

What is Scalar & Why Use It?

As the [Alliance for Networking Visual Culture](#) describes it, Scalar is “born digital, open source, media-rich scholarly publishing that’s as easy as blogging.” It is a tool designed for publishing academic work that combines the ease and convenience of publishing online through platforms like WordPress and the look and feel in many ways of a downloadable e-book, from the look of the page to the inclusion of table of content-like menu. Put blogging and e-books together and you have something that is interactive, hypertextual, navigable, professional, and easily shareable.

Scalar has a pretty good [Getting Started](#) guide, as well as instructions for more specific/advanced features, but all of that involves clicking around to different pages to try to find the information you’re looking for. This is a condensed setup guide that will show you around Scalar’s basic features.

The main components of a Scalar book/project include: **Pages, Media, Paths, Tags, and Annotations**.

- **Pages** holds your text (like creating a Post in WordPress), but **Pages** also holds **Media, Paths, Tags, and Annotations**.
 - Each of these components has its own URL.
- **Media** can be embedded from importing files from their affiliated archives (Internet Archive, Critical Commons, and more), other archives (which they refer to Prezi, Soundcloud, Vimeo, and Youtube), internet files, local media files.
- **Paths** are an ordered series of **Pages**. This is how you want your reader to experience the book/project.
- **Tags** are nonlinear markers/categorization, which will be useful to create visualizations of the overall Scalar project to tie in and connect the main themes in each **Page**.
- **Annotations** is the ability to comment the media objects imported/embedded: video, images, audio, and text. **Paths, Tags, and Annotations** help create relationships.

Once you sign-in, you should be taken to a page that looks like the one below. This is called the **Index**. Here you can see your books (if you entered a title on the registration page, it should show up here), as well as some featured books. We want to get to the **Dashboard**, so click that link in the upper right hand corner.

The screenshot shows the Scalar platform's index page. At the top, there's a header with the Scalar logo and a sign-out link. Below the header, there are two main sections: 'Your Books' and 'Featured Books'. The 'Your Books' section displays a thumbnail for 'Creating Identity, Defining Culture, Building Nations' by Gretchen Burgess. The 'Featured Books' section lists several books with their titles, authors, and small thumbnail images. These include 'Pathfinders' by Dene Grigar and Stuart Moulthrop, 'FemTechNet Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Pedagogy Workbook' by Anne Cong-Huyen, Genevieve Carpio, Veronica Parades, and Amanda Phllipe, 'Civic Media Project' by Eric Gordon, 'Complex TV' by Jason Mittell, 'Growing Apart' by Colin Gordon, 'Performing Archive: Curtis + "the vanishing race"' by Jacqueline Wernimont, Beatrice Schieler, Amy Rose, and David I. Kim, 'Scalar User's Guide' (with the Scalar logo thumbnail), 'Unghosting Apparitional (Lesbian) Histories' by Michelle Moravec, and 'Writing With Substance' by Vimala C. Pasupathi.

The **Dashboard** is the hub for making larger scale edits (like the look of your book), as well as creating new books, approving comments, etc.

Let's go ahead and create a new book. If you entered a title on the registration page, you can skip this step. On the “**My account**” tab, look at the bottom of the page under “My books.” Enter a title where it says “**Create new book**” and click the “**create**” button. You should receive a confirmation that your book was created, and your title should appear under “**My books**.” Go ahead and click on the book you just created and the name of the book should appear at the top of the screen.

The screenshot shows the Scalar platform's dashboard page. At the top, there's a header with the Scalar logo and a sign-out link. Below the header, there's a message: "You have Author privileges Back to book". The dashboard has a navigation bar with tabs: My account, Book properties, Book users, Sharing, Pages, Media, Paths, Tags, Annotations, Comments, Import/Export. The 'My account' tab is active. Under 'My account', there are fields for Email (login), Full name, Website, and Change password. There's also a 'Save' button. Below this, there's a section titled 'My books' with a table. The table lists three items: 'Creating Identity, Defining Culture, Building Nations' (Role: Author, Bio page: <http://scalar.usc.edu/works/creating-identity-defining-culture-building-nations/users/1381>), 'Demo Book' (Role: Author, Bio page: <http://scalar.usc.edu/works/demo-book-9/users/1381>), and a row for 'Create new book' with a 'New book title' input field and a 'Create' button. At the bottom of the 'My books' section, there's a note: "Source book requires special permissions to be displayed in this list".

