

Using the Filex File Distribution System

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Introduction

Filex is a file distribution system that allows TAMU affiliates to upload files to a CIS-managed file server and send download links via email to specified recipients. Recipients can then download these hosted files directly from the Filex server. By hosting files on a central server for distribution instead of emailing the files directly, email delivery times in general will become faster as the work of sending files is taken from the email relay servers and is given to dedicated file distribution servers.

Files hosted on the Filex system will remain available for three days. After three days, the files are automatically deleted from the Filex server and can not be recovered. Filex is intended to be a distribution solution and not a long-term storage solution. If you require that the files remain accessible for more than three days, it is recommended that you seek alternative hosting solutions.

Section 1: Creating and Sharing Folders

This section will cover the steps to create a folder to store the files you wish to share and to allow others to access all the files within that folder. Sharing only specific files within a folder is covered in Section 2: Sharing Files.

1) Go to <https://filex.tamu.edu>

2) Click on "Start Sending with Filex" (Figure 1).

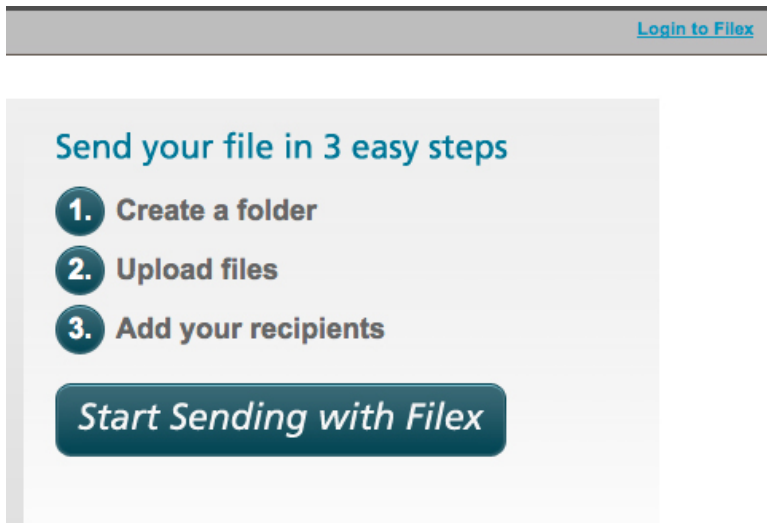


Figure 1

3) Log in using NetID and password (Figure 2).

