

STORING YOUR DATA IN THE CLOUD

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STORING YOUR DATA IN THE CLOUD

When you store your data in the cloud you are actually creating a virtual hard drive for your files. Instead of physically having to go out and purchase an external hard drive, you simply pay for an account with a storage cloud company.

Just trying to visualize this concept can be difficult for people to grasp. Plus it could be part of the reason why many people are still unsure of using this type of technology.

The best way to look at cloud storage is to imagine hundreds of servers scattered around the world. These servers are then rented out by users who store their data on them.

Some of the most popular cloud storage options today include Amazon S3, Drop Box, Box, Skydrive and Just cloud. They offer different options for their users but they do have several things in common.

They regularly update their servers and use the latest in security technology.

1. Can be accessed from any location worldwide.
2. Many offer access from various types of devices including your mobile phones.
3. You pay for only the space you use.
4. You can upload and download data.
5. Allow data to be shared easily.

Of course you can choose to store you own data yourself. This entails the use of different devices such as buying an external hard drive, using CD ROMS to backup your data or by using USB sticks. While all of these are good alternative choices they have still be known to fail. Have you ever used a USB stick that suddenly couldn't be read anymore? Your data is lost forever.

Even if you do use any of the above methods using cloud storage as an additional backup couldn't hurt. Depending on the amount of storage space you require, a free account from somewhere such as Dropbox could be sufficient.

The launch of Windows 8 recently brought cloud storage services into the forefront again. Microsoft included Skydrive in their new

operating system which is impacting users to try additional cloud storage methods. Having the ability to remotely access data is proving to be extremely popular.

Another advantage of using services such as Skydrive or Google Drive is that even if you lose your internet connection you can still access and work on your files.

So if you are nervous about using cloud storage why not start off by using them as an additional backup solution for your most valuable documents and photos?

PROS AND CONS OF USING CLOUD STORAGE SERVICES

Pretty much every business owner that has some type of online presence is using a form of cloud storage. This might entail using services such as Dropbox to share files with employees. Or you might store all of your data on a site like Amazon S3.

While using cloud storage is a viable and cost effective solution it does come with both pros and cons. This article will take a look at some of these.

The Pros of Cloud Storage

Accessibility is one of the biggest pros for using cloud storage. It allows you to access your data regardless of your location worldwide. Plus you can share files with other team players or with overseas employees.

It is now possible to access your cloud storage account from your mobile devices as well as your main computer. The only requirement is that you must be connected to the internet to do so.

Cloud storage gives you the ability to store as much data as you need. If your requirements vary from month to month your provider can easily accommodate you. While some cloud storage providers offer unlimited plans you can also find a pay as you use type of plan. This latter choice may prove to be more cost effective for your business.

Using cloud storage eliminates the need for additional external hard drives or the use of USB sticks. You also do not have to worry about performing any maintenance. All of this is taken care of by the cloud storage company.

Storing your data via the cloud is extremely cost effective especially when compared with having to install new hardware and hire maintenance staff.

The Cons of Cloud Storage

The biggest con of using cloud storage is also one that is listed in the pros section! This is the requirement of being connected to the internet to access your files. While the internet allows you to easily upload and download files, if you don't have an internet connection you are stuck. This may or may not be a concern to you but is something worth considering.

Many users are concerned about the safety and security of their data while being stored in the cloud. Each cloud storage company has their own terms and conditions, which you should take the time to read first.

Also look for any type of bandwidth limits and restrictions. If you exceed these limits you may end up paying more for the service. Or you could find that your access to your account becomes extremely slow.

Before making a final decision on which cloud storage provider to use, contact their support and ask them to explain any points that are not clear. Once you have your data stored it can be a hassle to change to a new provider.

POPULAR CLOUD STORAGE SOLUTIONS

Storing your files and photos in the 'cloud' is becoming really popular. Cloud storage allows you to save backups of all your important documents as well as freeing up space on your hard drive. Another benefit of using a cloud storage solution is that you can access your files from any location. Let's take a quick look at some of the most popular cloud storage solutions.

Dropbox - this is probably the most popular cloud storage system today. They offer free accounts with limited storage but you can increase your limit by simply referring your friends to this service. There is also a paid upgrade version if you need more storage.

