



Pre-Project Training Module

X-Culture Pre-Project Training

Contents

PART I: INFORMATION ABOUT X-CULTURE.....	3
Pre-Project Readiness Test.....	3
X-Culture Overview	3
The Task.....	3
Performance Evaluation and Grading/Marking.....	3
Teams	4
Exclusion for Free-Riding.....	4
Additional Team Members.....	4
Alternative Team Arrangements	4
Workload Distribution and Team Member Roles.....	4
Team Leadership	5
Communication.....	5
Surveys	5
Plagiarism.....	5
Known Challenges and Best Practices	6
<i>Time-Zone Differences</i>	6
<i>Not being able to schedule a teleconference</i>	6
<i>Email overload</i>	6
<i>Conflicting copies of the document in email attachments</i>	6
<i>Calendar differences</i>	6
<i>Language proficiency differences</i>	7
<i>Cultural and Other Differences</i>	7
<i>Lack of leadership, difficulties with workload distribution and team coordination:</i>	7
<i>Lack of commitment from some team members, “Free-Riders”:</i>	7
<i>Poor quality of work from some team members:</i>	8
<i>Plagiarism</i>	8
<i>Failing to harness the power of team</i>	9
PART II: ONLINE COLLABORATION TOOLS.....	10
Google Translate	11
Doodle	11
Dropbox	12
MS Word “Track Changes” Function.....	17
Google Docs	19
Video Conferencing	24
Skype	24
Google+	25
Facebook Groups.....	25
Whatsapp.....	25
Viber	26
Basecamp.....	26

PART I: INFORMATION ABOUT X-CULTURE

Pre-Project Readiness Test

Please start with reviewing X-Culture materials here: www.x-culture.org/training.html

You will be tested on your readiness for the project. A few days before the project starts, you will receive an email with a link to the X-Culture Pre-Project Readiness Test. Only those who pass the test will be allowed to take part in X-Culture.

X-Culture Overview

The main purpose of the [X-Culture](#) project is to provide trainees with an opportunity to experience first-hand challenges and learn the best practices of international collaboration. Working in cross-cultural teams for several weeks, trainees develop a business proposal for an international company.

The project was launched in 2010, and about 500 trainees from seven countries participated in the first season. The number of participants has grown every semester, approaching 4,000 trainees from 100 universities in 40 countries on six continents in 2015.

Undergraduate and Master's students participate in the project, many of them with extensive prior international and business experience. Additionally, a sizable group of non-student participants (professionals seeking international business experience) takes part in the X-Culture project.

The task and the format of each team, as well as the collaboration tools used by the teams, are reminiscent of those used in the modern workplace, making the project a very realistic preview of work in corporate global virtual teams.

The project is also used as a research platform. We are trying to find out why some teams perform better than others and what can be done to improve individual and team performance when collaborating internationally. The results of the research will be shared with all participating trainees to further enhance learning and idea exchange.

Members of all teams that successfully complete the project receive [X-Culture Global Collaboration Certificates](#). Members of the best teams are invited to present their work at an [X-Culture Symposium](#).

The project requires a considerable investment of time and skills, so if students cannot fully commit to the project or do not have the necessary skills, they are usually offered an alternative project to complete that doesn't require global collaboration.

The Task

You can find a detailed description of the task in the [Challenge Instructions](#) file.

Briefly, the teams have two choices: (1) develop a market entry proposal for a company of the team's choice or (2) develop a solution to a business [challenge presented by X-Culture corporate partners](#).

Performance Evaluation and Grading/Marking

The project typically comprises 20-30 percent of the course grade. The exact weight of the project and specific team and individual evaluation criteria are set by each instructor and may vary from university to university.

The following individual and team performance indicators are taken into account:

1. Ability to meet deadlines: There are a number of deadlines that trainees must meet individually or as a team, including:
 - Pre-project Readiness Test (must pass to participate in the project);
 - Weekly deadlines and progress report surveys: decision made by the team, surveys completed by each team member individually;
 - Post-project survey (must be completed to receive a grade/mark for the project).
2. Quality of the team report: Your team report will be evaluated by at least four different instructors. The following aspects of the report will be evaluated:
 - Accuracy and thoroughness of the company analysis;
 - Feasibility and originality of the product;
 - Quality of the market opportunity analysis, including the feasibility of the success criteria
 - Accuracy and thoroughness of the market analysis;
 - Feasibility of the suggested market entry mode and staffing policies;
 - Feasibility and creativity of the marketing strategy;
 - Quality of the arguments in support of the recommendations provided in the report (clarity, strength and feasibility of the arguments – essentially how well you explain your decisions);
 - Proper use of external sources and references;
 - Clarity of presentation, formatting quality, readability, visual appeal, grammar.

The quality of the team report accounts for 40-60% of the project grade/mark.
3. Peer evaluations: Every week you will be evaluated by your teammates in terms of your:
 - Effort and commitment,

- Intellectual contribution,
- Work ethics,
- Help with coordinating team efforts,

Peer evaluations account for 20-30% of the project grade.

Please note that most of the performance indicators are *individual*. This means that even though you will be working in a team, your grade primarily depends on your personal performance. Specifically, it is up to you and only you whether or not you complete fully and on time the tasks at hand. These include the pre-project training test, reporting on progress with establishing contact with teammates, reporting your team progress in weekly surveys, and completing the post-project survey, as well as what peer evaluations you receive from your teammates.

The only project components where your grade may also be influenced by your team members' performance (or a lack of thereof) is the overall quality of the team report.

This means that (1) you cannot expect your team members to do the work for you – most of it you will have to do on your own - and (2) do not get upset if some of your team members are not performing well, as the lack of their effort and commitment will not have a major effect on your individual grade/mark.

Teams

Trainees are assigned to teams on a random basis. With so many trainees involved in the project, accommodating individual requests for team composition is simply impossible. On the first day of the project, you will receive the names of your team members in a personal email.

Once teams are formed, we will not be able to move you to a different team.

Exclusion for Free-Riding

Each week, X-Culture participants complete a progress report. One of the questions in the weekly report will ask if any of the team members are not actively participating. If the majority of the team votes to exclude a team member for a lack of effort (free-riding), the case will be reviewed. If it is confirmed that the trainee in question is indeed not actively participating in the project, the trainee will be excluded from the project.

It is likely that the excluded team members will be replaced with trainees from countries where the semester starts later and who will be joining X-Culture with a bit of a delay.

Additional Team Members

Your initial team size will be 5-6 students. More team members may be added to the team in the first weeks of the project. If after the first week or two you feel your team needs more team members, you can submit your request in the weekly progress report. It is likely (although not guaranteed) that we will be able to add more people to your team.

Alternative Team Arrangements

X-Culture is a voluntary project and only those who are truly interested in gaining international experience should participate in it. If X-Culture is part of a course you are taking at your university and you do not want to or cannot be part of a global virtual team for any reason (busy schedule, lack of language skills, personal objections), you can request that you:

- (1) Complete the project alone. That is, rather than work in a team, you can choose work on the same task alone. In this case, you will be using the same [instructions](#) (excluding the team parts), work on the same [challenges](#), answer the same questions, write the same report and submit it via TurnItIn as done so by the teams, and complete the same weekly progress reports. By working alone, you will avoid the hassles of teamwork and online communication, but you will write the entire report on your own. You will still have to complete the weekly progress update surveys, but they will contain no questions about your team (since you work alone), only the questions about the work you completed in a given week. **This must be approved by your instructor first.**
- (2) Work in a one-country team. It is uncommon, but sometimes students choose to work in a co-located team (all team members are students at the same university). This allows the teams to meet face-to-face. Usually, these teams are culturally homogeneous (all team members are the same nationality), though if international students are enrolled in the course and choose this option, the team can be culturally diverse even though all team members are located in the same city. We also often form geographically dispersed culturally homogeneous teams, as it is sometimes the case with All-American teams where all team members are in the U.S. but at different universities. These arrangements allow the team members to avoid the hassle that can arise from cultural differences (if all team members are the same nationality) and the need to communicate online (if all team members are at the same university), though the students lose an opportunity to work with people from other countries. **This must be approved by your instructor first.**

Workload Distribution and Team Member Roles

It is up to the team to decide on the roles and tasks for each team member.

Often team members distribute the workload by assigning each team member to write one or two report sections, then team members work largely independently on their sections, and those individual sections are simply merged into a final report at the end of the project. Our research shows that this approach often doesn't work well.

A much better approach is when team members collaborate together on each report section. They would all brainstorm each question, check each other's work and provide feedback. Teams like this also tend to distribute workload by function. Rather than each team member work on a particular report section, one team member may be responsible for coordination, another one for searching for information and literature, another one or two for putting it all together, and another one for final copy-editing and submitting the report.

Team Leadership

There will be no centrally assigned team leader of your team. Each member of your team will simply receive the names and email addresses of the people on the team, and it will be up to the team to decide how to distribute the workload and coordinate the efforts of the team members.

Our research shows that the teams that tend to perform better are the teams that either formally elect a team coordinator or have an informal team leader who does the coordination, sends out reminders, etc.

There is no bonus for being a team leader and no penalty for not being one.

Usually team members are flexible about who does what, so if you are interested in a particular role, chances are, your team will support that.

Most problems arise from the delays in making decisions. Teams that have a team coordinator tend to make faster decisions. It works even better if the team coordinator keeps track of workload distribution, sends reminders, and does other coordination work.

If no leader emerges in your team naturally in the first few days of the project, don't wait for someone else to tell you what to do. Be proactive and take initiative. Your team will appreciate it.

Please note, however, that many teams don't have a formal leader and still perform well. Having a team leader is not a requirement and your team may do well without one.

Communication

It is up to your team to decide how you will communicate with each other. Much like in the corporate environment, you will receive only the names and emails of your team members, so you will have to initiate contact via email. Once contact is established, you will have a host of free and effective communication tools available to you to discuss ideas and co-edit the team report. Some teams work using only emails and document attachments. Most teams also use Skype, Facebook and other chat and conferencing tools. Other popular tools are Google Docs and Google+, Dropbox, Viber, and Doodle.

A detailed explanation of how each of these tools works is provided at the end of this document.

You can use any or all of these tools, or you can use none of them.

Our research shows that teams that go beyond simple email communication and use more advanced tools such as Skype and Google Docs tend to perform better.

Please note that the tools listed above are the same or similar tools that are used by corporate employees and managers around the world. We encourage you to try at least some of them. Multi-user voice conversations and video conversations provide a much richer communication medium than email. Dropbox and Google Docs make co-editing a team report much easier than sending multiple email attachments back and forth. Scheduling a team meeting using Doodle is very easy, and Google Docs provide an excellent opportunity for an anonymous discussion if you need to discuss a sensitive issue and openness is important. Learning to use these tools will help you in your future career.

Surveys

During the project, you will be asked to complete weekly on-line progress surveys. The information will be used to evaluate individual and team performance, monitor progress, identify and correct problems, and improve the X-Culture project in the future. Your feedback and suggestions will be much appreciated!

