

Cloud Basics: Understanding Where Your Stuff Lives





Cloud Basics

iCloud, Google & OneDrive — **Understanding Where Your Stuff Lives**

Today we'll take one of the most confusing ideas in modern technology—the cloud—and turn it into something simple, practical, and even a little comforting. By the end, you'll know exactly where your photos, files, and information live, and how to feel confident they're safe and accessible when you need them.

 October Seminar



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Welcome Back

Today's Focus

Clarity over complexity. You don't need to understand how the cloud is built or how the technology works behind the scenes.

What matters is understanding what it does *for you* and how to use it in your everyday life.

What You Already Know

If you can picture a filing cabinet and understand the idea of saving something safely, you already have everything you need to understand the cloud.

- No tech jargon
- No complicated concepts
- Just practical, everyday understanding



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What We'll Cover Today

01

What the Cloud Is

The basics — what the cloud actually is and what it is not.

03

iCloud vs Google vs OneDrive

Walk through the three main systems you'll encounter.

02

Why It Matters

Why this is important in today's digital world.

04

Everyday Uses

Practical applications so you can see how this fits into your life.



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☁ Foundations

What Is the Cloud?

Not the Sky

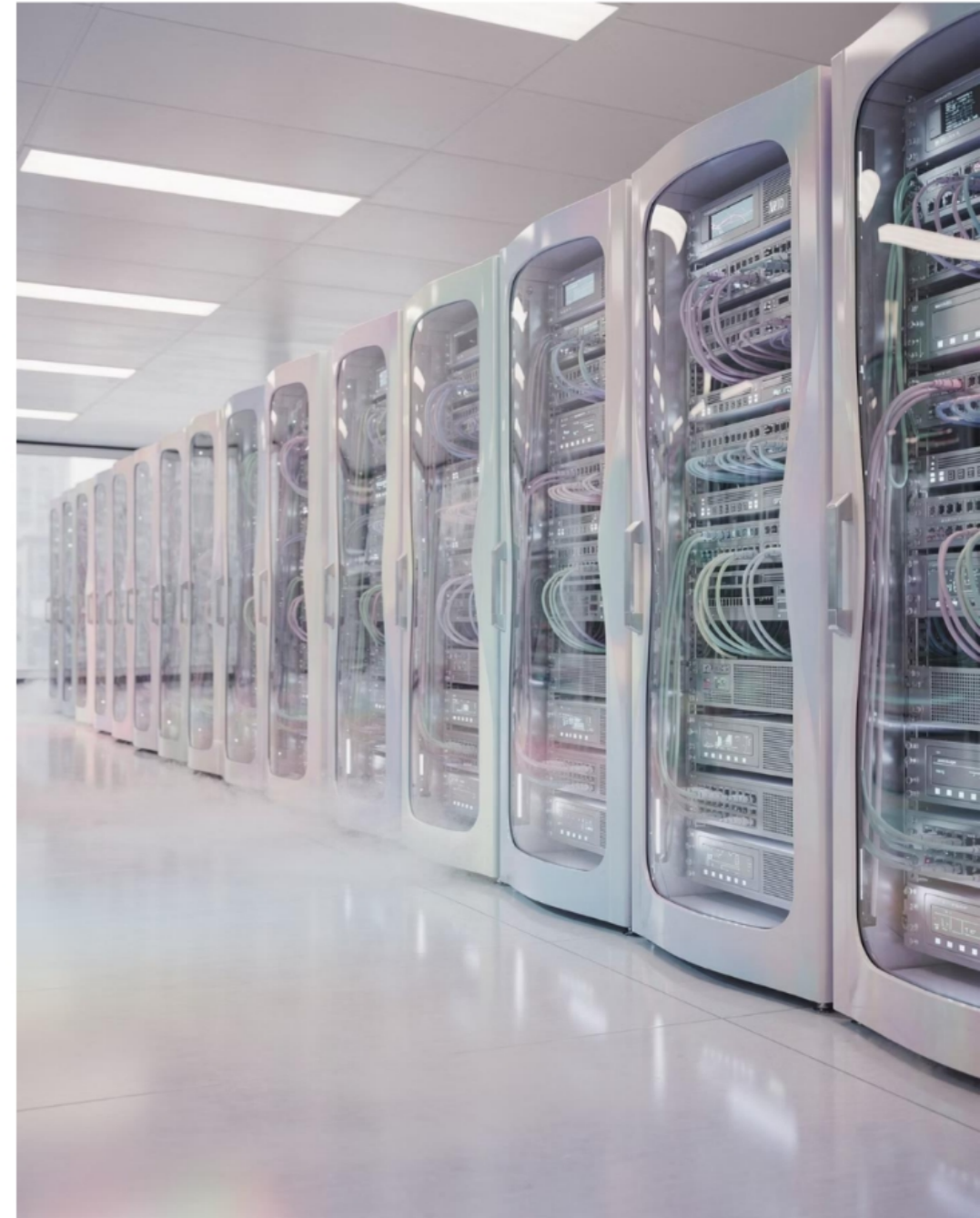
The cloud is not something floating above us — it's simply storage that lives on the internet instead of on your device.

