KNOWLEDGE BASE ARTICLE

Working with Folders in List Filter Online: Folder Navigation, Flat View and Breadcrumbs

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Introduction

Folders are the most common way to structure a **SharePoint document library**, and they are also the most common obstacle to finding something in it. List Filter Online gives the page author a choice: show the library the way SharePoint shows it, folder by folder; flatten it into one **list** of documents that can be filtered and sorted as a whole; or show both the folders and all the documents at once.

This article explains the three folder modes of the **web part**, how users move between folders with breadcrumbs, how folders are created and colored from the web part, and what happens to filters, sorting, grouping and the Excel export in each mode. The web part appears in the toolbox as "List Filter"; the settings described here are in its property pane.

Note

Folder settings apply to lists as well as to document libraries. A list shows folder commands only when folders are allowed in its advanced settings.

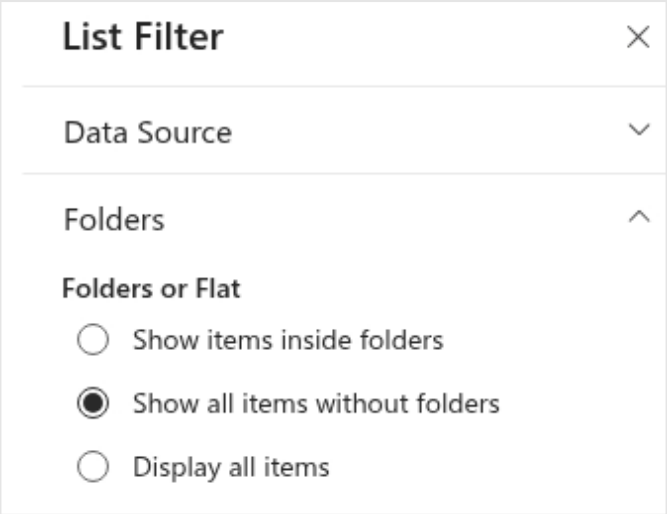
The three folder modes

Open the **Folders** group of the property pane. The choice **Folders or Flat** offers three options:

Option	What is shown	When to use it
Show items inside folders	The folders and items of the current folder only; the user opens a folder to see its content.	When the folder structure carries meaning and users are used to browsing it.
Show all items without folders	All items of the list or library from every folder, as one flat list; no folder rows.	When users search by properties and the folder is irrelevant - the typical setup for the filter pane. This is the default.
Display all items	All items and all folders from every level, together in one flat list.	When the folders themselves are needed as entries - for example to color or rename them - while all documents stay

Option	What is shown	When to use it
		visible.

Internally the options map to the SharePoint **view** scopes: **Show items inside folders** uses the default scope, **Show all items without folders** the *Recursive* scope and **Display all items** the *RecursiveAll* scope. The scope is written into the **CAML** query that the web part sends to SharePoint, so it applies to item retrieval and export. Filter-value lists also include values from subfolders, as explained below.



The Folders group of the property pane

Navigating folders as a user

Opening a folder

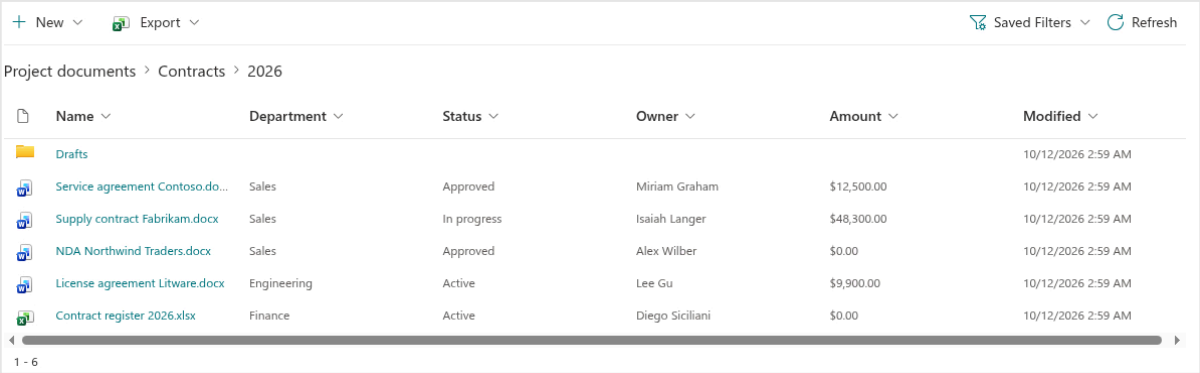
In **Show items inside folders** mode, folders appear as rows with a folder icon in the **Type** column - a filled icon when the folder contains items and an empty one when it does not. A folder is opened through a column whose **Linked to item** option is switched on in the column configurator (usually the **Name** column): the folder name becomes a link, and a click on it loads the content of the folder. Paging restarts from the first page in the new folder.

