

# Google joins 'cloud' data storage trend

April 24 2012

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Google on Tuesday launched a long-anticipated "Drive" service that lets people store, share and collaborate on digital files in the Internet "cloud."

Google on Tuesday launched a long-anticipated "Drive" service that lets people store photos, videos, and other digital files in the Internet "cloud."

[Google Drive](#) accounts with five gigabytes of storage were available free at [drive.google.com](#) and upgrades to more space on servers in the California company's data centers were available at rates set by size and country.

"The model is really designed at the core to help people live their lives in the cloud," Google vice president for Chrome and Apps Sundar Pichai said on a conference call with reporters.

"Google Drive is something we see as central to the online experience at Google."

Google Drive software has been tailored for Windows and Macintosh computers as well as smartphones or tablets powered by Google-backed Android software.

A version tailored for Apple mobile gadgets will be released soon, according to Pichai.

"We want to make sure that all our users' data are available wherever they are," he said.

Google Drive data can be reached from various devices, and deleting it from one deletes it from all. Scanned letters can be saved under the new service and Fax messages can be sent or received.

Google Docs online text program was described as an integral component of Drive, letting people create and collaborate on documents.

Google put its search expertise to work to provide tools for people to quickly find files in their Drive accounts, according to Pichai. Included was Google technology to power searches using images instead of key words.

Autodesk and some other third-party program creators have collaborated with Google to make it possible for people to use their software in Drive accounts, where teams can join forces online to handle projects.

"We have only shared it with a few developers so far," Pichai said.

"Over time, we want Drive to be thought of as a place where you can create anything and collaborate with anyone; and the devices or apps are up to you."

Talk about creating a Google Drive started about five years ago.

The booming trend of smartphones or tablets being at the center of mobile lifestyles and the growing popularity of services like Gmail or YouTube hosted in the Internet cloud made the time ripe for Google Drive, executives said.

"This is a natural progression," Pichai said. "We are moving to a post-PC (personal computer) era where this is the cloud at work. Pretty soon you will be able to open a file from anywhere in Google Drive."

Google Drive will also be built into a new generation of Chrome laptop computers.

A version of Google Drive geared for businesses will have a different pricing structure and offer 24-hours technical support.

Google's new service will enter an arena with Microsoft's SkyDrive, Apple's iCloud online data repository for users of its devices, and popular Web-based file hosting service startups such as Dropbox and SugarSync.

**More information:** Google blog post:  
[googleblog.blogspot.com/2012/04/...rive-yes-really.html](http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2012/04/...rive-yes-really.html)

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