

How to use OneDrive

<http://www.techradar.com/how-to/computing/how-to-use-onedrive-1308522>

Microsoft's cloud computing service. OneDrive, has seen a major overhaul in [Windows 10](#). Instead of being a key, but non-essential, add-on like it was in [Windows 7](#) and [Windows 8.1](#), Microsoft has baked OneDrive right into the operating system.

For example, the OneDrive application icon you'll discover in the Start Menu isn't really an app at all – it's just a special shared folder in File Explorer, which automatically uploads anything you place inside it to the cloud.

That means, of course, that all of those files are now available to you anywhere. So if you decide to move from the desktop PC in the study to the laptop in the garden, you'll find exactly the same files waiting for you - as long as you're both connected to the internet.

What is OneDrive?

OneDrive essentially functions as a 'live' shared folder in Windows 10. If you use the latest version of Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel and PowerPoint you'll notice that the default save location is to OneDrive – effectively ensuring that all your documents are uploaded automatically to the cloud.

But you aren't limited to using Microsoft Office – any file you move into the OneDrive folder will automatically be uploaded to the cloud as well. Indeed, it's a good habit to get into, because it always means you'll have an online copy even if the hard drive in your computer decides to head south, and you won't have to think twice about whether you backed up that crucial document.

You get 15GB of online storage free with OneDrive, which may not sound like much, but is actually plenty for storing Microsoft Office documents and even your photos. And of course you always have the option of buying more.

And if you sign up for an Office 365 subscription, Microsoft automatically bumps up the storage to a whopping 1TB, which should be enough for even the most enthusiastic Windows 10 user.

To enjoy all the benefits of OneDrive, you'll need to login to Windows 10 using your Microsoft ID, but this has an added bonus. As well as storing your files online, via OneDrive, your [Microsoft account](#) also keeps a copy of your computer settings – right down to the wallpaper that you use and even the icons sitting on your desktop.

So when you switch from your desktop to your laptop, logging in with your Microsoft account means all your PC settings are carried over.

So your laptop will look just like your desktop PC. This, of course, saves you the hassle of having to set up every different computer you use to suit the way you like to work. It also means that when it comes time for you to upgrade your current device, your new one will look just like the old one did when you login – all your favourite settings will be sitting ready.

Don't forget too that OneDrive is available for more operating systems than just Windows 10. If you use a Mac in the office, or an iPad or iPhone, or even an Android tablet or smartphone, you can still access files you've stored on your OneDrive by downloading the relevant client to your device.

You can even upload compatible files too, so can easily view them on your laptop or desktop PC when you get back home.

One of the curious things about OneDrive in Windows 10 is that because its features are so pervasive, there's no one place where all of its settings options are stored.

That has proved frustrating for some Windows 7 and Windows 8 users who were used to the old way of working, but it actually makes a lot of sense.

Why? Well, for the most part, you don't really need to know how OneDrive does its thing. It just works, and quietly gets on with the job in the background. When you do want to make changes it's simply a case of knowing where to look and that's what we're going to be looking at in more detail next...

First things first

The first thing you should do is take a peek in the System Tray. Right-click the OneDrive icon there and its settings options will open up. Click on 'OneDrive Storage' space and you'll be transported to your OneDrive's web page, where you can see how much storage is currently available, how much you've used already and an option to buy more if you need it.

You should also head to Windows' Settings app and click Accounts to find your sync settings – activating these will ensure that all of your PC settings are carried across to any other laptops or desktops you want to login to using your Microsoft account.

There are a couple more options that are worth taking action with. The first is to turn on syncing of your Pictures folder in OneDrive's settings. This ensures that any new photos you add to your PC are automatically uploaded to the cloud.

It also works the other way around of course: any photos you take on your Windows 10 smartphone can also be synced, so they'll appear on your PC the next time you're online – no more having to worry about transferring them manually by connecting your phone to your computer using physical cable.

That brings us neatly to the final option for OneDrive: Metered Connections. If you're using Windows 10 on a laptop or tablet with a SIM card slot or even a metered Wi-Fi connection, you can limit syncing to things like your PC settings and documents only – your movies and photos won't be uploaded when you're using mobile data, saving you from a hefty phone bill!

There is, however, one important caveat you should be aware of when using OneDrive in Windows 10. In Windows 7 and 8 you could move the OneDrive folder to a different location – such as an external hard drive – without having to re-download all your files.

That no longer works in Windows 10, but there is a workaround. To use it, right click the OneDrive icon in the Notification area, select Settings and click on 'Unlink OneDrive'. Then navigate to your OneDrive folder, choose 'Properties' then 'Location > Move' to move the folder to the new location. You'll now have to set up your OneDrive again... and then download everything. It's annoying, but it's the only solution that works right now.

1. Sync, don't sync

Don't want to sync all your files to OneDrive? Right-click the OneDrive icon in the System Tray, then select Settings and click the Choose Folders button. From here simply tick the folders you want to back up to the cloud.

Voila! All the folders you've ticked will be uploaded to the cloud, and the ones you haven't, won't.

2. Turn back the clock

If you or someone else accidentally overwrites a document you've shared on OneDrive, you can get the previous version back.

Login to OneDrive.com, then right-click the affected document. Your document's Version History will appear in a new tab, with a sidebar that lets you choose which one you want to revert back to.

3. Bring it back

If you accidentally delete a file on your OneDrive, don't worry, it's not completely gone. Login to OneDrive.com and click on the Recycle Bin on the bottom left of the sidebar.

Inside you should find your missing file. Right-click it and select Restore. It should now reappear in its rightful place in the OneDrive folder on your PC.

4. Make the most of OneNote

OneNote is a brilliant note-taking app for Windows 10 that lets you jot down ideas, meeting notes and anything else you can think of.

It even enables you to include pictures, drawings and other elements. OneNote automatically backs everything up to OneDrive every time you save. And it works the same way on iOS and Android too.

5. Stream your stuff

If you have home-made movies or audio files you need access to, uploading them to OneDrive makes them available for streaming anywhere – on any device via the OneDrive app.

You just need a compatible media player; Sound Player on Android for example. You can play them via the OneDrive website if they're MP4 or M4V files.

6. Share your stuff

Making files like documents and photos available to friends, family and workmates is easy to do. All you have to do is send them a link to the file's location. To do that, right-click the item you want to share, then select More OneDrive Sharing Options.

You'll now be taken to the OneDrive website. Login to take the next step.

7. Choose who you want to share with

Now you've logged into OneDrive.com you'll be able to choose who you want to share your files with. All you have to do is enter their email address and then type a message in the box provided.

An email containing your message and a link to the file you want to share will now be sent to your recipient.

8. Who can do what

OneDrive uses a system called Permissions, which enables you to choose what the recipient can do with the files you've shared. If you're working on a document with a colleague and want them to be able to make changes, click the blue "Recipients Can Edit" link and choose the Edit option.

Select "Read" so they can't make changes.