

Student Team File Management

File management is an important part of group collaboration. To ensure that each member of your team can contribute effectively they need to be able to access team documents and resources.

Every team manages their files differently, and not all systems work well for all applications. It is important to select an option that works for your team. Below are two options that appear to work well for most groups when combined with other tools like GitHub and CoLab.

The Student Design Hub is recommending that all student teams migrate their file storage to one service to minimize loss of details between academic years. Having all team members on one service will ensure that other members can access design files and make informed choices about the direction of the project. Operating out of several isolated folders can have a significant negative impact on your group's productivity.

Google Docs

As a student with Memorial you are provided with access to Google docs. Google docs is a fantastic platform for file sharing as it allows for many users to share and collaborate on documents. It is quick and efficient to set up, while allow for many users to work on the same document simultaneously.

One thing to keep in mind about google drive is that the person who creates a shared folder ultimately will house the documentation. In the future you may not be able to contact that individual through their MUN email address.

If you choose Google Docs as your preferred file sharing platform, it may be best to anchor all files to a team email address. That will ensure that the access and part year's documents are retained. The limitation of this is that you will have a storage cap. This means you may have to zip the files at the end of each year to ensure you don't run out of storage.

Alfresco

Alfresco is a file management service available to students and staff at Memorial University. Alfresco is not as user friendly as other services but it maintained locally on a Memorial server. This means that your files will always be recoverable.

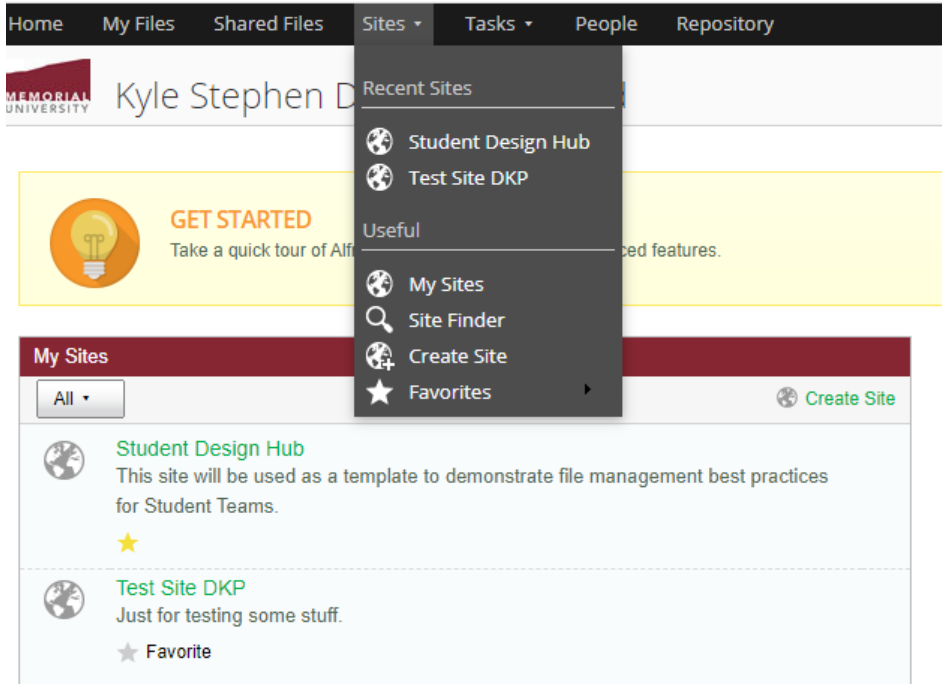
There are a few benefits of using Alfresco to manage your team's documents. They are as follows:

- 1) There is no storage limit.
- 2) It is integrated with google docs, you can continue to edit documents as you normally would using the equivalent google service (however there is a limitation – to maintain revision control only one person can edit a file at a time).
- 3) Alfresco automatically revision controls each document after each edit. This allows you to see who worked on what and when.
- 4) It is managed by Memorial, this means you will no longer have to worry about handing over documents at the end of each year. The Engineer in Residence can simply add the new team lead as the site owner.
- 5) You can copy and paste folder hierarchies, allowing you to easily copy the file storage architecture used in the previous academic year.

