

## Online Storage Services

**“Store, share and mobilize your files and data.”**

*by Pete Choppin*

In the past, we used file cabinets, briefcases, safety deposit boxes, fireproof safes, external hard drives, floppy disks, flash drives and other devices in an effort to preserve and protect our important documents and data. The need to securely store information still exists; however, there is a new option for safe storage that doesn't involve a personal storage gadget that can get damaged or lost. Online storage services protect and store your personal information in a location other than your home, office or on your person.

Digital data is becoming more common as we move closer to a paperless society. Though files stored in a computer are safe from many threats, there is still a chance of a natural disaster, like a fire or flood; or a computer-generated disaster, like a virus, worms or Trojans damaging your files. Digital information is hard and sometimes impossible to recover.

Online storage is becoming less expensive. To date, Mozy, one of the leading online storage services, offers unlimited storage for only \$4.95 a month and you can get a 2GB account free.

The price of online storage continues to drop, especially with rumors of the [gdrive](#). This is Google's version of online storage that would provide its users with unlimited storage space—similar to Gmail, but you could save any type of file instead of just e-mail.

Online storage is a cost-effective and practical option. Your files are transferred and stored with SSL encryption that ensures your personal information remains personal. Additionally, accounts are password-protected.

There are some benefits to using online storage versus storing your data on a traditional hard drive. Some advantages to online storage include:

- You are able to access your information from any computer connected to the Internet.
- It's easy to transfer files to a new computer.
- There is no need to save files on discs, external hard drive, or flash drives.
- You can share files with friends and family by e-mailing the files directly to the person, or assign the files a Web site address so people can go to the address to access the files.
- Files are secure online. You don't have to worry about losing the files or damage by a natural disaster or virus.
- You can access your files with a mobile device like a PDA or smartphone.

There are also some considerations when using an Internet storage service. Some helpful guidelines include:

- Choose a reliable service that fits your needs—There are many online storage services available. Your decision will largely depend on how much space you need and how often you want to access your information. Most services offer a free account so you can try the service before buying an account.

- Back up your files frequently—The more often you back up your files, the less likely you will lose information. Some services allow you to set scheduled backups.
- Keep a copy of your files on your computer—Though online storage services are very secure, nothing is foolproof. It's wise to keep a copy of important files on your computer where you can access them even if your Internet connection goes down.
- Organize your files—There is no sense in storing files online if you can't locate them later. Internet storage sites allow you to create folders and add tags to your files. It's a good idea to do so.
- Keep passwords safe—Online storage accounts require a password to access them. Always keep your username and password safe so your personal files aren't compromised.

People have files that can't be replaced, such as photographs, and files that it would be nice to access anytime and anywhere, like a resume. Important files to consider uploading to an online storage service include:

- Photographs
- Home video
- Audio files
- Tax information
- Important documents for work or school
- Resume
- User manuals
- Important insurance information
- Important e-mails

Online storage services provide peace of mind and can save money, time and heartache. Here are some of the highest-rated services:

### [SugarSync](#)

SugarSync is a great way to store, share and mobilize your files and data. It is a comprehensive solution for online storage, online file sharing/collaboration and multiple computer syncing. With advanced features and mobile options, your files are automatically everywhere you need them to be. SugarSync offers a unique combination of features, simplicity and amazing flexibility.

### [OpenDrive](#)

OpenDrive is one of those online storage services that might look weak on the surface, but when you get down to what it truly has to offer, you will find few online storage services that are more powerful. OpenDrive provides its users with an ample feature set as well as impressive security options. It would be nice to see the company add more storage space at

good prices and implement live chat support, but those are minor flaws that don't take away from a powerful service.

### [Mozy](#)

Mozy isn't so much an online storage service as it is an online backup service. However, as I was going over some of these services I came to realize that it doesn't matter too much anymore. Even though it's great as a backup service, this service still lets you store files online and retrieve them remotely, which is all you really need from an online storage service.

One reason that Mozy is so attractive as an online storage solution is the price; this service's subscription is practically unbeatable. Few other services offer that kind of price per storage space value.

### [Carbonite](#)

Carbonite provides a good backup and storage option for those who need a reasonably priced solution with unlimited storage and remote access. It is also a good option for those who need full Mac support and automatic backup options. The service could use a richer feature set, but the fact that it can pretty much run itself carries a lot of weight as far as making it a practical solution for those who do not want to have to think about backing up their system manually all of the time. Overall, Carbonite is a great online storage service with some good features and a great yearly price for unlimited online storage space.

There are many advantages to online storage services. Access your files anytime and anywhere. Share your files with friends, family or the world. Protect your most valuable data. Although it will still take time for people to get used to storing files somewhere else, other than on their computer, online storage appears to be one way moving to the cloud is put to good use.