Introduction to Mahara

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Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

Introduction to Mahara

E-Portfolios

'A portfolio is a collection, selection and organisation of…work over time that shows evidence of self-reflection and learning' (Wade and Yarborough, 1996).

'An e-portfolio is a purposeful aggregation of digital items - ideas, evidence, reflections, feedback etc. which 'presents' a selected audience with evidence of a person's learning and/or ability'
(Sutherland and Powell, 2007).

Mahara (Te Reo Māori for 'think' or 'thought') is a fully featured electronic e-portfolio, blogging, CV builder and social networking system, connecting users and creating online communities. It provides tools that can be used to create a personal learning environment (PLE). A Mahara portfolio can contain various forms of multimedia content such as images, sound and video, thus providing rich evidence of the work completed. It offers a file storage space, an ability to share work, collaborate in groups and it also has social networking capabilities such as friends, walls and blogs.

Some Resources

Videos
Introduction to Mahara: http://www.scivee.tv/node/6372
Loughborough College: http://youtu.be/7TWoJ2FcQhQ
Paul Treadwell: http://youtu.be/NXwkDtJ8z4c (first 8 minutes)

Sample portfolios
Sam Moss: http://mahara.solent.ac.uk/view/view.php?id=55
Richard Davis: http://mahara.ulcc.ac.uk/view/view.php?id=1
Savita Malik: http://youtu.be/3_FmRH6Lj5c

Links
Mahara website   https://mahara.org/
Overview of e-Portfolios, Educause http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/eli3001.pdf
Mahara user manual   http://manual.mahara.org/en/15.04/index.html

Accessing Mahara

In DkIT, Mahara has been integrated with Moodle so that only a **single sign-on** is required.To access Mahara, you first log into Moodle. On the lower left-hand side of your Moodle page there should be a block titled Network Servers similar to that shown below.
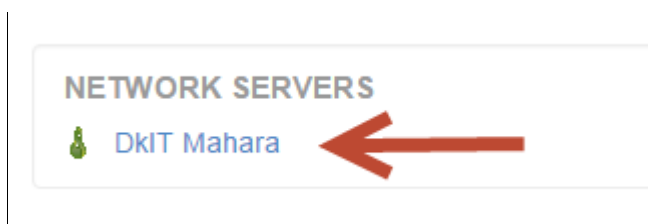
Click on the **DkIT Mahara link** to access your Mahara environment.

Note: It is currently not possible to log on directly to Mahara.

The Network Servers block is not visible on your Moodle page, then it may be visible on a tab at the side of the page as shown.

Click on this tab to see the block containing the link to Mahara.

When you click on the link your Mahara **Dashboard** should be visible.
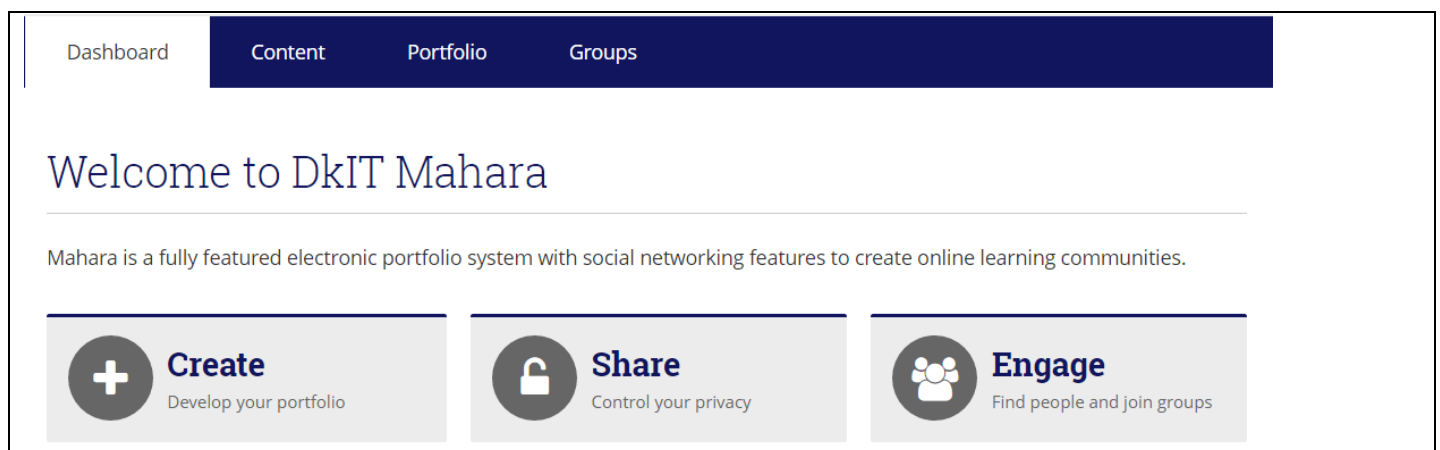
Process for creating your portfolio:
The normal process for creating your portfolio is as follows:
- Create pages
- Add content – text, images, video, files etc.
- Link pages in a collection
- Add navigation
- Share the pages or collection

