

USING ONEDRIVE FOR OFF-SITE DATA BACKUP

In our Saturday morning presentations, we have looked at creating a clone backup using Acronis and setting up File History to back up data files to an external drive.

This is all good — but there is a third way.

Best practices for a robust backup strategy call for keeping a backup copy **off-site**. OneDrive, included as part of Windows 10, can do that automatically. (Major caveat: You cannot store applications off-site, only data files!)

We'll set up OneDrive, and then make a couple of changes to other files to make our use of OneDrive for backing up nearly transparent.

Microsoft account and connectivity

You need a Microsoft account to use OneDrive. You may already be using one to log into your PC. If you're logging in with an email address and a password or pin, you are already using a Microsoft account.

If not, and you don't have a Microsoft account at all, you might want to sign up for a new account by using your current email address.

You will also need to be online for OneDrive to work. It's best if you're constantly connected, but it'll work with an intermittent connection as well. As with all things online, the faster the better.

OneDrive

OneDrive is standard in Windows 10. In fact, it's downright difficult to remove. If you don't have a OneDrive icon appearing on the right side of the Taskbar (its icon looks like a cloud), simply type *OneDrive* in the search box on the left side of the Taskbar, click on the OneDrive button that appears at the top of the column, and the OneDrive icon will magically appear in the notification area on the right side of the Taskbar.

Click the OneDrive icon to launch the set-up process.

Setting up OneDrive

First, you'll be asked for the email address corresponding to your Microsoft account. Type it in and click **Sign in**.

Once signed in, you'll be shown the location of your OneDrive folder, with the option to change that location.

Unless you have a specific reason to change it — such as placing it on a different drive — leaving it at the default location is preferred.

Unless you know you have specific requirements otherwise, make sure “Sync all files and folders in OneDrive” is checked. Click on **Next**. That's it! It's set up. OneDrive is at work.

What OneDrive does for backing up

At its most basic, OneDrive operates similarly to other cloud storage services: what's in your computer's OneDrive folder is a copy of what's in your OneDrive account online. What does that mean?

1. Any time you add or update a file or folder within the OneDrive folder on your machine, it is automatically uploaded to OneDrive online.
2. Any time a file is created in OneDrive online, it's automatically downloaded to the OneDrive folder on your machine.

The file is available in both locations, and you can use either.

Automatically uploaded to OneDrive.

The easiest way to make sure OneDrive is always backing up your work is to always do your work in OneDrive.

That means instead of creating your new documents (or Pictures, or Music, or whatever) in your “Documents” folder, create them in your OneDrive folder. Then every time you hit “Save as” and direct the data file to your computer's OneDrive folder, the document is updated on your computer *and* uploaded to your OneDrive online account. ***Your PC could be destroyed, but your document(s) will still be there, online, in your OneDrive account.***

When you open the OneDrive folder on your computer, each file that you place there will show a status symbol. A green circle with a check mark indicates that the file has been successfully sent. A revolving arrow indicates that the file is in process of being sent.

How to Access Your OneDrive Account from the Cloud (from any computer with Internet Access)

1. Go to your favorite browser and enter **onedrive.live.com**.
2. On the next screen, click *Sign up for free*.
3. On the next screen, click *sign in*.
4. On the next screens, insert your Microsoft Account and Password.
5. The next page will show your online OneDrive account.

When you are in your online OneDrive account, get to know some of the menu functions, such as uploading/downloading data files, deleting folders or files from the online account, and how to access and use the free Microsoft Office applications. (The Office applications are accessible by clicking the multiple cube box that appears near the upper left corner.)

Remember, your OneDrive online account is accessible anywhere you have web access. You can view and work with your file from a computer in a different location.

How to move a file to OneDrive

1. From File Explorer, open the folder that contains the file you want to move.
2. Right-click on the target file and select **cut**.
3. Now click on the OneDrive folder in the Navigation column. This action will expand OneDrive to let you see your other OneDrive folders.
4. Right-click on the OneDrive nested folder that you want to use. Then click **paste**.
5. This **cut and paste** action moves the target file to the nested folder with the OneDrive folder.

How to copy a file to OneDrive

1. From File Explorer, open the folder that contains the file you want to copy.
2. Right-click on the target file and select **copy**.
3. Now click on the OneDrive folder in the Navigation column. This action will expand OneDrive to let you see your other OneDrive folders.
4. Right-click on the OneDrive nested folder that you want to use. Then click **paste**.
5. This **copy and paste** action moves the target file to the nested folder with the OneDrive folder.