

## **Review of Freedcamp for Project Management**

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Freedcamp is a collaborative project management tool that allows a team to work together and communicate through features such as task lists and discussion boards in a shared digital space. It provides file sharing, alerts and reminders, time tracking, and project milestones, as well as other features that help to organize projects in an efficient way. The system offers a wide array of functionality to unlimited users performing unlimited projects and has no storage limit. A built-in calendar feature allows users the ability to schedule and track tasks, events, and milestones in one central location.

Freedcamp is offered primarily as a web-based solution and is Mac and PC compatible as well as tablet and iPad compatible. There is a mobile app for smartphones, but the reviewers feel this version of the tool offers very limited functionality compared to the browser-based version.

It is relatively simple and easy to get started in the Freedcamp system, as it is designed to be user-friendly, making onboarding new people to projects straightforward. It also allows significant customization of project organization and viewing, so different users are able to interact with the same data in the way that makes the most sense to them as they tackle shared projects. This feature certainly helps with team buy-in and, in turn, makes project tracking easier and more likely. For example, users have the ability to display projects in either Kanban style or as simple lists, depending on what the project requires and their organizational preference (Figure 1 and 2).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kanban boards are a workflow visualization tool using a card and column system. Individual cards represent specific work tasks or components, and they are placed within a series of columns representing separate stages of the project's overall workflow. This system shows the full progression of a project from start to finish, which can help with transparency of process. For more information about how to use the Kanban Board strategy, see <https://kanbanize.com/kanban-resources/getting-started/what-is-kanban-board>.

