

# Setting Up & Sharing Your Dropbox

## ESL 110/510

In our ESL 110/510 course, we will need a way to share sound files and other files. Rather than trying to email these files, which may not work because of their size, I want you to set up a Dropbox account to use for your assignments. Dropbox is a technology owned by Amazon. It provides two gigabytes of free, securely encrypted storage. (Dropbox is available for PCs, Macs, Unix, and other systems; our comments and screenshots are directed at Windows XP users.)

There are two steps to setting up a Dropbox account for our mutual use: (1) installing Dropbox, and (2) sharing a folder with me. When you share your folder with me, we will both have access to the same files in that folder. (Other benefits are listed below.)

### Step 1: Installing Dropbox

If you have not already installed Dropbox on your computer, please click on the link below to do this.

<https://www.dropbox.com/referrals/NTQ5NjM0Njc5>

I suggest that you begin by either watching their short video or reading the same information as a “text tour.” Then set up your account and accept the 2 gig plan because it’s the free plan. (By using the link above, you and I will both increase our storage space beyond the original 2 gigabytes!)

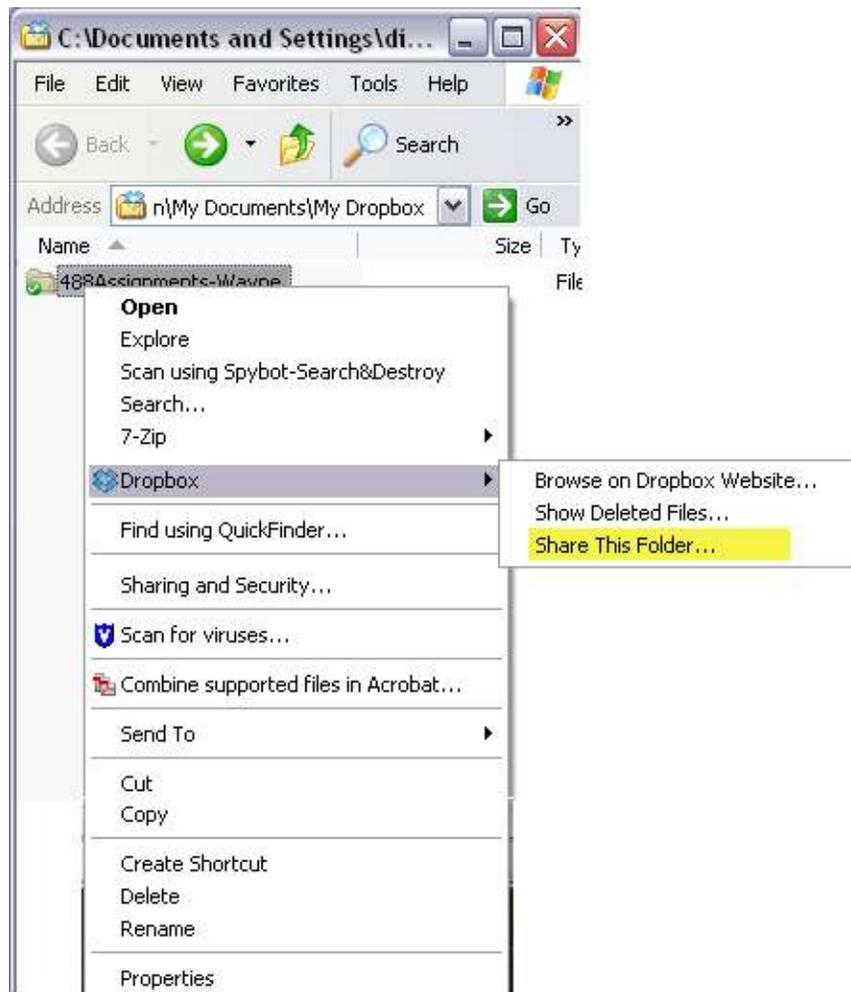
When you install Dropbox.com, Dropbox.com does three things automatically (on a PC).

