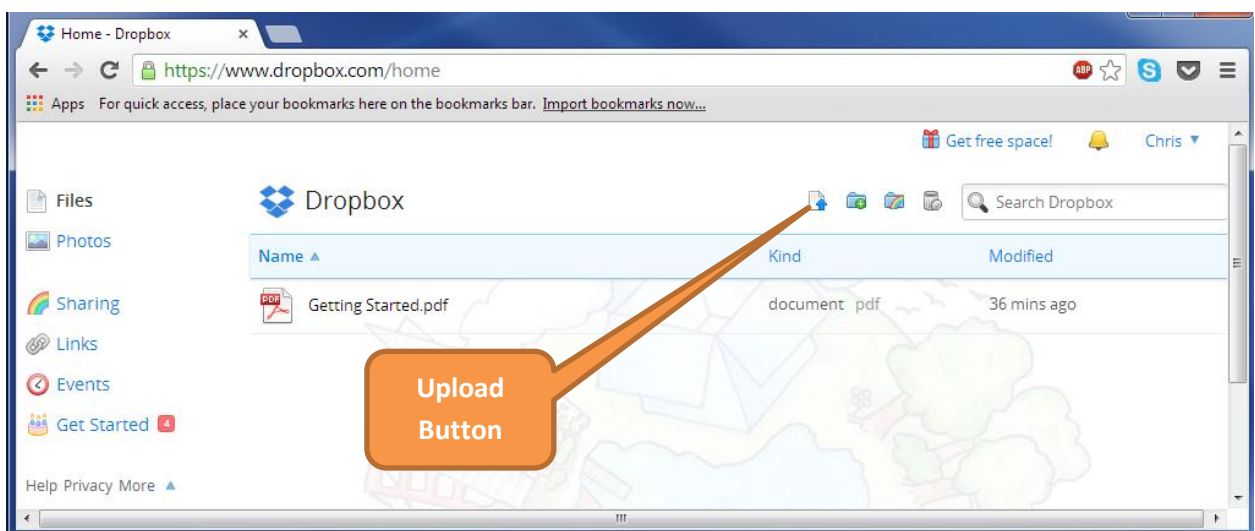
On Your Desktop

It's easy to add files to Dropbox. Move your files into your Dropbox by dragging and dropping them into your Dropbox folder. That's it. The files in your Dropbox folder will automatically be synced online and to your other computers. You don't have to do anything. You can even use the **Save As...** menu option in most applications to save files directly to your Dropbox folder.



On the Dropbox Website

1. Log in to the Dropbox website.
2. Click the Upload button from the very top of the window.



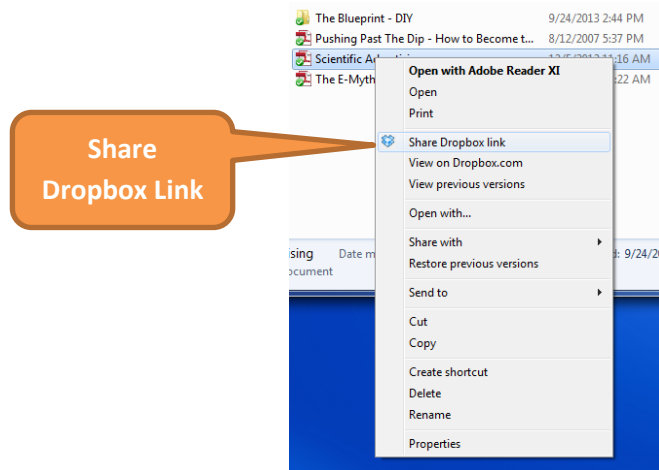
3. A window will appear. Click the **Choose File** button and then select the file on your computer that you'd like to add to your Dropbox.
4. Choose as many files as you like, and then click the **Start Upload** button.
5. The window will disappear, your files will start uploading, and you'll be shown a progress indicator. That's it, you've added files to your Dropbox!

Sharing Folders/Files

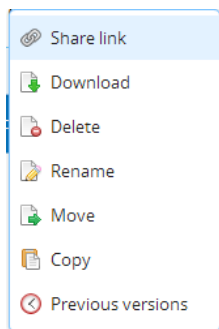
There are two ways to share the files or folders in your Dropbox with others, share a link to files and folders or through shared folders.

Share a Link to Files or Folders on Your Desktop

Right click on a file or folder in the Dropbox folder to open its contextual menu and select **Share Dropbox link**. The link will be copied and you can immediately paste it anywhere (IM, email, or text message). This link will allow anyone you share it with to view the folder or file.



