

Google might launch Drive for cloud storage soon

February 12 2012, by Nancy Owano



(PhysOrg.com) -- Google's next big move, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, is a cloud storage service called Drive. Hardly first to the plate, Google is simply catching up to introducing its cloud repository idea for mobile users. Apple, Microsoft, and Dropbox are known for their services, but stories about anticipated Google launches generally stir the waters and seed lots of news items and bloggers' posts.

Google, as observers already point out, has significant “stickiness” with an array of services surrounding documents and communications; its extension into cloud storage is seen as important to watch.

Drive will allow the user to store files and retrieve the files from Internet-connected devices, be it smartphones, tablets, or any other. The launch is

reportedly planned for any time soon—possibly in the coming weeks.

Information that can be Drive-stored is to include photos, documents, and videos, which would land on Google's servers. This type of online storage system sounds familiar to those familiar with Dropbox, which has enjoyed success. Dropbox has 50 million users, according to reports, and similarly allows users to store photos, documents and other material so users can always access them from PCs, smartphones, or other devices. Google and Dropbox also bear resemblance in pay models--Google's Drive service will be free, but users who store large amounts of data will have to pay.

Similarly, Dropbox offers 2GB for free but collects \$9.99 per month from customers who want 50 GB of data per month and Dropbox charges \$19.99 per month for 100GB.

Apple offers iCloud and [Microsoft](#), SkyDrive, but much of the press attention is focusing on Dropbox and what Google's entry might do to threaten the popularity of Dropbox.

Another question being posed is whether [Google](#)'s business executives will be content with simply a tiered subscription payment model or whether the company will be getting into the more lucrative business of scanning the user's data for the purpose of sending targeted ads. This might ruffle watchdog groups sensitive to threats to privacy.

Lastly, there is the all-familiar question about cloud storage versus maintaining security for large businesses. Some cloud-computing watchers worry over the idea of employees storing certain information on a service that the companies cannot directly control. Ensuring security measures to automatically stop people from sharing confidential documents has been one suggestion in the ongoing conversation about cloud services and security.

However, if Dropbox, which enables enabled iPads, Android phones and PCs to work together, is any indication, a number of businesses do feel comfortable about file-sharing services from Dropbox. According to a report last year in *The New York Times*, “millions” signed up with their work e-mail addresses to [Dropbox](#) and the company estimated that at least one million businesses used the service.

Yet another company, Box.net, has had success in targeting business customers by spelling out advantages of using its file-sharing services without incurring headaches over compromised security. Box.net tells customers that “protecting your corporate content is our top priority.” The company says it has invested heavily in security and resiliency at its data centers.

More information: online.wsj.com/article/SB10001211961645711988.html

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Citation: Google might launch Drive for cloud storage soon (2012, February 12) retrieved 5 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-02-google-cloud-storage.html>

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