Someone Else's Computer

Think of it as using someone else's very secure, very reliable computer to store your information safely.

Accessible Anywhere

Your data is no longer tied to one phone or one computer. As long as you have internet access, you can reach it from almost anywhere.



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A Simple Analogy

Your Desk vs. Your Filing Cabinet

Your phone or computer is like your **desk** — where you actively work on things. The cloud is like a **filing cabinet** where everything is safely stored.

If something happens to your desk, your files are still safe in the cabinet. That separation is what makes the cloud so powerful.

Your Device

Where you view and work —
temporary

The Cloud

Where things are stored —
always safe



Why It Matters

So much of our lives is now digital — photos, contacts, documents, even memories. Without the cloud, losing a device could mean losing everything.



Keeps Files Safe

Your information is protected even if your device is lost, stolen, or broken.



Easier Device Switching

Moving to a new device becomes much easier because your data can come right back.



Prevents Data Loss

With the cloud, your information is always protected and ready to restore.



Devices vs. Cloud

Device

Temporary workspace for viewing and editing



Cloud

Long-term home that syncs in background





Your device should be thought of as temporary — a place where you view and work with your data. The cloud is the long-term home. The two are constantly working together, syncing in the background so everything stays up to date without you having to think about it.

Automatic Backups

Working Behind the Scenes

One of the biggest advantages of the cloud is **automatic backup**. It's like having a silent assistant making sure nothing important is lost — without you doing anything at all.

What Gets Saved Automatically

-  Photos & Videos
-  Contacts
-  Settings
-  Apps

What Gets Backed Up

Photos & Videos

Your most precious memories are typically backed up automatically — the most common use of cloud storage.

Files & Documents

Important documents can be saved and accessed from any device at any time.

Messages (Sometimes)

Messages depend on your settings and the system you're using — worth checking to avoid surprises.

Most of your important content can be backed up automatically. It's helpful to understand what's included so there are no surprises.



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What Does NOT Automatically Save

- 📄 ⚠️ **Important Reminder:** A very common mistake is assuming everything is automatically saved. That's not always true.

It's important to take a moment to **check your settings** and confirm that the things you care about most are actually being backed up. Not every app or file type is included by default.

A quick check today can prevent a big headache later. We'll walk through how to do this together.



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 The Big Three

Meet iCloud

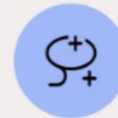
Apple's Cloud System

iCloud is Apple's cloud system, and if you're using an iPhone or iPad, **you're already using it.** It's built directly into the device and designed to work automatically — often without you even noticing it.



Built In

No setup needed on Apple devices



Automatic

Works quietly in the background



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iCloud: Strengths & Limitations

Strengths

- Seamless with Apple devices — everything works together
- Automatic backups with easy setup
- Runs quietly in the background — great for users who want simplicity

Limitations

- Mainly focused on Apple devices — less useful on Windows or Android
- Limited free storage (5GB) — many users eventually need a paid plan as photos and files grow



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Meet Google Drive

Google Drive is designed to work almost **everywhere** — Apple, Android, Windows. It's especially strong when it comes to sharing files and finding things quickly, thanks to Google's powerful search.