To ensure that your instructor can identify you and you can receive credit for completing the survey, your name and team number will be recorded. Once the project is over, your personal information will be deleted, and only de-identified data will be used for further research.

The data collection has been approved by bodies governing the ethical conduct of research (i.e., the Research Ethics Committee of the Institutional Review Board at the university hosting the project, and equivalent committees in local universities, when required). Please note that if you object to the use of the data you provide during the project for research purposes, you can request that the data be completely deleted once the project is over.

For each survey, you will receive an email with your personalized link to the survey about four days before the deadline.

Plagiarism

*Every team report will be **automatically** scanned with sophisticated software to detect plagiarism.*

This means that your instructor and team members are guaranteed to know if you plagiarize.

Any student found guilty of plagiarism will be handled according to each university's academic code of conduct.

One misconception that students have is that rewriting something is not plagiarism because they are "putting it in their own words." If the source is not officially acknowledged, **it is plagiarism**. Copying and pasting actually accounts for only a small percentage of plagiarism. The majority of plagiarism is a result of text manipulation. Simply stated, plagiarism is using someone's work without giving the appropriate credit. As summarized in a NMC [document](#),

1. Copying and pasting text from on-line or printed sources without acknowledging the author is plagiarism.
2. Simply modifying text from any sources is plagiarism. For example, replacing a few select words using a *Thesaurus* does not constitute original work.
3. Using photographs, video, or audio without permission or acknowledgment is plagiarism.
4. Using another student's work and claiming it as your own, *even with permission*, is academically unethical and is treated as plagiarism. This is known as "collusion" and is bad. Very bad....
5. Acquiring work from commercial sources is academically unethical and is treated as plagiarism.
6. Translation from one language to another is **not** using your own words.
7. Using an essay that you wrote for another class/another purpose without getting permission from the teacher/professor of both the current class and the class for which the original work was used is SELF-PLAGIARISM and is basis for consequence or penalty. You may use your previous work as a basis for new research but include the original work in your bibliography.

It is acceptable to support your answer with references to and short extracts from the work of others, but you must acknowledge the work of others by citing the source. It is recommended that you use APA citation style. You can find a brief summary on how to use it [here](#) or a more extended presentation on [here \(focus on slides 15-23\)](#). Do your best with respect to the reference style, but don't stress out too much about following it precisely – minor deviations from the APA citation style are acceptable.

Known Challenges and Best Practices

Time-Zone Differences make communication in global virtual teams very slow. If you are in the U.S. and you send an email to your team member in Japan, the person is likely sleeping and will not see your message until your tomorrow. When the reply is sent, you will likely be sleeping, so you will not see the reply until two days later even if each team member replies once the message is read. So the team members are rarely able to exchange more than 2-3 messages per week.

It works best if teams have occasional real-time conversations via Skype, Facebook, or Google+. Even if not all team members can join the teleconference, such an approach speeds things up.

Not being able to schedule a teleconference: It may be a real hassle for global virtual teams to find a time that works for all team members for a teleconference, or to vote on an issue. Sending emails back and forth takes time and often leads to much confusion.

It works best when the team uses Doodle.com to find a time that works for everybody or to get everyone's vote on an issue.

Email overload: Often, when teams rely on email-only communication, they end up with dozens of emails that are difficult to follow and are full of redundancies and conflicting information.

It works best if the team creates a Facebook, Skype, or Google+ group or a Google Docs discussion board. This way, all correspondence is permanently saved and it's easy to review the entire conversation.

Conflicting copies of the document in email attachments: when teams rely on email attachments to co-develop the team report, it may be hard to track which attachment is the latest version of the file. Somebody always makes edits in an older version of the file and the team ends up with conflicting copies of the document. Merging those files may be a real challenge.

It works best if the team uses Dropbox or Google Docs to co-develop documents. This way, there is only one copy of the document stored in the cloud and everyone is working with exactly the same single copy of the file.

Calendar differences: Members of global virtual teams come from countries that have different holidays and academic calendars. Your business day may be your team member's holiday. This often disrupts teamwork flow and leads to unexpected delays.

It works best if you find out in advance when each team member will be unavailable and plan your workflow accordingly.

Language proficiency differences: Your team will likely choose English as the working language. For most team members, however, English will not be their first language. This may lead to communication difficulties. Moreover, those who are not fluent in English tend to do a poor job if asked to write a complete report section.

It works best if the team members who are not fluent in English are assigned tasks that do not require them to produce finished written pieces. For example, they can be assigned to search for information and literature, perform coordination tasks, submit the reports, and possibly write initial drafts of some report sections. Team members who are more fluent in English, in turn, should be assigned to do more writing and possibly final copy editing of the report.

Cultural and Other Differences: Your team members will differ in many other ways. You all will be coming from different cultural backgrounds, and your values, attitudes, traditions, working and communication styles will be different. You will also be taught and evaluated by different instructors, so you will likely have different levels of skills and a different understanding of the task.

It works best if you try to turn those differences into opportunities. You come from different backgrounds, have different knowledge and have different ideas. It is like you have access to different libraries. Brainstorming tends to be particularly effective and more creative ideas are generated when team members are different. So rather than assigning different report sections to different members and letting them work independently, communicate frequently, use brainstorming and discussions whenever possible. Don't dismiss the ideas of others just because they are different from yours. Learn from each other. The more different ideas you have on the table, the more likely you are to have a solution that is the most creative and effective.

Lack of leadership, difficulties with workload distribution and team coordination:

With no formally appointed team leader, and no prior experience together, some teams experience challenges due to a lack of leadership. Everyone is waiting for someone else to tell them what needs to be done and how. The time is running out; the team is not making any progress. Frustration builds and team members start blaming each other for the problems.

There are a number of reasons your team members may be reluctant to take initiative. For most of them, this is the first time they have worked in a virtual team and the first time they have worked with foreigners. For most of them, English is a foreign language, and they may have difficulties communicating or are just shy to start a conversation. Most of them don't have prior leadership experience. Some team members come from cultures where modesty is valued, and they may be worried that if they try to assume a leadership role they will be perceived as too aggressive or inconsiderate.

It works best if you personally take initiative. Don't be afraid to make the first step. If you see that something is not done right, just send your team members your vision for how things should be done. If nobody knows what needs to be done, just send your suggestions for who should do what. Don't be pushy, just say "I see we have a problem here, why don't we do the following..." Your teammates are likely as lost as you are and they will appreciate that someone is finally taking a leading role. It's better to try and fail than to never try. If someone else is trying to manage your team, be supportive.

Lack of commitment from some team members, "Free-Riders":

In any team, at least some team members have a busy work schedule, family obligations, or get sick. As a result, some team members don't actively participate in the project. Some may send an email or two first and then disappear; some never send any messages. This is called "social loafing" or "free-riding." It is a common problem in teams in general, and especially in global virtual teams where team members have not met each other in person and have not developed the close social obligations (friendship) that tend to improve participation in traditional collocated teams.

Studies report that up to 30% of the members in corporate global virtual teams tend to be free-riders, that is, they do some work but do not meet expectations of their team.

Our data shows that in X-Culture, on average, there is 1 team member per team whose participation rate is below expectations (does something, but less than expected by the team) and about 3% of all trainees (one per 10 teams or so) don't participate at all and have to be excluded from the project.

In most cases, the "missing" team members turn up toward the end of the project. After all, they need to get a grade for their course. That creates even more problems as most of the work is done by then, and the team no longer needs the help of the "missing" team member.

It works best if you do the following:

- First of all, try to foster close social ties among your team members. Studies shows that spending only a few minutes on asking team members about their interests, hobbies, studies, work experience, and interesting facts from their lives helps a lot and leads to noticeable improvement in team commitment.
- Also, right at the start of the project, discuss what each team member expected to do and what happens if they don't. Better yet, develop a Team Charter that clearly states the roles and task of each team member and what the team will do if a team member doesn't do his/her share or work.
- Keep sending emails to the "missing" team members every few days even if you never hear from them.
- Every week you will be asked who on your team is not actively participating in the project. Make sure to provide the names of the "missing" students. The information will be used to identify problems and help. In cases when nothing helps and the "missing" team member doesn't participate, the person will be excluded from X-Culture.
- Don't wait too long. If after several days you don't hear from a trainee or two, start working on the project with the trainees who replied to your emails. Keep sending updates to the "missing" students, but don't wait too long for them. Just do what you can with the available resources.
- If, despite your best efforts to get in touch with the student, you never hear from him or her or his or her input remains very limited, give low peer evaluations to the "missing" student, and his or her poor performance will be reflected in his or her course grade.

Poor quality of work from some team members:

X-Culture students come from all around the world. Just like in corporate global virtual teams, X-Culture team members vary in terms of their skills and experiences: some have excellent skills and work ethics, others don't. For most of your team members English is not their first language. Some have received better training than others.

It is very likely that just like in real business teams, some of your team members will not do a good job. At least one of your team members will prepare a report section that will be so weak that your team will have to redo it if you want to win the completion. It is possible that a team member may not complete his/her work at all. For example, a team member may get sick right before the final deadline, or simply not complete the work for no reason. This happens in all kinds of teams, including business teams at top firms.

Worst of all, you will likely learn how poor is the work of some of your team members only a few days before the final deadline when you finally see (or not see) their work.

It works best if you do the following:

- Don't wait till the last day and just hope it will be fine. Check the work of your team members regularly.
- Use Dropbox or Google Docs to store all your team's work from day one. This way, you can always see everybody's work progress and intervene if somebody is underperforming.
- It is also a good idea to assign two students to each task. This will not only stimulate idea exchange and improve the quality of the work, but will also provide a backup if one of the team members doesn't do his/her work.
- Some teams also assign one team member to be a back-up. His/her job is to just stand-by and wait until something goes wrong. When it does (and something will go wrong), this will be the team member who will pick up the slack.

Plagiarism

It is common that when the report draft (Milestone 9) is submitted to TurnItIn.com, the team discovers that work of one or more team members contains plagiarism. This often happens in corporate virtual global teams, too. In some countries attitudes towards copyright and intellectual property are rather relaxed, and some people just don't know or don't care that plagiarism is serious problem. Additionally, some students' English is poor and they feel it's better to copy and paste somebody else's work than to do their own writing.

The problem is that it is often too late when you learn that part of your team report was plagiarized and your team simply has no time to redo it.

It works best if you do the following:

- Discuss your team policies about plagiarism early on so that every team member knows plagiarism will be caught by TurnItIn and will not be tolerated.
- Check work of your team members regularly to detect the problem early on.
- Submit your report draft (Milestone 9) early: you can submit your work to TurnItIn at any time, including several weeks before the deadline. However, you can submit your work and test it for plagiarism only once.

- If there are team members whose English is very poor, it may be a good idea not to assign them to do any writing, and instead task them with collecting information or helping with coordination.

Failing to harness the power of team

The value of teamwork is in the exchange of ideas, discussions, brainstorming, checking each other's work, and correcting mistakes. You will be working with people from around the world – don't waste that opportunity to interact and put your minds together. One of the biggest mistakes a team can make is to divide the questions among the team members so that each team member answers one or two questions, then the answers are just put together, and the report is submitted without team members reading each other's work.