Share a Link to Files or Folders on the Dropbox Website



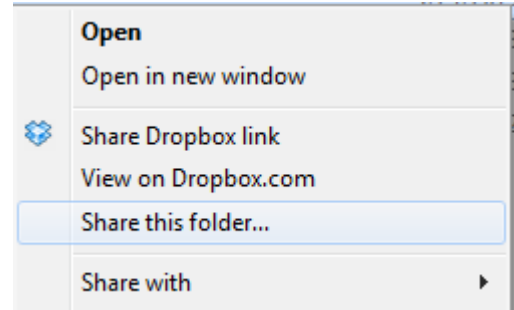
1. Log in to the Dropbox website (if you haven't already).
2. Right-click on the folder or file name to open the contextual menu.
3. Click **Share link** from the drop-down menu.
4. **Share link** through the Dropbox website

Once the link is created, a preview window appears. Enter the email addresses of the people you'd like to send the link to or select **Get link** to copy the URL so that you can paste it in your email, instant message, etc. This preview page is also what others will see when they use your link.

Creating Shared Folders on Your Desktop

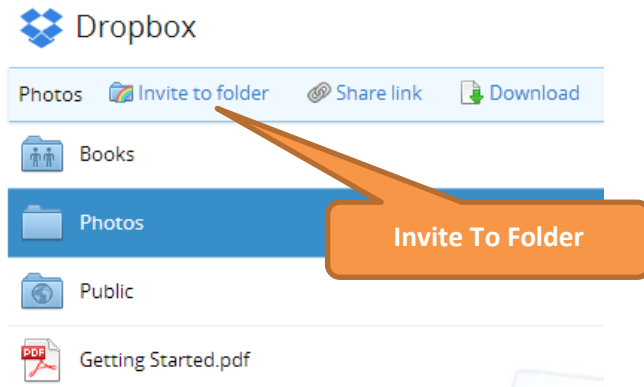
You can share a folder right from your computer if you've installed the Dropbox desktop application.

1. Open your Dropbox folder.
2. Right-click on the folder you want to share to bring up a menu.
3. Select **Share This Folder...**. This will open the **Sharing** page on the Dropbox website. Select **Share This Folder...** from the contextual menu
4. Enter the email addresses of the people you want to invite.
5. Add a personal message if you'd like and click **Share folder**.

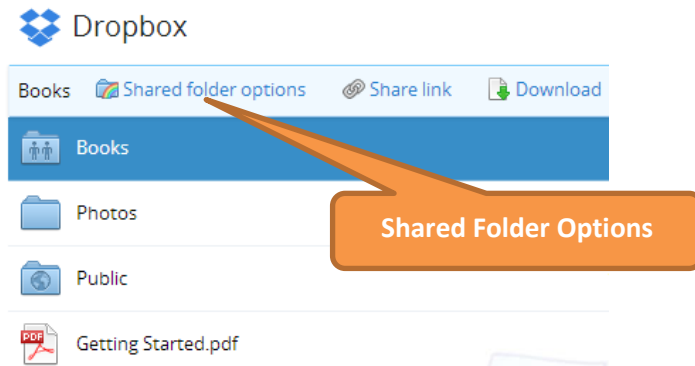


Creating Shared Folders on the Dropbox Website

1. Log in to the Dropbox website.
2. Go to your list of files and folders and select the folder you want to share by clicking on the empty space to the right of the folder's name. (Clicking on the folder name or icon will open the folder instead.)
3. If the folder is currently unshared, click **Invite to folder** in the toolbar:



If the folder is already being shared, click **Shared folder options**:



4. Enter the email addresses of the people you want to invite.
5. Add a personal message if you'd like and click **Share folder**.

You can also invite people to folders from the [Sharing](#) page. To create a new shared folder, click the **New shared folder** button at the top of the page. To invite more people to an existing shared folder, find it in the list and click its **Options** link.

Downloading the Dropbox Mobile App

Dropbox is a fan of making everything super simple and getting the mobile app for your tablet or smartphone is easier than ever. Just go to www.Dropbox.com/mobile. From here you have the option either text or email a link to your phone or device to receive the link that guides you through the installation process.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

That's Dropbox!

This Dropbox manual is meant to bring you up to speed with the features that are available in Dropbox. By the time you've reached this conclusion you'll know how Dropbox works, how to use it for file sharing and how to use it as a backup solution. Dropbox is, in stock form, extremely useful. Even better: it is surrounded by a large and rapidly growing community that is constantly churning out new ways to extend its functionality. So good luck and enjoy!

For a great video tutorial visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFb0NaeRmdg>

If you have any additional questions make sure to check out our other trainings and guides at the Nemsys Training Website or contact us at 419.243.3603

