

7 September 2017

Valued client

Good day

COLLABORATION ON WWW.DROPBOX.COM

Specific clients, please read further:

If you are not a client, you do not need to read further.

This is not compulsory reading for all clients.

No only relevant to South African circumstances.

No afrikaans version of this e-mail available.

The section under the heading “Collaboration on www.Dropbox.com”, as well as the first paragraph under the heading “Further notes”, on our earlier client notice 4 April 2017 ([Procedures regarding the Shared Use of \[www.Dropbox.com\]\(http://www.Dropbox.com\)](#)) refer.

While most clients have embraced the use of the online file sharing service available at www.Dropbox.com, a small percentage of clients are struggling to understand the shared use of electronic files in cases where multiple users are editing/updating the same electronic files (e.g. salary registers updated by both our firm and our clients). The purpose of this client notice is to elaborate on the earlier client notice dated 4 April 2017:

In a traditional paper-based office, files, being used by multiple users, are generally available at a secure location in the office (e.g. the upper shelf of the office), where all users can access such files. A similar concept applies in electronic files being available in a secured shared folder at www.Dropbox.com (the upper shelf).

In a traditional office, such files, books, registers, etc., being of a physical substance, can only be in use by one user at a time. There is therefore little risk of being duplicated by mistake. Once a user has removed a physical register from the usual filing place (e.g. the upper shelf of the office), the register is temporarily unavailable to all other users. Using electronic files in a virtual filing environment such as www.Dropbox.com, makes it extremely easy to duplicate the same file by mistake. This is the result of the electronic register being left in the shared folder at www.Dropbox.com after also being downloaded to the user’s computer.

In a traditional office, the user, currently working with the register, will normally take physical control over the register, disallowing others to use the same register while in use by that user. In a virtual filing environment, the user, currently working with the register, specifically needs to ensure that, once the electronic file has been removed from the shared folder at www.Dropbox.com, no other users can accidentally start using the same electronic file. Should another user accidentally start using the same electronic file, the two (or more) users will be editing/updating the content of the same electronic file simultaneously. In all such cases, all updates/edits will be overwritten by the user who uploads the electronic register last to the shared folder at www.Dropbox.com. This problem can easily be overcome by simply removing the register from www.Dropbox.com prior to downloading the electronic file.

In a traditional office, such files, books, registers, etc., being of a physical substance, is difficult to duplicate. Using electronic files in a virtual filing environment, such as www.Dropbox.com, makes it extremely easy to duplicate the same file by mistake. While it happens very seldom that the same electronic register is overwritten, it normally results in the same electronic register being duplicated with the postfix “(1)”, “(2)” or even “(3)” after the same name of the electronic file.

In a traditional office, the chances of somebody renaming a register (called e.g. “AAA001 - Salary Register - 28Feb18 (0016).ods”) to e.g. “My Register (3)”) is very little. Using electronic files in a virtual filing environment, such as www.Dropbox.com, makes it extremely easy to rename an electronic file by mistake. The result thereof is that the electronic file is no longer called what it is supposed to be called, thus unidentifiable by other users.

Understanding the inherent risks of overwriting the same electronic file, it is very easy to avoid this problem of duplicating the same electronic file: Either the electronic file is not in use available in the shared folder at www.Dropbox.com, or the electronic file is in use not available in the shared folder at www.Dropbox.com. Thus, when available in the shared folder at www.Dropbox.com, it implies that no one is currently using the electronic file. Also, when not available in the shared folder at www.Dropbox.com, it implies that someone else is currently using the electronic file.

Using one of two ways to avoid this problem, the best option is to first move the electronic file from the shared folder to a unshared folder at www.Dropbox.com, and thereafter download the electronic file to your computer. Once completed, the same electronic file is uploaded back to the shared folder at www.Dropbox.com without any modifications to its file name.

Please contact us, should you require any further advice or assistance.

Regards

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