

Sharing Tracker Projects






A Tracker project consists of one or more Tracker tabs and videos along with optional support documents (pdf, html), all zipped together by Tracker itself into a single file with extension trz. The project file automatically includes an information page with project title, description, thumbnail image and metadata for search and display in the [Library Browser](#). Once you have saved a project as a trz file it is easy to share since it is entirely self-contained and self-documenting. For help building and saving Tracker projects see [Help: Tracker Projects](#).

In this collection you will learn how to share individual resources as well as collections of resources.

- Individual Files: Tracker projects (trz), Tracker tabs (trk), video files, html pages, pdf documents
- Live collections: a live collection is simply a file directory on a local machine or web server that contains resources. When the directory is opened in the Library Browser the resources are automatically displayed.
- XML collections: an XML collection is an XML document built with the [Library Browser](#) that contains references to resources which can be anywhere, including other servers.
- ComPADRE Digital Library: a network of educational resource collections supporting teachers and students in Physics and Astronomy.

Individual Files

Individual file resources associated with a Tracker project are of the following types.

-  Tracker Project TRZ: the final resource, a zip file containing resources below
-  Tracker Tab TRK: text file with tab data and path to video
-  Video or Image: any of the file types supported by the current video engine
-  HTML Page: may have associated image files.
-  PDF Document

Because a TRZ file is fully self-contained any Tracker user with access to it can open it knowing it will be complete. You can email or transfer it directly to others or share with peers in a classroom by copying it to a shared local directory.

Videos, HTML pages and PDF documents can also be shared separately, but Tracker tab files (TRK) are best shared when they are in a TRZ project file with their video, not separately without the video.

Live Collections

A live collection is simply a file directory on a local machine or web server that contains resources (and subdirectories if desired). When the directory is opened in the Library Browser the resources are automatically displayed. This is the easiest way to share multiple resources. For more information see [Library Browser](#).

1. Local: put the resources into a local directory and open the directory in the Library Browser. An ideal way for students to turn in lab projects is to add them to a shared directory accessible to both teacher and students as a live collection in the Library Browser.
2. Web: put the resources along with the Library Collection PHP script into a directory on a server and open the URL path to the script in the Library Browser. For more information see [Share your Projects and Collections](#).

XML Collections

An XML collection is built using the [Library Browser](#). This takes more work but gives you more flexibility and control of your collection. For example, you may include resources located anywhere, including other servers.

Here are the steps to building a local XML collection. For a more complete tutorial see the XML Collection Tutorial collection below or [Help: Library Browser](#).

- a. Organize your local Tracker projects and other resources within a single directory (with subdirectories if desired).
- b. Use the Library Browser to create, edit and save an XML collection file on a local drive. The base URL of the XML collection should be the absolute path to the directory containing your resources. By contrast, all paths to local html files and resources should be relative

to the base URL, not absolute. It's easy to convert absolute to relative paths when building the collection in the Library Browser.

Once you have your local XML collection it is easy to convert it to a web-based XML collection:

- a. Upload your entire directory (with resources and subdirectories but not the XML collection file) to a web server.
- b. Change the base URL of your XML collection to the URL path of the directory on the server so that all relative paths point to web files.
- c. Upload the XML collection file to the server. Open the collection by opening the URL path to the XML file in the Library Browser.

Note that your XML collection file need not reside on the server--you can also email it to others or share it on a local network. However, putting it on the web means you only have send others the URL to the web XML file.

Note: If you have a web-based XML collection you are proud of, please email [Douglas Brown](#) who will (if approved) add it to the Library Browser's Collections|Shared Library menu. It will then be accessible to all Tracker users, not just your students.