Creating Pages in Mahara

To create pages you can click on **Create** on the Dashboard or click on **Portfolio**.
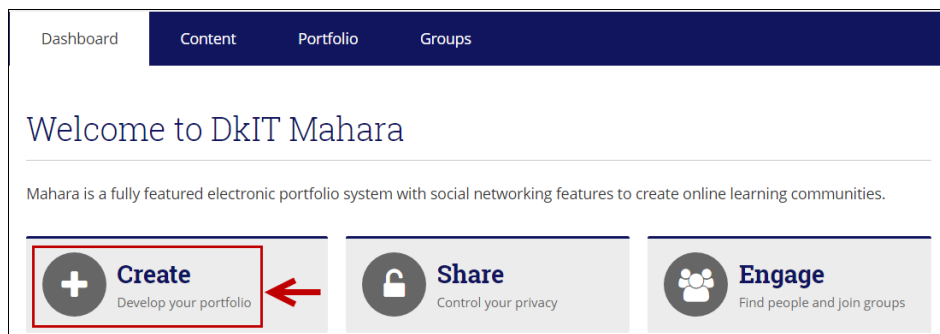
If you click on **Portfolio** you will see list of your pages similar to the following.
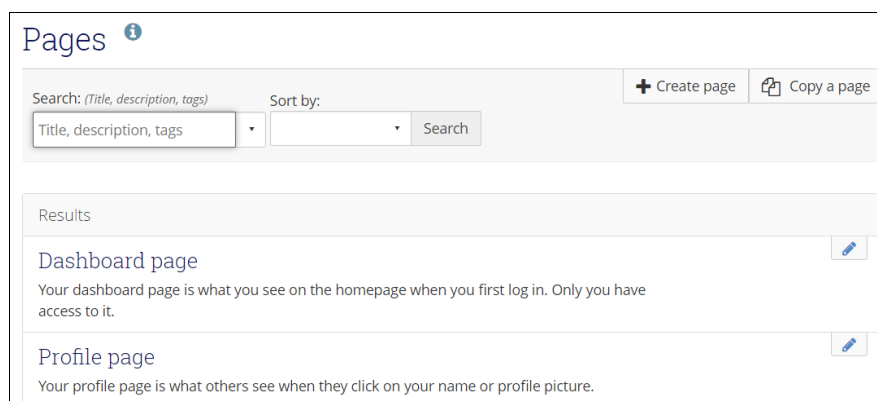
Click on **Create Page**.

On the first tab, we can give the page a title and brief description.
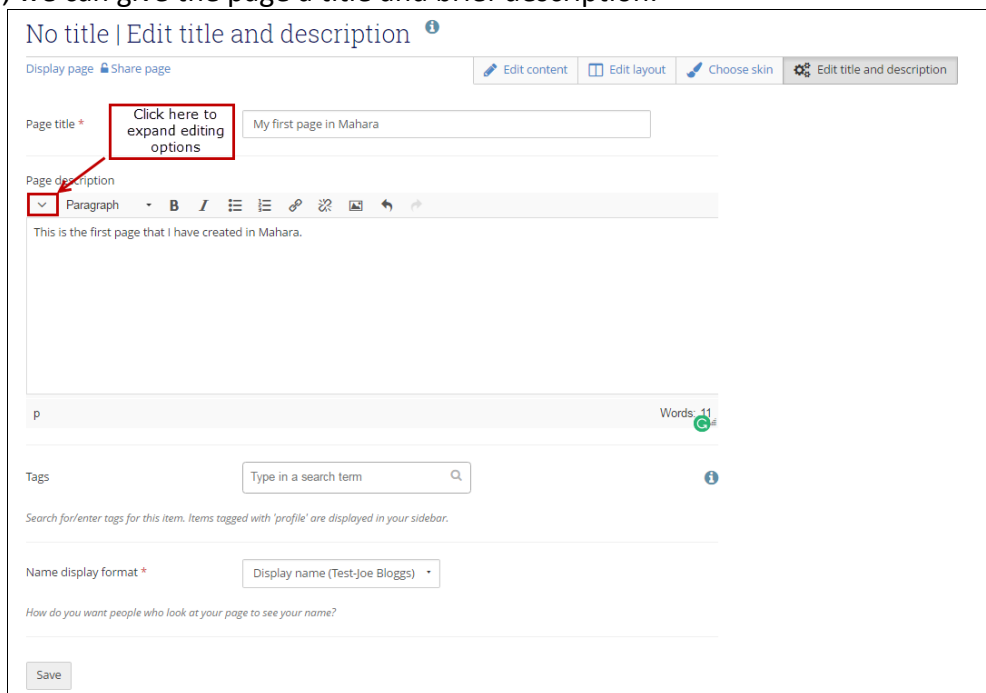
Click on **Save**.