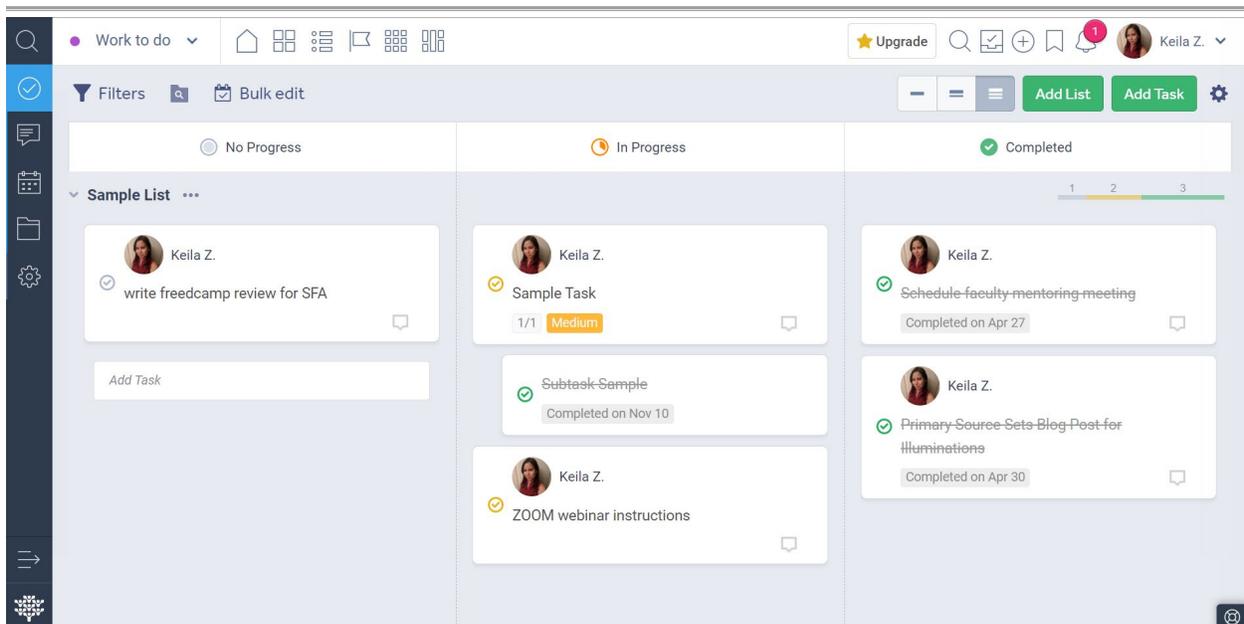


Figure 1 - Kanban View

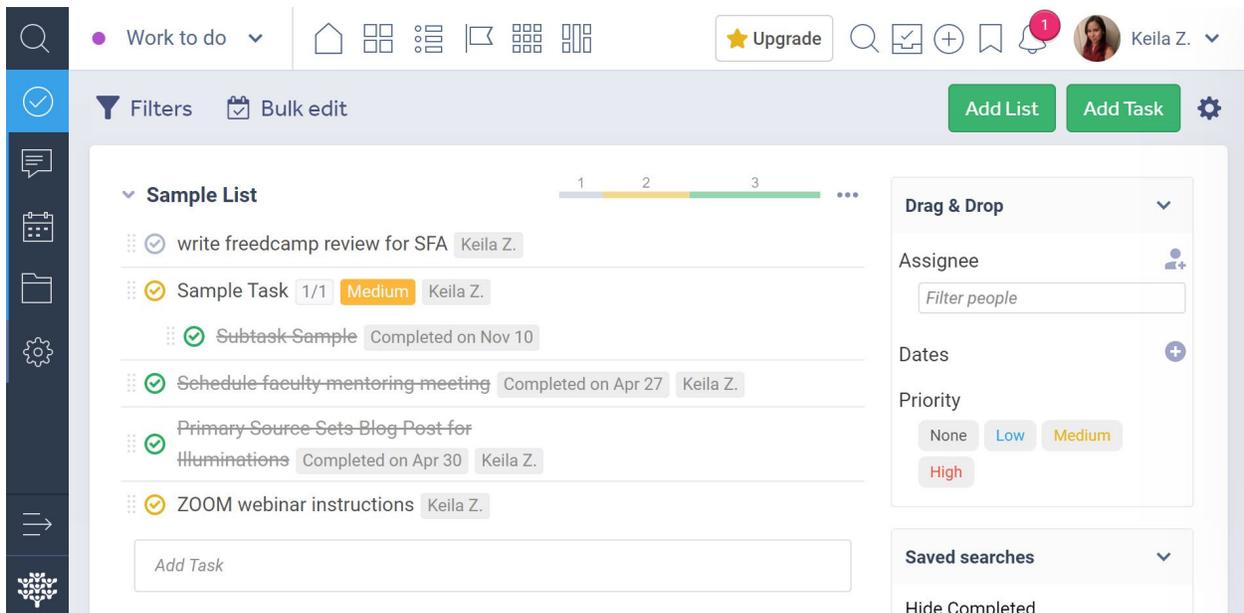


Figure 2 - List view

Freedcamp’s flexibility even extends to defining what a “project” is. Using the project template in Freedcamp and the flexible views discussed above, users can organize a single discrete project within the template space or set up the template to allow tracking for multiple projects in a single view. For example, at Florida State University (FSU), we used the template to create a “project” for our Digital Library Center (DLC).<sup>2</sup> Then we worked with Freedcamp’s list functionality to create a separate task list for each step in our digitization workflow, but the

<sup>2</sup> The Florida State University (FSU) Digital Library Center (DLC) provides online access to thousands of unique manuscripts, photographs, pamphlets, rare books, historic maps, and other materials from across the FSU campus. The DLC is constantly adding new online resources through a variety of digitization projects. For more information about the DLC, see <https://www.lib.fsu.edu/sca/digital-library-center>.

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tasks in each list actually refer to the many separate projects in progress at the DLC (Figure 3). Using the ability in Freedcamp to move tasks between different lists, this setup allows a project task to move along an established workflow and show, at a glance, where all the DLC project tasks are within that workflow at any given time. Team members can see who is assigned the particular project task, its current stage and history, whether the task is not started yet or if it is in progress, and any linked documentation or comments attached to the project task. Importantly, linked content and documentation remains with each project task as it moves across lists or columns, even if it is assigned to new people at different stages in the workflow. This ensures that all team members are equally informed about critical project details and have a ready reference for retracing their steps if need be.

The screenshot displays three project lists in a web interface. Each list has a title, a progress bar, and a list of tasks. The first list, 'Projects in Digitization', has a progress bar with '2' in blue and '4' in yellow. It contains six tasks: 'Il Secolo Processing' (Will P., 5 comments), 'Patron Request - Journal Militaire', 'University Communications Building Files' (Will P., 1 folder, 11 comments), 'St. John's Bulletins and Newsletters - Box 1' (Will P.), 'Instructional Support Batch #3' (Stuart R., 2 comments), and 'Osceola, set #1' (Abigail Y.). Below the tasks is an 'Add Task' input field. The second list, 'Projects in QC', has a progress bar with '2' in blue. It contains two tasks: 'PRIDE Student Union Collection - Boxes 29 and 30' (Will P., 5 comments) and 'Walker Family Papers - Instructional Support project' (9 comments). It also has an 'Add Task' input field. The third list, 'Projects in Loading', has a progress bar with '1' in blue and '1' in yellow. It contains two tasks: 'Means notebooks' (Krystal T., 22 comments) and 'Il Secolo: 1886-mid 1888' (Krystal T., 2 comments). It also has an 'Add Task' input field.

