

10 Cloud Computing Tips for Genealogy

GENEALOGY BARGAINS

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Cloud computing is fairly simple when you think about it. Basically, instead of storing your data on your own computer, you agree to upload that data to a server provided by a vendor. You then can access that data from various devices including laptops, tablet computers and mobile phones, depending upon the vendor you select.



- Read the Terms of Service.** A good rule to follow for any site storing your data, not just cloud computing sites. Before you check that little box that says “I have read and accepted . . .” make sure you understand fully what the site says it will and won’t do in terms of using your data.
- Understand the Limits of Each Program.** Some programs limit the amount of data stored for free or even if you pay a monthly fee. There are also limits as to file size. And for those programs that sync to devices such as a desktop computer or smart phone, there may be limits as to the number of devices.
- Be Discreet.** Do you want to store personal or financial information on a cloud program? Servers get hacked and that information could be at risk. If you do want to have these types of files accessible, secure them with a password for each document.
- Offline vs. Online.** There’s a difference between an online-only platform where the files are only stored on the server and one that synchronizes the files between the server and one or more of your computers and devices. Understand the capabilities of the program so you won’t lose data.
- Avoid Multiple Accounts.** A sure-fire way to lose data is to try and “game the system” and get more free space by setting up multiple accounts. Most of the desktop applications are intended to work with only one account for each computer or device.
- Can You Easily Import and Export Data?** Are you able to upload a large group of files at one time or able to export that same group to a computer or another platform? Review any limitations imposed by the program, especially in terms of individual file sizes and file types.
- Avoid Collaboration Confusion.** When you collaborate with others and allow them to add, edit and delete files in a cloud program, you may lose data. Make sure that each person who has access understands how the cloud program works.
- Be Careful with Genealogy Database Files.** Don’t move the data file for a genealogy program like Legacy Family Tree, in a cloud program without changing the “file, open” settings.
- Can You Recover Deleted Files?** Some programs like Dropbox will retain deleted files for up to 30 days and allow you to “undelete” them. In addition, some programs will use “versioning” to save multiple sets of edits to a file, such as a Microsoft Word document.
- How Are Backups Handled?** Storing data in the cloud is NOT backing up data. Use the **3-2-1 Data Backup** method: 3 separate backups, 2 different media, 1 backup offsite.

Check out the **Cloud Computing Resource List** on the back page!

Cloud Computing Resource List

- **Comparison of File Hosting Services**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_file_hosting_services
- **Box**
<https://box.com>
10 GB free storage; sync to other devices
- **DropBox**
<https://dropbox.com>
2 GB free storage; sync to other devices; earn free storage through referrals
- **Google Drive**
<https://drive.google.com>
15 GB free storage (split across Drive, Google Photos, and Gmail)
- **iCloud (Apple)**
<https://www.apple.com/icloud/>
5 GB free storage; iOS devices
- **OneDrive (Microsoft)**
<https://onedrive.live.com>
15 GB free storage; cumbersome file sharing process
- **Sync**
<https://sync.com>
5 GB free storage; sync to other devices; earn free storage through referrals