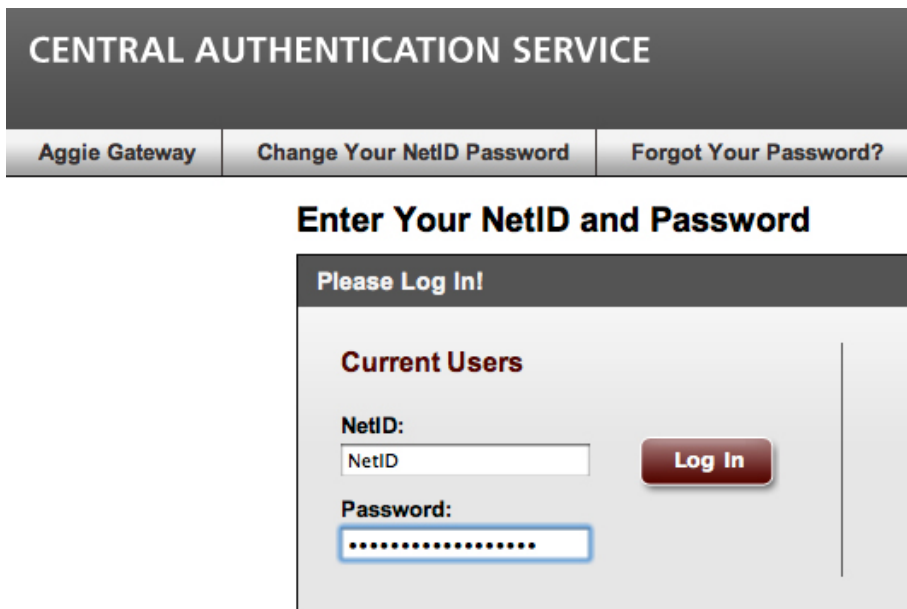
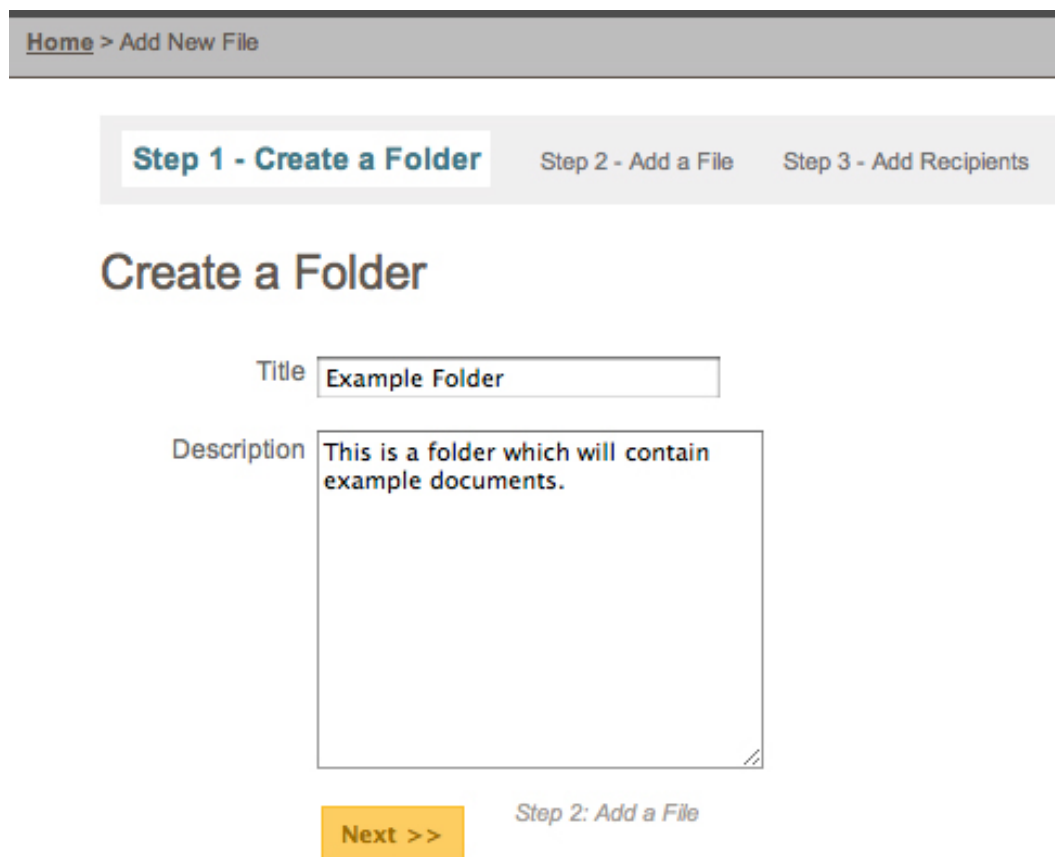


Figure 2

4) Once logged in, click on either "Get Started with Filex" or "Create a Folder" to create a folder to hold the documents you wish to share. Both links will take you to the folder creation screen.

5) Enter a title for your folder and a description of the files in the folder. In this example, we will name the folder "Example Folder." Once a title and description have been entered, click on "Next" (Figure 3).



The screenshot shows a web interface for creating a folder. At the top, there is a breadcrumb trail: [Home](#) > Add New File. Below this is a progress bar with three steps: **Step 1 - Create a Folder** (highlighted in blue), Step 2 - Add a File, and Step 3 - Add Recipients. The main heading is "Create a Folder". The form consists of a "Title" field containing "Example Folder" and a "Description" text area containing "This is a folder which will contain example documents." At the bottom, there is a yellow "Next >>" button and a link for "Step 2: Add a File".

Figure 3

6) This is where you choose the file you wish to upload to be shared via the Filex service. As with the folder we created in Step 5, give your file a title and description. Once a title and description have been entered, click on "Choose file" to choose a file to be hosted. Please note that Filex cannot host files that are larger than 2GB in size.

7) Once you have chosen the document to upload, you may choose to encrypt the file or not. If the document contains sensitive or confidential information, please encrypt the document. Once you have chosen whether or not to encrypt the document, click on "Next." This will upload the file you have chosen and encrypt it if you selected to do so (Figure 4).

Step 1 - Create a Folder

Step 2 - Add a File

Step 3 - Add Recipients

Add a File

Skip

Title (optional)

Description (optional)

File Test_Doc..._01.txt maximum file size is 2 GB.

