



Manual: bwSync&Share

A Quick Guideline for Researchers

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Introduction

bwSync&Share is a secure online storage, synchronization, and collaboration platform operated by Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) for Baden-Württemberg's higher-education institutions. It allows students and staff to:

- ✂ Store up to 50 GB of files (basic quota), which can be raised up to 200 GB by the KIT admins upon request.
- ✂ Synchronize across devices: desktop (Windows/Mac), mobile (iOS/Android), and web.
- ✂ Collaborate via online editing (Nextcloud).
- ✂ Share securely with internal users, guests, and via public links with optional password/expiry.

Role of bwSync&Share in Research Data Management (RDM)

bwSync&Share supports the secure and collaborative exchange of data, particularly within the academic landscape of Baden-Württemberg. It enables researchers from Universities of Applied Sciences and their partners to **share** and **synchronize** files efficiently during the **active phases** of research projects.

However, it is important to note that bwSync&Share is **not** a research data repository and should not be used for the long-term publication or archiving of research data. It lacks essential repository features such as metadata management, long-term preservation, and persistent identifiers (e.g., DOIs). For publishing research data according to Open Science and FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable), dedicated repositories such as **RADAR** [<https://www.radar-service.eu>], **bwDataArchive** [<https://www.rda.kit.edu>] or other certified platforms should be used.

A typical use case for bwSync&Share is a joint research project between two or more Universities of Applied Sciences in Baden-Württemberg, potentially including external partners such as industry collaborators or research institutes. In these cases, teams need to share working data securely and efficiently throughout the project lifecycle. bwSync&Share facilitates the exchange of datasets, draft papers, and analysis results in a controlled environment, supporting teamwork and accelerating collaboration. Once the project concludes and the data is ready for publication or long-term storage, it should be transferred to an appropriate research data repository.

The following guide offers a detailed overview of how to use bwSync&Share efficiently in your research projects.

To get started with the tool, navigate to: <https://bwsyncandshare.kit.edu/>

Registration and login at bwSync&Share

The tool shares three different login/registration options as shown in Figure 1:

- **Option 1:** Your institute is already a member of the bwSync&Share association.
- **Option 2:** If you have a Helmholtz ID.
- **Option 3:** If you are a guest or external user, i.e., are not a part of bwSync&Share association.

This user guide is designed by keeping Option 1 in focus, i.e., when the institute is already a member of the bwSync&Share association.



Figure 1: Login page of bwSync&Share

Navigation through “Welcome” page

- ✂ As you enter the platform through the *“Mitglied im bwSync&Share – Verbund”* option, you will be redirected to the authentication page, where you will need to select your registered institute.
- ✂ As you find your institute, it is important to check the *“Remember home organization”* button to avoid any repetitive step during the future login sessions.
- ✂ Once you select your institute, click *“Continue”*. This will redirect you to your institute's login profile as show in Figure 3.

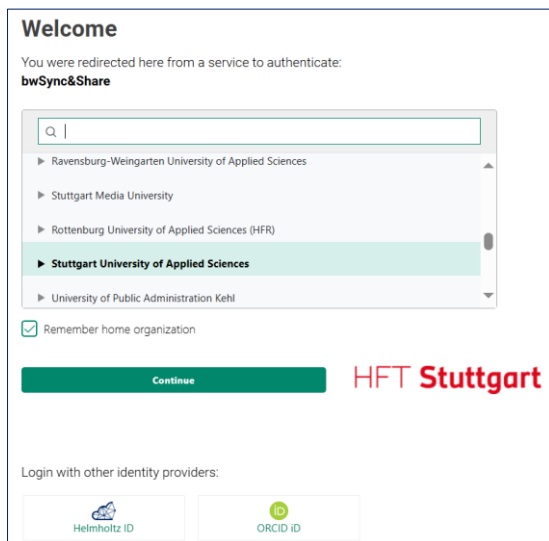


Figure 2: Institute authentication page



Figure 3: Institute login page

Navigation through the home page

As you enter the bwSync&Share environment, you will be directed to the home page, where you can find all the information about your files (both personal and shared):