Experience shows that the best reports are produced when teams rely on collective wisdom. One of the more successful strategies is described below. You can use a different strategy; this one is just an example of what has been shown to work.

1. Once the client organization is selected, each team member generates ideas for answering each question. It can be done in a teleconference using Skype, or on a Facebook Groups discussion board, or using a Google Docs file where all questions are listed in a text document and everyone can write some thoughts and comment on each other's input. The discussion can be open and go on for several days.
2. Only after all questions have been brainstormed and initial ideas have been gathered, the team divides the tasks among the team members.
3. It works best if the team appoints one of the team members as a coordinator who regularly checks work of others and send reminders when needed and one (usually a native English speaker) who does final copy editing.
4. Each team member's work is stored in Dropbox or Google Docs and everybody is required to regularly read work of everybody else and provide feedback.
5. Once the final draft of the team report is put together, every team member reads the entire report, makes corrections and adds comments and suggestions for further improvement. It works best if a single copy of the document in Dropbox is co-edited by the entire team using MS Word's Track Changes or Google Docs (see instructions at the end of this document for how to use these tools). This way, all suggested revisions are visible in one document.

This is only a suggestion for how your team may organize its work process. You may have a better way of doing things, or a different approach may be more suitable for your team.

PART II: ONLINE COLLABORATION TOOLS

This section provides a detailed description of how to use various on-line collaboration tools as well as links to short 1-3 minute videos that provide additional real-time, on-screen guidelines. Here is a brief break-down of which tools are optimal for various tasks:

Task	Optimal On-line Tool (Detailed Instructions Provided Further Below)
Translate text to and from English	Google Translate, http://translate.google.com/
Open discussion, idea sharing (names of authors of the comments displayed)	Facebook Groups Skype conference call , using text-only, or text and voice communication, or text and voice and video, can remain active for the entire group for as long as needed, even weeks. All written comments will be stored for anyone in the group to review. Google Plus, "hangout" – equivalent to Skype's conference call, but supports up to ten-person video conference.
Anonymous discussion (names not displayed, when teams need to discuss a sensitive matter and need to be able to speak freely)	Google Docs , a co-edited file, works best if Google Docs Spreadsheets are used. Column A provides original comments, Columns B (C and so on) show responses to the comment.
Voice only or Voice and Video Conference	Skype , limit 2 users with video, up to 10 with audio, up to 10 with video for upgraded (for money) accounts. Google+ Hangout , limit 10 with video and audio. Facebook Video Chat , limit 2 users with video.
Anonymous or open voting	Google Docs Forms
Scheduling a meeting	Doodle
Document co-editing	Dropbox , works best if you prefer to work with "real" MS Office documents and have multiple documents that you collectively write/edit. Google Docs , works best if several people need to be editing the file simultaneously; often used in conjunction with a video conference on Skype or Google +. MS Word "Track Changes" function for tracking what changes have been made and who changed what.
General project management, one place for all project files and discussions	Basecamp allows you to create a shared project, co-edit files, store all files in one shared folder in the cloud, keep track of all conversations, also copies all comments via email, so you can see them in real time in your email, or review later on the project page (free 60-day trial, exactly the duration of X-Culture, \$20 per month if you want to continue using for your other projects)
Always-on chat and idea sharing room	Facebook Groups Viber works with computers, phones, tables, and other mobile devices. It allows for creating groups (for example, your team members) and exchanging texts, files, pictures, or any other digital material.

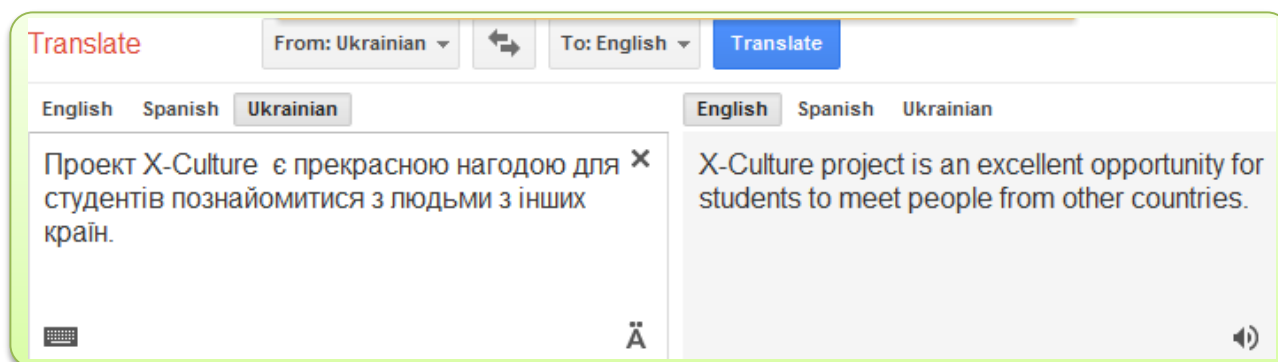
Please note, Facebook, Google, and Twitter do NOT work in some countries (China, Iran). If you have team members from those countries, we recommend use Viber or Basecamp instead.

Below are detailed instructions for how to use each tool. Remember, these are just suggestions. You may use none of these tools, or you may use other tools that work better for your team (for example Twitter for instant sharing of ideas, Microsoft Office SharePoint, and others).

Google Translate

Video instructions: www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdSC1Z1Kzs

Google Translate allows instant translation of written text among dozens of languages. While translation is often not perfect, it usually conveys the message very well. It is a web-based application, and translation is done directly in your web browser. Simply visit www.translate.google.com, select the languages you want to translate the text from/to and click on “Translate”.

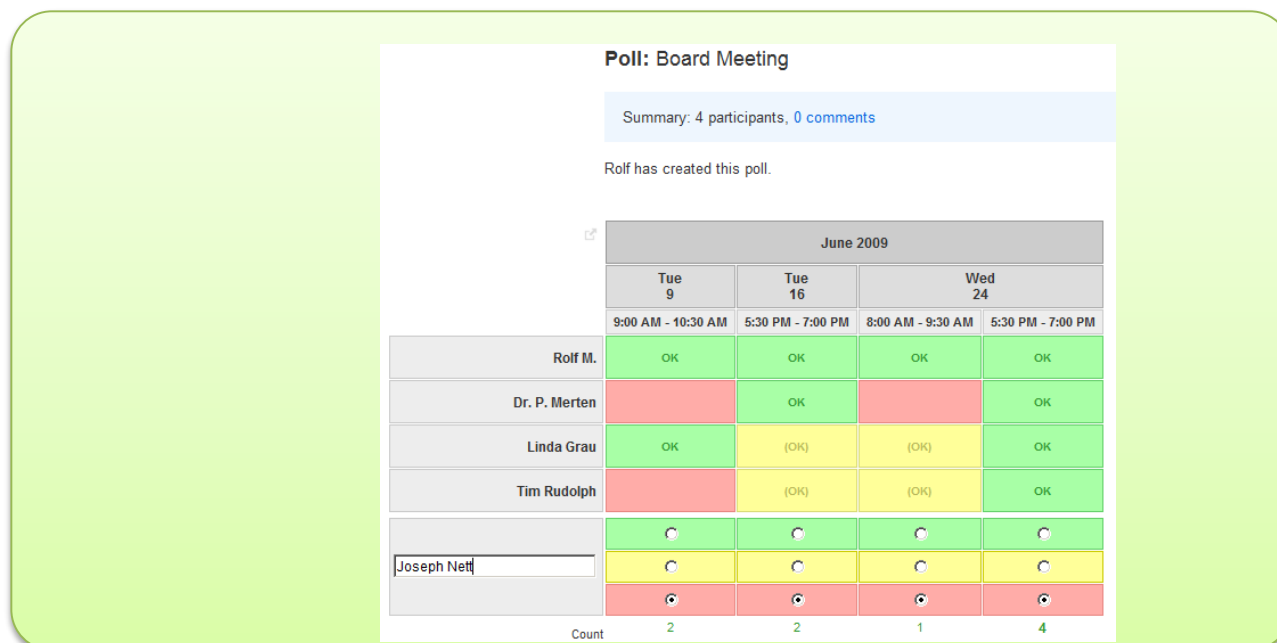


You can also listen to the translated text by clicking on the  button.

Doodle

Video instructions: www.youtube.com/watch?v=UK28QKNSj58

Trainees on your team will be on different continents and finding a time for a teleconference that works for all parties may not be an easy task. Doodle is a simple tool for scheduling meetings. Simply go to www.doodle.com, click on “Schedule an event”, provide event description, list possible dates for the meeting, and send out invitations to your team members to indicate which of the proposed meeting times work for them. After everyone responds, it is easy to see what time works for everyone for the meeting.



Dropbox

Video instructions:

What is Dropbox: www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVKSfBG1jPo

A detailed step-by-step tutorial: www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJJgAKPEPPo

“Dropbox” is the name of software that offers a convenient way to share files across different computers and users. Dropbox is a [file hosting service](#) that creates a folder on your computer that looks and operates just like any other document folder on your hard-drive. To copy files into or from the folder, you simply drag and drop them with your mouse as you would with any other folder. The difference is that the files are actually stored “in the cloud” on a remote server, and you can access them from any internet-enabled device, such as your desktop, laptop, iPad, or iPhone.

You can use Dropbox to access your files from multiple computers or to share the documents in the folder with other people. This way, many people can be developing or editing the same MS Word or Excel file as if they were using the same computer. Every time you make a change in a file or save a new file to the folder, the latest version becomes automatically available to all people who have access to the folder. And unlike Google Docs that create “not real” MS Office documents, Dropbox allows you to work on “real” MS Office files or any other type of files.

Dropbox works best when each team member is using his/her personal computer or mobile device and can install the software onto it. If the team members are relying on shared computers in labs or libraries, Google Docs may be a better way to co-edit documents as Google Docs does not require installation of the software onto the computer. However, Dropbox can also be used without installing the software onto the computer. You can access Dropbox document folders in a web browser, open then in MS Word, Excel or other programs, edit, save and upload back to Dropbox to make them available to your teammates.

Before Dropbox, people would email files to their own email account so they could access them from another computer or send files as email attachments to people they work with. That method would create multiple copies of the file which often creates confusion. Dropbox takes care of that by essentially creating an extension of your hard drive that you, or your colleagues, can access from anywhere.