Warning

If no column of the view has **Linked to item** switched on, folders are listed but cannot be opened. Include the **Name** (or **Title**) column and enable **Linked to item** for it.

Breadcrumbs

To let users return to a parent folder, switch on **Navigation** in the **Appearance** group of the property pane. A breadcrumb bar then appears above the table. Its first entry is the name of the list or library and stands for the root folder; each folder the user has opened is added after a chevron. A click on the list name returns to the root, a click on an intermediate folder returns to that folder; the current folder is shown as plain text.



Breadcrumbs above the table in folder mode

Warning

Without **Navigation** the web part offers no way back to the parent folder: once the user opens a folder, only reloading the page returns to the root. Always enable **Navigation** together with **Show items inside folders**.

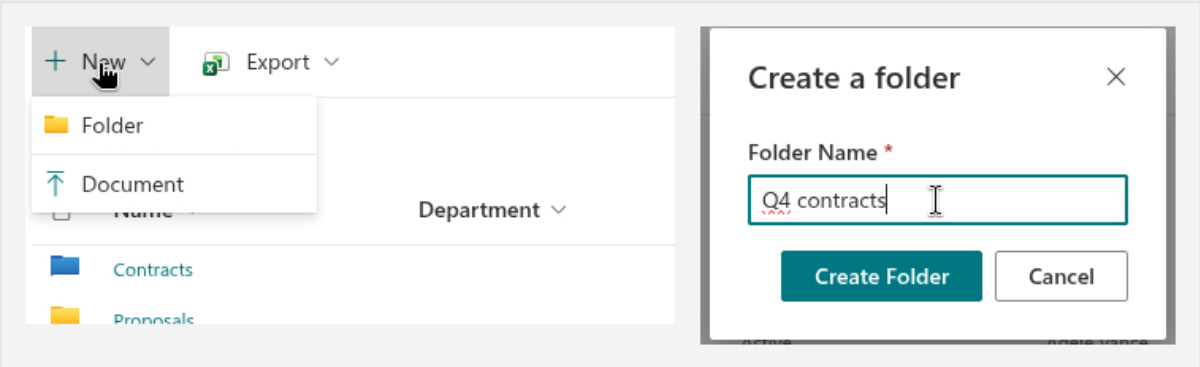
Initially, in the two flat modes the breadcrumb bar shows only the list name. In **Display all items** mode a folder row can still be opened; the view then shows all items and folders below that folder, and the breadcrumb bar leads back.

Creating folders and uploading documents

The **New** command of the command toolbar is shown to users who have permission to edit items in the list or library. Its content depends on the type of the list:

- in a document library, **New** opens a menu with **Folder** and **Document**; **Document** opens the SharePoint form for adding a document to the library in a new tab, **Folder** opens the folder dialog;
- in a list that allows folders, **New** currently opens the new-item form; create folders in the native SharePoint list view because the folder submenu is not displayed correctly;
- in a list without folders, **New** opens the new-item form directly.

The **Create a folder** dialog asks for the **Folder Name** and creates the folder with the **Create Folder** button inside the folder currently shown - the current breadcrumb location in any mode; this is the list root until a folder is opened. The view is refreshed after the folder is created. If a folder with the same name already exists, SharePoint rejects the request and the dialog shows its message.