Editing the page layout

Click on the **Edit Layout** tab. A number of layouts will be available as shown below. Choose an appropriate layout for your page.
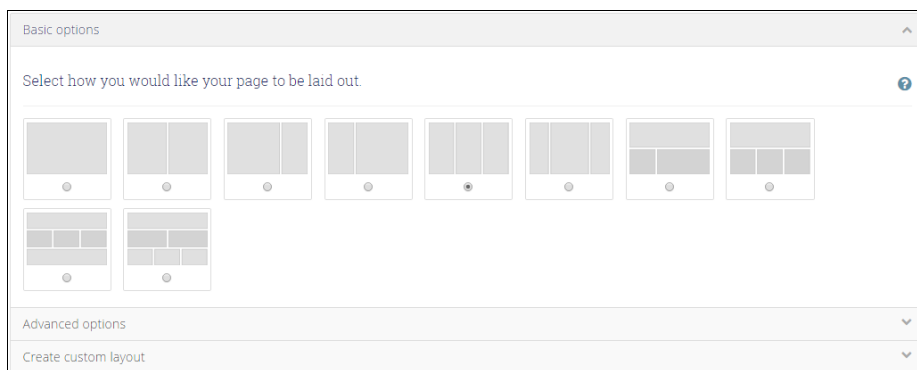
To see a list of further layout options, click on **Advanced options**. Under **Advanced options** you can also create your own layout if you wish. To close the Advanced options list, click on **Advanced Options** again.

Click on **Save**.

Editing the contents of the page

Initially, at least, your main focus will be on adding content to your portfolio pages. To add content (i.e. text, images, video etc.), click on the **Edit Content** tab.
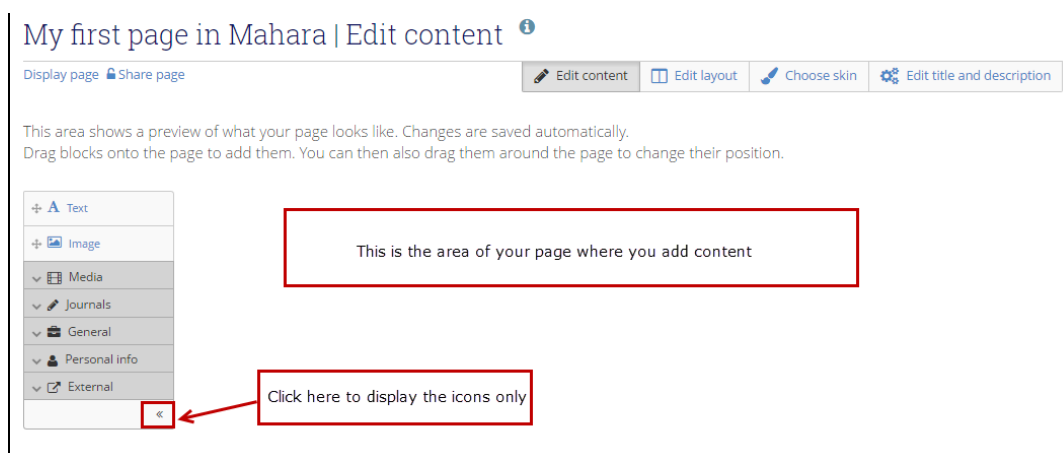
A number of different types of content block are displayed on the left as shown above. Clicking on the left arrow will display the icons for each block type. Click on the right arrow to see the block names again.
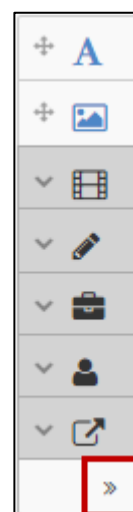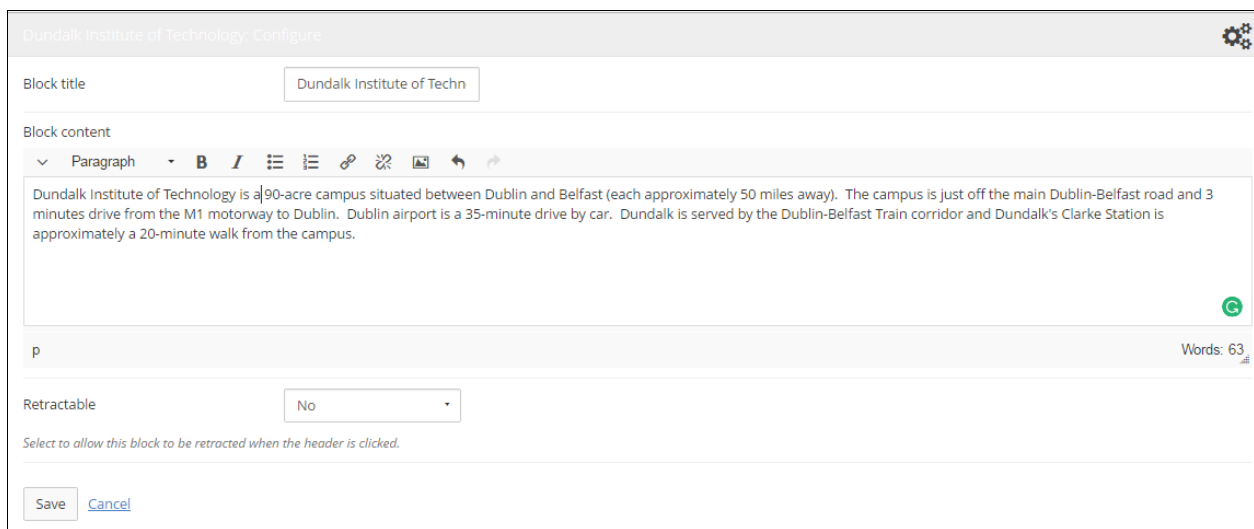
Adding text

