

Online storage.

There are now a large number of websites which will give you free space to store your files. Although this might sound risky, it is in fact, a secure way of storing information. It is also a useful backup option. Your files will never get lost or infected with a virus, and because they are kept in a secure location, there's very little chance of hackers ever getting their hands on them. More importantly, your files will then be available to access from anywhere. The amount of free space which is available varies from 500Mb to 50Gb. You can get more if you are willing to pay.

However, before you jump at the chance of having free backup, bear in mind the obvious pitfalls. Firstly, in order to do this you need to have reasonable upload speeds in your broadband connection. A 200K upload speed would be adequate for this purpose. Make sure you use secure passwords, and remember them! Bear in mind also that if the company went bust you would lose your data. In other words, make sure that your data is also stored to a physical hard disk or a tape backup drive.

The different storage websites have different features. This can include displaying files online, sharing files, storing files from a variety of devices and collaborative working on documents. Below are a few sites you might like to try (and experiment with):

www.adrive.com

The basic package gives a massive 50GB. of space, and the maximum you can upload at one time is 2Gb, enough for even the biggest of files. You can drag and drop files within Internet Explorer, or upload files by browsing to them on your hard disk.

www.myotherdrive.com

Very user-friendly. When you want to add files, click **upload** and select the ones you want. Thumbnails give a preview of what is in each folder. Every time you upload or download a pop-up asks if you'd like to pay to upgrade. You can store up to 5Gb.

www.humyo.com

Enables you to import friends from your Microsoft office Outlook, Facebook or MySpace list. You can upload as many files as you like, and they can be displayed as thumbnails. You can store up to 30 Gb.

www.mozy4free.co.uk

The first time you use the backup feature, you select which files you'd like to store online, and it backs up as many as fit within the 2 GB of storage. If you accidentally delete a file on your PC, go to your online account and click on **restore files**.

<http://Workspace.office.live.com>

You can only store 500 Mb here, but this site has good file sharing abilities. For instance, when someone makes a local change on their own computer and uploads it, an activity list shows who did what and when.