The New menu and the Create a folder dialog

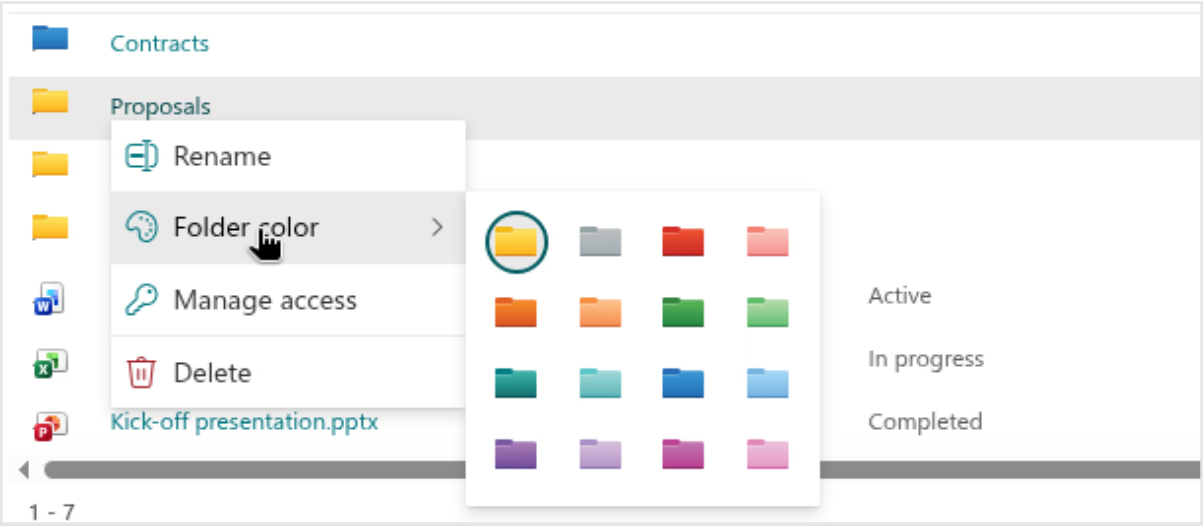
Note

The **Folder** entry is disabled when the list or library does not allow folders. The **New** command is hidden from users without the "Edit items" permission, and the whole toolbar is hidden when **Commands** is switched off in the **Command toolbar** group.

Folder colors

Users with edit permission on a folder can change its color from the web part. Right-click the folder row and choose **Folder color**; a palette of 16 swatches opens - the same 16 colors that **SharePoint Online** and OneDrive offer: Yellow (the default), Grey, and dark and light shades of red, orange, green, teal, blue, purple and pink. The color is saved to SharePoint through the folder coloring API, so it is the same color that users see in the native library view, and a color assigned in SharePoint is shown in the web part.

The same context menu also offers **Rename** for the folder and, for users who can manage permissions, **Manage access**.



The Folder color palette in the context menu of a folder

Tip

A step-by-step guide to coloring folders, including the required permissions and the role of the **Type** column, is in KB50010. How To Color Folders in SharePoint Online.

Filtering and folders

Every filter - the predefined filter of the Query Builder, the filter pane and the filter values in the column header menu - is combined with the folder scope in a single query:

- in **Show items inside folders** mode the filters are applied to the content of the current folder only; the result does not include matching items from subfolders;
- in the two flat modes the filters include the current folder and its subfolders. At the root this covers the whole list or library; after opening a folder in **Display all items** mode, only that subtree is searched.

The lists of values in the drop-down controls of the filter pane and in the column header menu are collected for the current folder - including the values found in its subfolders - and are reloaded every time the user opens another folder. Filters applied by the user stay active while the user moves between folders; opening a folder resets the paging but not the filters.

Tip

When the goal is to find a document by its properties, use **Show all items without folders**: the filter pane then searches the whole library in one step and the user never has to guess the folder. The folder of each result can be shown by adding the **Path** column to the view.

Sorting and grouping with folders

Sorting and grouping are part of the same query and are applied in every mode. Folder rows are treated like any other row: the web part does not pin them to the top of the list, so their position follows the order that SharePoint returns for the configured sort columns. With **Display all items**, grouping by a column gathers folders and documents under the same group headers; folders usually fall into the **(No Title)** group of a column they have no value for. The settings themselves are described in KB10260. Grouping, Sorting and Totals in List Filter Online.

Export and folders

The **Export** menu of the command toolbar exports what the current query returns:

- **Current Page** writes the rows of the page on the screen - in folder mode, the rows of the current folder;
- **All Items** reads all pages of the current query and writes them to one workbook: in folder mode all items of the current folder, in the flat modes all items below the current folder, always within the active filters;
- **Selected items** writes the rows the user has selected.

Folder rows are exported like other rows, with the word **Folder** in the **Type** column. The folder path of a document is exported when the **Path** column is part of the view. See KB50022. How To Export a SharePoint List to Excel for details on the export.

Limitations

Warning

Terms

CAML
Collaborative Application Markup Language (CAML) is a case-sensitive, XML-based language used in SharePoint to define data definition objects such as lists, document libraries, views, content types, fields, and data rendering elements. For example, CAML can be used to build a query that filters and retrieves data from lists or libraries.

Document Library
A special type of list that stores files, folders, and information about them. Like a list, a document library can contain personal or shared views, item-level permissions, and so on.

List
A list is a storage unit in SharePoint. A list can contain columns of different types, content types, and views. A document library is a special type of list and therefore inherits the functionality of a list.

SharePoint
SharePoint is a web-based collaboration platform that provides content management, document management, workflow applications, search, and other tools that empower employees and teams to work together. SharePoint is also a secure place to store, organize, and access shared information.

SharePoint Online
The cloud version of SharePoint, a web-based collaboration platform within Microsoft 365 that provides an extensive range of capabilities to store, share, and manage the digital information, content, and knowledge of an organization.

View
A view is a saved configuration that determines which items of a list or library are displayed and how, including the columns, sorting, filtering, grouping, and layout. Views can be personal or public.

Web Part
A web part is a primary building block of functionality or content placed on a SharePoint page. Some web parts support customization, such as configuring the web

part or changing its appearance.