To add a textbox, click on the **Text** tab and drag the block onto the page area as shown.
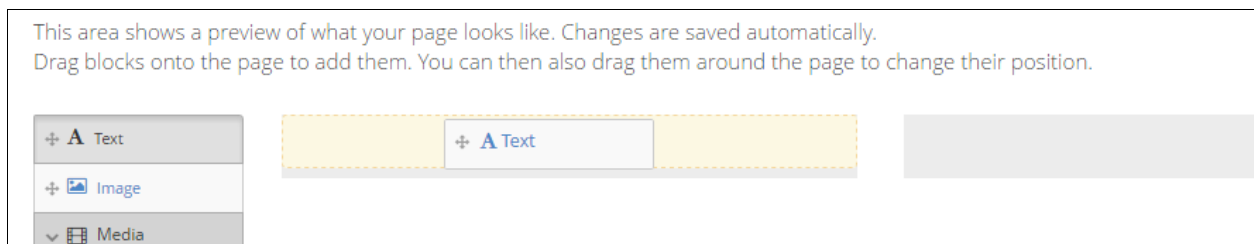
Configure the textbox by entering a title and inserting some text. An example is shown below.

Click on **Save** when finished.

The resulting textbox is shown below.

To edit the textbox, click on the cog icon on the upper right corner. To remove the textbox, click on the bin icon.

Inserting an image

To insert an image, click on the I**mage** tab and drag it into position on the page.
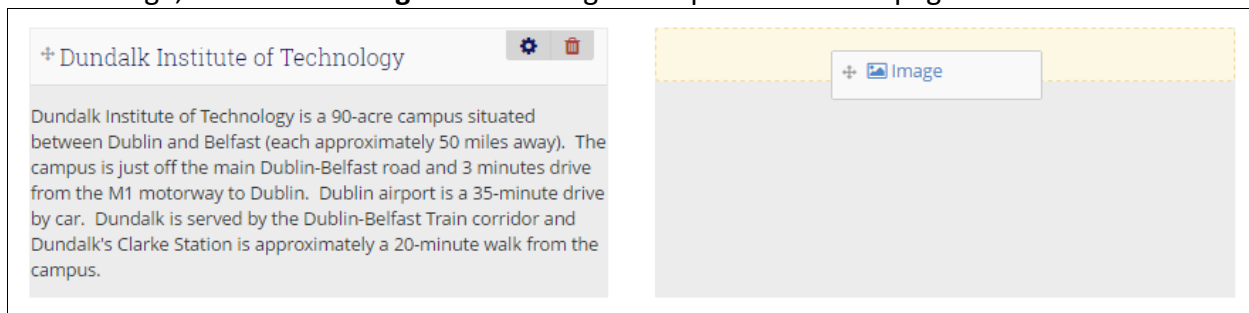
Drag the **Image** block to the correct position on the page.

To configure the image block, give it a title, browse and upload a file or select from list of files already uploaded. To upload a file, click on **Choose Files**.

To choose an image which has previously been uploaded, click on the **Select** button to the right of the image name.

Click on **Save**.

Your page should look similar to the following.