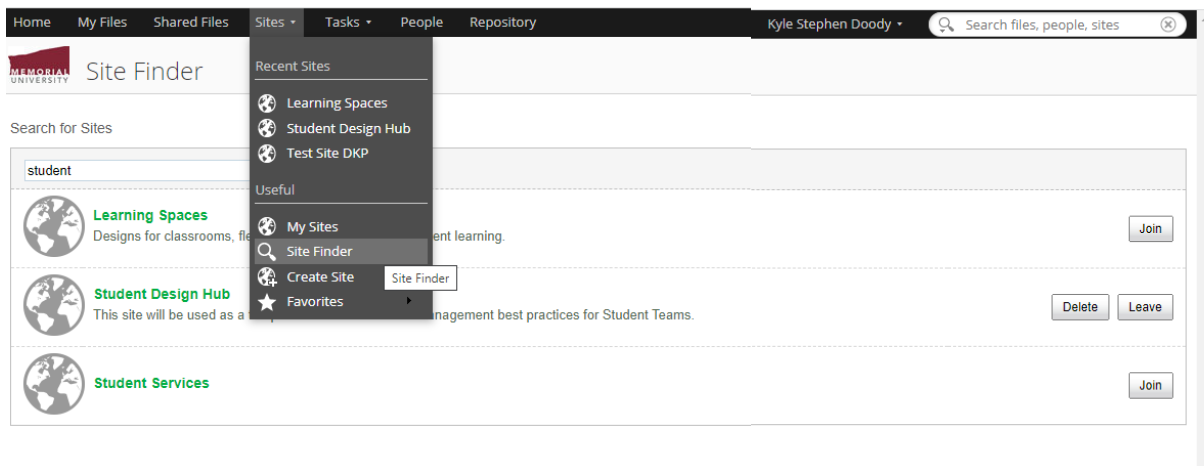
Alfresco Login: <https://forge.citl.mun.ca/share/page/>

Getting Started

To get started with Alfresco, you'll need to create an account you can select "sites" from the dropdown bar. You should be able to navigate to your site (if you're already a member), your sites will also populate under "My Sites" on the main page.

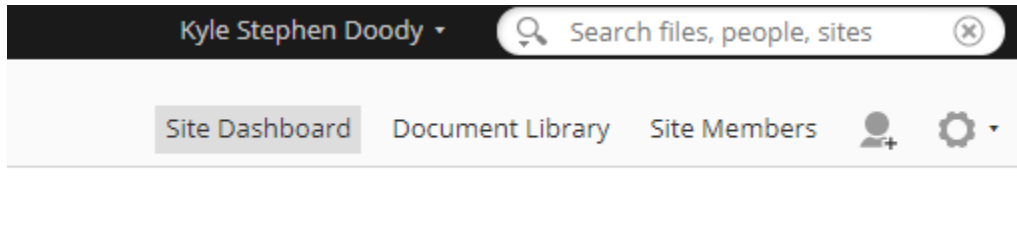


You can also use the "Site Finder" in the same part of the menu to find your team's site and add yourself. You can "Join" by pressing the button on the right hand side of the screen.



It is recommended that you join your team's site, as well as the Student Design Hub. Your team's site will be actively used for file storage while the Student Design Hub will be used to host templates and the folder hierarchy that can be copied at the start of each competition year. If your team doesn't have a site yet reach out the Engineer in Residence at kddoy@mun.ca. They can create a mirror of another team's site to help you get started.

Navigate to your site and you'll be brought to the site dashboard. This page includes useful information like who is a member of your site, and what people have been working on. To view the file explorer for your site open the document library (there is a button on the top right of the browser).