If you click over to the “**Book properties**” tab, you have some options for customizing the look of your book. There are seven built-in themes to choose from, as well as the options to upload a background image, a thumbnail image, and customize with CSS and/or Javascript.

The screenshot shows the "Book properties" tab interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with tabs: My account, Book properties (which is active), Book users, Sharing, Pages, Media, Paths, Tags, Annotations, Comments, and Import/Export. Below the tabs, there are two main sections: "Basics" and "Style".

Basics:

- Title: Demo Book
- Subtitle: (empty)
- Description: (empty)
- URI Segment: http://scalar.usc.edu/works/_demo-book-9
- Main menu items: Drag menu items to reorder. A link to "Add menu item" is present.

Style:

- Design: Theme dropdown set to "Gloss", with a preview image of a book cover.
- Background image: Select image dropdown.
- Thumbnail image: Upload image field with "No file chosen" message. Note: JPG, PNG, or GIF format; will be resized to 120px.
- Custom style: Example code provided: body {font-family:Helvetica;} No <style> or </style> tags. An "Insert CSS" button is available.
- Custom Javascript: E.g., Google Analytics code. No <script> or </script> tags. An input field for custom Javascript is shown.

Publisher:

- Scope: Select scope dropdown set to "Book".
- Publisher name: (empty) field. Note: Include HTML <a> to create link.
- Publisher logo: Upload image field with "No file chosen" message. Note: JPG, PNG, or GIF format; will be resized to 120px.

At the bottom right, a message says "You have unsaved changes." and a blue "Save" button.

In the “**Book users**” tab, you can easily add, edit, or remove Scalar users to the book, making it easy to collaborate. Note: you will not be able to add someone until they have created a Scalar account, and right now there isn't an invite to join option or anything like that either.

The screenshot shows the "Book users" tab interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with tabs: My account, Book properties, Book users (which is active), Sharing, Pages, Media, Paths, Tags, Annotations, Comments, and Import/Export. The title "Dashboard" is displayed above the user list.

The main area shows a table of users:

ID	Relationship	In index	Order	Full name	Email	URL	Contributions
1381	author	1	0	Gretchen Burgess	gbeasley@gmu.edu		

Buttons for "Edit" and "Remove" are located next to the first row. A "View" button is also present in the last column of the table. At the bottom left, there's a "Add a user" button.

On the right side of the header, there's a sign-out link and a note: "Gretchen Burgess Sign out You have Author privileges Back to book".

Under the tab “**Sharing**”, you can choose whether to make the URL public and indexed by Scalar, whether to allow other Scalar users to duplicate your book, enter publisher info, add menu items, and select the scope of your publication, be it a book, article, or project.

The screenshot shows the 'Sharing' tab selected in the top navigation bar of the Scalar dashboard. The page is titled 'Sharing' and includes tabs for My account, Book properties, Book users, Sharing, Pages, Media, Paths, Tags, Annotations, Comments, and Import/Export. A message at the top right says 'You have Author privileges' and 'Back to book'. The main content area is titled 'Public/private' and contains several configuration sections:

- Availability:** Options include 'Make URL public?' (No), 'Display in Scalar indexes?' (No), and 'Automatically approve all user comments?' (No). Descriptions explain that the URL is accessible via its URL without login and that the book will be listed in public feeds.
- Reviewability:** Options include 'Email book authors about new comments?' (No) and 'Add the Hypothes.is sidebar?' (No). Descriptions explain moderation and collaboration features.
- Joinability:** Option 'Allow requests to join book?' (No) is described as sending an email to the author when a user requests book authorship.
- Duplicability:** Option 'Allow book to be duplicated by others?' (No) is described as displaying the book in the list of duplicatable books regardless of availability settings.