Adding a video to your page

Click on the **Exernal** tab. Drag the **External media** block onto your page. Enter the title for the block, the URL for the video, a width and height for the video in pixels. Then click **Save**.

Your page should now look similar to the following.

Editing and moving blocks

Edit: To **edit/configure** a block, click on the ⚙ icon in the top right corner.

Move: To **move** a block around the page, click on the title and drag it to the new location.
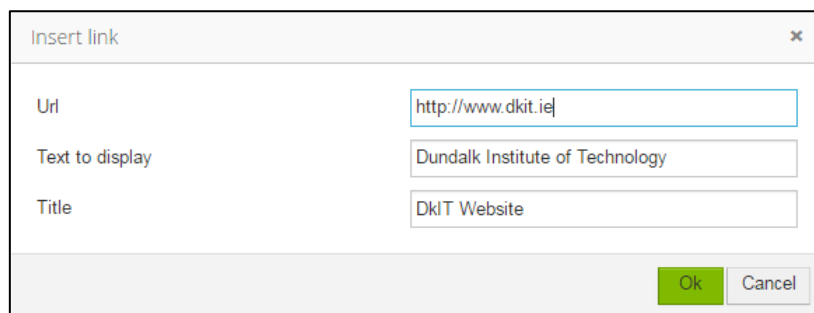
Creating a link to a web page.

In the following example we will create a link to the DkIT website in the textbox so that when we click on the text "Dundalk Institute of Technology" the DkIT homepage will open. First, we edit the textbox by clicking on the cog icon. Select the text "Dundalk Institute of Technology". Click in the **Insert/edit link** icon as shown.

Enter the URL. The text that you enter in the **Title** field will appear as a tool tip when the mouse hovers over the link.

Click on **Ok**. Then click on **Save** to return to the page.
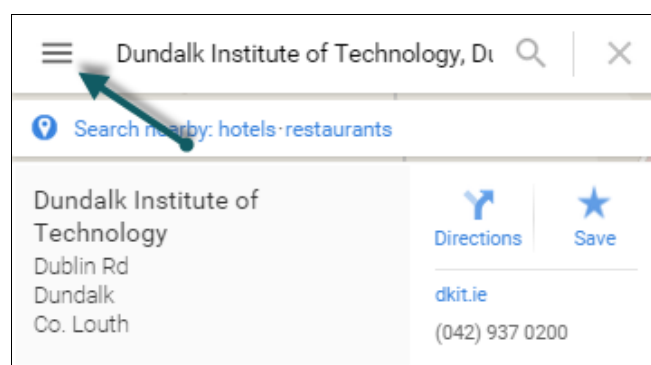
The textbox now looks as follows.

Adding a Google App

You can also add Google Apps by dragging the **Google Apps** (on **External** tab) block onto the page. The following instructions show how to embed a Google Map to show the location of DkIT. Go to Google maps.

Search for Dundalk Institute of Technology. When the map is displayed, click in the upper left corner as shown.

Click on **Share or embed**.