Creating Files in Alfresco

If your alfresco site is brand new it will start out empty, however you can copy a sample file directory from the Student Design Hub to get you started. Every page created by the SDH will have a folder created for 2022 and 2023 at the minimum. The copied SDH Alfresco directory will also include some templates that you can use to start planning for the academic year. Click through the folders to see what files are available by default.

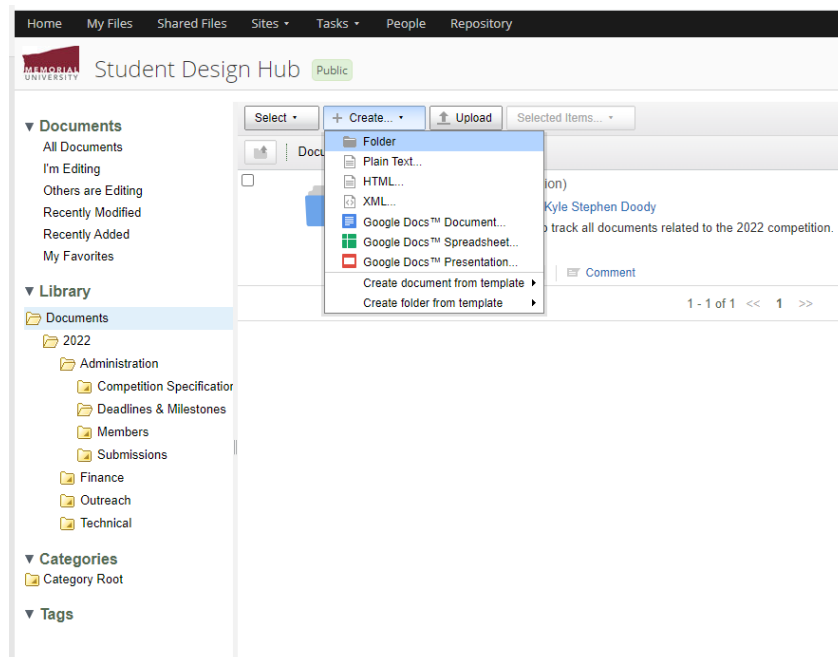
If you don't plan to use the provided folder system it's recommended that you set up the following folder hierarchy:

Year → Category → Topic → Working Files

An example file path might look like:

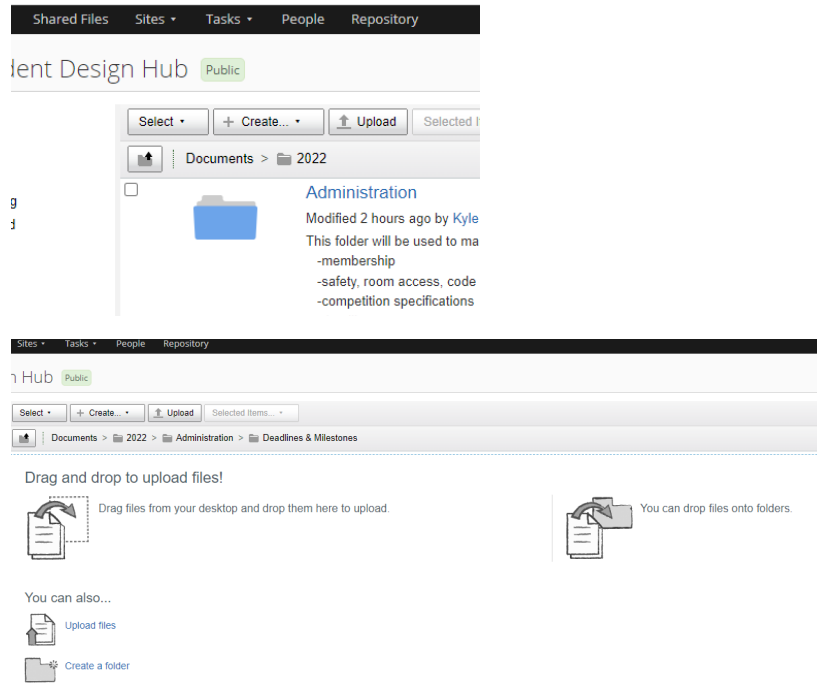
2022 → Administration → Members → Lab Access Forms

To start setting up your file system, you can use the create button at the top of the documents menu. This button allows you to create a folder, HTML, XML, TXT, or google doc. This can be used to create more organization within the file system, or to start new documents!



