Module 9

Using large files & sharing documents

Digital technologies are making it easier to collaborate with staff and clients around the globe.

In this module you'll learn about new technologies to increase productivity, securely share large files, and keep everyone up to speed when collaborating on rapidly evolving projects.

PART ONE: DEALING WITH LARGE FILES

Part 1: Dealing with shared documents and large files

Many businesses have relied heavily on email to transfer working business documents. With file sizes growing larger and more complex, files are becoming too large to share via email, and sharing multiple versions of the same document can be confusing and cause errors in production.

Online file sharing tools can bring together staff, suppliers and clients from around the world, collaborating on documents simultaneously to drive your business forward.

New file sharing technologies

The development of more advanced digital technologies has made it faster and easier to edit and share documents within your business, and with external contacts.

Users and staff around the world → Access online file sharing tools → Collaboration and file control
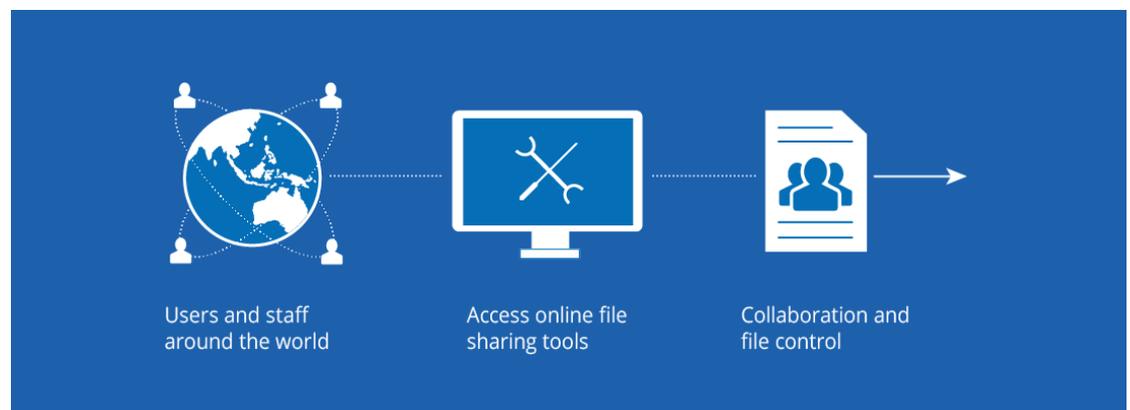
There are two main types:

1. Online collaboration tools

These tools allow you to create and store documents online, and to invite other people to remotely view, edit and download them via a web browser. Multiple people can simultaneously edit and share documents, saving time and allowing for more dynamic updating.

2. Basic file sharing tools

Online tools like Dropbox and Huddle allow you to quickly and easily share large documents, which can be accessed and downloaded (but not edited) through a web browser.

Well-known options are Google Drive and Microsoft Office 365. The key difference is that Google Drive is free and Microsoft Office 365 requires a subscription.

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PART TWO:
WHAT ARE THE
CHALLENGES
AND POTENTIAL
PITFALLS

Part 2: What are the challenges and potential pitfalls

With many different file sharing options available, you'll need to define which features are most important for your business.

Security

Some documents may contain important private data. The best online file sharing services should encrypt every file transferred, and provide password protection to keep files safe. Isolated storage facilities are a more expensive security option, but good if your customers' data is especially sensitive.

Tracking

Look for services that provide tracking tools to confirm your files have been received. Some services also provide a services log, which can track employees' file sharing activity.

Pricing vs. business focus

There is a large number of free or very low cost online storage and file sharing providers. Look closely to find business focused solutions, rather than those designed for non-sensitive documents.

Your customers' needs

Your customers and business partners may favour their own file sharing provider. Be open to working with a range of different file sharing solutions, provided they meet your own business needs.

You might also want to consider:

- maximum number of sends;
- storage space;
- file size limit;
- compatible file types;
- availability of multi-user plans; and
- how many days shared files remain available.

Further resources

If you're ready to learn more about file sharing services, these resources may help.

All information was current at the time of writing.

Digitalbusiness.gov.au - Information about choosing the right online tools to help manage your business more efficiently.

Dropbox.com - Dropbox.

Google.com.au/drive - Google Drive.

Huddle.com - Huddle.

Products.office.com/en-au/business/office - Microsoft Office 365.