Cross-Platform

Works across all devices and operating systems — not just one brand.



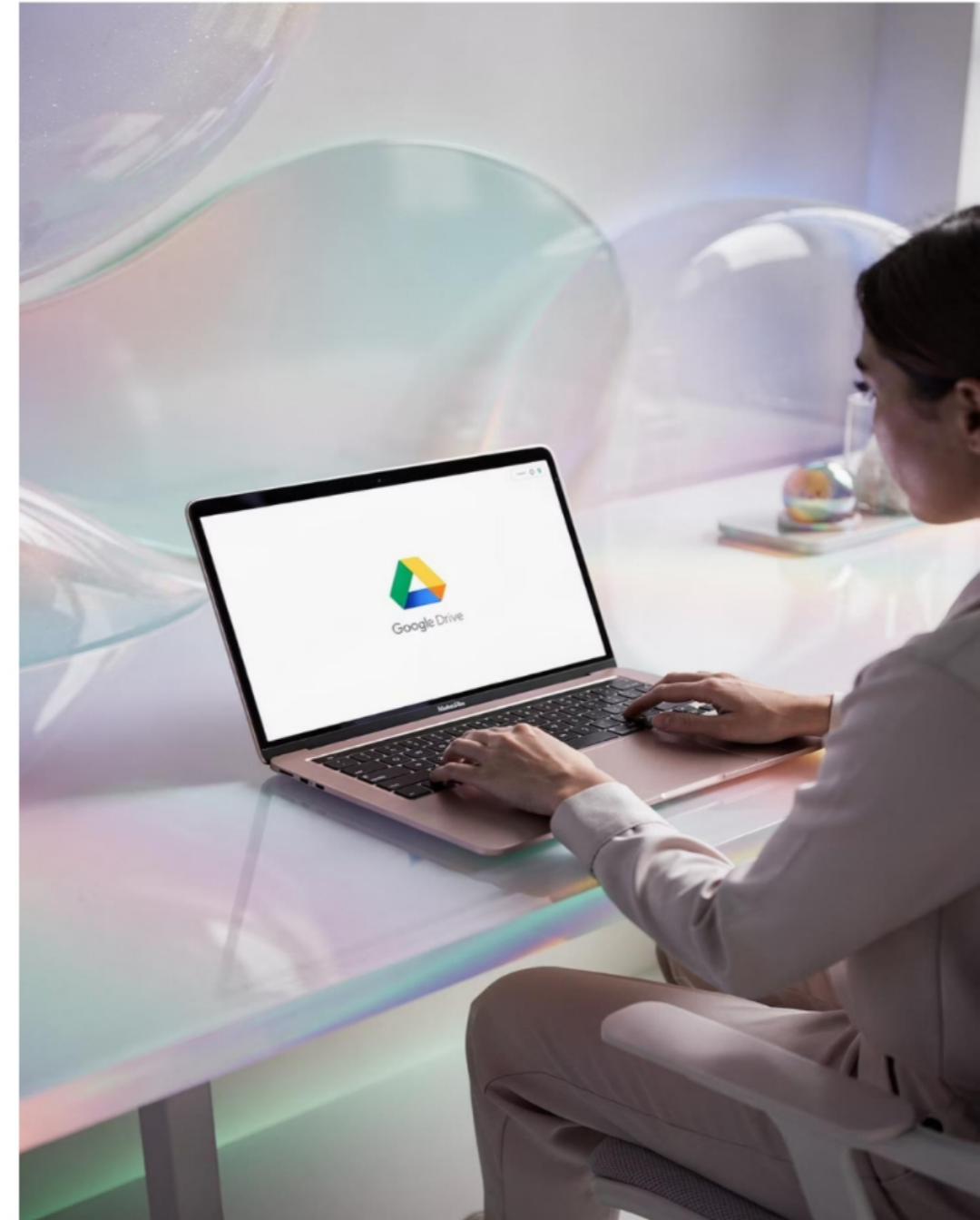
Easy File Sharing

Send a link instead of a copy — simple and always up to date.



Strong Search

Google's powerful search makes finding files fast and effortless.



