

## To 'Cloud' or Not To "Cloud," That Is the Question

Submitted by Joan Frerichs, CIACUG Board Member

[www.ciacug.org](http://www.ciacug.org)

ciacug@ciacug.org

I'd heard of saving computer files to the "cloud," but I really didn't know very much about it until our April CIACUG meeting when David Williams provided members with a great deal of helpful information about how it works.



If you have never had your computer "crash," be destroyed in a fire or flood, be struck by lightning, or stolen, you have been exceptionally fortunate, or, perhaps, you haven't been computing very long. After spending many painstaking hours of inputting data, contact lists, medical histories, financial information, etc. on our first computer, we experienced a crash that lost all of that data forever. Many times you toss or shred the paper trail thinking your information is safe forever. How naive can one be? It can be an "oops moment," or it can be devastating. We had to consider ours an "oh phoo moment" and move on with life and start over, and that is disconcerting, to say the least. If you have business information and customer lists on your computer, it can put you out of business temporarily, at the very least.

If you've been backing up your files to an external hard drive, what if that is destroyed in a fire? If you've been religiously backing up your data to disc times two, putting one in the fire safe (not very safe) and taking one to an off-site location, that gets time-consuming and cumbersome. The easy solution....back it up to the "cloud."



If you are a non-business user, there are several cloud servers that give you a certain amount of free storage, and it was pointed out that it is a good plan to review the sites to see what they have to offer and then choose a couple that you feel fit your needs and you are comfortable with probably being around for the long-term. There have been servers that have “disappeared” in the past without ample warning for users to recall their data. Thus, it’s a good plan to save the same data on more than one cloud server. If you are a business user or require more space than the free allotment, there will be a charge. With some servers you can increase your allotment by “recommending” their service to others, and if they should decide to sign on with that service, you may then be allowed additional storage space.

The next step is to set up your accounts, organize your files, save your files to the clouds and then synchronize your pc, your laptop, your iPad, etc. so that any changes you make to any of your saved files will automatically be updated on all your devices. That’s a time-saving plus. Also, you are able to access those files in the cloud from any web-based hardware that has access to the internet. You can also share data files, photos, etc. with friends and family. Be sure to remember, or write down, your user names and passwords.



## Cloud Computing

*Having secure access to all your applications and data from any network device*

Following are some links to websites for comparison purposes:

20 Clever Apps and Services That Make Great Use of the Cloud

<http://bit.ly/JydzYV>

Comparison of online backup services

<http://bit.ly/5P003Z>

Cloud Drive Comparison

<http://rww.to/j2FUhI>

The “Top Best Cloud Storage Companies” Reviewed!

[www.thetop10bestonlinebackup.com/cloud-storage](http://www.thetop10bestonlinebackup.com/cloud-storage)

15 Best Free Online Data Storage & Backup Services

<http://bit.ly/rQGb1p>

Listed below are some of the free cloud storage servers and the amount of free storage:

DropBox	2 GB	<a href="http://www.dropbox.com">www.dropbox.com</a>
Windows Skydrive	7 GB	<a href="http://skydrive.live.com">skydrive.live.com</a>
BOX	5 GB	<a href="http://www.box.com">www.box.com</a>
Google Drive	5 GB	<a href="http://drive.google.com">drive.google.com</a>
SugarSync	5 GB	<a href="http://www.sugarsync.com">www.sugarsync.com</a>
ASUS Webstorage	2 GB	<a href="http://www.asuswebstorage.com/">www.asuswebstorage.com/</a>
Wuala	5 GB	<a href="http://www.wuala.com/">www.wuala.com/</a>
Apple iCloud	5 GB	<a href="http://www.icloud.com">www.icloud.com</a>
Amazon Cloud	5 GB	<a href="http://www.amazon.com/cloudrive">www.amazon.com/cloudrive</a>
Google Music		<a href="http://play.google.com/music">play.google.com/music</a>

You might also be interested in checking out the following:

TonidoSync	<a href="http://www.tonido.com">www.tonido.com</a>
LiveMesh	<a href="http://download.cnet.com/Live-Mesh-2011/">download.cnet.com/Live-Mesh-2011/</a>
Social Folders	<a href="http://socialfolders.me">socialfolders.me</a>
Insync	<a href="http://ww.insynchq.com/">ww.insynchq.com/</a>
Teradesk	<a href="http://www.teradesk.net">www.teradesk.net</a>

Now, get organized and SAVE, SAVE, SAVE (TO THE CLOUD). It can keep you safe and sane.