A 'Save' button is located in the bottom right corner of the form.

While you are in the Dashboard, there is always an option in the upper right hand corner under your name that says “**Back to book**.” Let’s click that now. As you can see below, other than the title, there isn’t anything in my book at the moment. (I have picked the “Gloss” theme.)

The screenshot shows the 'Demo Book' page. The header includes the title 'Demo Book' and 'Gretchen Burgess, Author'. The top right corner shows 'Gretchen Burgess Sign out' and 'You have Author privileges' with links to 'Dashboard | Index | Guide'. The main content area displays the message 'Content hasn't yet been added to this page, click Edit below to add some.' Below this is a large empty white space. On the left side, there is a sidebar with a 'Main menu' section containing the text 'This work doesn't have a main menu, but you can still navigate it by selecting an option above.' There is also a 'Search' field and a 'Recent' section. At the bottom of the page, there is footer information: 'Demo Book by Gretchen Burgess. Help reading this book.', 'Powered by Scalar.', 'Terms of Service | Privacy Policy | Scalar Feedback', and a 'New' and 'Edit' button.

When we click the “**Edit**” button at the bottom of the screen, we’re taken to what looks like a basic word processor, not unlike the page where you write a new blog post in Wordpress. You can enter a title for the page, a description of the content on that page, and your text.

The screenshot shows a 'Demo Book' website interface. At the top right, it says 'Gretchen Burgess Sign out' and 'You have Author privileges'. Below that are links for 'Dashboard | Index | Guide'. On the left, there's a sidebar with a 'Main menu' dropdown, a note about navigating via options above, a search bar, and a 'Recent' dropdown. The main area is titled 'Add content' and has fields for 'Title' and 'Description'. Below these is a rich text editor toolbar with tabs for 'Visual' and 'HTML'. The toolbar includes icons for bold, italic, underline, lists, tables, and various media and styling options.

At the bottom of the edit page, you have some options for the view, relationship, style, and metadata. We're not going to go into this, but you can play around with these different options or find more information about them [here](#).

This screenshot shows the bottom portion of the edit page. It includes a 'Layout' dropdown set to 'Single column'. Below it are sections for 'Relationships' and 'Style'. The 'Relationships' section contains four items: 'Path', 'Comment', 'Annotation', and 'Tag'. Each item has a description and a link to 'specify the items that [it] contains'. The 'Style' section has a single link to 'specify items that tag it'. At the bottom are 'Cancel' and 'Save' buttons.

When we click “save,” we are taken back to the view of the page, so we can see how it looks as formatted.

Demo Book
Gretchen Burgess, Author

Gretchen Burgess [Sign out](#)
You have Author privileges
[Dashboard](#) | [Index](#) | [Guide](#)

CFP: Dressing Global Bodies: Clothing Cultures, Politics and Economies in Globalizing Eras, c. 1600s-1900s

7-9 July 2016, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

Co-Organized with the Pasold Research Fund, UK

Website: dressingglobalbodies.com

The clothes on our backs are intimately connected with bodily experiences, cultural, social and gender portrayals, as well as the economies of fashioning and re-fashioning across place and time. Garments reflect the priorities of local and international economies, collective and personal inclinations, religious norms and conversions. These materialities are shaped by global flows of cloth and beads, furs, ready-made and second-hand apparel, in dynamic processes of fashion exchange. Dress is a charged cultural instrument, as evident in colonial and decolonization processes, social and political agendas, animated by cross-cultural and commercial flows, industrial and institutional innovations.

This international conference will showcase new historical research on the centrality of dress in global, colonial and post-colonial engagements, emphasizing entangled histories, comparative and cross-cultural analyses. This scholarship redefines national and collective communities, in the practice of fashion and the dynamics of re-fashioning and re-use, from the seventeenth through the twentieth century.