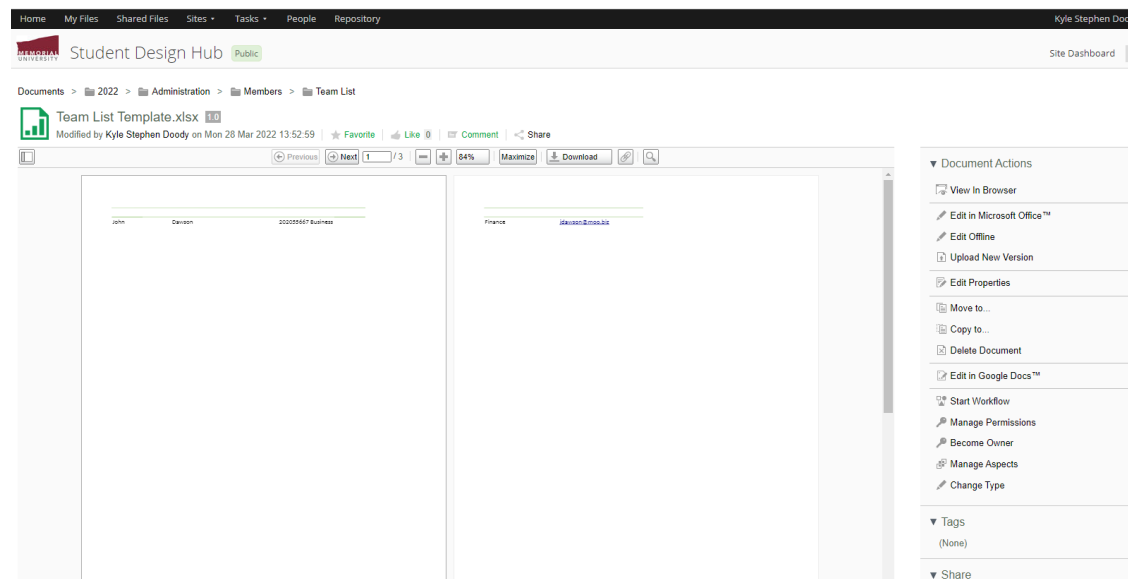
Uploading Files

Alternatively, you can upload files to Alfresco at any time as well. You can do this by using the “Upload” Button, or by dragging and dropping the file into your browser.



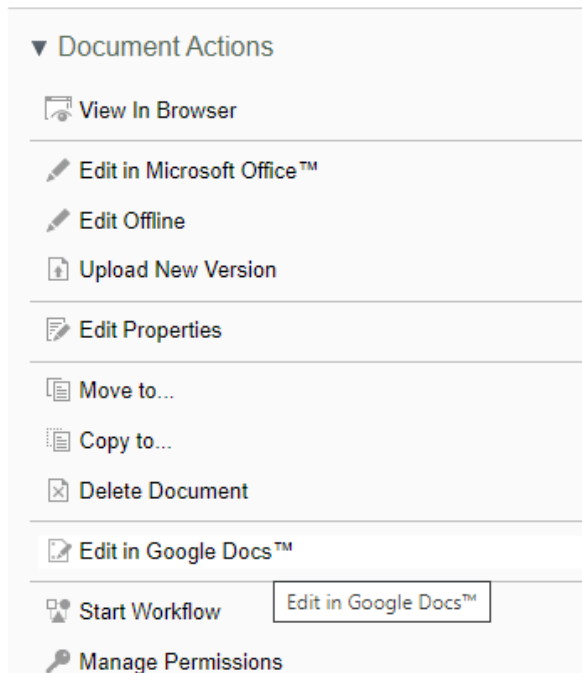
Editing Files

Now that you have documents in your file system you can start working on them. Simply navigate to the file and click on it as if you wanted to open it. This will bring you to a file preview.