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Google Drive: Strengths & Limitations

Strengths

- Flexibility — use it across different devices and brands
- Easy file sharing with others via links
- Connects to Gmail, Google Photos, and a wide range of services

Limitations

- Can feel cluttered or overwhelming due to the many features offered
- Requires account awareness — many people end up with more than one Google account, which can cause confusion



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Meet OneDrive

OneDrive is **Microsoft's cloud system** and is built into Windows computers. It works especially well with Microsoft Office programs like Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

Great for Documents

Keeps everything synced and integrates smoothly with the tools many people already use.

Built into Windows

Already on your PC — no extra installation needed for Windows users.

Office Integration

Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files save and sync seamlessly.

OneDrive: Strengths & Limitations

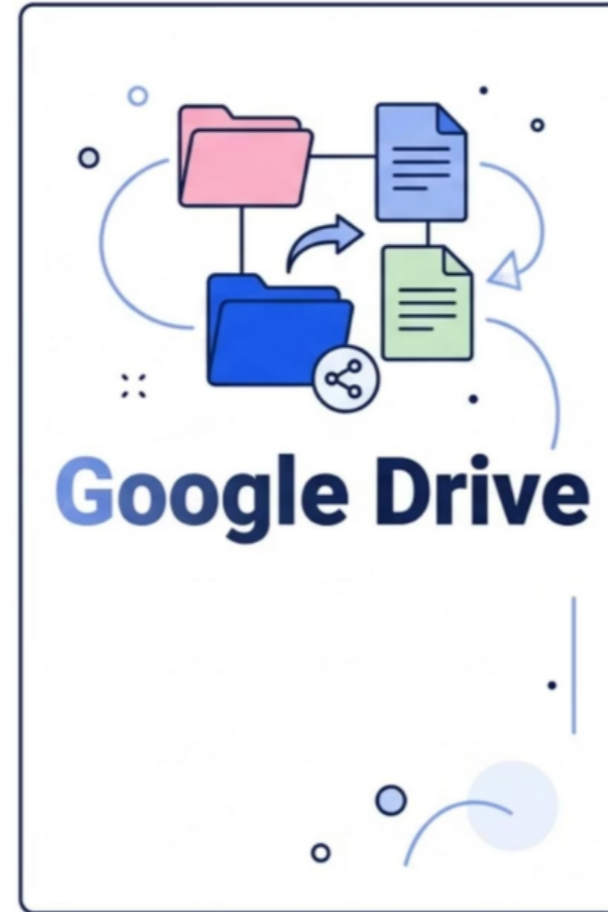
Strengths

- Very strong for document users — Word, Excel, PowerPoint sync seamlessly
- Built into Windows PCs — no extra setup needed
- Keeps everything synced across your Microsoft devices

Limitations

- Can feel less intuitive for beginners compared to iCloud
- Requires managing a Microsoft account — another layer to keep track of

Quick Comparison: The Big Three



Each system has its own personality. **iCloud** focuses on simplicity, **Google Drive** emphasizes flexibility, and **OneDrive** excels with documents. The best choice depends on what you use most.

Do You Need All Three?

No.

Trying to use too many systems at once creates confusion, not convenience.

The Smart Approach

Pick **one primary system** and learn it well. The others are optional and can be added later if needed.

- Apple user? → iCloud
- Multi-device? → Google Drive
- Windows/Office user? → OneDrive

Photos in the Cloud

Photos are the **most common use of the cloud**. They can be backed up automatically and accessed from any device — your phone, tablet, or computer.

Automatic Backup

Photos save in the background without you doing anything.

Access Anywhere

View your photos from any device, anytime.

Storage Considerations

Photos use the most storage — something to keep in mind as your library grows.



