

Living in the cloud

Free up space on your devices,
and access your files anywhere at any time.

Using cloud-based software
to create and store files



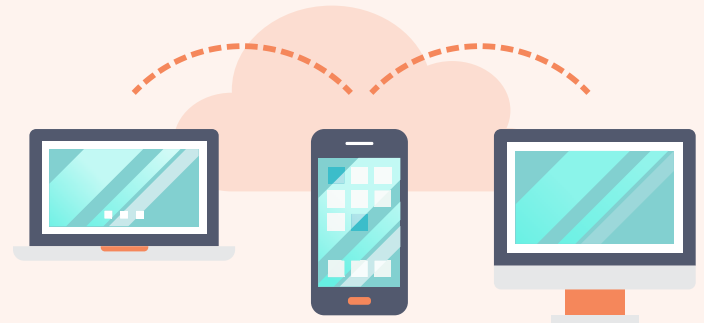


What is Cloud Computing?

Cloud-based storage

Cloud-based storage is one of the most common uses of cloud computing. It allows you to store content and information in “the cloud”, rather than taking up space on your device (e.g., computer or phone).

Most cloud-based storage services now have an application (app) that you can download onto all your relevant devices.



- The app or software creates a folder on your computer.
- You can save your content into this folder, instead of the one on your local hard drive.
- The saved content then automatically uploads to the cloud server, using internet data.
- You can access the same file from multiple devices by installing the same app across all your equipment, such as your laptop, desktop, mobile, and tablet.
- The app regularly synchronises with the cloud location and automatically downloads any updated files, using internet data.
- You can also see your files by logging into a webpage, which uses as much data as it takes to display the file listing; the files themselves are not downloaded to the computer you're using, using less data.
- Many programs can now be used fully online, such as designing or accounting software.

The most common cloud-based storage services are:

Dropbox (for everyone)



iCloud (Using AppleID)



Google Drive (for everyone)



Microsoft OneDrive



For more information on how to manage data usage in each of these services, head to our website.

Benefits

- You have an offsite backup of your content not impacted by fire, flood, or other emergencies.
- It clears up space on your devices, such as computers and external hard drives, leaving room for other software and activities.
- You have access to your files from anywhere that has an internet connection, across multiple devices.
- It allows for real-time updates of data, meaning the latest information and versions of a document are always readily available.
- You can easily share files and collaborate on content with others.
- Most services track the changes made to a document in their folders, and you can generally “revert” changes to an earlier format.
- You can turn off syncing, change how often it syncs and also disconnect from the cloud storage if you want to save internet data.



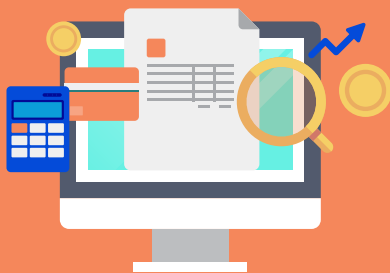
Disadvantages

- If you are on a metered internet plan, each time you save a file to the cloud-based storage folder, you use some of your upload allowance.
- Uploading that file will then sync it to all other devices that are using that service, which means these devices then download that same file to their own folders. This is automatic unless you turn this feature off.
- If your internet stops working or you're in an area with no internet, you won't have access to your files (or the most recent versions of them) because they are stored online rather than locally, and you need the internet to access them.
- Files in the "cloud" folders are not backed up through local backup systems (e.g., Apple's Time Machine). If you lose access to your cloud-based storage service, you lose access to your files. Some storage services, such as Google Drive, may allow you to sync documents by streaming or mirroring, with the mirroring option allowing you to keep a copy of your files on your computer, making them available offline, however, be aware this will use up space on your devices.
- Your files aren't 100% secure, as they're being transferred over the internet and accessed via username and password. Cloud-based storage is maintained by a third party.
- Internet use is calculated by both uploads and downloads. So, each time one file is synced, it's counted twice.

How can I manage the data usage of cloud-based storage services?

- Identify which cloud-based applications are running.
- If you've installed Microsoft or Office 365 for instance, files created through Microsoft Word will try to save into OneDrive (cloud-based) automatically, rather than on your device's hard drive.
- Apple devices such as iPhones and iPads will attempt to save content directly to iCloud as the preferred storage system, however other cloud services can still be used on any ios or apple device
- Understand how your cloud-based storage service operates, and which folders save to the cloud, and which save to your hard drive.
- Create and save working files to your local folders rather than the cloud folders. Only upload the version of a file that you know you need access to and do this by copy-and-pasting the file from your local folder into the "cloud" folder.
- If you don't want a particular service (e.g., OneDrive), consider turning it off completely.
- If you need to maintain access to each service, change the settings so your cloud-based storage service:
 - automatically saves to your local computer.
 - only syncs the folders or files you specify.
 - only syncs at the times you specify (e.g., during off-peak data times).

Jane



Jane lives on a remote property, and does the books for her and her husband's cattle property. Because it is hard to get to the nearest town, she accesses her accounting software online for all her accounting needs, which her accountant can then also access, and they can discuss records in real-time.

Jim



Jim is a photographer. He is able to use all his photography software online, as well as store his photos, so he can edit photos while on the road, rather than having to go home first. This reduces the time it takes to get photos back to his clients. It also means his devices don't fill up with large files.

Things to consider:

Cost:

Some storage services and program software may operate free of charge to a certain level of storage or use, and you then pay for increased storage capacity or features.

Security:

Many businesses will use cloud software for business activities such as accounting. To increase security around these activities you may wish to consider using a VPN (Virtual Private Network). Using two-factor authentication for any cloud-based activities also offers more security.

For more information and tips go to
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