# Getting Started With FolioSpaces

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Get a FolioSpaces account

This document doesn’t try to explain why you should use an ePortfolio or FolioSpaces (you can Google that stuff); it just tries to introduce you to the most important features of this software service. If you have reasonable computer literacy, you can complete all the steps in this guide in under 30 minutes, and gain a solid grasp of how ePortfolios could work for you.

Good luck with your ePortfolio.

1. Open your web browser and go to:
https://www.FolioSpaces.org

2. Follow the instructions after clicking the Register link on the right of the screen.

3. Confirm your account as instructed in the email you receive. If you don’t get our email, check your Spam filter and try again. If that fails, use the Contact Us form on our website.

Login to Your Account

1. Open your web browser and go to:
https://www.FolioSpaces.org

2. Enter your username and password in the Login block shown above and click the Login button. If you forget your password or username, you can have them reminded or reset using the Lost username / password link.

Technical requirements

You can access FolioSpaces from any Internet connected computer, tablet or smartphone. You should update your preferred web browser to the most current version before using FolioSpaces. There are occasional problems when using Microsoft Internet Explorer, and we recommend Firefox or Chrome browsers.

You must allow cookies and Javascript in your web browser for FolioSpaces to function correctly. These are usually allowed by default in your web browser, but some security software may ask if you are sure you want to trust us (you can!). Our privacy statement is available on our website.
The FolioSpaces Interface

The first page you see after logging in is called your Dashboard. Only you can ever see your Dashboard. You can configure some of the content and layout of this page; we'll try this later.

Just below the FolioSpaces logo in the top-left corner, there are several tabs that you use to navigate your ePortfolio. Rolling over a tab will usually reveal more links below it. The tabs are:

- **Dashboard**: this will bring you back to your Dashboard.
- **Content**: this where you enter and edit your profile and other information, add files and journals. We'll look at this shortly.
- **Portfolio**: this is where you create pages for sharing with others. We'll look at this later.
- **Groups**: where you can form your own user groups and interact with other users of the system via discussion forums and shared pages. We won't be looking at groups in this introduction to FolioSpaces.

In the top-right corner are links to:

- **Settings**: we'll consider this later.
- **Inbox**: where your notifications are held; we'll also consider this later.
- **Logout**: always remember to logout when you've finished editing your ePortfolio if you are using a shared computer.

You can find others in the system by using the **Search users** box.

On the right of the page are a number of blocks with information. The number and type of blocks you see will depend on your context (whereabouts in the system you are).
In the screenshot above we can see that there were four FolioSpaces users online at that time. Click on a user’s name (or your own) to access their Profile page. Every user has a Profile page that is accessible by all other users of FolioSpaces, and optionally to the world. This is discussed shortly.

You should only place minimal information on your Profile page, for privacy reasons. A typical Profile page is shown below.

**Context sensitive help**

FolioSpaces gives context sensitive help, anywhere you find the information icon 📘. Click the icon to see help information that is specific to its context.
Update Your Profile

You should keep your profile information in FolioSpaces current, as this can be used in multiple pages (including your Profile page) later. Keep in mind that your profile information is not the same thing as your Profile page. Your profile information is like a filing cabinet full of private information; your Profile page is a small section of that information presented for your own reasons.

Perhaps the most important feature of FolioSpaces is that any information you enter or upload is completely private until you choose to make it available to others in pages you create and share.

Edit profile information

1. Click on the Content tab. This will take you to the Profile area where you can update your profile information.

2. Use the text editor to enter an introduction of yourself and format it how you like. Click on the Contact information, Messaging, and General tabs to enter more information. Remember to click the Save profile button when you have finished.

You can come back and edit your profile information at any time, and it remains private until you choose to publish it on a page and then share the page. You can also upload profile pictures that can be displayed wherever you choose. Refer to the manual if you need more information on this topic.
Résumé

The Résumé area is similar to your Profile area, and you can store all the information that may be useful to potential employers or other organizations. Remember that all of this information remains private until you choose to put it in a page and share it. The advantage of storing this information in the central Résumé area is that later on you can pick and choose which aspects to display in an ePortfolio page rather than having to copy and paste text to various pages. If you update the central Resume information, it gets updated everywhere you’ve used it.

Some users prefer not to use the Résumé area, and simply upload a Résumé/CV and cover letter Word or PDF files. We’ll look at uploading files soon.

Profile page

Your FolioSpaces Profile page is a special page that can be viewed by all other users of FolioSpaces. You may also choose to have this page accessible to anyone on the Internet. You cannot delete your Profile page but you can control what information appears in it, including any profile information you have already entered into the system.

1. Click on your name in the top-right block on the Dashboard. This will take you to your Profile page, and show you what other FolioSpaces users can see about you.

2. On your Profile page, click the ‘Edit this page’ button at the top-right.

3. The Edit content tab is highlighted. You will see a large pane that gives a preview of your page, and a column to the left with available ‘blocks’ to insert into your page. To put one of these blocks into your page, click on one and hold down the mouse button while dragging it into your preview pane. When you see a dashed outline, you can drop the block (let go of the mouse button). Try this with a text box.
4. Once a block has been dropped into the preview pane, you will usually be asked to configure it. For the text block, enter a title and some content, format it as you like, then scroll down and click the **Save** button. Note the ability to toggle advanced toolbars on or off in the text editor.