Then click on the **Embed map** tab and copy the embed code as shown.
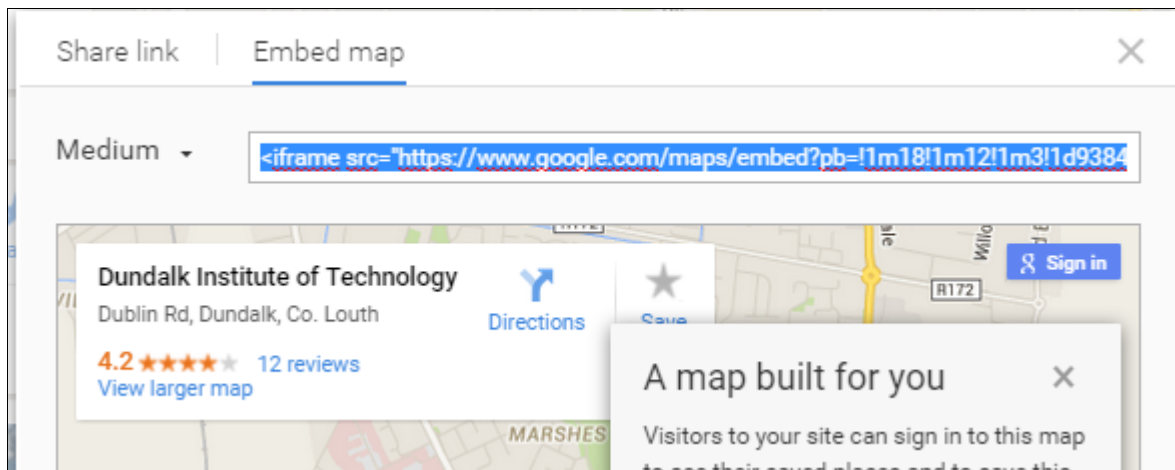
Paste the embed code into the textbox and click on **Save**.
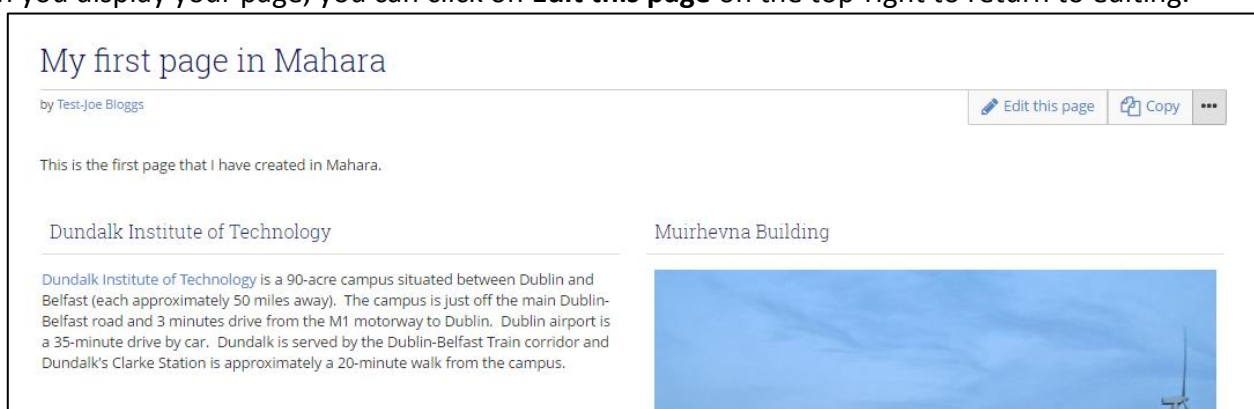

Note: The link from Google Maps can also be used.

Viewing the page
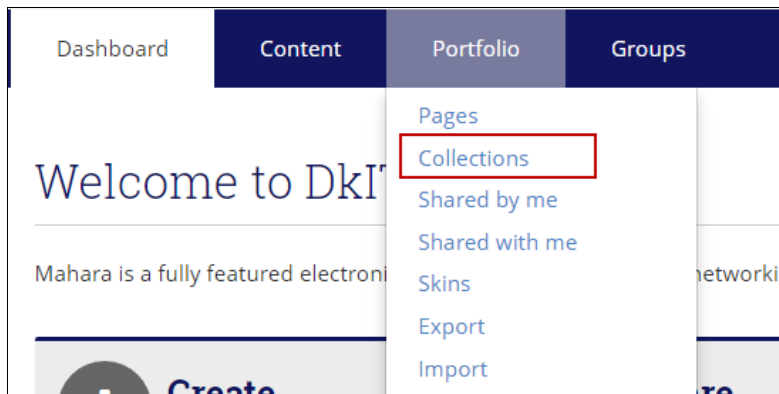To view your page, click on **Display Page**.

Editing a page
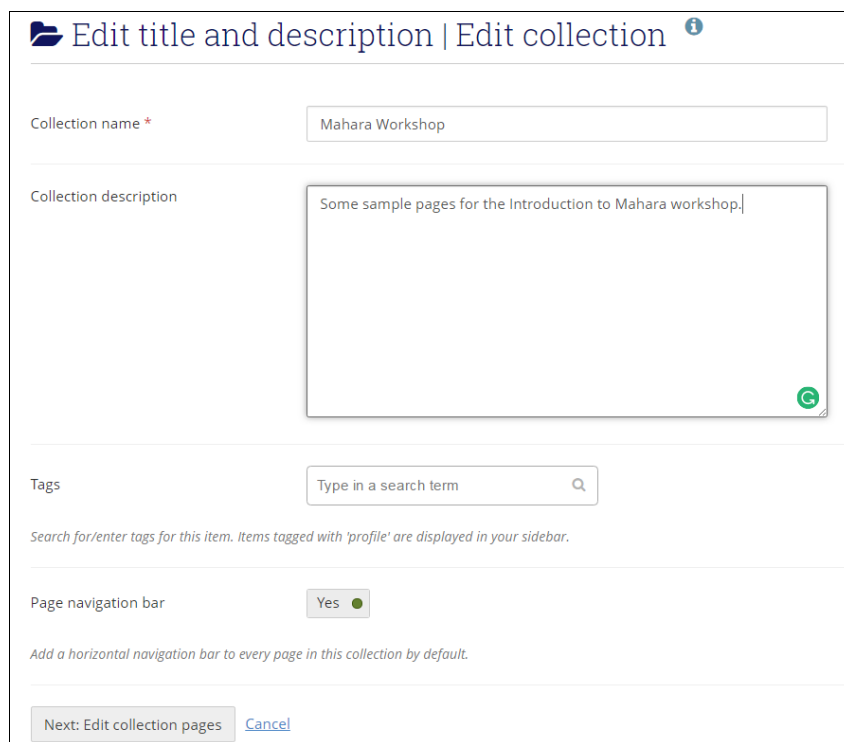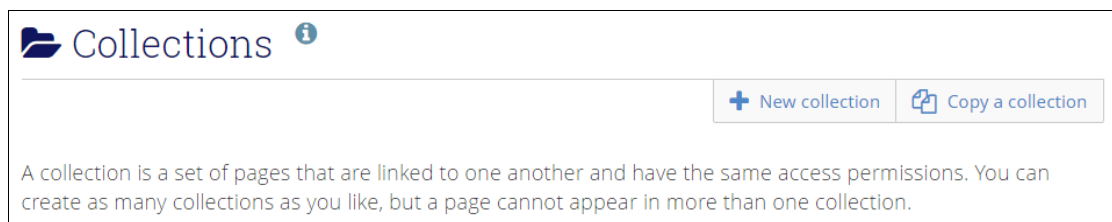When you display your page, you can click on **Edit this page** on the top-right to return to editing.