- It creates space on Amazon’s secure server where anything that you put into your Dropbox folder on your computer will be copied in an encrypted form. Each time you update a file in your Dropbox folder, that file will be updated on the server.
-  It puts a Dropbox icon on your desktop that looks like the one on the left. This gives you instant access to your folders and files.
- It adds a small Dropbox icon to your taskbar tray (lower right hand corner of your screen). Clicking the icon gives you easy access to the folders on your computer and to the copied folders on the Web.

### Step 2: Creating a shared folder

a. *Now create a new folder in your Dropbox folder* for your recordings and other assignments. To do this, open up your Dropbox folder (double-left-click on the Dropbox icon on your desktop, or click on the dropbox icon in your taskbar tray and select **Open Dropbox Folder**). With your dropbox folder open, access the dropdown menu under **File** and select **New** then **Folder**. Give your new folder the name **110-510Assignments-your first name**, e.g. **110-510Assignments-Inchull**.

b. Next, give me access to your **110-510Assignments-your first name** folder so that when you put an assignment there, I can see it, and when I send you a file, you can see it. To do this, right-click on the name of the folder you just made for your assignments. In the dropdown menu that appears, select **Dropbox > Share This Folder**. In the window that pops up, enter my email address as [dickerson@illinois.edu](mailto:dickerson@illinois.edu) ('dickerson' without the 'e'), and then click on **Share folder**. That's all there is to it! I'll know you've completed this assignment because I'll receive an email message that you have done so. When I accept your invitation to share your folder, I'll see your folder in **my** dropbox.



**Caution:** After you save a file, it does not show up in my Dropbox until you **close** your file.

### Other benefits of using Dropbox

- **Automatic syncing of files on different computers.** If you have more than one computer, be sure to download and install Dropbox on each of them. All the files you put into your Dropbox, and any changes you make to a file in your Dropbox on one computer, are automatically updated on all your other computers as long as your computers are online. (Once synced, your files are on your computer, and you don't need to be online to have access to those files.)

- **Access to files from any computer anywhere.** If you're using someone else's computer or a public computer, you can always go to your server-based Dropbox by typing [www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com) and entering your account information. You'll see the same files on the server that are in your Dropbox on your home computer. To work on a file on the server, however, you must download it to the computer you're using or to a thumb drive you're using on that computer. Then to save these changes to your Dropbox on your own computer, you must upload your file to your Dropbox on the server. Dropbox makes uploading and downloading your files easy to do.
- **Sharing of folders and files with anyone.** In the tutorial above, we have demonstrated how to create and share folders with others who have a Dropbox account. In addition, Dropbox allows you to (a) share individual files with anyone, even if they don't have a Dropbox account, and (b) share photo galleries with anyone, even if they don't have a Dropbox account. These functions are possible because Dropbox automatically creates two specialized folders in your Dropbox folder when you install Dropbox. One is called **Public**; the other is called **Photo**.

The unique thing about the **Public** folder is that it gives you the capability to share a single *file* with an individual or a group. The Public folder will not allow sharing of folders, only files. To share a single file in the **Public** folder, simply right-click on that file, go to  **Dropbox** in the dropdown menu that appears, and then select **Copy Public Link**. When you do, Dropbox puts the URL to that file (on the server) on your clipboard. You can then give that link to anyone, and they will have access to that file. So, for example, if you have a file that you want someone to see, you could put it in your **Public** folder and then give that person the Public link to that file.

The other specialized folder that Dropbox creates is the **Photo** folder. When you add a subfolder to the **Photo** folder and put pictures into this subfolder, Dropbox will backup your pictures to the web and arrange them in an easy-to-use photo gallery on the web. You can share your photo subfolder with anyone by right-clicking on that subfolder, going to **Dropbox** in the dropdown menu, and then selecting **Copy Public Link**. Share that link with family and friends so that everyone can view the photos online. If you create a subfolder for each of your trips, then everybody can enjoy your pictures.

- **Automatic off-site backup of files.** You know how important it is to back up your files regularly. Even if you were not interested in any of the other feature of Dropbox, this last feature would make Drobox valuable by itself. Everything you put into your Dropbox is backed up automatically to Amazon's secure server. And every time you modify a file in your Dropbox, it is also backed up just as soon as you save it and close the file. If the hard drive on your computer crashes, or your computer is stolen or destroyed, you will still have a secure, off-site backup of all your files.