To create a new page, simply click the “**New**” button at the bottom of the page. This will take you to the same page the edit button did, but will create a separate page from the one you are currently on.

Principal Organizers:

- **Dana Leibsohn**, Priscilla Paine Van der Poel Professor of Art, Department of Art, Smith College. She will address colonial practice, cross-cultural influences in the dress of colonial Spanish America.

Beverly Lemire, Professor & Henry Marshall Tory Chair, Department of History & Classics, University of Alberta

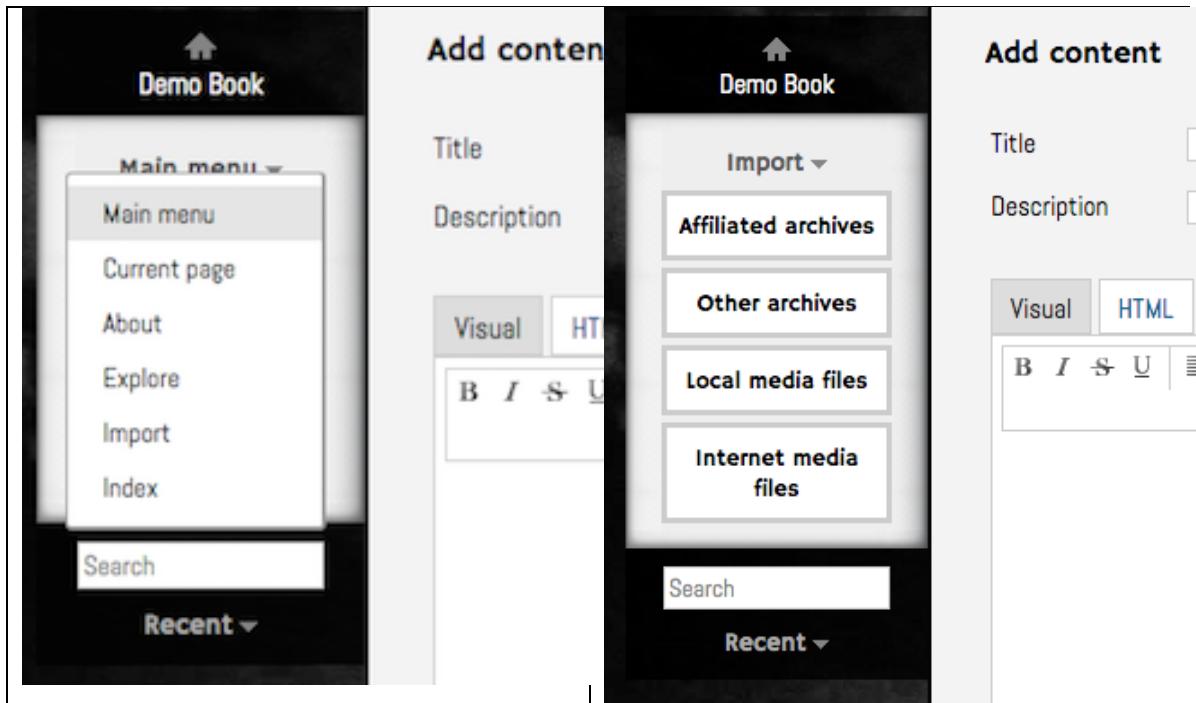
Giorgio Riello, Professor, Department of History and Director, Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Warwick

[Comment on this page](#)

Version 1 of this page, updated 17 July 2015.
Demo Book by Gretchen Burgess. Help reading this book.
Powered by Scalar.
[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Scalar Feedback](#)

[New](#) [Edit](#) [Hide](#)

If we want to add media to a page, we have a few options. If we click the dropdown menu on the left and select “**Import**” we can see the different types of media we can include. Accessing the media is pretty simple, though the process for including media files in pages is a little tricky.