Encryption type Encrypt this file
 This file does not contain sensitive information or is already encrypted

[Step 3: Add Recipients](#)

Figure 4

8) After the file has been transferred, click on "Continue" to select your recipients. Recipients entered will have access to all files in the folder.

9) Enter the email address you wish to share the folder with. This can be an individual person's email address or a bulk mail address (such as those used for SYMPA, TAMUDirect and Listserv). Only one address at a time can be entered in the email field. If you wish to add two or more recipient addresses, click the link below the Recipient pull-down menu that says "Add Another."

10) In the pull-down menu by Recipient, you can set the permissions you wish to give to that email address. These permissions will apply to all files within the folder. If sending to a bulk mail address, every recipient will have the same address, so please be careful of the permissions you give. The choices are:

- Can download - The recipient(s) can only download files contained in this folder.

- Can download and upload - The recipient(s) can download files from the folder as well as upload new files.
- Has complete access - The recipient(s) can download and upload files as well as edit folder titles and descriptions, add or remove recipients and delete files.

11) Once you have set permissions for the recipient(s), click on "Complete."

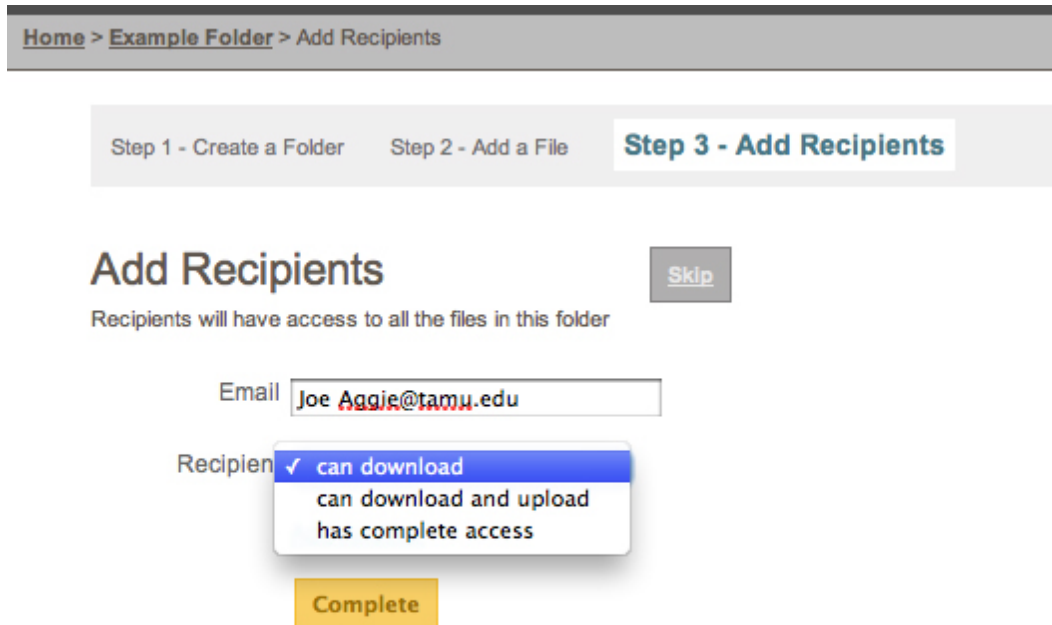


Figure 5

12) You will now be on the Folder View page for the folder you have created (Figure 6). On the left is the title of your folder with its description below it. These can be edited by clicking the "edit" link to the right of the title. Below the title and description is a list of recipients for the folder. You can remove recipients who no longer need or should not have been given permission to download the folder by clicking the "remove" link to the right of their address. If you remove a bulk mail address, all individual recipients of that bulk mail will be removed. If you need to resend the download key for the folder, you can click the "Resend Key" link.

13) On the right side of the screen is a list of files located in this folder. You will have links there to download the file and to delete the file (if you have permission to do so). Please note that files are only stored for three days. The expiration date of a particular file is given in red to the right of the file's name. After this date, the file is deleted from the Filex server and cannot be retrieved. Filex is intended for file distribution and not file storage.

