

# Why aren't my folders or uploaded files working?

When creating folders and uploading files to UVACollab, folder and file names that contain special characters can affect site participants' ability to download or access the files correctly.

Issues can also arise from uploading files with very long names in excess of 250 characters, or from saving files inside many stacked folders so that the resulting file location is greater than 250 characters.

This article includes the following:

- [Issues that arise from using special characters in file or folder names and recommendations for naming](#)
- [Issues that arise from having very long file and folder names](#)
- [Tips for making shorter file and folder names](#)

## Special characters in a file or folder name.

Certain characters should not be used in folder or file names, because computers use these characters to denote file locations. For example, a **slash** (/) signifies a location within a folder. In Windows, a **colon** (:) is used to identify a drive location, such as the computer's hard drive or an external storage device like a flash drive. A **period** (.) precedes the file type in a file name.

If special characters are used in a file name, the file may not open properly when site participants try to access it. If a file with special characters in its name can be opened by clicking on it when viewing the UVaCollab site in an internet browser, site participants might not be able to download it via [WebDAV](#).

UVACollab's *Resources* and *File Drop* tools may also allow you to enter special characters in folder names, but having certain characters, including **colons**, **slashes**, and **periods**, in a folder name may prevent site participants from downloading files contained in it via [WebDAV](#).

## Recommended file/folder naming conventions.

Using the following characters in folder and file names will help ensure that your folders and files will work in *Resources* and *File Drop*:

- **letters (no accent marks) A-Z** (either lowercase or uppercase)
- **numbers 0-9**

- **hyphens -**
- **underscores \_**

## Disallowed Characters.

The following characters are known to cause issues when they are used in folder or file names in *Resources* or *File Drop*:

Name	Character
colon	:
period	.
semicolon	;
back slash	\
forward slash	/
question mark	?
quotation mark	"
apostrophe	'
ampersand	&
asterisk	*
at symbol	@
hash mark	#
percent sign	%
carat	^
less than	<
greater than	>
equal sign	=
vertical bar	

## Very long file and folder names.


 [Week 1 Readings](#)

 [Journal Articles](#)

 [File that was downloaded from an online journal-its name has the entire bibliographic entry as it would appear in the MLA handbook including authors publisher etc.pdf](#)


You may encounter an error when attempting to upload a file with a name that exceeds 250 characters. Issues can also arise if you store the file inside many folders, so that the resulting file path is greater than 250 characters. Pictured above is an example of a potentially problematic file, where the file path is:

[https://collab.its.virginia.edu/access/content/group/7fbe9304-94d8-42bc-af57-f7aadcfc8f51/Week%201%20Readings/Journal%20Articles/File\\_that\\_was\\_downloaded\\_from\\_an\\_online\\_journal-its\\_name\\_has\\_the\\_entire\\_bibliographic\\_entry\\_as\\_it\\_would\\_appear\\_in\\_the\\_MLA\\_handbook\\_including\\_authors\\_publisher\\_etc.pdf](https://collab.its.virginia.edu/access/content/group/7fbe9304-94d8-42bc-af57-f7aadcfc8f51/Week%201%20Readings/Journal%20Articles/File_that_was_downloaded_from_an_online_journal-its_name_has_the_entire_bibliographic_entry_as_it_would_appear_in_the_MLA_handbook_including_authors_publisher_etc.pdf)

 **Note:** Some online journals post articles with their entire bibliographic entries in the file names. These names may contain special characters and be very long. If such a file is uploaded without editing its name, it can cause errors when uploading other files to the same folder.


## Tips for making shorter file and folder names.

### Limit the use of spaces.

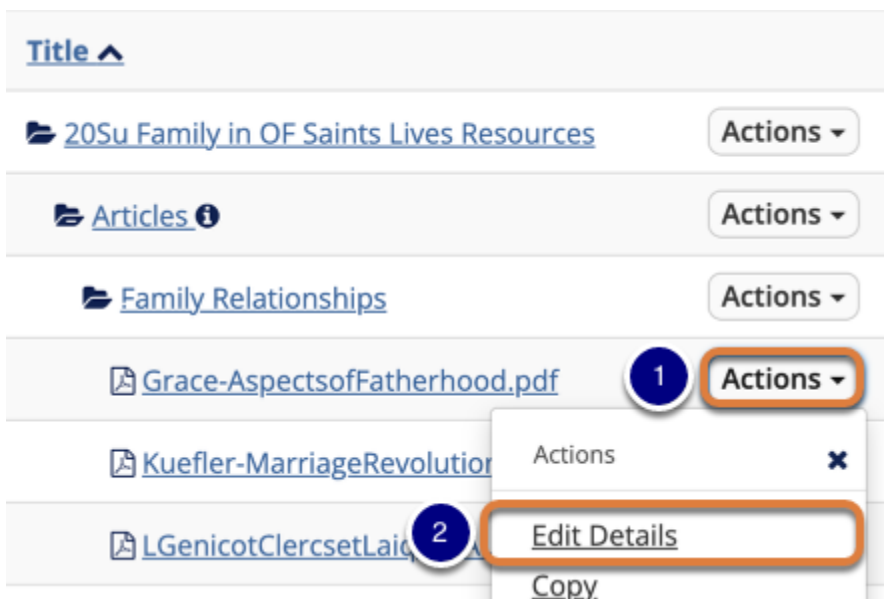
 **Tip:** When you use a space in a file name, it actually takes up three characters in a file path. Each space in a URL is represented by %20. You can decrease the number of characters in your file path by using an underscore: \_ instead of a space or eliminating spaces. Below is a table with an example of a file name and its length when spaces are replaced with underscores or eliminated.