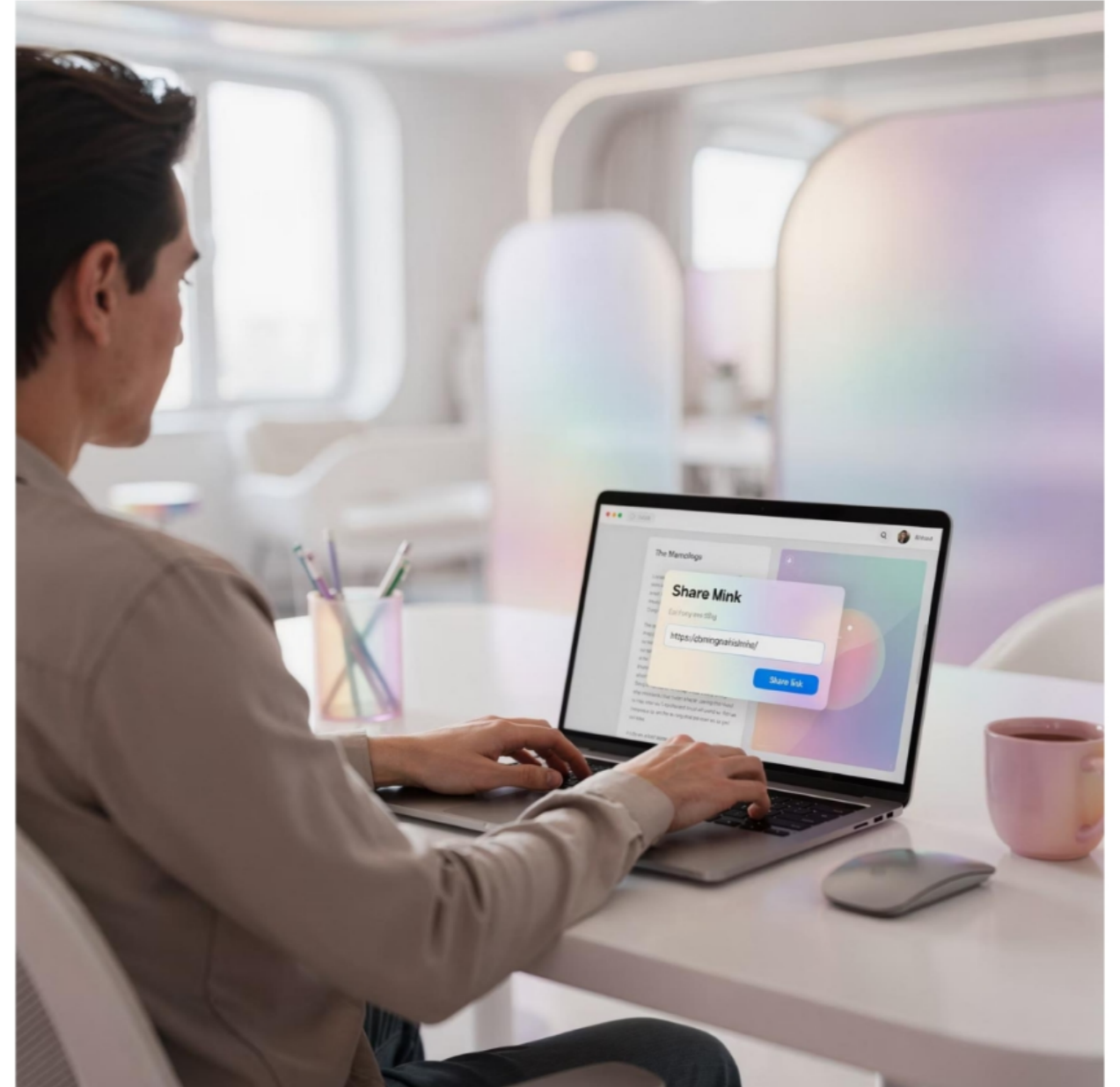
Files & Documents in the Cloud

Store Safely

Storing files in the cloud keeps them safe and easy to access from any device — no more worrying about which computer has the right version.

Share Easily

Instead of sending multiple copies as email attachments, you can send a **link** to one live file that stays updated. Links are better than attachments.



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Email Attachments vs. Cloud Links

ATTACHMENTS

**CREATES MULTIPLE
COPIES OF THE SAME FILE**



CLOUD LINKS

**POINTS TO ONE
LIVE VERSION**



**STAYS UPDATED,
ALWAYS CURRENT**

**SIMPLER AND
CLEANER**

Attachments create multiple copies of the same file, which can lead to confusion about which version is current. Cloud links point to a **single, up-to-date version** — making things simpler and cleaner for everyone.





