The cloud and you

What are advantages and disadvantages of the cloud, and what's likely to happen with the personal data your keep in the cloud?

How to get started with the cloud

How do you know that your data is safe in the cloud? It's secured by your user account. Let's look into that:

- The cloud stores data and provides services, online. That means your data can be held remotely from your devices, and you don't have to run certain processing services on your device. As long as you are connected to the internet, the online data can be accessed at any time, by you, from anywhere.

- You can create a **cloud account** when you first set up a Windows or Apple computer, iPhone, iPad or Android phone or tablet account. You can also go to a third-part cloud system and set up an account.

- Most cloud accounts come with some free storage which you can access either with your **web browser** or with a special **app** on your mobile device. The amount of free storage varies depending on the cloud service.

- Some free cloud accounts include other free services. Google, for example, includes **Gmail**, a calendar and a suite of office programs.

- When you put a document, photo, video or any other kind of file onto your cloud storage, it will use some of your allocated storage space. Video tends to use the most space, and regular documents the least.

- If you run out of space you can remove bulky unwanted files to make room, or purchase more space.

The cloud stores files on the internet, rather than on your devices

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Using the cloud safely and securely

As with all online activity, it's important to keep a few things in mind to use the cloud safely and securely:

- Your cloud **account** will be secured with your **username** and **password**. Choose a strong password which is easy for you to remember but hard for others to guess. Keep a written copy of your password in a safe, secret place.

- Turn on **two-factor authentication** in your cloud service's settings. That way it will send a code to your mobile device every time you log on to help verify your identity. That will keep your cloud service much more secure.

- You own your data, even if it's on the cloud. The cloud service provider does not have permission to look at your data. They will keep backups in case of server problems, but you should keep an extra backup yourself.

- From time to time, check the **terms and conditions** of the cloud service. That way you will know your responsibilities and the service's responsibilities. These can change over time as the service develops.


Squirrel Cloud

username:
tony@tada.com.au
password:
xxxxxxxxxxxx

A cloud account is protected by a username and password

Are there downsides to the cloud?

There are some drawbacks to using cloud services. Let's see what they are and what you can do about them:

- You may receive irritating advertisements from the cloud service provider that try to convince to you to upgrade to a paid service.

- If the advertisements are in the form of emails, you can click on the **unsubscribe** link at the bottom of the email.

- If you are receiving advertisements in the form of pop ups when you sign in to your cloud storage, that's usually because you are running low on free space.
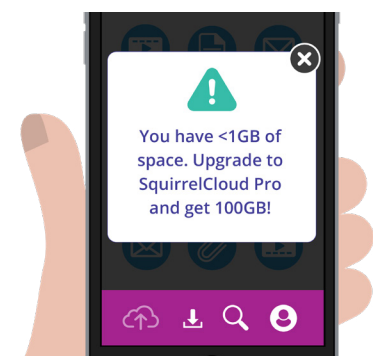
Pop up ads from your cloud service usually mean you're running out of storage

The cloud and you

- You can stop these by removing files you don't need to free up some space. Or you can look in the **account settings** for an option to stop the pop ups.

- Sometimes the terms of service of a cloud service may change, perhaps reducing the amount of free storage or the number of devices you can use to access to the service. You can always delete your files and cancel your account. Remember to make sure you've downloaded your files first!

- Shop around. Some cloud services offer more free data than others. You can even use several different cloud services at the same time.

Shop around when looking for a cloud service provider

Other things the cloud can do for you

Here are some of the other ways that the cloud integrates with your devices, and other cloud-based activities you might like to try:

- The most common uses of the cloud are email, storing files, storing and organising photos, and sharing things such as your contact list and calendar between all your various devices.

- **Cloud-based messaging** allows a far richer experience than regular SMS. Cloud-based messaging includes Apple **iMessage**, **WhatsApp**, **Facebook Messenger** and several others.

- **Cloud-based video call services** have become much more important in recent times. Some examples of this are **Skype**, **Zoom**, and Apple's **Facetime**.

- The cloud allows smart speakers to make calls. For example, a **Google Assistant**-compatible smart speaker can call another using an app called **Google Duo**.

The cloud lets you store and share all types of files