

Google Cloud and Google Drive

What are they?

Google Cloud Platform (GCP), offered by Google, is a suite of cloud computing services that runs on the same infrastructure that Google uses internally for its end-user products, such as Google Search and YouTube. Alongside a set of management tools, it provides a series of modular cloud services including computing, data storage, data analytics and machine learning. Registration requires a credit card or bank account details.

Think of GCP as an umbrella covering many separate Google functions such as Gmail, Google Drive and Google Photo. To describe, in detail, everything under this GCP umbrella would take over 100 type written pages. I will discuss Google Drive below and leave Google Photo for future discussion.

Google Drive is a file storage and synchronization service developed by Google. It allows users to store files on Google servers, synchronize files across devices, and share files. The only access to personal data on the servers is web based. A Windows 7/8/8.1/10 desktop app was taken out-of-service on March 12, 2018.

Google Drive encompasses Google Docs, Sheets and Slides, an office suite that permits collaborative editing of documents, spreadsheets, presentations, drawings, forms, and more. Files created and edited through the office suite are saved in Google Drive.

Google Drive offers users 15 gigabytes of free storage, with 100 gigabytes and over offered through optional paid plans. Files uploaded can be up to

5 terabytes in size. Users can change privacy settings for individual files and folders, including enabling sharing with other users or making content public. On the website, users can search for an image by describing its visuals, and use natural language to find specific files, such as "find my budget spreadsheet from last December".

As of March 2017, Google Drive has 800 million active users, and as of September 2015, it has over one million organizational paying users. As of May 2017, there are over two trillion files stored on the service.

Computer Group Recommendation:

Since Google Drive no longer offers a Windows Desktop app, we recommend using Dropbox with 2 GB of free storage. Move your data to Google Drive if you have need for more free storage up to 15 GB. It is much easier to use Dropbox with Desktop folder access than to logon to the web each time you need to utilize free storage.