Accessing Your Cloud

Your cloud isn't tied to one device. You can access it from almost anywhere, which gives you flexibility and peace of mind.

 Phone

 Tablet

 Computer

 Web Browser



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Signing In to Your Cloud

Your Account Is Your Key

Using the **same account consistently** across all your devices is essential. Your account is what connects you to all your stored data.

Protect It Well

- Use a strong, memorable password
- Keep your login information written somewhere safe
- Don't share your password with others



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Storage Limits: Free vs. Paid

1

Free Storage

Most services start with free storage — enough to get started with photos and documents.

2

When You'll Need More

As your photos and files grow, you may receive a warning that you're running low on space.

3

Upgrading Is Normal

Paid plans are affordable and part of using the cloud effectively. This is a completely normal step.



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Safety Reminder

Your Cloud Holds Valuable Information

Photos, documents, contacts — it's all there. Protecting your account is essential.

→ Use Strong Passwords

A strong password is your first line of defense.

→ Watch for Scams

Be alert for emails or calls claiming to be from Apple, Google, or Microsoft asking for your password.

→ Stay Consistent

Use the same trusted account and keep your login info somewhere safe.



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Real-Life Example: Lost Phone → Data Safe

This is where the cloud really shines. Imagine your phone is lost, stolen, or simply stops working.

- 1 Phone Is Lost**
Your device is gone — but your data isn't.
- 2 Cloud Has Everything**
Photos, contacts, and settings are safely stored in the cloud.
- 3 New Device → Everything Returns**
Sign in on a new device and your data comes right back.



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What You Can Do Right Now



Access Photos Anywhere

View your memories from any device — phone, tablet, or computer — at any time.



Save Documents Safely

Store important files in the cloud so they're always protected and accessible.



Share Files Easily

Send a link instead of an attachment — simpler, cleaner, and always up to date.



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Simple Setup Tips

The Golden Rule

Consistency is the key to confidence. Keep it simple and stick with one system.

01

Pick One System

Choose the cloud that matches your devices and habits.

02

Learn It Well

Spend time getting comfortable with one system before exploring others.

03

Keep It Consistent

Use the same account on all your devices every time.