Figure 3 - Detail of the DLC use of the list view and tasks as projects

The Sunshine State Digital Network (SSDN) uses Freedcamp to manage tasks and projects across many Florida institutions.<sup>3</sup> Working group projects, like the SSDN newsletter, are created and tracked in project task lists to ensure that the different portions of the newsletter are all completed on time. Conveniently, the file sharing and commenting features allow the newsletter team to share text and images for different sections of the newsletter, and the helpful notifications feature makes sure that all team members are kept in the loop concerning exactly where a task is in the process of completion (Figure 4).

<sup>3</sup> The Sunshine State Digital Network (SSDN) is the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) Service Hub for the state of Florida. It offers tiered services to connect institutions of all sizes to the DPLA hub. For more information about the SSDN, see <https://sunshinestatedigitalnetwork.wordpress.com/>.

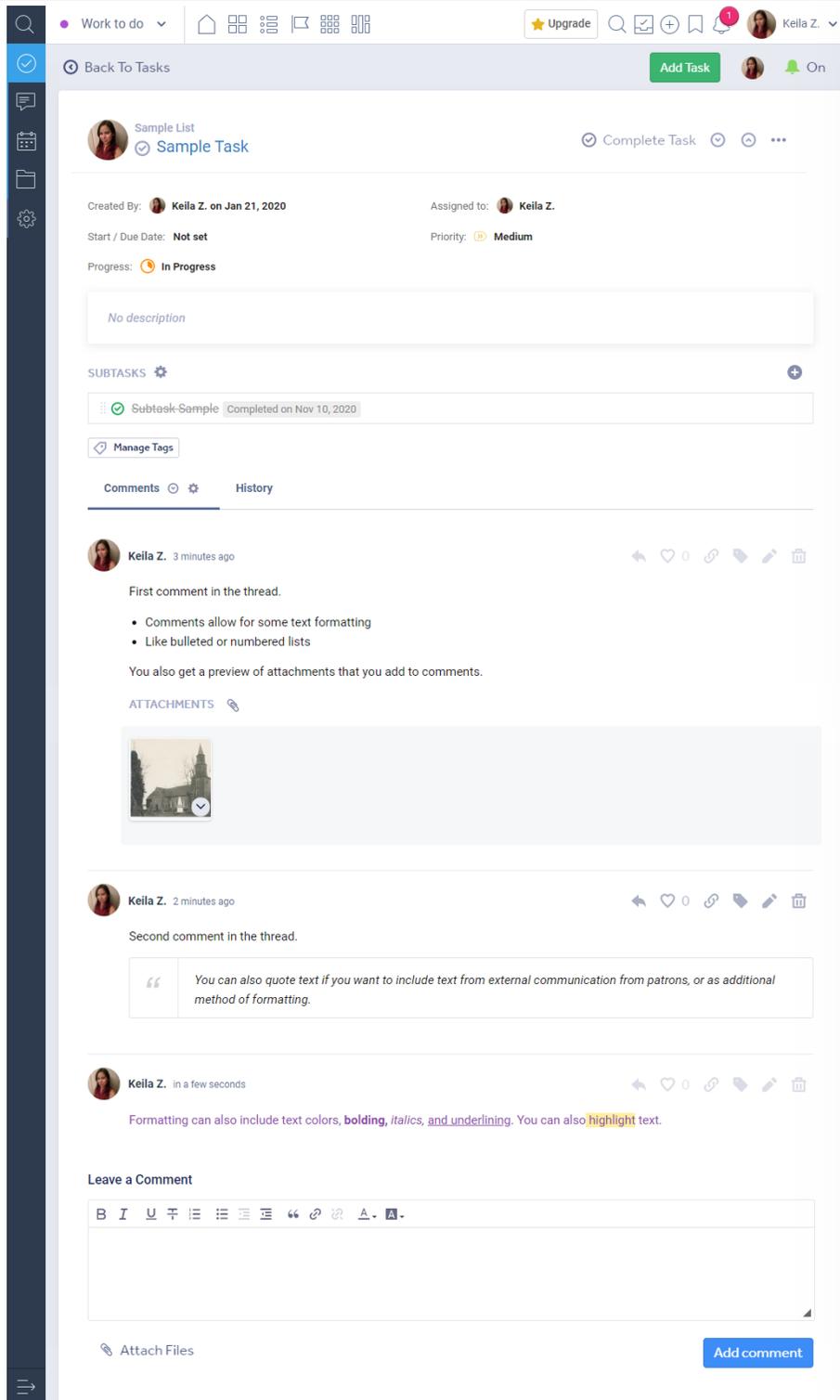


Figure 4 - A task in progress with a completed subtask

All of this functionality is available in the robust, free, browser-based version of Freedcamp, which allows for unlimited users, projects, and tasks. However, its paid version does include some functionality that might be particularly useful to larger teams and projects. For example, while the free version allows project tasks to have subtasks outlined (and this can be particularly useful if you are using a single task list to represent an entire project), they cannot

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be assigned to specific team members; the paid version allows subtasks to be assigned to and passed between individuals. Also, direct connections to storage services like Google Drive are only available through the paid version. However, it is easy to link to documents stored in various other shared file locations within each project task, so this limitation of the free version is not as inconvenient as it may seem. Freedcamp's "History" function does track changes made to tasks, but in a limited capacity. The History tab (seen in Figure 4) will show changes to the task for seven days in the free version and thirty days in the paid version. At FSU, we use the "Comments" feature to note changes or updates to a task for long-term internal recordkeeping, so this has not been a limitation in the case mentioned here. However, others may not like having to manually add notes to track tasks' progress over time.