I selected the “**Internet media files**” option, which takes you to a familiar edit page. Put in your title, URL, and description.

This screenshot shows the 'Add content' page for 'Internet media files'. The 'Title' field contains 'Abraham Lincoln - Presidential Portraiture'. The 'Description' field contains 'Presidential Portraiture - from painting, plaster life mask, photography to 3D imaging'. The 'Media File URL' field contains 'https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otzMtMu4tPU'. Below these fields are several relationship options: 'To make this media a path, specify the items that it contains', 'To make this media a comment, specify the items that it comments on', 'To make this media an annotation, specify media that it annotates', 'To make this media a tag, specify the items that it tags', and 'To tag this media, specify items that tag it'. At the bottom right are 'Cancel' and 'Save' buttons. The top right of the screen shows the user's name 'Gretchen Burgess' and 'Sign Out', along with links to 'Dashboard', 'Index', and 'Guide'.

When we click save we can see the video on the page, but it's not on a page. I'll go back to my Chapter One page by clicking the “**Recent**” dropdown in the left hand navigation bar and selecting the page. Then click “**Edit**.”

At the top of the textbox, we have several options for importing media, depending on how you want it to be displayed. I'll choose the second option this time, which says "add inline Scalar media file" when you hover over it with your mouse.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit content' page of the Demo Book application. The left sidebar includes links for 'Import', 'Affiliated archives', 'Other archives', 'Local media files', 'Internet media files', and 'Recent'. The main content area has a title 'Edit content' and fields for 'Title' (Chapter One: Clark on Kuzmany, 'Brody: Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert') and 'Description' (Börries Kuzmany, 'Brody: Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert. Vienna: Böhlau Verlag Wien, 2011'). Below these is a rich text editor with a toolbar containing icons for bold, italic, underline, etc. A tooltip 'Add inline Scalar media file (for display directly within the text)' points to a specific icon in the toolbar. The main text area contains a paragraph about Brody.

A box pops up, and we can see the video I previously uploaded. When I click on it, it is automatically added to my page wherever I left the cursor.

The screenshot shows a modal dialog box titled 'Search for content'. It includes a search bar with placeholder 'Search for content:' and a 'Go' button, and a radio button group for 'Content type' with 'Media' selected. Below this is a list of media items with columns for 'Title' and 'Description'. The first item is 'Abraham Lincoln - Presidential Portraiture' with the description 'Presidential Portraiture - from painting, plaster life mask, ... >>'. There is also a 'Preview' button next to the item. At the bottom of the dialog are 'Cancel' and 'OK' buttons.

In the **edit** menu the video will simply show up as a grey box, but when you click **save**, it will show up properly in the view menu.

