

Data Storage for Research Projects: a comparison table

This table provides a quick features comparison of the commonest storage choices for live research data projects. More information on Open Research Data Online (ORDO) is available from the [Library research support website](#); for more information on other services visit [IT Services intranet pages](#) (requires login).

	Research Data Online (ORDO)	OneDrive	OU networked file storage	SharePoint	Cloud based services (Dropbox, Google Drive etc.) ¹
Storage limits	Up to 50GB upon account creation; user may request more. Group storage may use faculty storage allocations rather than individual researcher allocations.	1 TB overall: individual file sizes up to 10GB.	See IT network administrators; if very large scale storage during project is required then it may need costing into bids.	Default single file upload is 50MB; no limit on overall file storage. Discuss requirements with IT on site creation.	So much free space; after which you will need to pay corporate rates.
Does it support collaboration?	Yes: invite collaborators to a project workspace. Basic shared space; no online editing of files. Simple permissions control. Project owner retains control of data. Individual files may be shared with private links.	One Drive will allow simple file sharing with others who have either an Office 365 or a freely available Microsoft account. Does not support more complex collaboration.	Yes: collaborators will need access to the OU network; OU computing accounts can be requested from IT Services. External collaborators need internal sponsors to gain access.	Sophisticated project management and permissions control for managing large scale projects. Internal collaborators only, unless collaborators register for an OU computing account.	Yes: there are many file sharing and project management free tools available; they must be checked for data security.

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Easy file updates?	Files may not be edited online. New files may be uploaded to replace older versions. No in-built version control for files.	Very easy: online editing and sharing is available on an individual file basis.	Very easy: files stored in a network area may be accessed as easily as locally stored files.	Online content management and editing; version control functionality.	Very easy: most services are designed for collaboration. Check individual providers' functionality.
How secure is this storage?	Very secure: backups performed to industry standards. Arkivum data archiving service guarantees 100% security. Personal storage areas; two-factor authentication required for off-site login.	Files encrypted at rest and in transit. Files backed up by Microsoft; copies held in multiple EU locations.	Very secure from access external to OU, but there are no access controls within the network storage areas, so anyone who can access the shared areas has access to unencrypted files.	Very secure: this is within the OU's firewall. Granular permissions settings within the Sharepoint site	Check individual providers for service level descriptions.
What about Data Protection issues?	You can store information classified up to and including Highly Confidential. This service meets EU Data Protection requirements regarding the storage of personal information.	You can store information classified up to and including Highly Confidential.	Secure within OU network; but no protection for personal sensitive data.	Sophisticated permissions control options meet data protection requirements.	Do not use for storage of personal sensitive data, unless you have approval from IT.

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Backups?	Amazon cloud redundancy, daily backups kept for 5 days. Weekly snapshots taken of entire data system.	Files backed up by Microsoft and copies held on multiple Microsoft servers in multiple locations (within the EU).	Yes – regular backups taken according to best practice.	Yes – regular backups taken according to best practice.	Check individual providers' terms and conditions.
What happens if I leave the OU?	Set up a personal Figshare account with up to 20GB free storage. Manual file transfer with request to the Figshare helpdesk.	All documents attached to your OU account will be deleted. You must transfer them to a different personal account.	Any documents you wish to access must be transferred to a personal storage service.	Any documents you wish to access must be transferred to a personal storage service.	Externally hosted service.
Will it work with other devices?	The Figshare platform is cloud based so can be accessed from a web browser. It is possible to upload data from mobile devices.	Yes – designed to work across multiple platforms. Not currently recommended to use the sync client.	Yes – if those devices are enabled for use within the OU.	Yes – if those devices are enabled for use within the OU.	Yes; cloud based services are designed for ease of online access. See individual service providers' terms and conditions for use.
Where do I get it?	Access from the Library-research-support website or OU A-Z intranet index. OU staff and research students can create an account on first login: once logged in you can request more storage.	IT intranet pages have advice on accessing One Drive (requires login).	IT Helpdesk.	IT Helpdesk. IT intranet pages have advice on SharePoint (requires login). You can request a collaboration site on the SharePoint site request form (requires login).	Individual service providers.

ⁱ Important to know: When using cloud based services not supported or licenced for OU corporate use (such as Dropbox, Google Drive), accountability rests with the individual choosing to use this method of storage. It is also against OU information security policy to store OU information on unsupported/unlicensed cloud based storage. Check with IT Helpdesk first