Freedcamp also offers fairly robust discussion boards and a shared web-based calendar. Users can create different discussion lists and then initiate separate discussion threads within these lists, and even star or pin important discussions at the top of each list (Figure 5). The calendar provides another view of tasks, events, and milestones for all projects in the Freedcamp system that the user has permission to view. This allows for a bird's-eye view of an entire month of tasks, enabling users to see where due dates may overlap and when. The calendar's big-picture perspective is helpful because it provides the opportunity to better plan or schedule project timelines and avoid conflicting priorities. The SSDN uses Freedcamp discussion boards to manage various ongoing conversations around projects and subgroups. Users can set up notifications for a discussion and include the whole team or selected users. This helps facilitate discussions in one place, which is helpful for both inter- and intrainstitutional teams, as it avoids having to manage many separate email threads. At FSU Libraries, these discussion boards have proven less useful, since we use other tools like Microsoft Teams for this kind of communication, but they may be particularly useful for teams working across institutions.

SSDN Outreach Worki... Home Grid List Calendar Upgrade Search Keila Z.

**Filters** Add List Add Discussion

**Important Documents/Links** *This lists the links to group folders and important documents*

Title	Last Activity	Comments
★ <b>Google Drive Folder Link</b> Posted By: Keila Z. on Apr 5, 2018	Apr 9, 2018 09:52am by Keila Z.	1
★ <b>Elevator Speech</b> Posted By: Gabrielle C. on May 14, 2018	May 14, 2018 10:07am by Gabrielle C.	1
★ <b>Marketing Group Meeting Notes 4.25.18</b> Posted By: Jennifer P. on Apr 25, 2018	Apr 25, 2018 10:51am by Jennifer P.	0

**General Discussion** *General group discussion*

Title	Last Activity	Comments
★ <b>"Getting Started as a SSDN Content Contributor"</b> Posted By: Katrina H. on Jun 10, 2019	Jun 10, 2019 12:50pm by Katrina H.	1
★ <b>Audience - Who are we marketing to?</b> Posted By: Unknown user on Apr 9, 2018	May 14, 2018 12:44pm by Katrina H.	9
★ <b>Design Software</b> Posted By: Katrina H. on Apr 12, 2018	Apr 16, 2018 09:18am by Keila Z.	1
★ <b>Discussions/Questions for Google Group</b> Posted By: Keila Z. on Sep 10, 2018	Nov 6, 2018 10:13am by Keila Z.	2
★ <b>GIF it up printable handout</b> Posted By: Keila Z. on Mar 11, 2019	Mar 12, 2019 08:49am by Renelda S.	1
★ <b>Newsletter link and website link tracking</b> Posted By: Deana S. on Feb 25, 2019	Feb 25, 2019 04:16pm by Deana S.	0
★ <b>Training needs and Feedback</b> Posted By: Keila Z. on Nov 6, 2018	Nov 6, 2018 10:04am by Keila Z.	0
★ <b>Volunteers to work on FLA Poster</b> Posted By: Keila Z. on Apr 9, 2018	May 14, 2018 04:34pm by Keila Z.	19