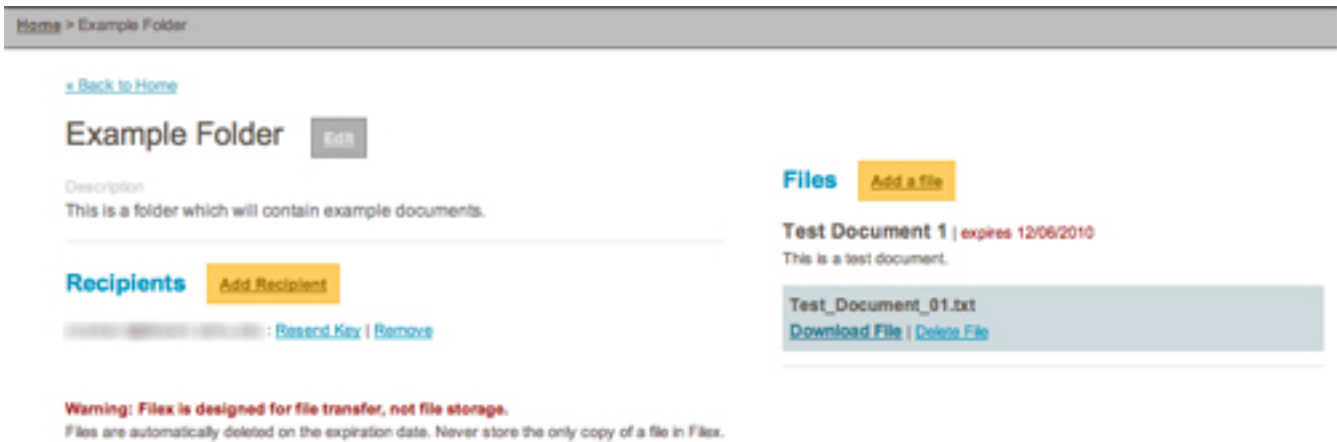


Figure 6

Section 2: Sharing Files

To share a file, you need to have a folder. If you have not created a folder in Filex, please see Section 1: Sharing Folders. Please note that permissions for files are defined by the folder recipient in Step 10 of Section 1.

1) Go to <https://filex.tamu.edu>

2) Click on "Start Sending with Filex" and login with your NetID and Password (Figure 2). If you are continuing from Section 1: Sharing Folders, you will already be logged in.

3) You will now be on your Filex home page (Figure 7). On this page, you will see listed the folders you have created, descriptions of those folders, the date you added the folders, and the documents inside each folder. Each file will have its expiration date beside it. After that expiration date, the file will be deleted from the Filex server and cannot be retrieved.

Folders		Create a folder	
Name	Description	Date Added	Files (expiration date follows)
Example Folder	This is a folder which will contain example documents.	12/03/2010	Test Document 1 expires 12/06/2010

[View all folders](#)

Figure 7

4) Click on the folder you wish to upload your file into.

5) You will now be on the Folder View page. For a complete description of this page, please see Step 12 in Section 1. To upload a file, click the "Add a file" link on the right side of the page next to the Files heading.

6) On the Add a File page, enter a title and description of the file you will be uploading.

7) Click on "Choose File" to choose the file you wish to add to your Filex folder. Please remember that you cannot upload files larger than 2GB in size. If the file contains sensitive or confidential information, please select to encrypt the file. When you choose to encrypt the file, you will have an option to allow recipients to decrypt when downloading. This will result in an unencrypted file on the recipient's machine. If you do not leave this option checked, the recipient will need a GPG program on their computer in order to decrypt the file. In this example, the file is being encrypted, and recipients will be able to decrypt it while downloading.

Add a File

Title (optional)

Description (optional)

File Test_Doc..._02.txt maximum file size is 2 GB.

Encryption type Encrypt this file
 This file does not contain sensitive information or is already encrypted

Allow recipients to decrypt when downloading

Figure 8

8) After you have selected the file and set its encryption settings, click on "Complete." Because the file is being encrypted, a File Access Code will be given. A copy of this access code will be sent to you, but you may wish to write it down as well. Click "continue" on the File Access Code page (Figure 9).