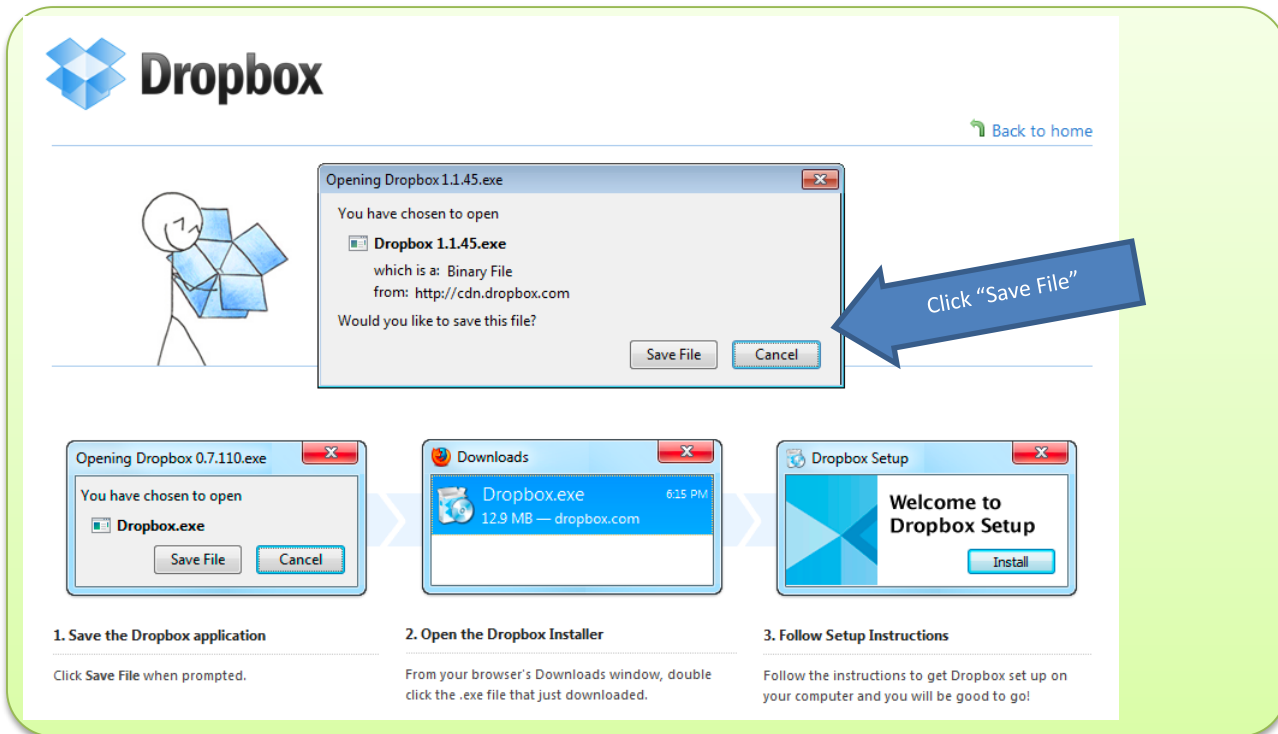
Dropbox gives you 2GB of storage space for free to start, and there is a small fee if you need more.

Getting Dropbox

To get Dropbox, you would need to download a small program. Usually you would get an invitation from a colleague who already uses Dropbox, and if that’s the case, simply follow the link in the email invitation. Or, you can get it directly from the Dropbox website (www.dropbox.com).



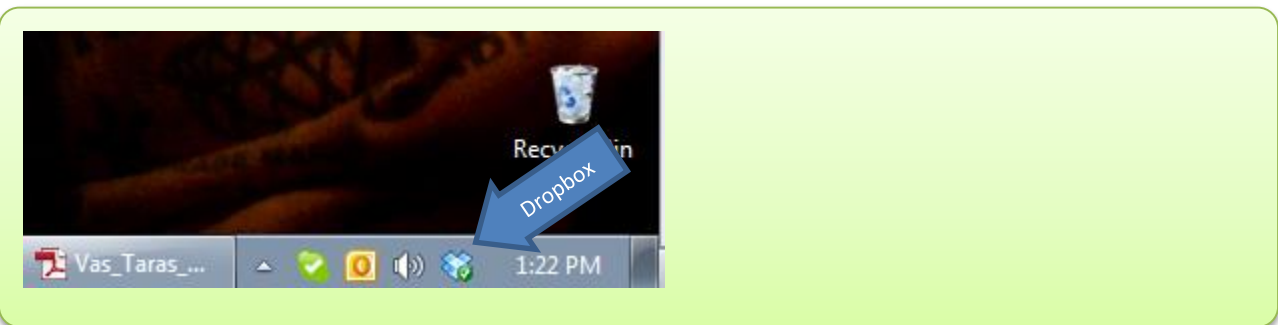
Once you click on the link, you will be asked if you want to save the file that installs the program. Click on “Save File.”



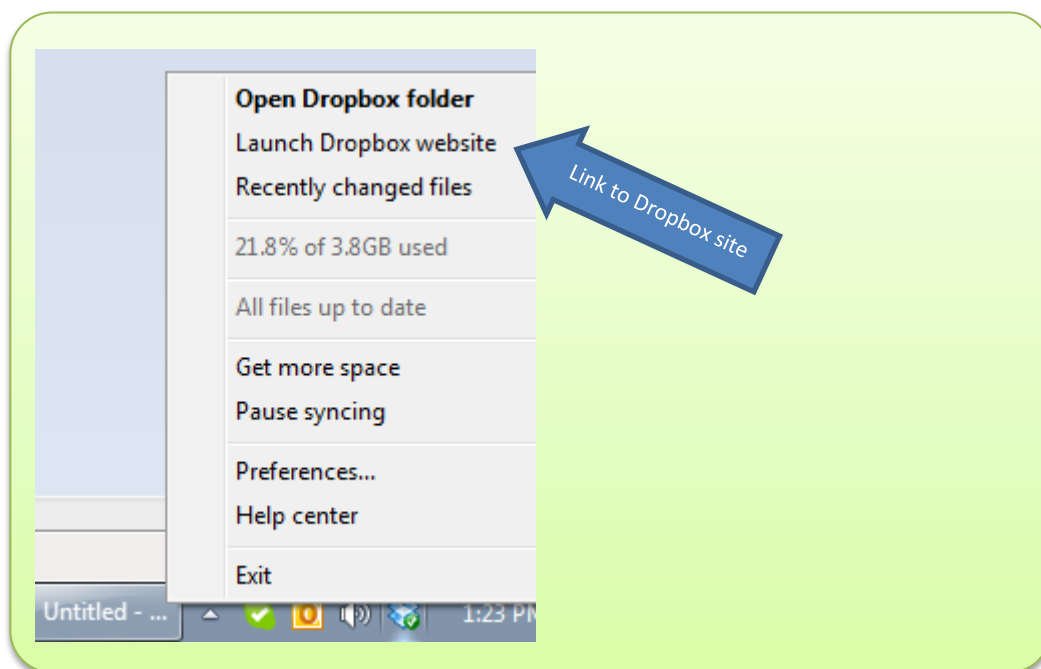
Once the file is saved (by default on your Desktop) simply click on it and follow the installation steps. Besides choosing a User Name and Password, the only choice you will have to make in the process is where the Dropbox folder will be located. Most people choose right on the Desktop or in My Documents.



Once the program is installed, you will see the Dropbox folder on your Desktop (or in the other location you've chosen). From this point on, it will look and behave just like a regular folder. You can also access the folder by clicking on the icon in the lower right corner of your screen.

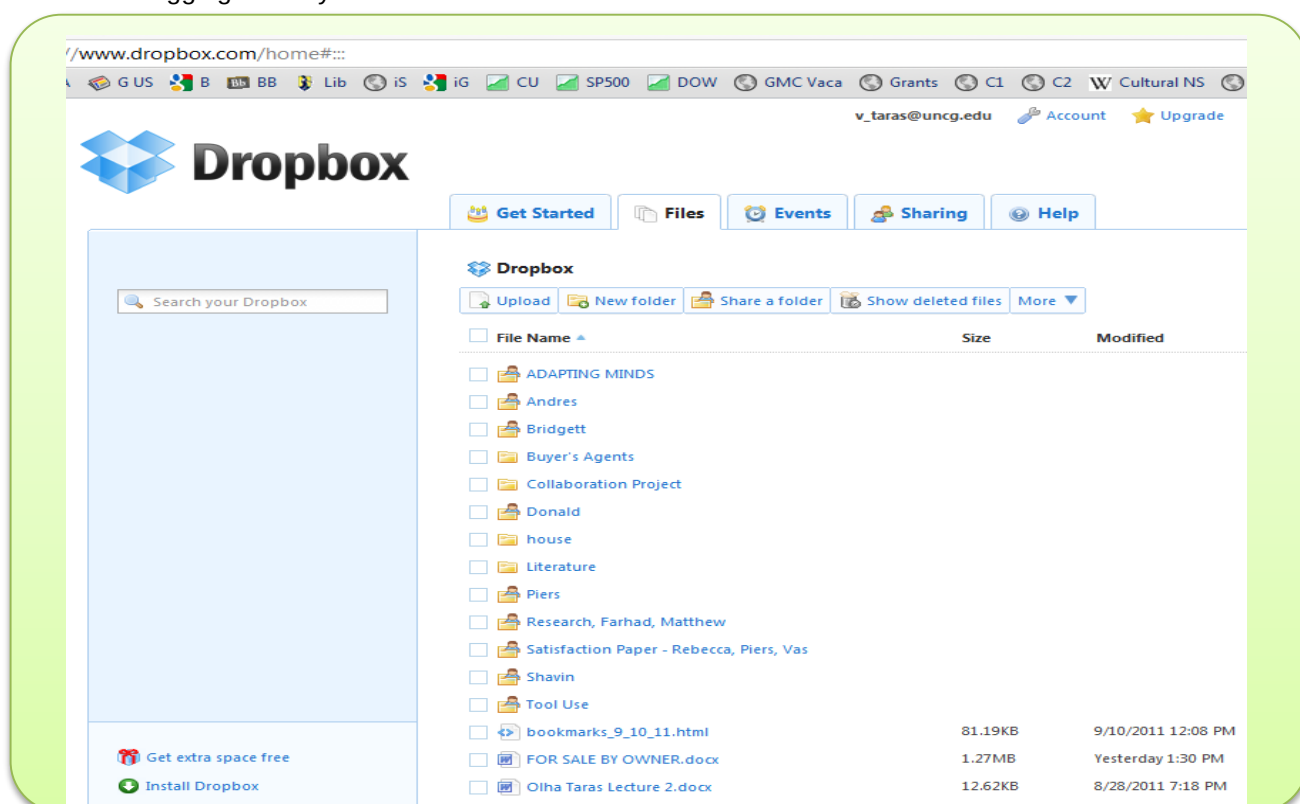


Right-clicking on the icon will give you a few extra options, including changing your preferences or going directly to the Dropbox page.



If you want to access your files from another device (computer, iPad), install the program on that device (follow the steps described above) and log in using your User Name and Password. From that point on, once the computer or mobile device is on, Dropbox will be up and running. All files will be updated automatically, and you will always see the latest files saved to Dropbox.