File Name on Computer	File Name in URL
UVACollab Quick Start Guide To Resources.pdf	UVACollab%20Quick%20Start%20Guide%20To%20Resources.pdf
UVACollab_Quick_Start_Guide_To_Resources.pdf	UVACollab_Quick_Start_Guide_To_Resources.pdf
UVACollabQuickStartGuideToResources.pdf	UVACollabQuickStartGuideToResources.pdf

## Display more text with a Display Name.

 **Tip:** Each file in *Resources* or *File Drop* has a name that displays for site participants when they view the file within the site, which is independent from the actual file name. A *Display Name* can be longer than a file name without increasing the length of the file path.

## In Resources or File Drop, select Actions, then Edit Details.



1. To the right of the file for which you would like to change the *Display Name*, select the **Actions** menu.
2. Select **Edit Details**.



**Note:** On mobile devices or small screens, the **Actions** menu displays as a **down arrow** icon.

## Enter the new Display Name.

### Edit Details

Change the resource's details and then choose 'Update' at the bottom. Required items marked with \*

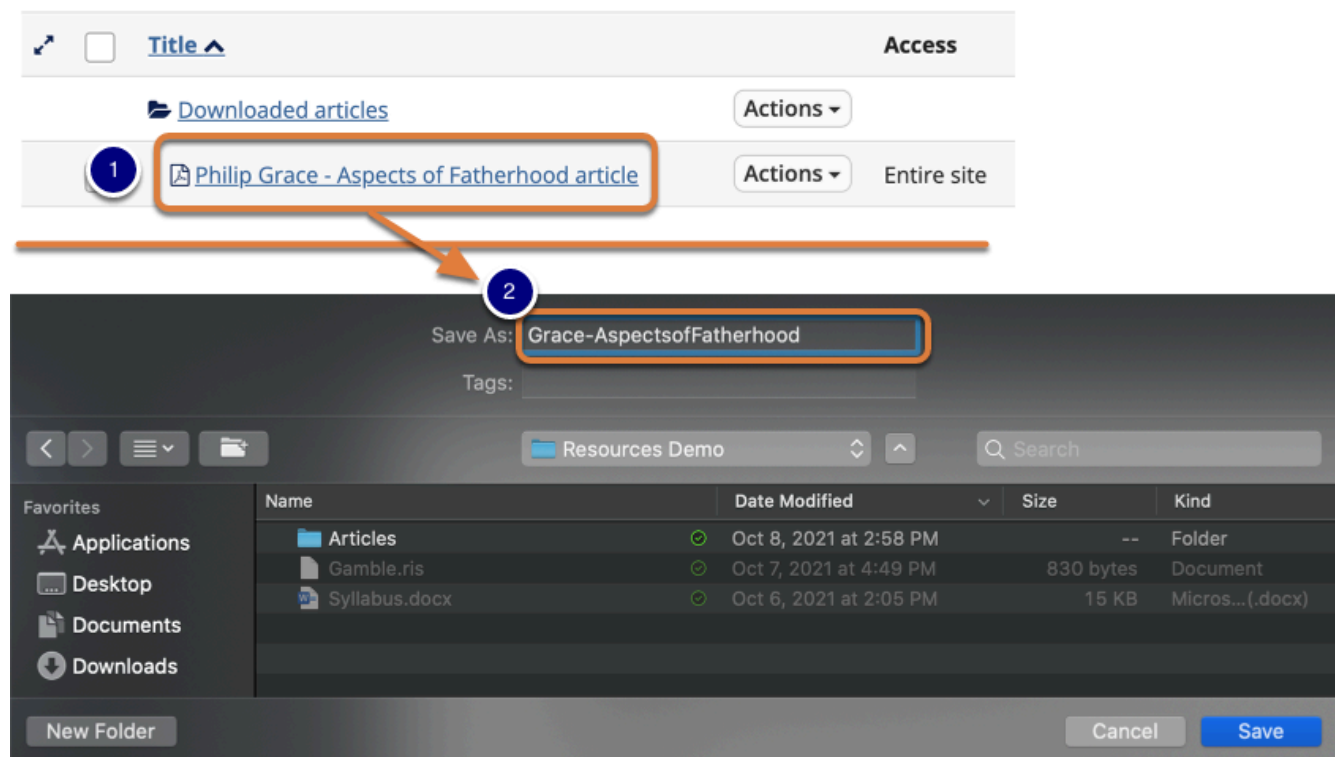
#### \* Display Name

#### Description

By default, the *Display Name* is the same as the file name. In the *Display Name* box, change the file name to the name you want displayed in *Resources* or *File Drop*.

## At the bottom of the page, select Update.

## View file.



1. The new *Display Name* will be shown in *Resources* or *File Drop* instead of the file name.
2. When someone downloads the file, it will have the original file name.