

WHAT IS CLOUD STORAGE?

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WHAT IS CLOUD STORAGE?

Cloud storage has been around for a while but not everyone is using it. When cloud storage first became available users were concerned about how safe and secure their data would be. As time went on cloud storage companies have shown that they are a reliable and safe way to store your business and/or your personal data.

By storing your information 'in the cloud' you are freeing up space on your hard drive. Or you may prefer to use your cloud storage as a backup option. If you do this you need to have the ability to sync your files so the latest versions are always in the cloud.

Cloud storage indicates that your data is being stored remotely. This also means that it is much harder for a would be hacker to locate your data. Another plus is that you can access your data at any location around the world. You just require an internet connection.

At one time the majority of business owners used external hard drives to back up their data. While this is a good option, even these drives can fail and your data is lost. Having additional cloud storage space means that you can easily save another copy of your data. So even if your first line of defence failed your second would still be in place.

The great part about using a cloud storage company is that the majority of them can backup your data automatically. So once you have your account setup and working, backups would happen at a certain time each day or week as required.

One of the most well known cloud storage options is Dropbox, they even start you off with a free account. Dropbox is easy to use and allows you to easily store your data in the cloud. You can share files and folders with whoever you wish. This is perfect for friends and family and for business owners who can easily share documents with their employees.

Most cloud storage solutions allow you to store any type of data including documents, music, photos and videos. Some do have restrictions or limitations when it comes to videos though.

There are numerous cloud storage companies available, some have free plans and others are purely paid options. When choosing a provider consider the volume of data you wish to store and choose accordingly. You may prefer to look for a storage solution where you can increase your space as your needs grow.

WHY YOU SHOULD USE CLOUD STORAGE

Cloud storage is a fairly new concept to many people. One advantage is that it can be used by everyone for both personal and for business purposes. Cloud storage is just as its name suggests storing data in a remote location - in the cloud - by using an internet connection.

To give you a basic understanding of how this works think of a whole field of servers being located in different locations around the world. These servers can be owned by large companies or they can be rented out to cloud storage companies.

One of the biggest concerns for people is in wanting to know how secure these cloud storage platforms are. This is definitely understandable and is the reason a number of people are holding back from using them.

The security on cloud storage options is actually no greater than storing your data anywhere else on the internet. Even your website is vulnerable to being hacked.

There are several advantages to using cloud storage for your personal or business use. The main one is the cost, paying to store data can get really expensive. To do this yourself you would need to have your own dedicated servers and then hire people to manage and maintain them.

A typical cloud base storage company has a low monthly fee and provides you with more than enough space. All you have to worry about is whether or not you have uploaded all of your important files to your storage system.

Another huge benefit of cloud storage is that you are only paying for the space you actually use. So as your storage needs increase you can upgrade your storage plan. Most of the companies have a small storage plan which is normally more than enough for personal use, or for a small business just starting out.

A professional cloud storage company is going to ensure that they are always running the latest security options. After all their business is to protect all their customers files and they won't last long in business if they didn't.

Plus these companies tend to use more than one server to back up all their customer's data. So even if one server encounters a problem the information would still be safely stored.

The last advantage of using cloud storage is that it allows you to access your files from anywhere. All you need is access to the internet. With so many companies hiring employees remotely using cloud storage means that everyone can access documents regardless of their location or time zones.

THE BENEFITS OF USING CLOUD STORAGE

Storing data online is a viable solution for business owners today. It saves them the hassle of having to buy additional servers and finding the space to house them at their own location.

Storing your data online by using a cloud service company can save you time, money and lots of frustration. Plus there are a ton of benefits for a business for having their data stored in the cloud.

Numerous companies today tend to hire outsourcing staff who may be located in various countries around the world. By utilizing cloud storage they can easily give these employees access to the required documents regardless of location or time of day.

Access can be done from almost any device these days. This means that one person could access their files from their Smartphone while someone else uses their laptop or tablet.

Many cloud storage companies are also offering low monthly fees that allow you to only pay for the storage that you actually use. This does vary, however, so do checkout storage fees and space and do comparisons from company to company.

Data can be synched when stored in this manner. What this means is that as different people work on a document the file is automatically updated in the cloud. This is fantastic for project management teams for example. As different members of the team update a portion of any document it can easily be viewed and accessed by another team member. There is no need to wait for an updated file to be emailed or sent to you.