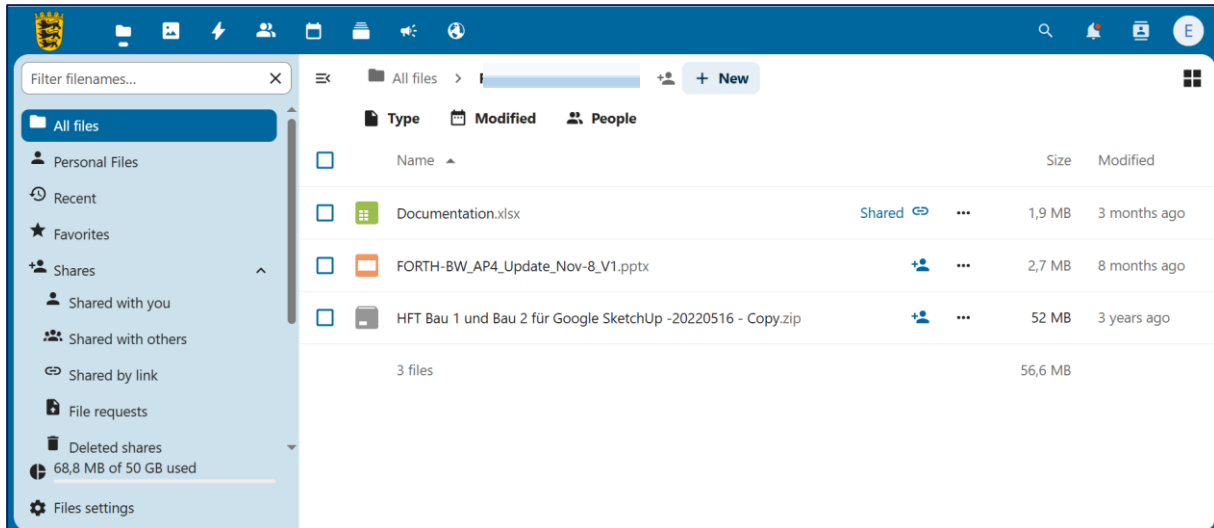


Figure 4: bwSync&Share Home page

On the left-hand side of the home page (Figure 4), you can navigate through various options, including:

- ✂ Viewing the most recently modified files and folders
- ✂ Marking files as favorites for quick access
- ✂ Viewing shared files, folders, and links
- ✂ Viewing the shared files and folders you are no longer a part of.
- ✂ Checking the storage space used and remaining in your bwSync&Share account
- ✂ Setting different file settings

Uploading and organizing files

bwSync&Share allows you to easily upload and organize your research files, making them accessible across your devices and simplifying collaboration with your team.

Uploading Files

- ✂ To upload a file or folder, navigate to your Homepage or the desired project folder.
- ✂ Click *“New”* button.
- ✂ Select *“Upload files”* or *“Upload folders”*, then choose files from your local device.
- ✂ You can also drag and drop files directly into the browser window to upload them.

Uploaded files will immediately appear in your selected folder and can be accessed, shared, or edited based on your permissions.

Best practices on folder structures

A well-organized folder structure helps research teams collaborate smoothly and find information quickly. Here are some best practices:

- ✂ **Use a clear hierarchy:** Create top-level folders by major categories like Projects, Data, Publications, or Meeting Notes. Inside each, add subfolders for specific experiments, dates, or document types.
- ✂ **Be consistent with naming:** Agree on a consistent naming convention for folders and files. For example, use dates in YYYY-MM-DD format (2025-07-03_Experiment1) and avoid spaces or special characters.
- ✂ **Include a “ReadMe” file:** Place a simple text or PDF file in each major folder explaining its contents and any special notes. This is helpful for new team members or collaborators.

Navigation through options with each file

For every file, you can perform a range of actions. These include adding the file to your favorites, opening its details, viewing, renaming, moving or copying, setting a reminder, editing it locally, locking the file, downloading, or deleting it.

On hitting “*Open details*” (Figure 5), you can navigate through three options:

- ✂ **Activity:** The Activity tab shows a log of all actions related to the selected file. This includes uploads, downloads, edits, shares, renames, and deletions. It helps you track who accessed or modified the file and when those actions occurred, providing transparency and accountability for file changes.
- ✂ **Sharing:** The Sharing tab allows you to manage how the file is shared with others. You can:
 - ✂ Create public sharing links for external access
 - ✂ Set password protection or expiration dates for links
 - ✂ Share the file with specific users or groups within bwSync&Share
 - ✂ Adjust permissions (e.g., view-only or editing rights)
 - ✂ This option helps you control access and collaboration securely.

- ✂ **Versions:** The Versions tab keeps a history of the file's previous versions. Whenever a file is modified, a new version is saved automatically. From this section, you can:
- ✂ View and compare previous versions of the file
 - ✂ Restore an earlier version if needed
 - ✂ Delete older versions to free up space
 - ✂ This feature helps prevent data loss and allows easy recovery from unwanted changes.

