

Secure FTP (SFTP) Software

What is SFTP?

FTP stands for File Transfer Protocol. It is a standard mechanism that lets computers move files and folders between them across a network connection. For example, say you want to edit your people.whitman.edu web page. You would connect to the appropriate server (see below) using a piece of software that knows how to use FTP, download the file you want to change to your computer, make your changes, then upload the altered file back to the server.

SFTP is a more modern version of FTP that has some important security features. Because of this, we have turned off FTP access to all of our servers, and require all connections to be made using the more secure SFTP protocol.

The Software

Basic SFTP Software Clients

Below are two recommended SFTP software clients. You will need software like this installed on your computer in order to connect to an SFTP server. These two software clients are already installed on most Whitman computers.

- [FileZilla](#) - *Free* and open-source, runs on **Windows, OS X, and Linux**. *Recommended for Windows*
- [Cyberduck](#) - *Free* and open-source, designed for the **Mac**. *Recommended for Mac OS X*

Advanced SFTP Software Programs

If you are planning on spending a lot of time changing server-side files (if you become your club's webmaster, for example), you may find it more convenient to edit files "directly on the server," rather than constantly downloading and uploading files all of the time. This can be more dangerous, since you won't necessarily have a backup of the files you're working on, but the time and convenience trade-off may be worthwhile in some cases. *Use at your own risk.*

- [NetDrive](#) - Mounts an SFTP server connection as a "Windows Drive Letter." **Windows only**.
- [sshfs](#) - Module of the [FUSE](#) project. Available natively for **Linux**, with an **OS X port** available called [MacFUSE](#). You'll need to download both the FUSE core and the sshfs module.

To reiterate: using these advanced software programs is considerably different than using normal SFTP software. If you don't feel comfortable experimenting with new software, these options are not for you.

Configuring a Connection

The buttons you click and the menu items you select to configure a new connection depends on the software you decide to use. However, the basic information needed to connect to a server is the same. Some software will have all of the following options, others will only have some.

- **Server** - the computer you are trying to **connect to**. Also sometimes referred to as the **Host**. Some commonly-used servers:
 - If you are **faculty/staff**, your designated server is **people.whitman.edu**
 - If you are editing a **club or department website**, connect to **webedit.whitman.edu**
- **Protocol or Servertype** - the "language" with which your computer will talk to the server. Use **SFTP (SSH Secure File Transfer)**
- **Port** - **22**
- **Username** - the username of the **account** you're connecting to.

Some software lets you create a "connection profile," which lets you save settings (including the above, other settings, and sometimes your password) so you don't have to type it all in every time you want to connect.

Uploading and Downloading

Most SFTP software has a two-column layout. The side that is labeled "**Local**" shows you the contents of folders **on your computer**. The side labeled "**Remote**" shows you files and folders **on the server**. Make sure that you've navigated to the proper folder in *both* the Local and Remote columns before you start uploading and downloading things.

- To **upload** an item - drag it **from the Local** side, over **to the Remote** column.
- To **download** an item - drag it **from the Remote** side, over **to the Local** column.

Cyberduck is a notable exception to this. It displays only the "remote" view. To upload and download items, you can either "drag 'n drop" them in and out of the Cyberduck window, or use the "**Action**" menu in the top menu-bar.

Software-specific Help

All of the software products mentioned maintain their own help and support sites. See the following links for more.

- [FileZilla Wiki](#)
- [Cyberduck Help](#)
- [FileZilla \(Windows\)](#)

Related articles

- [Creating a Secure Password](#)
- [Multi-Factor FAQ](#)
- [Encrypting Folders and Files on Mac](#)
- [Encrypting Folders and Files on Windows](#)
- [Cloud Storage Guidelines](#)