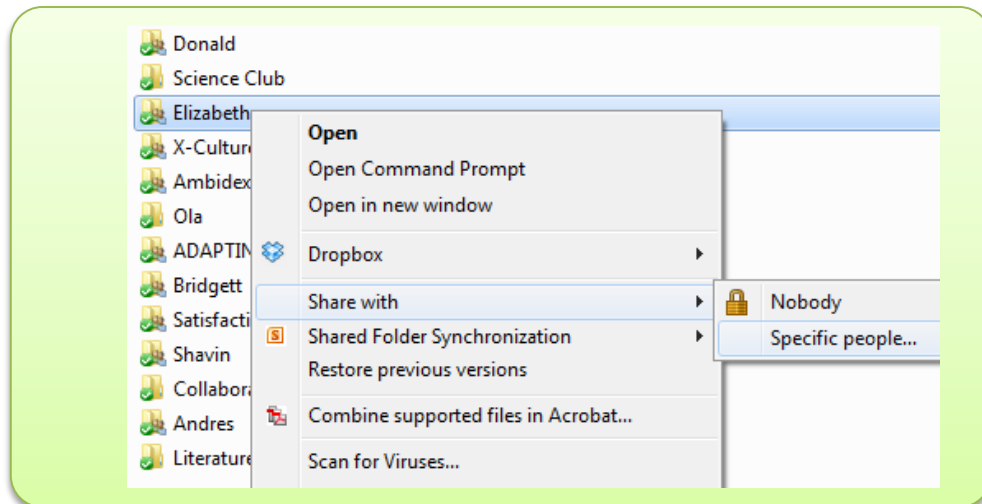
If you are using a computer that does not have Dropbox installed, you can access your document by simply going to the Dropbox site and logging in into your account.



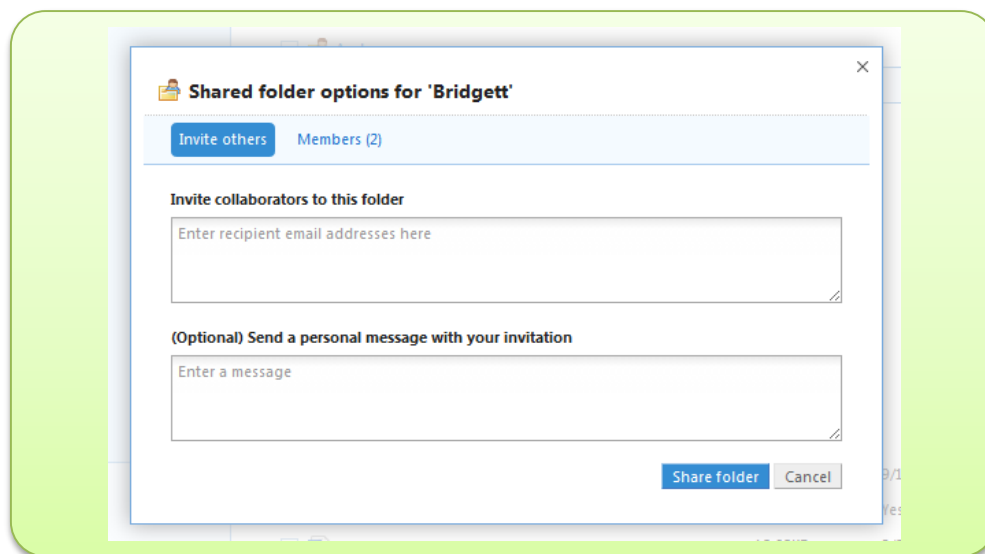
You can see all your files, download them and upload new files, etc.

Sharing a Folder

If you want to share a folder in your Dropbox with your colleagues, right-click on the folder and select “Share with.” You will be taken to an options window where you can specify who you would like to share the folder with.



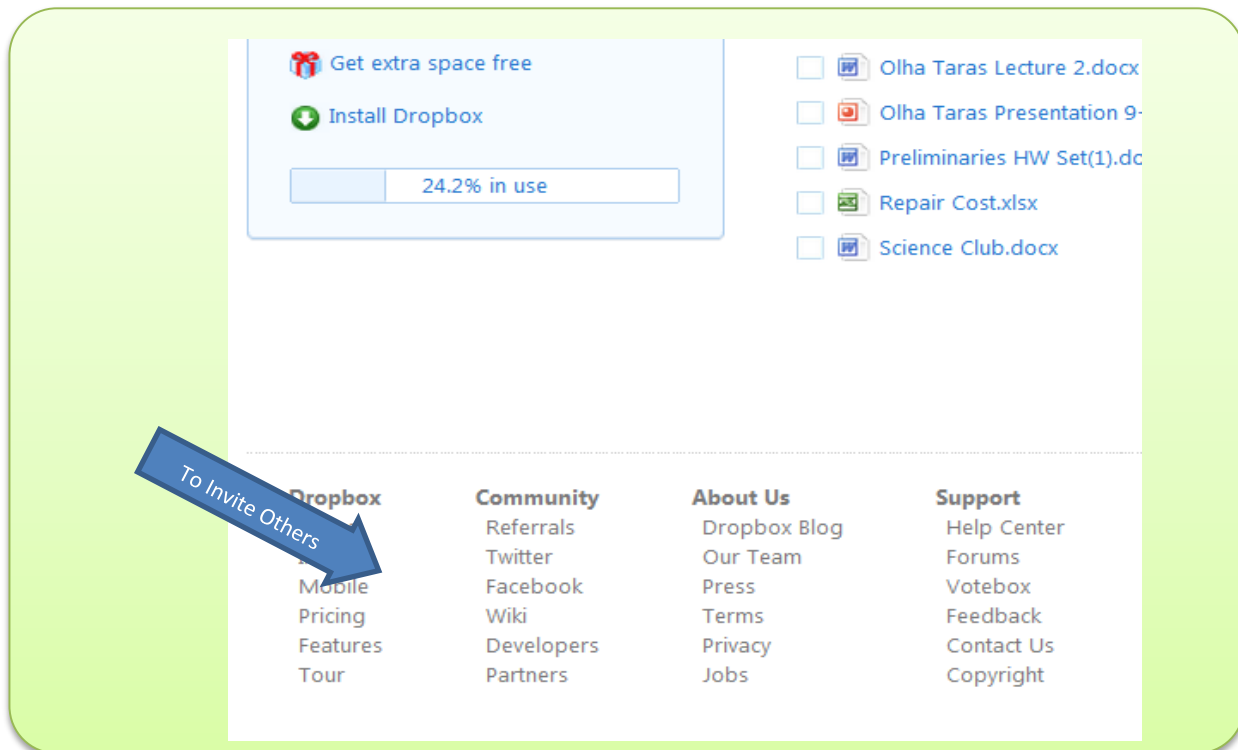
Type in the email(s) of the person(s) you want to invite to share the folder. Once that person accepts your invitation (clicks on the link sent to him/her via email), all of you will have access to the file in the folder. No uninvited people, however, will have access to your files.



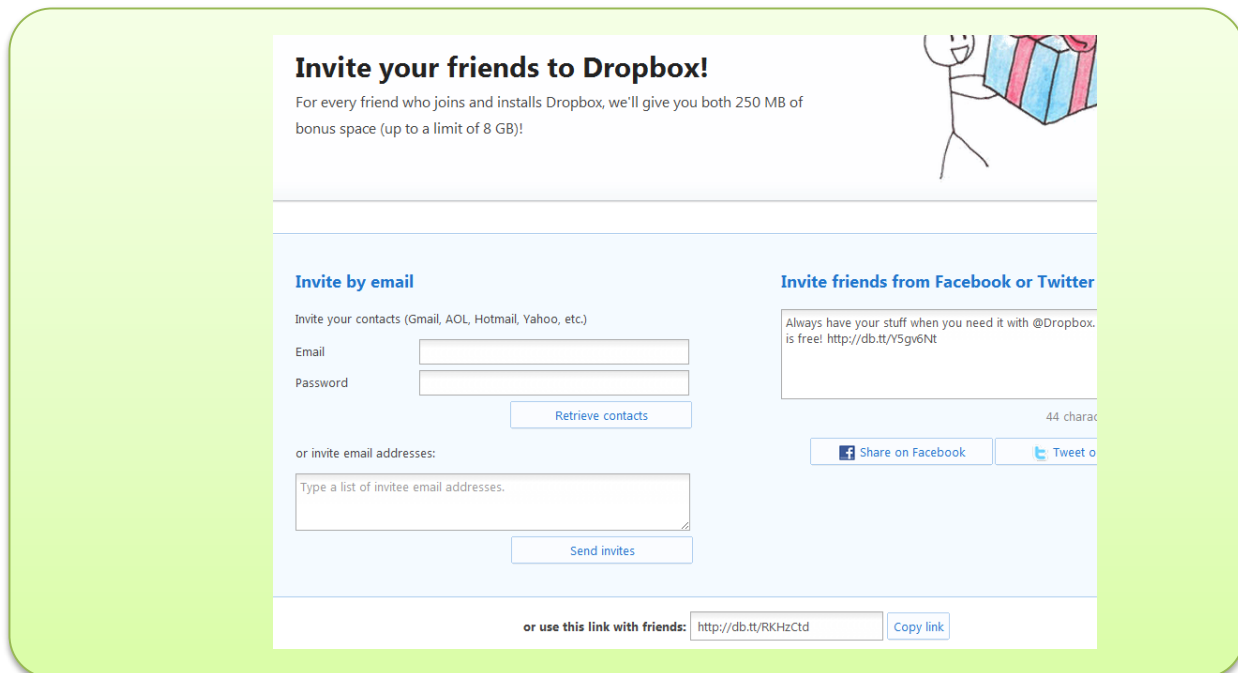
To invite others to use Dropbox

If your partner is not using Dropbox, you can send an invitation. Every successful invite gives you an extra 250 MB of storage space, so it's better to use an invitation than to go directly to the Dropbox website to get the program. Go to the Dropbox page and log on to your account.

At the bottom of the page, click on “Referrals” under the “Community” column.



Then, simply type in email addresses or invite your Facebook or Twitter friends.



MS Word “Track Changes” Function

Video Tutorials

There are many video tutorials on the Web for how to install and use the MS Word “Track Changes” function. The following seem to offer the most effective instructions:

Instructions for MS Word 2007/2010: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uANGRpCEucg>

Instructions for older versions of MS Word: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vcOYPnuPms>

Additional guidelines can be found here: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word-help/track-changes-while-you-edit-HA001218690.aspx>

When multiple people co-edit a text file (e.g., team report), one of the biggest challenges is knowing what changes have been made by other co-authors. For example, you receive a document in an email attachment or open one from Dropbox, and the document looks different from what it was when you worked with it last time. But, what exactly changed, and who made those changes? “Track Changes” function in MS Word allows for tracking changes you are making, so your co-authors can see what revisions you made and accept or reject them (go back to the original version) one by one.