**Marketing** *This list is for discussing marketing strategies, promotional materials, and branding.*

Title	Last Activity	Comments
★ <b>Members</b> Posted By: Keila Z. on Apr 6, 2018	Apr 6, 2018 10:37am by Keila Z.	0
★ <b>Graphic Design Resources</b> Posted By: Katrina H. on Apr 24, 2018	Apr 24, 2018 08:39am by Katrina H.	0
★ <b>Newsletter title ideas</b> Posted By: Keila Z. on Aug 13, 2018	Aug 22, 2018 11:00am by Katrina H.	1

**Partnerships/Networking** *This list is for discussing partnerships, networking, and contact lists topics*

Title	Last Activity	Comments
★ <b>Members</b> Posted By: Keila Z. on Apr 6, 2018	Apr 6, 2018 10:38am by Keila Z.	0
★ <b>Digital Collections Lists for contacts list</b> Posted By: Katrina H. on Feb 7, 2018	May 23, 2018 10:16am by Unknown user	3
★ <b>Doodle Poll for Networking Meeting</b> Posted By: Renelda S. on May 22, 2018	May 25, 2018 04:42pm by Katrina H.	3

**Social Media** *This list is for discussing social media strategies and topics*

Title	Last Activity	Comments
★ <b>Members</b> Posted By: Keila Z. on Apr 6, 2018	Apr 6, 2018 10:38am by Keila Z.	0
★ <b>Doodle Poll for Social Media group</b> Posted By: Unknown user on Jun 11, 2018	Jun 11, 2018 11:35am by Unknown user	0
★ <b>Next steps - social media planning</b> Posted By: Unknown user on Jun 8, 2018	Jun 8, 2018 04:24pm by Unknown user	0
★ <b>Social Media Subgroup</b> Posted By: Unknown user on Feb 26, 2018	Jun 8, 2018 04:25pm by Unknown user	2

Add List

Figure 5 - Discussion boards

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There is one substantive limitation with Freedcamp's functionality, both in the free and paid versions: the ability to assign multiple people to a single task. Users can assign a single person or everyone to a project task, but there is no in-between option. This is a disadvantage in many team-based scenarios such as assigning multiple student workers to a shared project. The SSDN team navigated this issue by selecting multiple users to receive notifications for a task or by tagging them in the comments section of the relevant task.

As mentioned in the introduction, Freedcamp offers a mobile app, but it leaves much to be desired. Users can only access the task lists, not the discussions, calendar, or any other feature. It is difficult to create new tasks or lists in the mobile app, and experience shows that tasks often disappear in the mobile app without explanation. With so many mobile work tools that make it easier to get things done on the go, it is disappointing that this app isn't more fully developed, but perhaps this is simply an opportunity to draw stricter work-life boundaries.

Pricing for Freedcamp is as follows:

- Free: Unlimited projects, tasks, storage, and users.
- Minimalist: \$1.49/user per month — Includes all core functions plus email integrations, Google Calendar and Drive integration, Dropbox integration, and OneDrive integration.
- Business: \$7.49/user per month — Includes all previous features plus issue tracking, invoicing, CRM capabilities, project templates, and reporting.
- Enterprise: \$16.99/user per month — Includes all previous features plus project overviews, customizable branding, priority email and phone support, data archiving, private cloud servers, two-factor authentication, and single sign-on capabilities.

Overall, Freedcamp is an effective project management tool for internal, interdepartmental, and interinstitutional use. It offers a very generous free tier with unlimited users and lots of basic functionality. FSU Libraries does not use much of the advanced functionality that comes with the paid version of the software, and the SSDN also finds that the free version serves the majority of its project management needs with the addition of a few functional workarounds.

If archival professionals are looking for a robust, easy-to-use, and no-cost project management software—be they lone arrangers or part of large departmental teams—we recommend Freedcamp. Because an account is free, and Freedcamp provides an extensive Knowledge Base as well as other online help resources (see the “Additional Resources” below), it is easy to sign up, learn, and experiment with the tool to see how it can help with the organization of existing or new projects.

### **Additional Resources**

Freedcamp Knowledge Base

<https://freedcamp.com/help>

DLF Project Manager's Toolkit

[https://wiki.diglib.org/DLF\\_Project\\_Managers\\_Toolkit#Project\\_Management\\_Basics](https://wiki.diglib.org/DLF_Project_Managers_Toolkit#Project_Management_Basics)

The Ultimate Glossary of Project Management Terms

<https://www.projectmanager.com/blog/glossary-of-project-management-terms>