5. The block will now appear in your Profile page’s preview pane. To edit an existing block, click on the gear icon that appears in its top-right corner when in the **Edit content** view. To delete a block, click on its trash icon.

6. You can move blocks around the preview pane by dragging and dropping them by their headers. When you see the movement pointer you can click and drag a block to a new location. Drop the block wherever you see the dashed outline in the area you prefer.

7. Click on the **Personal info** category to see a list of other block types you can drag into your page. For an up-to-date list of all available blocks, refer to the official manual.

8. Click the **Display page** tab to see how your page will look. There will be a **Back** button on that page that you should use to continue editing.

9. When you have finished editing your Profile page, click the **Done** button at the bottom of the preview pane to save any changes. **At this point, only you can see your page.**
Adding and Managing Files and Folders

To create a meaningful ePortfolio you’ll probably need to add files. These files may help you provide evidence and could be in various formats such as documents, slideshow presentations, images, audio and video. FolioSpaces allows you to upload almost any type of file you’ll need to include in your ePortfolio, organize them in folders, and add them to pages you can share.

Adding files and folders

1. From the Dashboard, click on Files under the Content tab.

2. Before you can upload a file, you must agree to the copyright statement by clicking on the check box to the right of Upload file.

3. You will now be able to click the Choose Files button and browse for the file you wish to upload. When you have successfully uploaded your file a message will appear towards the top of the screen, similar to this one:

4. Alternatively, after agreeing to the copyright statement, you can drag and drop files from your computer to the area that states 'Drop files here to upload'.

5. Create a new folder by entering its name and clicking the Create folder button.
Managing files and folders

Before you add a lot of files to your ePortfolio, spend some time thinking about a useful folder structure. You may want to structure your folders so that documents are in one folder, audio in another and so on. Or you may prefer to have folders that represent different aspects of your work and academic life, such as by course code or research topic. Once you have a folder structure in place it can be time-consuming to rearrange it. You can also use tags, but we won’t discuss that here.

1. To see what a folder contains, or to upload a file to that folder, click on its name.
2. To move back up the folder structure, click on the Parent folder link (up arrow) or use the breadcrumbs to navigate back up (in the example below, click on Home).

3. Move files or folders into other folders by dragging and dropping their icons. Make sure the movement pointer is visible before you click and drag.
4. Delete a file or folder by clicking the trash icon on its far-right.
5. Edit a file or folder by clicking the pencil icon on its right. Enter a short description to help you and your ePortfolio viewers identify the contents of the file or folder more easily later on. You can also change the name of the file, if necessary. Click the ‘Save changes’ button when you’ve finished editing.

You can upload and download an entire zip folder of contents to and from FolioSpaces. This may make it easier for shifting large amounts of files. Don’t forget you can also backup your entire ePortfolio (including all your personal info, journals, pages etc) using the Export function.
Storage quota

Every user in FolioSpaces has a file storage quota. You can see how much of your quota you have used by checking the Quota block at right in the Files area. Videos or large presentations with multimedia content can use up your quota quickly.

Adding and Managing Journals

A journal is like a blog—a place where you can keep reflections, observations, or other timely information for yourself or for others to read. You can keep as many journals as you like in FolioSpaces, and publish none, all, or parts of their content in your ePortfolio pages.

1. Go to Content > Journals.
2. Click the Create journal button.
3. Give your journal a title, an optional description, and optional tags, then click the Create journal button.

4. Your Journals area will now show that you have a journal to which you can add entries.
5. Add an entry to your journal by clicking on the **New entry** button. Do this each time you have something new to add to your journal. Your journal entries are private until you put them in a page and then share that page.

6. Give your new entry a title, enter the main body of text for the entry, and add some optional tags.

7. Add a file as an attachment to the journal entry if necessary.

8. Choose whether to save the entry as a draft. If saved as a draft it cannot ever be included in a page that you share. You can edit a draft entry later so that it is no longer in draft.

9. Choose whether to allow comments on your entry. This option only applies if you publish your journal or individual journal entry to a page and then share that page with others.

10. Click the **Save entry** button when you have finished creating or editing your entry.

11. A message will let you know that your entry was saved successfully.

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**Creating and Sharing an ePortfolio Page**

You learned earlier how to edit your Profile page. Your Profile page is just one of many ePortfolio pages you can share with others. The main reason for creating different pages is that you can share them with different target audiences. For example, you may create a page that contains information relating to a research paper you are writing and choose to share this page with your research associates. You may have another page, or several pages, containing information and evidence relating to your continuing professional development. This page might be kept completely private until you are required to share it with your supervisor for promotional purposes. The information stored in your ePortfolio can be repurposed for different audiences by creating pages with different access permissions. A page can be completely private, open to the world, or anything in-between.
Create your Page

1. Navigate to **Portfolio > Pages**. Everyone in FolioSpaces has at least two pages: a Dashboard page (which only you see when logged in) and a Profile page (which is shared with everyone else at FolioSpaces, and optionally shared with the world).

