

UNDERSTANDING THE CLOUD

Computer users have been limited in the way in which they can access files on separate systems. Traditionally, users store their files on a local hard drive (such as the C: drive). To use those files on a different computer, that computer must have a network connection to the user's network drive, or the user must transfer files using a removable drive such as a flash drive.

With cloud technology, the user only needs access to the Internet in order to work on files. Microsoft OneDrive is Microsoft's cloud-based technology that provides access to users' files from any location at any time. The advantage with cloud technologies is that you aren't limited to a removable drive strategy. Storing files in the cloud also provides a more flexible way for users to share files with other users.

As with most systems, cloud-based systems have some disadvantages. First, you must have an Internet connection to access files. Also, your files may be subject to terms and conditions imposed by the cloud company that gives it rights to read and access your files. Currently, Microsoft OneDrive does not indicate that it has those rights, but you should be aware of that possibility as you decide to store your photos, documents, videos, and other items in the cloud.

Microsoft has a vision that every user should have access to his or her files anytime and anywhere he or she wants them (with Internet connectivity, of course). In addition, the device you use to access your files should be irrelevant. For example, users should be able to access files using a personal computer, a tablet, a smartphone, or a laptop.

To effectively use the OneDrive app, you must be signed in to your Microsoft account. Signing into your computer with a local account will only let you use the OneDrive app to browse your PC. You won't be able to access your files unless you also log in to **OneDrive.com** (using your Microsoft account, of course).

If you have an Apple iPad or iPod Touch, consider downloading the free OneDrive app from the Apple iTunes Store. The OneDrive app enables you to view your OneDrive files, delete them, move them to different folders, add folders, send photos or videos to OneDrive, and open files (if you have a support app for that file type).

Using OneDrive

OneDrive is available on the Windows Start menu. Click it now to start using it.

When the application first appears

If you don't have a Microsoft account on your local PC, you're prompted to enter your Microsoft account and password. Do so to continue with the initial setup process. To access your OneDrive folders from File Explorer, simply open OneDrive from the Start menu.

Adding files to OneDrive

One of the tasks that you can perform with OneDrive in File Explorer is to add files to your OneDrive folders. You can add files from your computer to OneDrive by using the following steps:

1. In File Explorer, navigate to your folders and select a file or a collection of files. Right-click the files and choose Copy.
2. Click the OneDrive folder icon in the left pane of the File Explorer window.
3. Right-click and choose Paste to paste the files into your OneDrive.

Uploading the Files Beyond the Desktop

OneDrive uploads the files to your OneDrive account online and displays those files in your OneDrive folder on the Internet.

Working in the Cloud

One of the most powerful uses of OneDrive is the capability to share files with other users. For example, you can choose to share files from OneDrive to other OneDrive account users or with those who do not have a OneDrive account. The following steps show you how to share files using OneDrive:

1. Open OneDrive in File Explorer to the file you want to share.
2. Right-click the target file to display its shortcut menu.
3. Click Share a OneDrive Link. A message appears above the taskbar indicating that a new link to the OneDrive file has been sent to your Windows Clipboard.
4. Open your e-mail application. You will use e-mail to share the new link to other people who you want to access your shared OneDrive file.
5. Enter the e-mail address of the recipient of the file.
6. Right-click and choose Paste in the body of the e-mail message to paste the shared OneDrive link in the e-mail message.

7. Click the Send button. Upon receipt of the message, the recipient simply clicks the link and has access to your shared file.