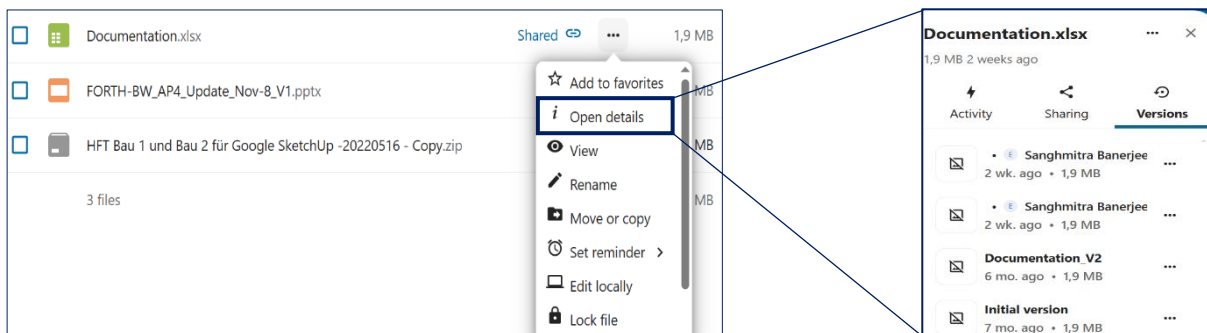


Figure 5: Options under “Open details” menu

Navigation through custom permissions

bwSync&Share offers a wide range of customizable permissions under the “*Sharing*” option (Figure 6). When sharing a file or folder, you can control who has access and what actions they can perform. Permissions include allowing users to view, edit, or download files. You can also set expiration dates for shared links, protect them with passwords, and restrict resharing to others. These options help you share content securely while maintaining control over how your data is accessed and used.

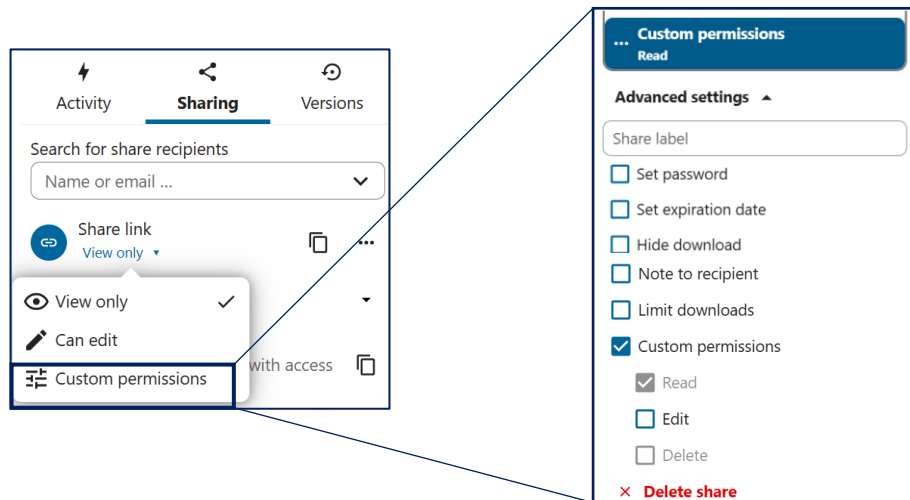


Figure 6: Custom permissions in sharing files and folders

Best practices for sharing files securely

- ✂ **Set expiration dates:** Always set an expiration date for public sharing links to prevent unwanted long-term access.
- ✂ **Use password protection:** Protect shared links with strong passwords, especially when sharing sensitive information externally.
- ✂ **Limit permissions:** Grant only the level of access needed (e.g., view-only if editing is not required) to reduce the risk of accidental changes.
- ✂ **Restrict resharing:** Disable the option for recipients to reshare the file unless absolutely necessary.
- ✂ **Review shared files regularly:** Periodically check your shared files and remove any links or permissions that are no longer needed.

Synchronizing files across devices

bwSync&Share offers desktop and mobile clients that allow you to synchronize your files seamlessly across all your devices. By installing the bwSync&Share app on your computer or smartphone, your files automatically stay up to date without manual uploading or downloading. This synchronization ensures that any changes you make—whether adding, editing, or deleting files—are reflected instantly across devices.

One of the key benefits of this feature is offline access: you can work on your files even without an internet connection, and any changes will sync automatically once you're back online. This seamless integration streamlines your workflow, enhances productivity, and ensures you always have the latest version of your research files at your fingertips.

For more information on clients, visit: [bwSync&Share-Clients](https://help.bwsyncandshare.kit.edu/english/147.php?) [<https://help.bwsyncandshare.kit.edu/english/147.php?>].

Managing storage space

Keeping track of your storage quota in bwSync&Share is important to ensure uninterrupted access and smooth file management. You can monitor your current storage usage directly from the dashboard or the sidebar, where the system shows how much space you have used and how much is still available.

To optimize your storage, regularly review your files and remove any that are no longer needed. Additionally, take advantage of the *"Versions"* feature by deleting old file versions that are no longer necessary, freeing up valuable space without losing your latest work. Regular cleanup helps maintain efficient performance, prevents storage limits from being exceeded, and ensures you always have room for new research data and documents.

Conclusion

bwSync&Share provides researchers with a secure and collaborative environment for managing and sharing their files. By understanding the platform's navigation, file management options, and customizable sharing permissions, users can streamline their workflows while protecting sensitive data. Following best practices for sharing and regularly reviewing file activity ensures that your research data remains both accessible and secure.

With its user-friendly interface and robust security features, bwSync&Share is an essential tool for collaborative research within academic and scientific communities.

Source

KIT – The Research University in the Helmholtz Association: Information on the bwSync&Share service, URL: <https://help.bwsyncandshare.kit.edu/english/161.php>