Grouping your pages in a collection

Having created your individual pages and added content, you can now group them together as a collection, which is a set of pages that are linked together. A page cannot be linked to more than one collection. If you wish to use a page in more than one collection, you will need to make of the copy of the page and include the copy in the collection.

Click on the Portfolio tab and choose **Collections**.

Click on **New collection**.

Enter a name and description for the collection.

Click on **Edit collection pages** to add pages to the collection. Pages that are not currently in any collection will be displayed.

Select the pages you wish to add and click on **Add pages** or you can drag the page names into the collection area.

In this example, two pages have been added to the collection.

Click on **Done** to finish.

Your collection should now be available in the list of collections as shown.

Using a Secret URL to share your page or collection

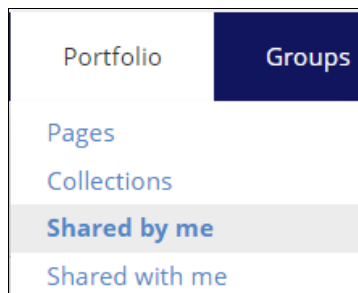Secret URLs provide a simple way to allow you to give people who are not registered on Mahara at DkIT access to your pages or collections. It can also be used as an alternative way to give access to other users at DkIT. This will allow them to view your page or collection but they will not be able to edit it.
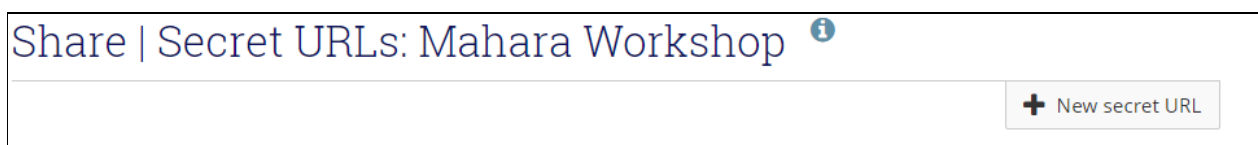
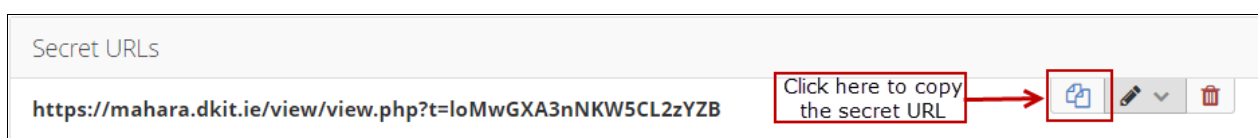Click on **Portfolio** and then click on **Shared by me**.

The list of pages and collections will be displayed. To create a secret URL for a page or collection click on the **globe** icon on the right.

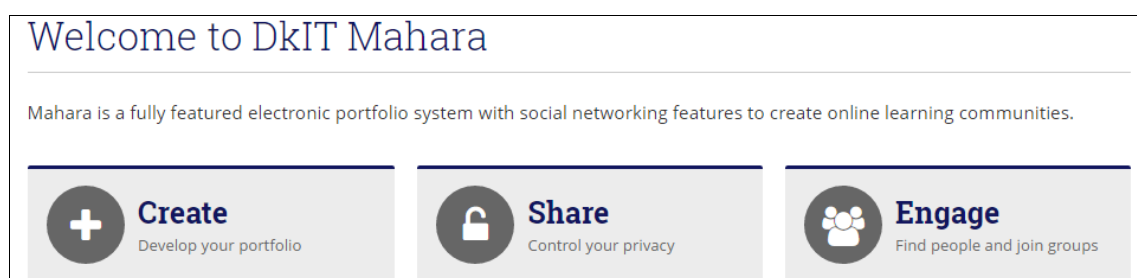In the Secret URL screen, click on **New secret URL**.