Here you can review the file in browser, download the file to work on it offline, or edit it in google docs. Please note that if you work on the file offline you'll need to re-upload it after you're done making the changes. It is recommended that you “edit in google docs” when possible. That will ensure all of your

changes are captured and saved immediately. To edit in google docs click the option on the right side of the screen.

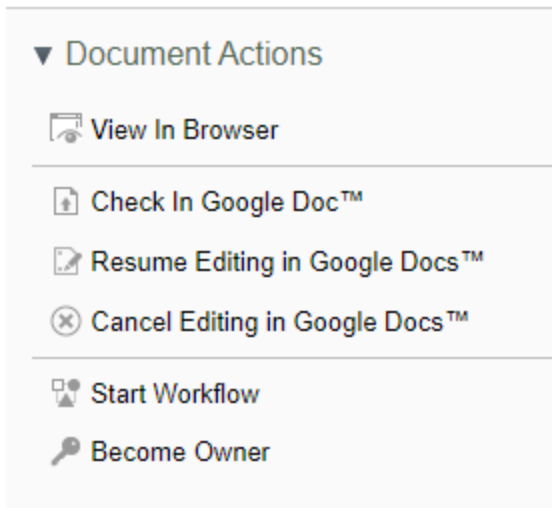


To edit in google docs you'll have to allow Alfresco access to your google docs. When prompted press "allow". This should launch the document in your browser in another tab.

NOTE:

When you're working on a document it locks it out for other users. This is to enable revision control. For this reason, if multiple people need to work on a document at one time, it's advisable that you use your standard google drive and then drop a copy in Alfresco when you're done. One of the benefits of the document being locked for editing is that you can see all revisions made to the document and you can roll them back if required (more on that later).

Make the changes to your google doc as normal. To release the document so other can edit it, return to the Alfresco tab and select "Check In Google Doc". This will return the document with your edits to the file directory and allow others to make edits.

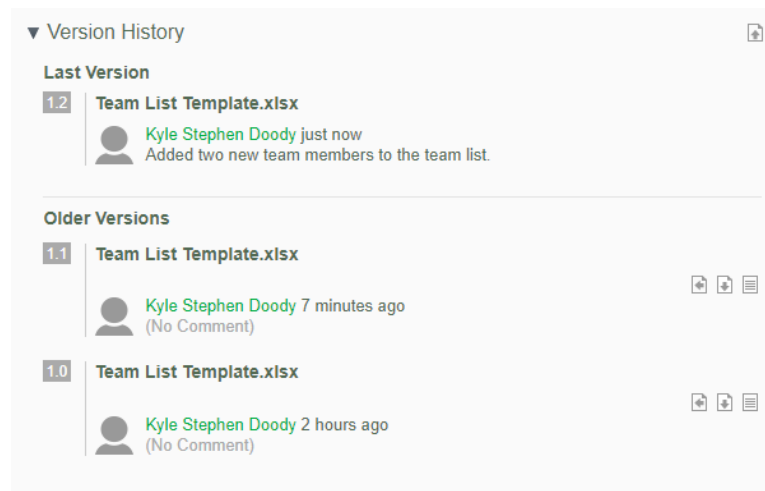


After pressing “Check In” you’ll be prompted to “revise the file” with a comment. You can select “minor” or “major” revision.

A **minor change** is when you add content to the file, adjust formatting, or other regular document development changes.

A **major change** marks that the document is being revised. You should only mark a major revision after you feel the document is finished and you’re ready for others to review it and make comments. Implementing their comments would incrementally increase the revision number (for example from 1 to 2). People can still add comments to the document like any other google document.

When you create a change you can also comment, this comment will then be posted with the version history of the document on the bottom right hand of the explorer.