Google Drive - this cloud storage system provides users with 15GB of storage when you link it to your Google Account. It's a great way to save your documents and photos to the cloud. Plus you can share and edit content with others directly from inside your account. A good solution for team members working on a project together. Updates and edits are saved easily so there is no need to worry about whether or not you have the latest version of a document.

One Drive or Sky Drive is from Microsoft and it integrates with Office 2013. If you run Windows 8.1 you have cloud storage automatically installed on your system. This allows you to save your important documents in the cloud for extra protection.

Box dot com has been around longer than Dropbox but is not as well known with small business owners. They have always focused more on larger corporations but are now targeting the other end of the spectrum. It is easy to use and can be synched to your computer so all your documents are always up to date.

Icloud is for users of Apple devices. Currently it doesn't offer any drag and drop functionality as the other cloud storage options do. It does integrate with Apple's iWork Office Suite as well as iPad and iPhone apps.

Just Cloud is another storage option but this is a paid site. The advantage of using this is that you can schedule backups for your computer as well. This might be a good choice for small business owners who are looking for an easy way to back up all of their files on a regular basis.

All of the above cloud storage solutions provide you with an easy way to store and protect your documents. Perfect for business and personal use alike.

GETTING STARTED WITH DROPBOX

Dropbox just has to be the most popular cloud storage service currently out there. They offer you free online storage for your data with additional space available as a paid option. Another option to receive additional storage space is to share your Dropbox link with your friends. When they sign up for an account you receive extra storage space!

Getting started with Dropbox is easy you sign up for an account and then download the Dropbox software to your computer and to your mobile devices. Then each time you save an item into your Dropbox folder it will automatically update and sync it across all of your devices.

The file sharing feature that Dropbox offers is another huge attraction for users. To share one of your files you simply right click on that particular file and an the email address of the person you want to share it with.

As soon as you enter the email address Dropbox sends them an invitation and lets them know you want to share a file with them. This is a great way to share files with another co-worker or with your virtual assistant. In addition if your VA is working on a document the updated version will always be available to you in Dropbox immediately.

You can also share files publicly. This is a good way to deliver content to various people such as email subscribers or for delivering your eBooks and reports to your customers.

As well as using Dropbox for business purposes you can also use it for personal purposes. Dropbox is the perfect solution for storing and sharing your photos, your own documents, as well as sharing your videos. Many people use this cloud storage system for backing up their data. For example you may have photos of your children or of a beloved pet that you don't want to lose. Simply save a copy of it to your Dropbox folder.

A new development with Dropbox is that they have recently merged the business and the home version of their software. This means that you don't have to run two different accounts. You can now login in and access either account.

Dropbox has more updates and improvements in the works and it will be interesting to see what they have to offer their customers. If you are looking for a cloud storage option and haven't tried Dropbox why not take them for a test drive today?

AMAZON S3 FOR CLOUD STORAGE

One of the biggest issues with Amazon S3 is that it can be very intimidating and turns people away from using it. Amazon has put time and effort into making their S3 platform more user friendly. So isn't it about time that you took another look at using this service for storing your data?

Online storage is increasing in popularity and users are looking for affordable and easy to use solutions. Amazon S3 allows you to store your photos, videos, music and documents on their servers.

Once you have set up your account you can create buckets which is where you store your data. This also helps protect your data by making it much harder for anyone to find.

The advantage of using Amazon S3 is that you can count on their reputation to ensure that your files will be secure. In addition you only have to pay for the space that you actually use. Your payment will vary each month depending upon how much data you upload or download from your account. So you technically have unlimited storage capabilities.

The use of buckets is especially helpful for business owners, as it helps them to track what visitors to their sites are doing. They can see which products are being downloaded the most for example. As well using buckets helps you to keep your files organized.

If you are accustomed to using your hosting account then a bucket is similar to a root file. From this file you can then add sub folders or buckets to it. Then inside each bucket is where you add your documents, videos and photos.

To make it easier to access your Amazon S3 account you can make use of extensions and plugins. These allow you to access your account directly from your computer. Look for the Firefox S3Fox and install it. You will need to have your Amazon access and secret keys ready to activate the plugin.

If you want to access Amazon S3 from your wordpress site then look for the Wordpress Amazon S3 plugin. If you use Google Chrome then you will need the Extended S3 browser which can be located in the Chrome Web Store.

Once you have actually set up your Amazon S3 account and become familiar with it, you will find that it is not that difficult to use. It is a

great way to store your favorite files for both business and pleasure purposes.