Demo Book
Gretchen Burgess, Author

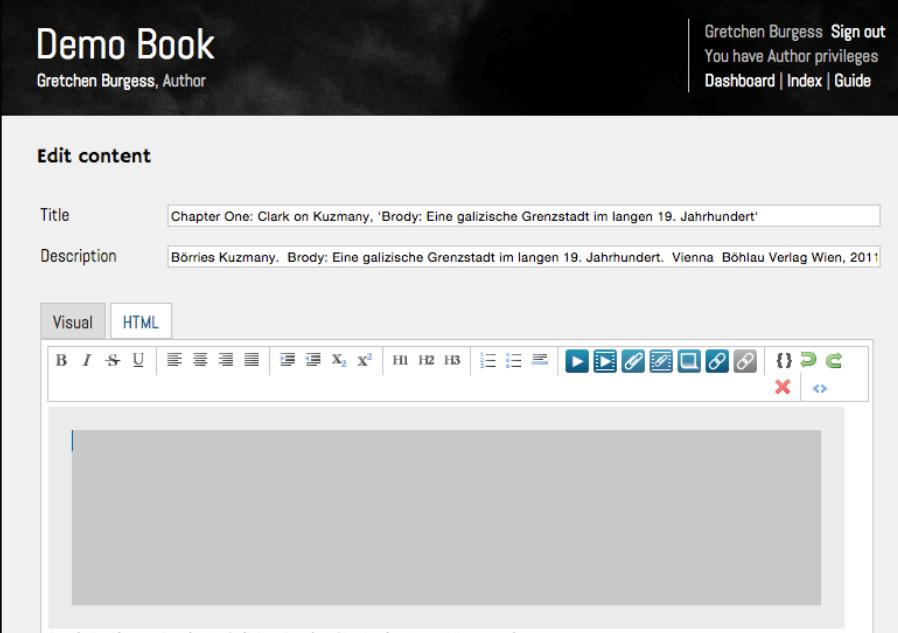
Edit content

Title: Chapter One: Clark on Kuzmany, 'Brody: Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert'

Description: Börries Kuzmany. Brody: Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert. Vienna Böhlau Verlag Wien, 2011

Visual HTML

Brody is Always Brody: A Galician Border City in the Long Nineteenth Century



Gretchen Burgess, Author

Chapter One: Clark on Kuzmany, 'Brody: Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert'

Abraham Lincoln - Presidential Portraiture

Abraham Lincoln - Presidential Portraiture



0:00 / 3:32

Details

Brody is Always Brody: A Galician Border City in the Long Nineteenth Century



So now that we have a couple of pages, let's go back to the **Dashboard** by clicking on its link in the upper right hand corner of the screen. Click on the “**Book properties**” tab and scroll to the bottom. Click on “**add menu item**.”

I'm going to click on “CFP: Dressing Global...” and then click “**add menu item**” again and click on “Chapter One: Clark on...”. Hit “**Continue**”.

The screenshot shows a 'Select main menu items' dialog box overlaid on a 'Book properties' form. The dialog has two tabs: 'Pages' and 'Media'. Under 'Pages', three items are listed: 'CFP: Dressing Global Bodies: Clothing Cultures, Politics and Economies in Globalizing Eras, c. 1600s–1900s' (unchecked), 'CFP: Dressing Global Bodies: Clothing Cultures, Politics and Economies in Globalizing Eras, c. 1600s–1900s' (checked), and 'Chapter One: Clark on Kuzmany, 'Brody: Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert'' (checked). The 'Media' tab is empty. At the bottom right of the dialog are 'Continue' and 'Cancel' buttons.

I can now see my two menu items I just added in numbered order on the “Book properties” page. If you want to change the order, simply drag and drop the menu items.

The screenshot shows the 'Book properties' form with the 'Main menu items' section expanded. It lists two items: '1. Chapter One: Clark on Kuzmany, 'Brody: Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert' (remove)' and '2. CFP: Dressing Global Bodies: Clothing Cultures, Politics and Economies in Globalizing Eras, c. 1600s–1900s (remove)'. Below this, there is an 'Add menu item' button. The rest of the form includes sections for 'Basics' (Title: Demo Book, Subtitle: empty, Description: empty, URI Segment: http://scalar.usc.edu/works/demo-book-9), 'Style' (Design: Theme: Gloss, Background image: empty, Thumbnail image: empty, Upload image: Choose File, No file chosen), and 'Custom style' (Example: body {font-family:Helvetica;}).