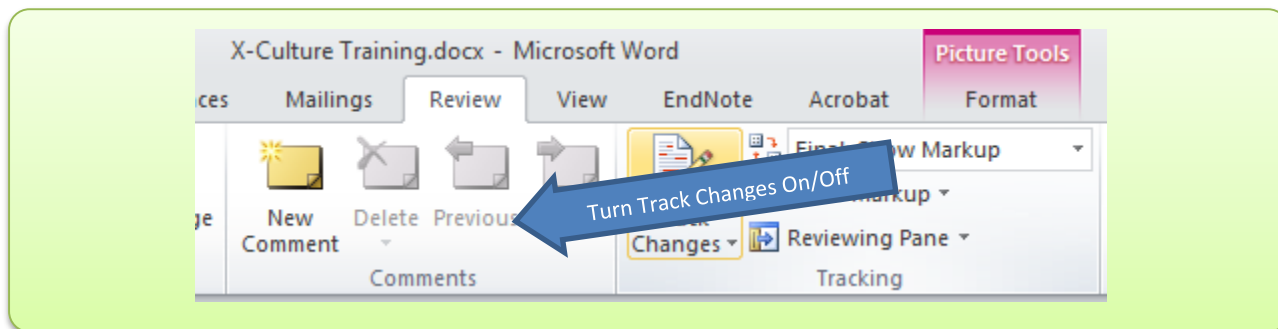
The best way to learn how the “Track Changes” function works is to switch it on as described below and play with it for a few minutes. It’s really easy once you try it.

Note: The instructions provided here are for the 2007 version of MS Word. Earlier versions, such as MS Word 2003 also have the “Track Changes” function. Search through the file menu options to find it or use F1 Help function for directions.

Turning On/Off Change Tracking

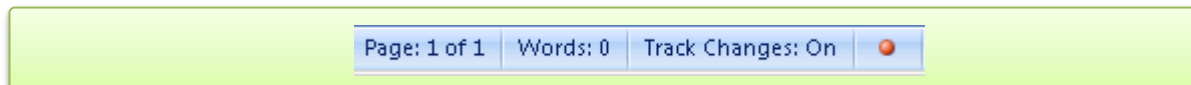
To turn on the function, follow the following steps:

1. Open the document that you want to revise.
2. On the *Review* tab, in the *Tracking* group, click the *Track Changes* image.
To add a track changes indicator to the status bar, right-click the status bar and click *Track Changes*. Click the *Track Changes* indicator on the status bar to turn track changes on or off.
3. Make the changes that you want by inserting, deleting, moving, or formatting text or graphics. You can also add comments.

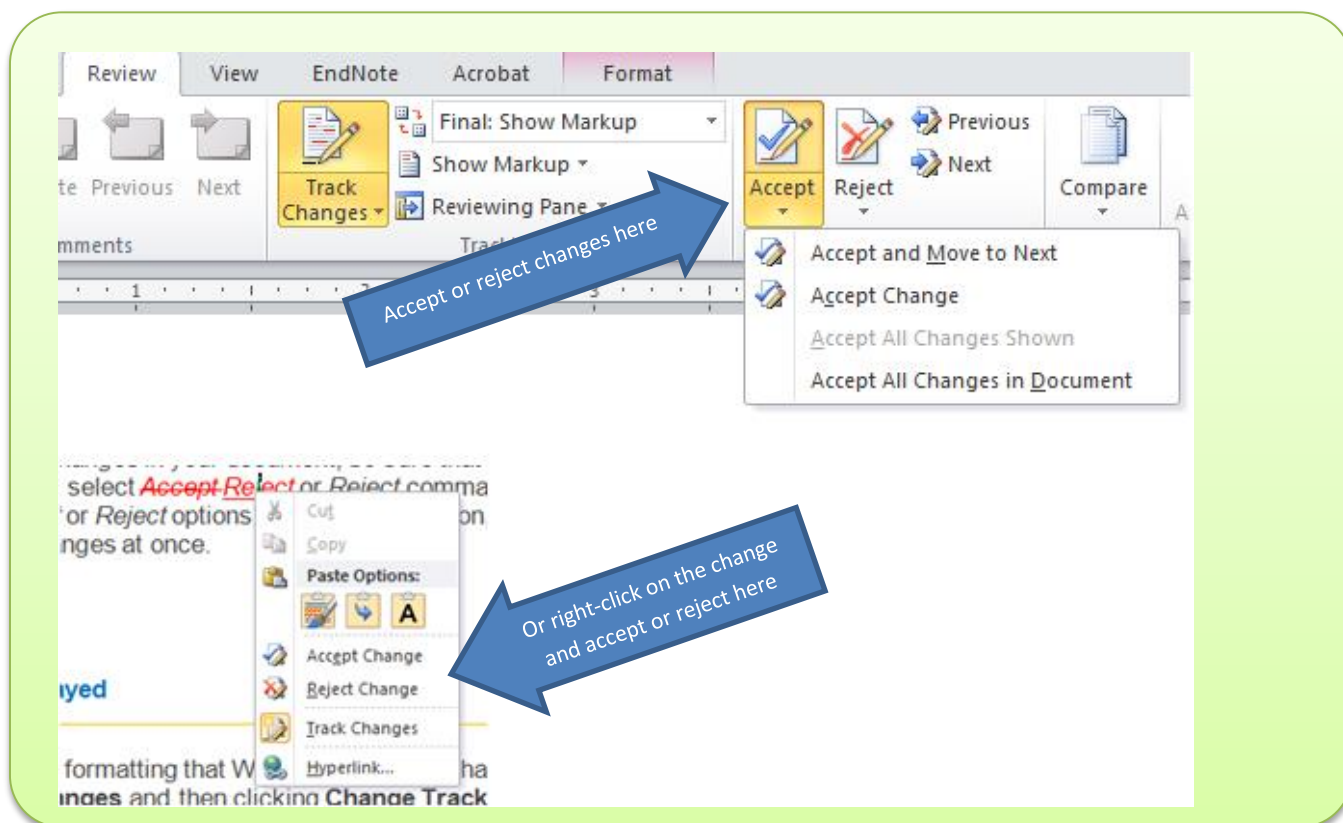


To turn off the function, simply click on the “Track Changes” icon again. If the icon is highlighted (looks yellow), the function is on, if it is not highlighted (looks grayish), it is off.

If you customized the status bar to include a track changes indicator, clicking *Track Changes* in the *Tracking* group will also turn off the indicator in the status bar.



Turning off change tracking does not eliminate/accept the tracked changes in your document. To ensure that there are no more tracked changes in your document, be sure that all changes are showing, then right-click on each change and select *Accept* or *Reject* commands for each change in the document. You can also click on the *Accept* or *Reject* options in the *Review* ribbon or select *Accept All* or *Reject All* if you want to deal with all changes at once.



You can change the color and other formatting that Word uses to mark changed text and graphics by clicking the arrow next to *Track Changes* and then clicking *Change Tracking Options*.

You can view all changes, including deletions, inline instead of inside balloons that appear in the margins of your document. To show changes inline, in the *Tracking* group, click *Balloons*, and then click "Show all revisions inline." When you click "Show all revisions inline," all of the revisions and comments in the document appear inline.

To prevent you from inadvertently distributing documents that contain tracked changes and comments, Word displays tracked changes and comments by default. *Final Showing Markup* is the default option in the *Display for Review* box.

Comment

A related function is "Comment." If you don't want to make any changes but would like to leave a comment on a particular part of the document, select the section of the document that you want to comment on (a word or a larger section) and click on "New Comment" in the *Review* tab to the left from the *Track Changes* button. A bubble will appear to the right of the text where you can leave a comment for your co-authors to see. Comments can later be revised or deleted.

Compare

"Compare" is another function that you may find useful if you haven't been using "Track Changes" and need to figure out what exactly is different in the new version of the document. Click on the "Compare" icon in the *Review* tab to the right of the *Track Changes* button and follow the instructions to select the two documents that you want to compare.

Google Docs

Video tutorial: <http://youtu.be/OBh8bMC7XEU>

Google Docs is a powerful, real-time collaboration and document co-editing tool. Multiple users can edit a document at the same time while seeing each other's changes instantaneously. In Google Docs, users can produce text documents, slide presentations, spreadsheets, drawings, and surveys. The formats used are compatible with Microsoft Office and Open Office, so you can switch between these programs as needed.

While Google Docs documents are not "real" MS Office documents, they have most of the document editing functions of the MS Office. If you still prefer to work with the "real" MS Office documents, Dropbox may be a better option for you, but Google Docs allows for simultaneous co-editing, which is a big advantage. If two users open a file in Dropbox at the same time, the program automatically creates multiple copies of the document and merging the two later on may be a hassle. In Google Docs, co-authors can literally co-edit the document at the same time, and you can see in real-time what changes your team members are making. Google Docs also tracks changes, so it is easy to see who made which changes.

One of the disadvantages of Google Docs is that the files are displayed in a web browser. That is, all interactions and files are contained in Google's Internet servers (the cloud) and are accessible from within a web browser window. If you don't have access to the Internet, you cannot access your file unless you downloaded a copy to your hard-drive earlier.

Creating, Editing, Uploading and Downloading Google Docs files

In order to use Google Docs, you will need to register for a Google account. If you already have one through Gmail, then you can use the same login to access Google Docs. If you do not have a Gmail account, you will have to sign up for one, so you can also use the Gmail and Calendar feature within Google. Otherwise, you can just sign up for a Google account with an email address of your choice and a password (this type of account does not provide the use of Gmail).

Note that while it's possible to view a document, spreadsheet or presentation without a Google Account (via an invitation), you'll need to create a Google Account to edit the document, spreadsheet or presentation and to continue accessing Google Docs.

If you don't have a Google account, go to www.google.com and click on "Create an Account Now."

Fill out the form that comes up next.

Google accounts

Create an Account

If you already have a Google Account, you can [sign in here](#).

Required information for Google account

Your current email address:
 e.g. myname@example.com. This will be used to sign-in to your account.

Choose a password: [Password strength:](#) **Strong**
 Minimum of 8 characters in length.

Re-enter password:

☒ Stay signed in

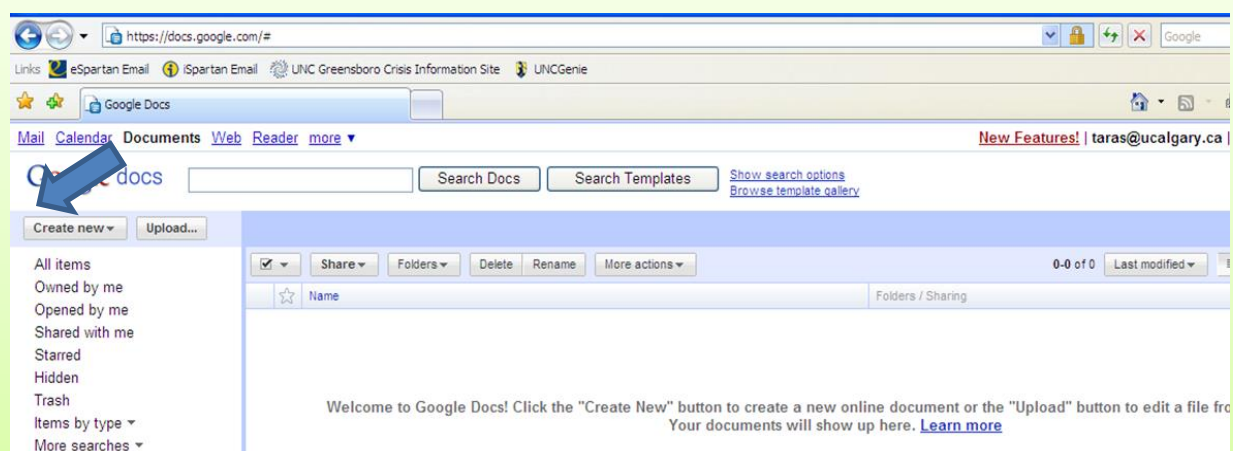
☒ Enable Web History [Learn More](#)

Default Homepage ☒ Set Google as my default homepage.
 Your default homepage in your browser is the first page that appears when you open your browser.