You can control who can view and work on your documents as well. It is easy to add sharing and special permissions to your data. This way you can control what employees or team members can and cannot view.

Storing your data in the cloud can free up disk space on your computer. Plus you won't have to store your data on devices such as an external hard drive, a USB stick and you won't have to spend money on buying DVD ROM's. By virtually storing your documents you are maintaining the speed and health of your main computer.

Using cloud storage is very easy and you really don't need to be tech savvy to do so. Once your account is created you can set it up to automatically backup your entire computer if you wish. This will

safeguard you against any computer malfunctions or crashes that could happen. So even if your computer crashes your data will be easily accessible from your cloud server.

THE THREE TYPES OF CLOUD STORAGE

If you are thinking about using some form of cloud storage you should be aware that there are three different types of storage available. It will depend upon your requirements as to which type would be best for your purpose. Obviously if you need cloud storage for your business needs you may require a different platform to that for your personal needs.

Private Cloud Storage

This type of cloud storage is normally used for large businesses. They are designed for one company and are specific to your requirements. You can choose from two types one that is hosted externally and the other would be located on your premises.

Private cloud storage could also suit a small home based business as well. This type of system offers more control for you in the way it is used.

Businesses who would select this option are those that have dozens of employees. An on premise solution would also be able to be used to host software programs. This makes this solution very cost effective for a larger business.

When too many users are attempting to access the cloud, via a hosted solution, this can really slow upload and download times. Ultimately this can affect work productivity. Plus if the internet connection is lost employees can still keep working if the storage system is on your premises.

Public Cloud Storage

The advantage with public cloud storage is that you do not need to maintain your system. It is hosted online and you can access it from any location and with any device, provided you are connected to the internet.

Public cloud storage would probably suit most people's needs. This would be a good choice for storing your personal documents and for small business owners.

Hybrid Cloud Storage

As its name suggests hybrid cloud storage is a combination of both public and private clouds. You can easily customize features as necessary. You have the option of storing your more important

information on a private cloud and your less important on a public cloud.

Some of the most popular cloud storage companies include Dropbox, Google Drive, Microsoft One Drive/SkyDrive, Box and Just Cloud. These are most suitable for small business purposes and individual needs.

As more companies look to use some type of cloud storage this generates more competition between companies. The plus for you is that you may be able to get good pricing for your storage needs.

Try to choose a cloud storage plans that accommodates your current needs, but one that can be upgraded as your business grows.

WINDOWS 8 AND SKYDRIVE

When Windows 8 first appeared on the scene it received a bunch of mixed reviews. Some people loved the new interface and the use of apps. One feature that drew attention was that of Microsoft adding Skydrive to their operating system.

Skydrive is cloud storage for users to store their documents and photos. This helps owners protect their valuable data and it also allows them to share the data with family, friends or business associates.

Skydrive is really just an example of what cloud storage is all about. If you are currently using Windows 8 and love Skydrive why not protect your entire computer in the same manner?

It is very easy to organize your folders in Skydrive. If you were in the habit of using the libraries feature you can just replace this with Skydrive. The libraries feature in Windows 8 is often underutilized. It is a convenient way to organize and access your information.

If you look under the libraries feature you will see that it has 4 folders including Documents, Pictures, Music and Videos. Just copy these folders into your Skydrive. Then just get into the habit of working from your Skydrive instead of your regular document or music folders.

The main advantage of working in this way is that if something does happen to your computer you won't lose all of your information. Plus if you work on more than one computer you can still access your Skydrive documents.

Another benefit is that you can work on the documents in Skydrive while not connected to the internet. Great if you are on the road and are not sure if you will have access to the internet.

Skydrive doesn't give you a whole lot of room but don't forget you can also use Google Drive in the same manner. Or you may prefer to use additional cloud storage.

For example both Dropbox and Box provide you with a certain amount of free storage. You could easily use both, one for your personal data and the other for business purposes.

Many people often lose their most treasured photos because they don't think about making a backup of them. If you store your photos

using some form of cloud storage, you won't have to worry about losing them. So if your computer crashes or your laptop gets stolen you will still have access to your photos.