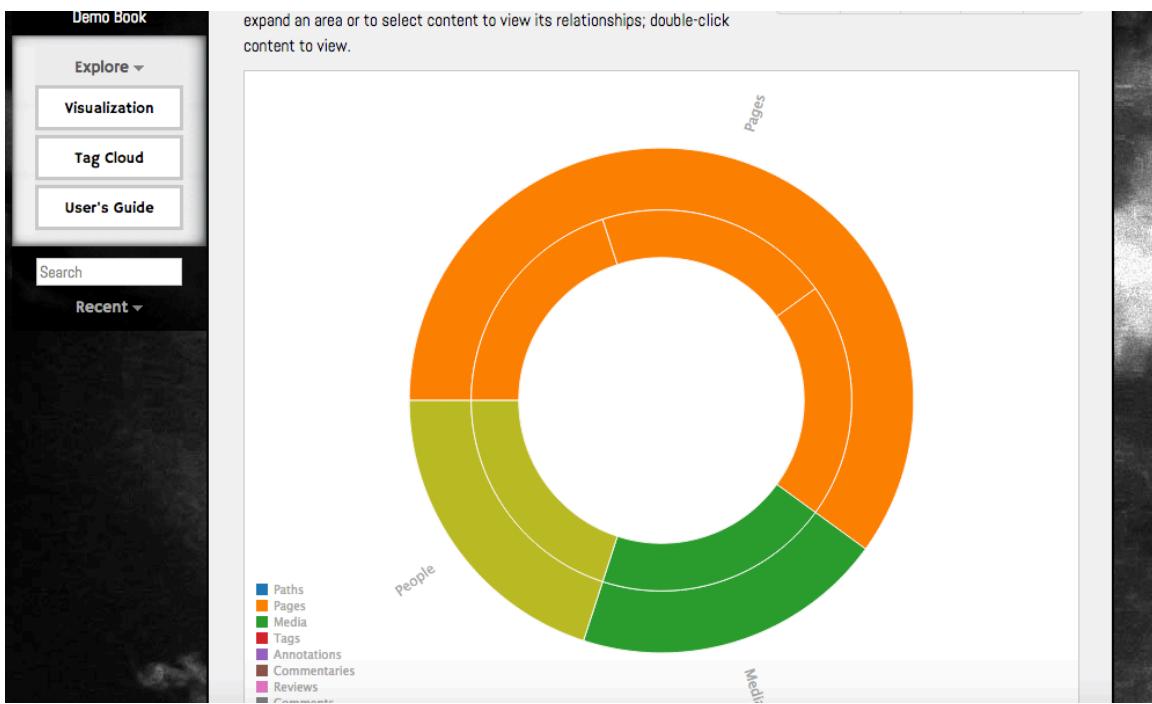
Click the blue “Save” button at the bottom of the page and then click “**Back to book**” in the upper right hand corner (scroll all the way up). Now you should see your menu items you just added in that left hand navigation bar when it’s on the **main menu** option.

The screenshot shows a website titled "Demo Book" with a dark header. In the top right corner, there are links for "Gretchen Burgess", "Sign out", "You have Author privileges", "Dashboard", "Index", and "Guide". The main content area displays a call for papers (CFP) for a conference. On the left, a sidebar titled "Main menu" contains two items: "I. Chapter One: Clark on Kuzmany, 'Brody: Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert'" and "2. CFP: Dressing Global Bodies: Clothing Cultures, Politics and Economies in Globalizing Eras, c. 1600s-1900s". A "Search" button is at the bottom of the sidebar. The main content area includes sections for the conference title, date, location, co-organization, website, and a detailed description of the research focus.

Scalar automatically puts in an “About” and “Explore” navigation option. In the “About,” you have **Works Cited** and **Acknowledgments**, and you can edit these just like any other pages.

The screenshot shows the "About" page of the "Demo Book" website. The left sidebar has a "About" section with options: "Main menu", "Current page", "About", "Explore", "Import", and "Index". Below these are "View" and "Recent" dropdown menus. The main content area displays the same CFP information as the previous screenshot, including the conference title, date, location, co-organization, website, and a detailed description of the research focus.

In “**Explore**” you have the option to view all of the tags in your book, as well as a **visualization** option, with different options for visuals related to elements of the book like pages, media, tags, comments, etc.



When you are happy with your book, go back into the “**Book properties**” tab in the **Dashboard** and make your URL public!

Scalar has a bunch of little customization options for the whole book, each page, the media, etc. that we haven't even touched in this tutorial, so feel free to play around and explore those options. Overall, this is a great tool to explore if you are looking to publish academic work to the web!