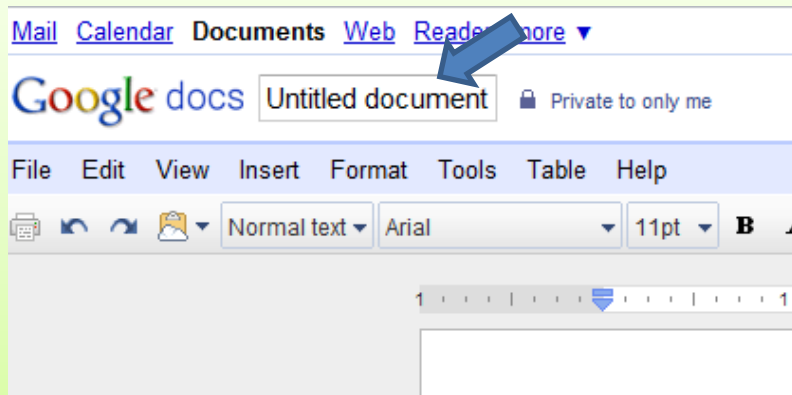
Once a Google account is created, go to your mailbox and open the message from Google. Click on the first link to verify your account.

Once you have created a Google account and are able to access Google Docs, you can begin creating or adding documents to your account:

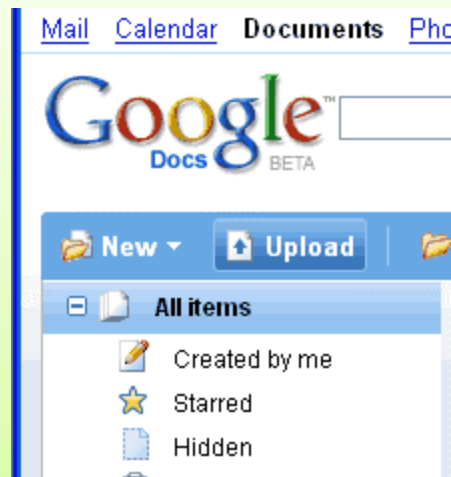
1. Click on *New* on the *Menu* bar and select which type of file you would like to create. For the purposes of this tutorial, we will be using the Document option.



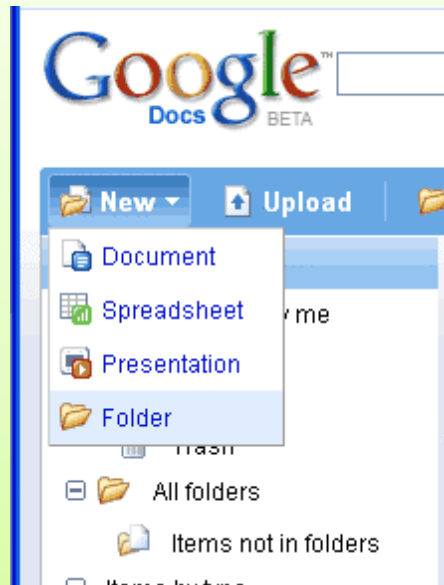
2. Google Docs will open a new window that will allow you to create a word processed document. Once the file is created, it will look like a regular MS Word or Excel file, and you can work with it as you normally would. Name the document by typing in the file name in the window on the top left.



3. To save your document, you just need to click on the *Save* button. You can also use the *Save* and *Close* buttons if you are finished working with the document.
4. You can also choose *File* on the *Menu* bar and then *Save*. In either case, it will save the file using the text at the top of the document as the file name.
5. In order to upload an existing document, you just need to click on the *Upload* button on the *Menu* bar. Then you will need to click on the *Browse* button and find the document that you would like to upload.



6. Editing files is very similar to how it is done in MS Office.
7. On your computer, you probably have some sort of organization to storing your documents. This usually involves folders and sub folders. In Google Docs, you have the same option for organizing your files. To create a new folder simply click on *New* on the *Menu* bar and choose *Folder*.

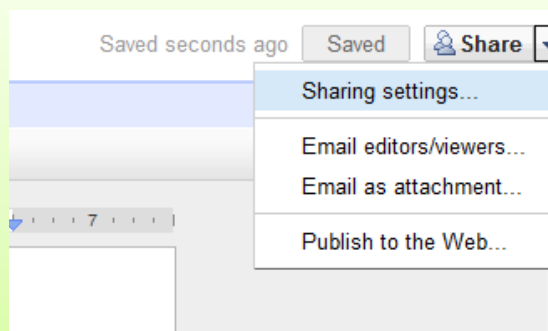


Sharing Google Docs

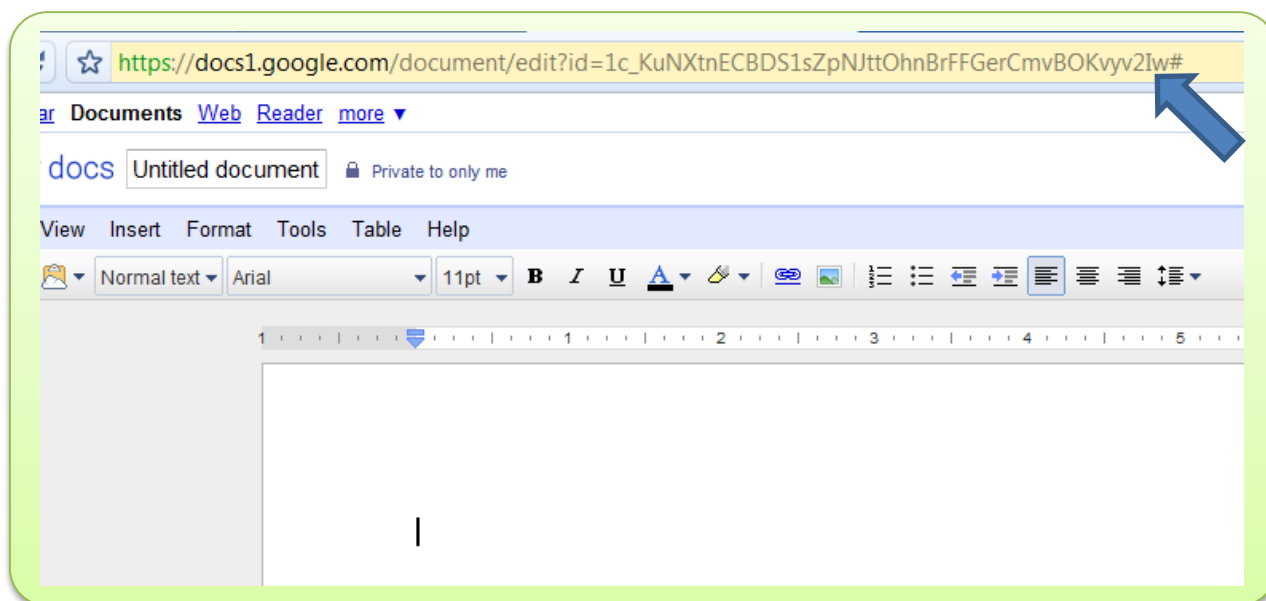
A wonderful feature of Google Docs is the ability to share your work with others. You have many options for ways to do this. You can give access to a document where the viewers are only able to read the document and not make any changes. You can also give access to a document where people can collaborate with you by making changes. You will be able to see the changes that each person has made to your document. In this lesson, you will learn how to share your document with others and how to publish the final version.

Note: In order to collaborate on a document, the person you share the document with must have a Google Account. Otherwise, they can only view the document.

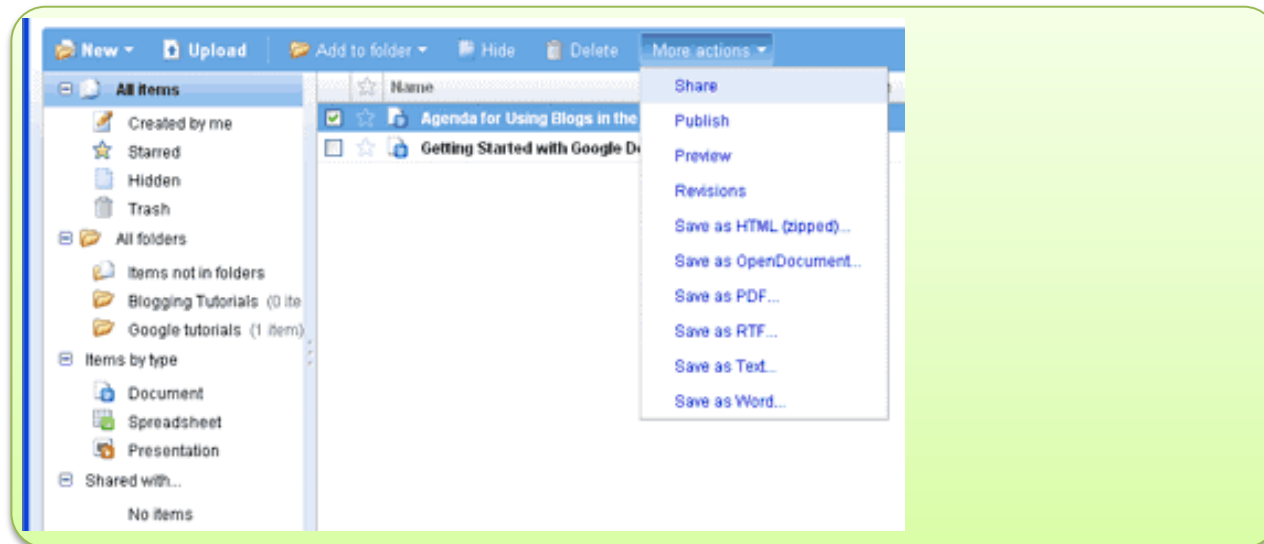
1. The easiest way to share Google Docs files is to set Sharing Settings so that the file can be edited by anyone with the link and then send the link to your team members.