A new URL similar to the following will be displayed. You can copy this and send it to all those who you wish to have access to your page.

You can copy, edit or delete this URL by clicking on the icons on the right.

Sharing your pages and collections
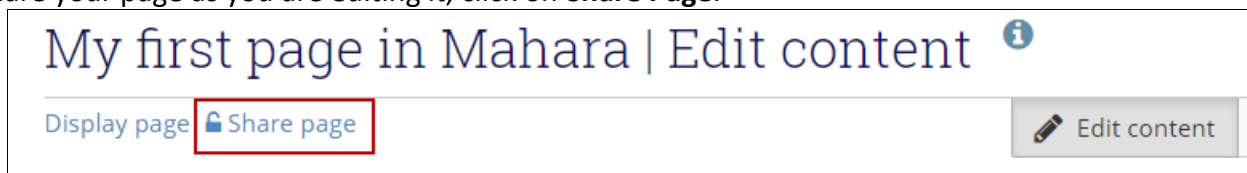To share your pages and collections, click on **Share** from your Dashboard.

Access to your page

You can specify who gets to see your pages, which pages they can see and when.

By default, all the pages that you create are **private** and only visible to you. Other users can only see your pages if you give them access to them.

To share your page as you are editing it, click on **Share Page**.

Alternatively, you can click on **Portfolio** and then **Shared by me.** Your pages and collections will be displayed as shown. Then click on the **Edit Access** icon (i.e. lock) opposite a page or collection.

You can then choose who you wish the share the page or collection with. You can also limit the time period for which pages(or collections) are shared.
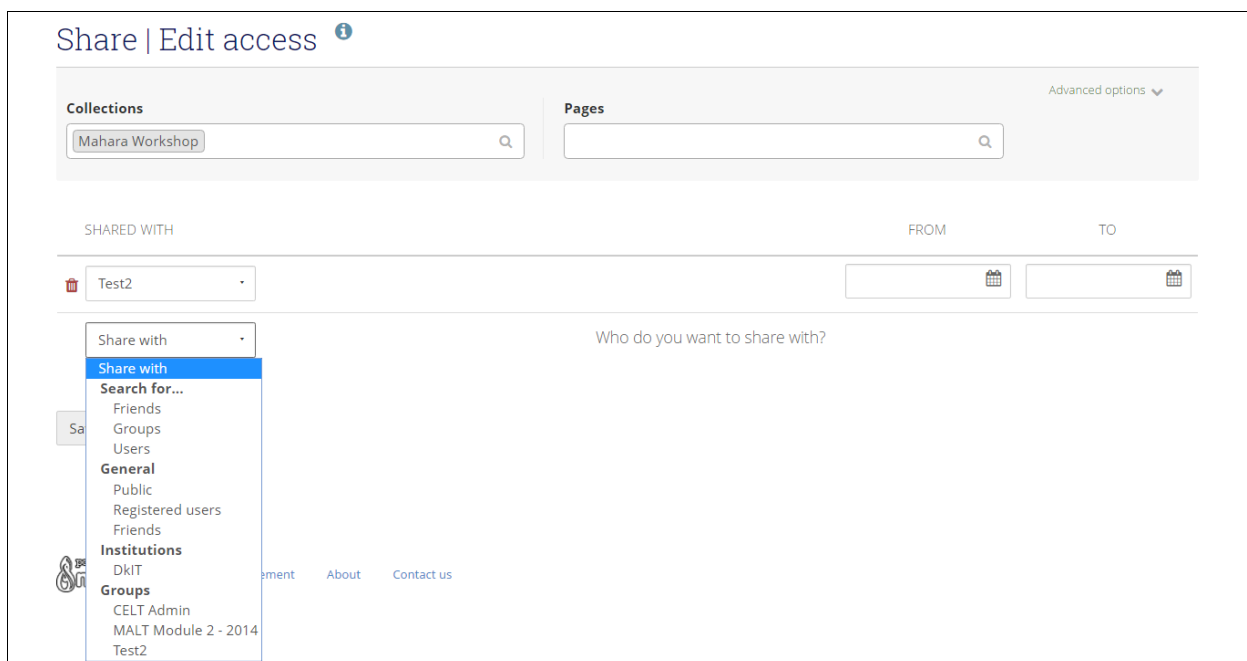
Click on **Advanced Options** to change other settings, some of which are shown below.