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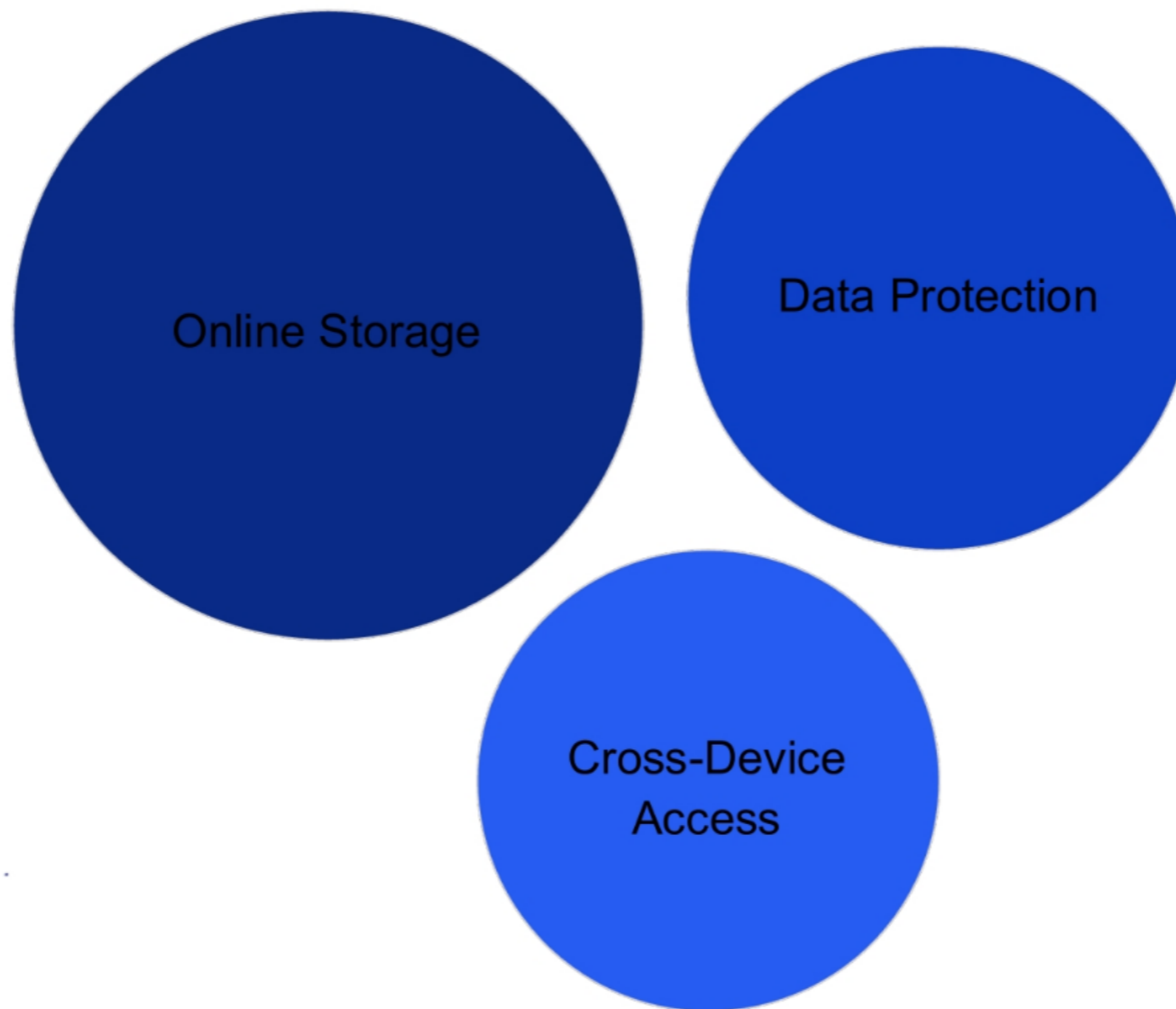


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Let's Review



At its core, the cloud is simply a **safe place for your data** that works across all your devices. Once you understand that, everything else becomes easier.



Confidence Check

You don't need to know everything about technology to use it well. Just understanding the basics puts you in control.

You've covered the essentials today. You know what the cloud is, why it matters, and how the three main systems compare. That's exactly what you need to move forward with confidence.



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Where This Fits in Your Journey

1

Understanding Your Devices

The foundation — knowing your phone, tablet, and computer.

2

Understanding the Cloud

Today's session — where your data lives and how to keep it safe.

3

Staying Safe Online

Coming next — scams, protection, and online security.

This is part of a bigger journey — understanding your devices, your data, and how to protect both.



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Coming Next Month

Staying Safe Online

Next time, we'll focus on **online safety** — one of the most important topics for every technology user today.

What We'll Cover

- How to recognize scams and phishing attempts
- How to protect yourself and your accounts online
- Practical tips you can use right away

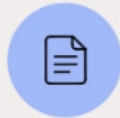


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Your Resources



Summary Sheet

A one-page overview of everything we covered today — key terms and concepts at a glance.



Handout

Step-by-step reference guide to take home and review at your own pace.



Slides

Today's slides are available for you to review and reinforce what we covered.



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Questions & Discussion

Now let's talk through your questions and real-life situations. No question is too basic — if you're wondering about it, someone else is too.

This is your time. Share what's on your mind, what's confusing, or what you'd like to try at home. Open discussion is where the real learning happens.



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Closing Thought

"Your data should work for you, not worry you."

Technology should reduce stress, not create it. The cloud, when used properly, gives you **confidence and peace of mind** — knowing your photos, files, and memories are safe, accessible, and always there when you need them.



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Thank You

Thank you for being here and continuing to build your confidence with technology.
You're doing exactly what matters — **learning step by step.**

See You Next Month

November Seminar — Staying Safe
Online

Take Your Materials

Summary sheet, handout, and slides
are yours to keep.

Keep Asking Questions

Every question is a step forward. You've got this.



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