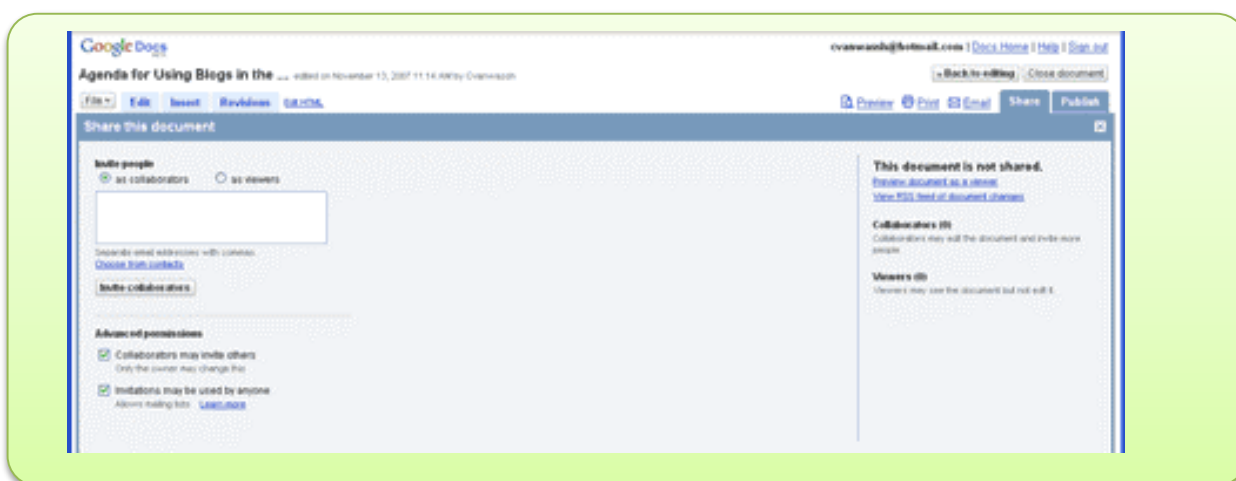
2. The link can be copied directly from the address bar in your web browser, or you can get it by clicking on the "Share" button.



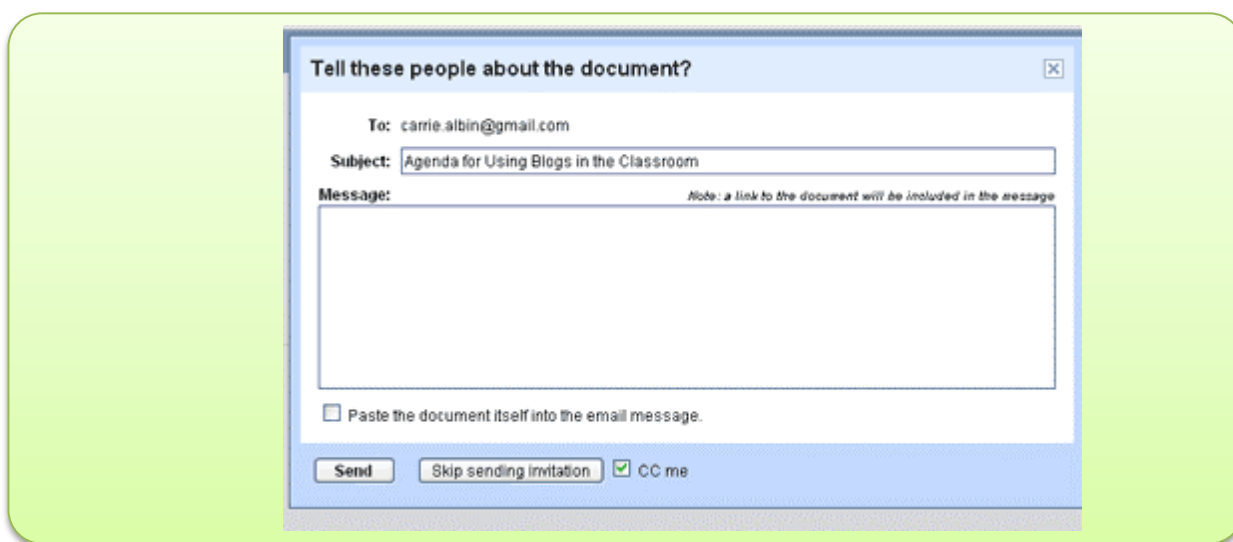
3. A more sophisticated way to share the file includes the following steps. Click on *All Items* in your left navigation menu to show all the items that you have in your Google Docs account. Select which one you would like to share with another person by clicking the checkbox in front of the document. Then click on the *More Actions* button on the *Menu* bar and select *Share*.



4. You have the option to invite others to be Collaborators or Viewers. Collaborators are able to view as well as edit any documents that you share using this option. Viewers are only able to view the document. They are not able to make any changes to the document. After selecting the Collaborator or Viewer option, you will need to type in the email addresses of the people with whom you would like to share the document. Separate addresses with a comma. Then click on the Invite Collaborators/Viewers button.
 Please note: If you'd like to allow Collaborators to add and delete other collaborators and/or viewers, select the checkbox next to "Collaborators may invite others" under *Advanced* permissions. Collaborators, once given this permission, can share the document by forwarding their invitation to others.
 To successfully add a mailing list, you must select the "Invitations may be used by others" checkbox (under *Advanced* permissions at the bottom of the screen). This allows all members of a group to access the document using this one invitation.



5. A window will pop up that will ask you to type in a message that will be emailed along with the invitation to access the document. Type in your message and click on the *Send* button. You have the option to CC yourself on the message by making sure the checkbox is selected next to “CC me.”



6. Anyone that receives the invitation can then click on the link within the message to begin viewing and/or editing the document. They will need to log in with their Google Account in order to edit if they are a collaborator.

Video Conferencing

Experience shows that the teams that have face-to-face interaction tend to perform better. Communication is much richer when you go beyond emails and actually talk to your teammates once in a while on the phone, or even better, use free video-conferencing options such as Skype, Google+ or Facebook Video Chat.

Skype

Skype is a popular voice and video conferencing program that allows you to place a call to other Skype users as well as call people on their telephone numbers. All you need is a computer with a microphone and speakers (video optional) or a mobile device such as an iPad or a smart phone.

The huge advantage of Skype is that it already has hundreds of millions of users, and it is likely your teammates already have accounts. You simply add their names to your address book, and as long as you are logged in, you will see when your team members go on-line and can call them when they are available.

Another big advantage of Skype is that it is “always on-line,” as long as your computer is on, your Skype account is active. Your teammates can see that you are available, and you can see which of your team members are also on-line. You can keep working on your stuff, but if you have a question or need to discuss something, you can simply call, talk and then continue working. Because Skype is free, some people never log out and effectively always remain connected. This is as if you are working in the same room.

One of the limitations of Skype is that it allows video conferencing only between two users at a time (you can see only two people), though it supports multiple-user audio conferences (only voice).

Skype-to-Skype calls (including video) are free, but there is a small fee to place a call to telephone numbers. For the purpose of the X-Culture project, you will likely be using Skype to talk to your teammates who have a computer and are also using Skype, thus you will be able to talk to your teammates (and see them if your computers have video cameras) for free.

To download Skype, go to www.Skype.com. The software is so simple to use that we don't provide further instructions here. Once you install the software, you will be able to use it in seconds.

If you need further instructions, there are many tutorials available on-line. The following links are recommended:

Text-only tutorial: http://www.educationworld.com/a_tech/techtutorial/techtutorial107.pdf

Video tutorial: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wqx2noZy7CU>

Google+

Google+ is a new platform that was introduced as recently as the summer of 2011. It is much more powerful than Skype and essentially combines Skype, Facebook, and Google Docs in one. The biggest advantage of Google+ over Skype is that Google+ allows video conferencing (or Hangouts as Google calls it) among up to ten people simultaneously. That is, you can talk and see ten people at the same time. It's like your entire team is at the table with you. You can even co-edit and share files in real time.

As long as you have a Google account (one that you created for emails or for Google Docs is all you need,) you are ready to use Google+. It is important to note that Google Hangouts no longer requires a Google+ account to use. As long as you have a basic Google account, you can have access to basic Hangouts features.

Like Skype, it is so extremely easy to use that we don't provide further instructions here. Once you login, you will be able to use it in seconds.

If you need further instructions, there are many tutorials available on-line. The following links are recommended:

How to video-conference in Google+

Video tutorial: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5kdr7N6nPg>

Text only: <http://www.wikihow.com/Use-Google%2B-Hangouts>

Since Google+ does much more than just video conferencing, here is a link to a list of tutorials that cover more Google+ features:

<http://freelancefolder.com/20-of-the-best-google-guides-and-tutorials-to-get-freelancers-up-and-running/>

Facebook Groups

Facebook recently added a video chat option, so you can now effectively do everything Skype offers. This option also has most of the features of Google+. It may not be as powerful as Google+, but with almost a billion users, it is very likely your team members already have Facebook accounts. So, finding them and communicating (messages, instant messaging, voice, and video) with Facebook may take only a few seconds.

You probably already have a Facebook account and know how to use Facebook for chatting and calling, but if you don't, here are links to on-line tutorials that provide very clear instructions:

Video and text: <http://blog.facebook.com/blog.php?post=10150223135777131>

Whatsapp

Whatsapp is a messaging app that works on iPhone, Android, Blackberry, Nokia, and Windows Phones. It uses the internet to send messages, which means those messages are free. However, it does use your data plan, so it may be best to use WiFi to send messages through Whatsapp whenever possible.

Here is short video that shows how Whatsapp works: <http://youtu.be/mhnFh1MGx4w>

This link gives instructions on how to add international contacts' numbers correctly:

<http://www.whatsapp.com/faq/en/general/21016748>

Here is a comparison of Viber and Whatsapp: <http://youtu.be/ioOwpkCYlqg>

Viber

Viber is very similar to Whatsapp, but has a bit more functionality. Viber is a free messaging and calling service that allows you to contact other Viber members (including internationally) for free. Viber works on almost any platform and device that is currently popular, from PC and Mac, to iOS and Android. It integrates right into your contact list and allows you to create groups to send messages and pictures, make phone calls, and video calls. The video calls are limited, like Skype, in that you can only video call with one other person at a time. You can download Viber directly at Viber.com. To get a better idea of how to download and use Viber here are links to two videos:

Viber for phones and tablets <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEqS5W-KfRw>

Viber for computers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAVE8djwnTQ>

Basecamp

Basecamp is a project management app available on PC, Mac, iPhone/iPad, Android, and through email.

This is a more serious platform for managing complex projects and is extremely popular in the business world. It is not free, but it gives you a 60-day free trial, which is enough to complete the X-Culture project.

Basecamp allows you to store all your project related files, messages and appointments in one shared space, so that anyone from your team could easily review all the materials and discussions. It is basically Dropbox, Google Docs, and Viber in one. By storing all the project materials in one central location you won't have multiple conflicting versions of the same file and nobody on your team will "miss" your email with the attachment. Everything is on the project page – ready for review any time.

Basecamp allows you to set meetings and deadlines, see what work needs to be done (and delegate that work if need be), and keep track of assignments.

Here is a short video on how Basecamp works: <http://youtu.be/B6refCD6fBc>

Here is a collection of 1-minute tutorials on each aspect of Basecamp:

<http://youtu.be/Fcw0JGFvYUM?list=PL0B869E1B9E6D8FBC>