2. Click the **Create page** button.

3. Give the page a title, optional description and optional tags, then click the **Save** button

4. You will be taken to the **Edit content** area, where you will see a preview pane similar to the one you see when editing your Profile page. Drag a block or two into the preview pane and
configure. You can move blocks around by dragging them to new locations, as previously described.

5. If you don't wish to share this page yet, click the **Done** button at the bottom when you have finished editing. You can come back to edit and/or share the page later.

6. If you wish to share the page immediately, click the **Share page** tab when you have finished editing.
Share your page

Now that you have created a new page you can share it. This is where you decide who can see your page, and when. **By default your page is completely private**, so you will need to tell FolioSpaces who should be able to see it.

In the screenshot below “Little dogs” is to be shared with Public (anyone on the Internet who has the link/URL to this page) with no time limit set.

You can edit access to any of your pages by navigating to Portfolio > Shared by me.

1. Make sure the relevant page is selected for sharing from your list of pages at the top.
2. Share your page with Public (the whole Internet) by clicking the add icon on its left.
3. If you need to share your page only with particular users in the system (e.g. team members or a teacher) click on the link **Share with other users and groups**.

4. Select **Users** in the drop-down box, then type in the name of the person you are looking for. Add them to the share list by clicking the add icon to the left of their name. Repeat as necessary, and set access timeframes if required.
5. When you finish editing access to your page, click the **Save** button at the bottom. Individual users will receive a notification to say you have shared a page with them, with a link (URL) to it.
6. If you need to share your page confidentially with someone outside FolioSpaces (who doesn’t have an account at FolioSpaces) use the Secret URL method described below.
Secret URL

A secret URL (secret web link) can be used to share your semi-private page/s with people outside of FolioSpaces. With this method, you don’t need to share your page with the public for outsiders to gain access. A secret URL is impossible for a person or search engine to guess.

To get a secret URL for your page:

1. Browse to Portfolio > Shared by me. You can edit access to any of your pages from this screen.
2. Click the Secret URL button to the right of the page you wish to share secretly.
3. Click the Add button to create a new secret URL for your page.
4. A secret URL will be displayed. Copy this URL to give to your external audience.

Remember that a secret URL is only secret to the extent that it is shared. You can delete these secret URLs at any time.

Inform your audience

Once you have created a page and set up sharing through one of the methods above, you may need to send the URL (web link) to your audience. There are three general sharing scenarios:

1. **If you have shared your page with the public, logged-in users or your institution**, you will need to get the required URL by opening your ePortfolio page in Portfolio > Pages. Click on the name of your page and it will be displayed in the browser. The URL that appears in the browser’s URL bar is what you need to copy and send to any prospective viewers. A typical URL is in the form of:


   Only the numbers at the end should be different.

2. **If you have shared your page with individual users, friends, or a group**, they will receive a notification from the system that you have shared a page with them. The notification will contain the URL, but you can also get the URL using the method described above.

3. **If you have used the Secret URL method**, you can only get the URL by clicking on the Secret URL button as described in the previous section.
Other FolioSpaces Settings and Preferences

Dashboard page

Your Dashboard page is what you see when you first login to FolioSpaces. Nobody else can see this page, and you can configure most of it as you wish.

To edit your Dashboard page, browse to Portfolio > Pages. Your Dashboard page always appears at the top of your list of pages. Edit and save your Dashboard page as you would with any of your other pages, as described earlier. Note that only certain blocks can be part of your Dashboard page.

Settings and notifications

You can change a number of account options that will affect your experience in FolioSpaces. To change these settings, click the Settings link or icon in the top-right of your screen. This will take you to your Settings page. Most of the options here are self-explanatory and have help available via the information icon.

In your Settings Notifications tab, you can change the way you receive notifications from FolioSpaces. For each of the activities listed you can choose:

1. Inbox: notifications will stay in your inbox in FolioSpaces, which you can access via the envelope icon at top-right. The number next to the icon is the number of unread messages there.
2. Email: every time an activity occurs, you will receive an email. This can become overwhelming in busy environments.
3. Email digest: you will receive one email each day that lists the activities relevant to you in the previous 24 hours.

Note that if you select either of the email options, notifications will still arrive in your FolioSpaces inbox, but they will be automatically marked as read.

Further Help

Where else to get further help with using FolioSpaces?

1. Look for answers and ask questions in the FolioSpaces User Help forum, available to Premium Users. There is a link to the User Help forum under Links and Resources once you have logged in.
2. Refer to the official Mahara manual. There is a link to the manual under Links and Resources once you have logged in. This is available to all users.
3. Check out our Youtube ‘FolioSpaces’ channel for help videos.
4. Refer to your institutional support resources. We can help your institution create customized support resources.
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We appreciate your feedback so that we can improve this support resource and our service in general. If you have suggestions, criticisms or anything else that could help the FolioSpaces and Mahara community, please go ahead and tell us.

team@FolioSpaces.org
@folioman