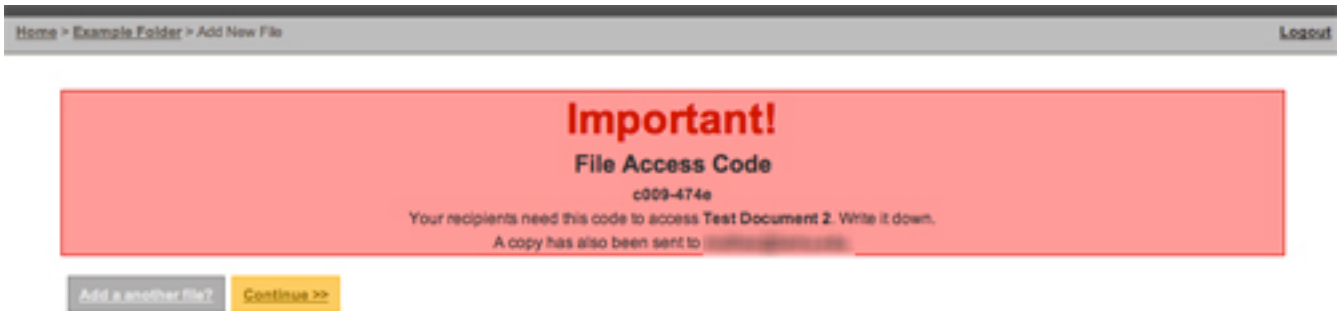


Figure 9

9) On the Folder View page, the new file will be added to the list of files within the folder. Because the file is encrypted, the options listed are "Decrypt File and Download" and "Download Encrypted File" as well as "Delete file." As with all files, the expiration date for this file will be listed beside the file's name.

10) If you need to delete a file, click the "Delete file" link below the file. This will give you a confirmation page where you can confirm that you wish to delete the file. Click on "Yes, Delete This File" to delete the file. This cannot be undone, and you will have to re-upload the file if you deleted it by mistake (Figure 10).

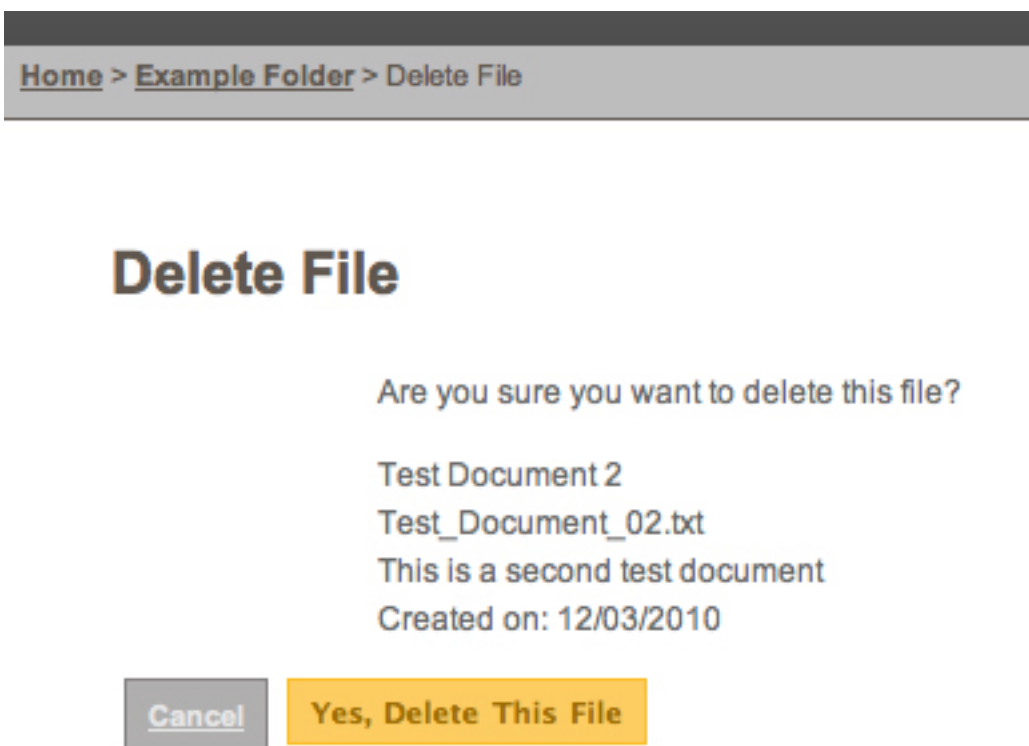


Figure 10

Section 3: Downloading files

1) When a file is available for you to download, you will receive an email from the @tamu.edu address of the person who uploaded the file to be downloaded (Figure 11). The email will contain the name of the folder you have access to as well as the titles and descriptions of all the files within the folder. There will also be a link available which will take you directly to the shared folder.