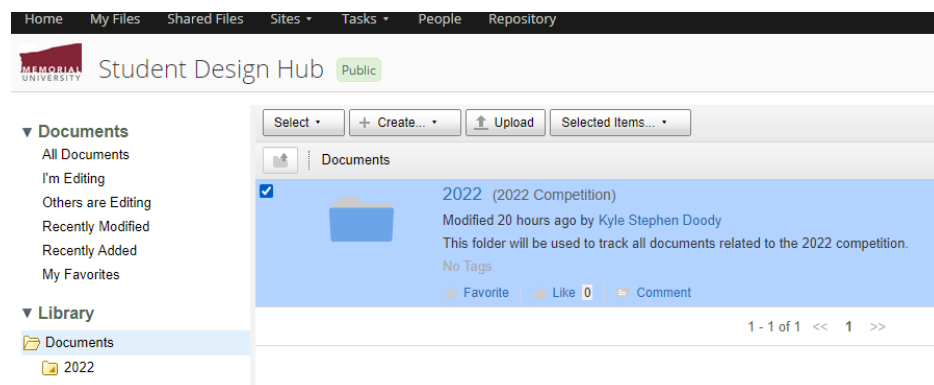


One of Alfresco’s powerful features is that you can view each committed change to the document and revert the document to a previous state if required. You can revert the document to the selected revision by selecting the first icon on the right side of the revision, or download it to see the changes by selecting the second icon.

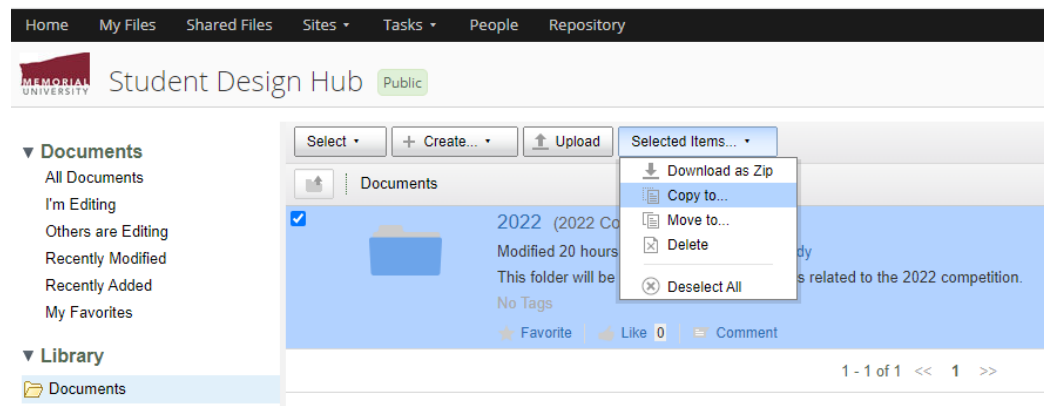


Copying Folders

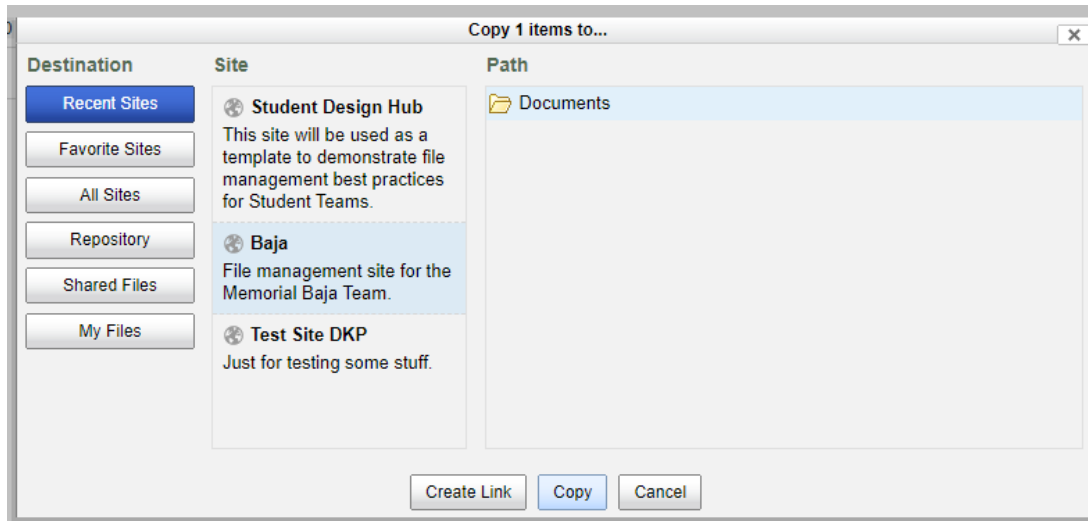
Finally let's assume that you need to start a new folder system for a new competition or competition year and you want to create a copy of your existing file system so you don't have to set it up from scratch. Navigate to the document library you want to copy and check off the box to the left of the folder system.



