BROWN

Decide How to Store and Share Files

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Several services at Brown allow you to share and store files. This guide will let you compare the options and decide which one(s) are right for you.

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Easy to Use

Google Drive

The native Google document formats allow for real-time collaboration and versioning. You can also store unconverted files of various types in your Google Drive. It's easy to share files with members of the Brown community (including Google Groups) and non-Brown Google accounts; files can be shared with view-only, comment, or edit access. You can access files on the web, through a mobile app, or by installing Google Drive on your computer (which makes it act like a folder on your computer).

- **Best for:** Collaboration in native Google files, easy access from anywhere, unlimited storage, sharing with Google Groups.

- **Limitations:** Some confusion / lost formatting when opening shared Office documents in Chrome.

- **More info:** Service Catalog | Documentation

Dropbox

Brown offers free, large-quota Dropbox.com accounts to Brown faculty, staff, and grad/med students. These are great for storing all types of files; some people prefer Dropbox to Google Drive because the latter can accidentally convert Office documents to an editable version. You can access files on the web, through a mobile app, or by installing Dropbox on your computer (which makes it act like a folder on your computer). Brown team accounts

have more storage and version history than consumer accounts.

- **Best for:** Sharing and storing various file types including Office files and photo galleries, easy access from many devices

- **Limitations:** To give edit access to a file, it must be in a folder; this means you must create a new folder for each combination of people who will be editing files. Child folders always inherit permissions from the parent (you cannot remove collaborators from child folders).

- **More info:** [Service Catalog](#) | [Documentation](#)

General File Storage

These additional storage options are provided on the Campus File Storage platform.

Campus File Storage / Department File Services

Departmental File Services provides University departments with a location in which files can be stored, backed up, and shared across the department. The service can be accessed by mapping the drive on your computer ([Windows Explorer](#) on PC or [Finder](#) on a Mac), or by using a virtual computer in Brown's [MyApps service](#). (For researchers, the "Campus File Storage / Research" service described earlier on this page runs on the same technology.)

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- **Best for:** Backing up and sharing official department documents, ensuring longevity of documents after file authors leave Brown.

- **Limitations**: Can only be accessed on the Brown network or with VPN. Not as easy to access as consumer services (no app, web access is a bit clunky). Sharing is not easy: no sharing with people outside of Brown, no sharing with people who don't have access to the department folders.

- **More info:** [Service Catalog](#) | [Documentation](#)

Campus File Storage / Home Folder

Each member of the Brown community has a "home folder" to store files. This folder shows up on computers in computing labs so you can take files with you without having to email them to yourself. You can also access this folder when using RemoteApps (for example, the virtual Engineering lab). In some departments with managed computers, computer folders such as "Documents" redirect to the home folder, providing backup and easier access to files when away from the computer. Along with the already mentioned ways of accessing the folder, you can also access it by [mapping the drive on your computer](#) or by using a virtual computer in Brown's [MyApps service](#). .

- **Best for:** Storing files in computing labs, working on files when using a RemoteApp, student access to file storage.

- **Limitations:** Can only be accessed on the Brown network or with VPN. Not as easy to access as consumer services. Not intended for sharing.

- **More info:** Documentation

Especially For Research

Please refer to the **Research Storage Article** for complete details regarding all storage services and options available for Brown Researchers.

Comparison table

Features	Google Drive	Dropbox	Campus File Storage
Collaborative editing	✔		
Easy access from smartphones	✔	✔	
Share a file by sending the link	✔	✔	✔ (webfiles only)
Backed up	✔	✔	✔
Search stored files when you search files on your computer		✔	✔
Login required to access shared data		Only for editing	✔
Brown-provided account required to access shared data			✔
Access restricted to Brown campus or VPN			✔
Integration with Supercomputer			
Allow guest upload		✔	
Security Features	Prevent editors from resharing, set expiration date	Share with password, set expiration date	Access controlled by Brown security groups
Storage per user	Depends on university status	Practically unlimited*	100GB - 10TB+
Max file size	5TB	20GB	4TB (1TB for best performance)

Related Content

- About Dropbox at Brown