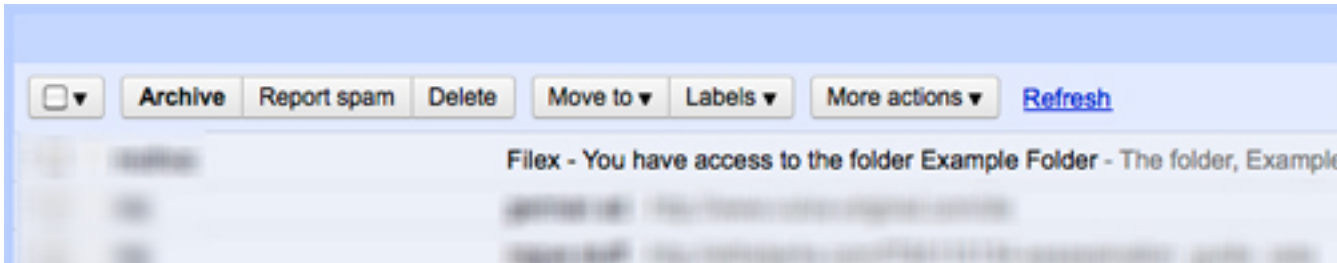


Figure 11

2) On the right side of this page is a list of files in the folder as their download options. For unencrypted files, you will have only a download link. For encrypted files, you will have links to decrypt and download the file or to download the encrypted file (Figure 12).

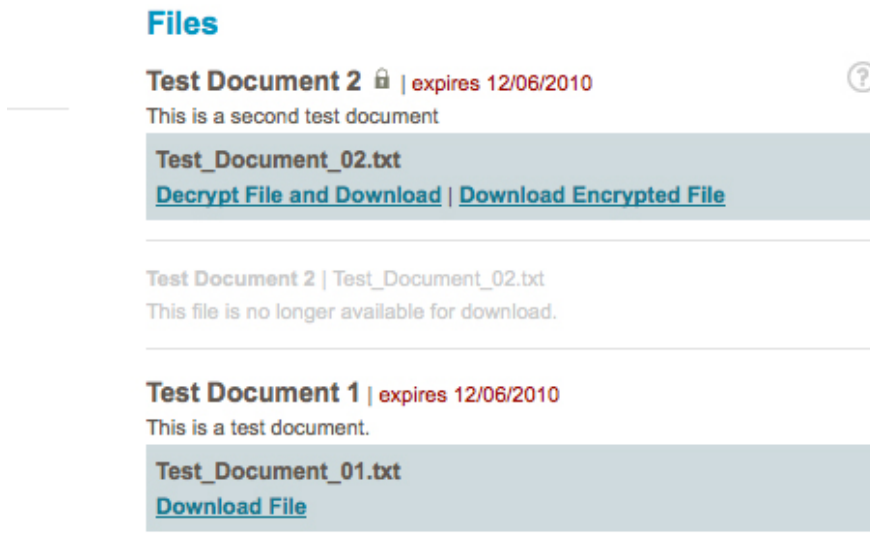


Figure 12

If you choose to download and decrypt an encrypted file, click on "Decrypt File and Download." You will be asked to enter the passcode provided you in step 8 of Section 2 (Figure 13). Enter the passcode and then click

on "Download File." The file will then download normally. If you choose to download the encrypted file, you will need a GPG program on your computer to decrypt the file.

To decrypt this file, type the passcode provided to you by the person who uploaded the file. If you have not received the passcode, contact the person who uploaded the file.

Passcode:

Download File

Figure 13

3) If you have been given options to delete files, a "delete file" link will appear to the right of the file download links.

4) If you have been given permission to upload files to the folder, you will have an "Add File" link above the list of files. Instructions for adding files can be found in Section 2: Sharing Files.

Important notes

There are several important notes to remember about the Filex system:

- 1) There is no long-term storage for files on this system. Each file will be deleted 72 hours after it is uploaded. If you require longer-term storage than that, it is advised that you seek alternative hosting solutions.
- 2) The message sent to recipients DOES NOT include the expiration date of the file. The only place where this expiration date is visible is on the Filex webpage itself. The expiration date will be listed in red letters to the right of each file's name. This date is viewable to every recipient who has permission to view and download that file.
- 3) Once a file has been automatically deleted from the Filex server, it cannot be retrieved.
- 4) If you send a Filex notice for an encrypted file to a bulk mail address through SYMPA, TAMUDirect, Listserv, etc., every recipient will receive and be able to use the same access code to decrypt and download the file.
- 5) If you use Filex to distribute a file that contains sensitive or confidential information, it is up to you to know that **every** recipient you send the file to has authority to view the contents of the file.