Next click the "Selected Items" dropdown and click "Copy To"



This will allow you to create a copy of that folder system anywhere on the sites that you have access too. In this example we'll copy the 2022 file system from the "Student Design Hub" to the "Baja" site. Click the folder you want to copy to and press "Copy at the bottom of the page.

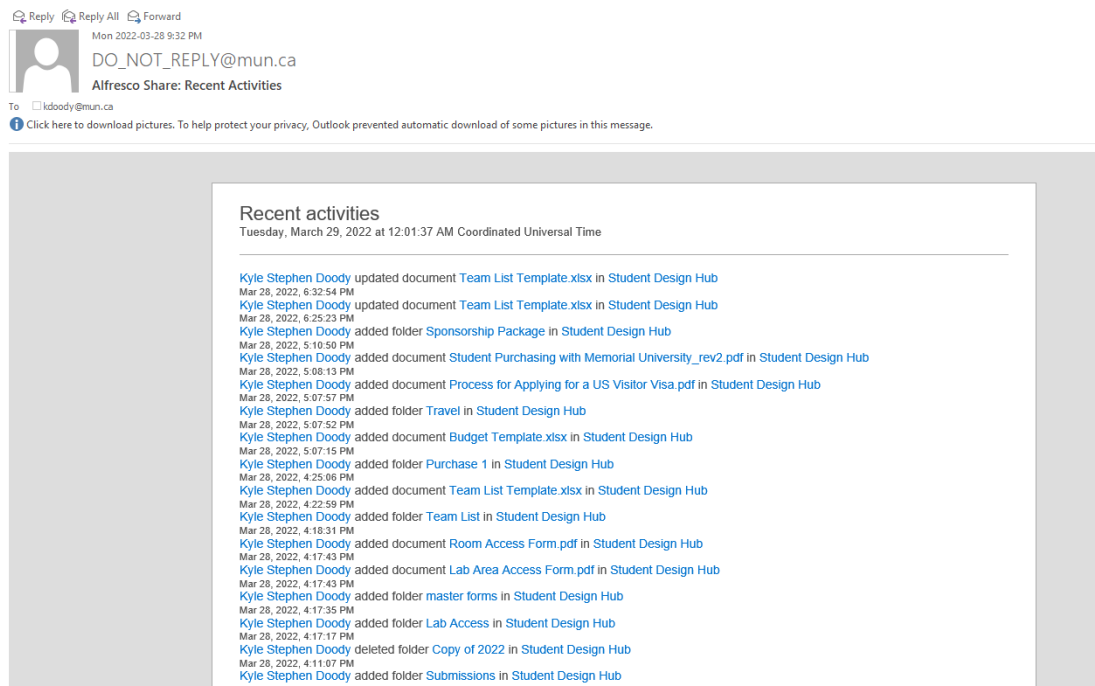


That's it! You've copied your files 😊

Other Nice Features

Summary Emails

Another nice feature of Alfresco is that the site owner will get a summary email of all activity happening on the site for moderation purposes. The site owner can be set to whoever is designated a document lead for your team. The summary email looks like this:



You can see all folders and file created, as well as all of the implemented edits during a given day.