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Apps We Love August 2017: Document Sharing

File sharing and collaboration are no longer for the tech crowd, but are essential tools of client service and teamwork. File sharing apps not only allow users to stay focused on the task at hand, and the right document version, they can also ...

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Aug. 18, 2017



File sharing and collaboration are no longer for the tech crowd, but are essential tools of client service and teamwork. File sharing apps not only allow users to stay focused on the task at hand, and the right document version, they can also be useful for individuals who just want to access all of their work, or play, files from all of their devices. Here's a roundup of apps we love for document sharing and collaboration.

DropBox helps you keep your files in sync, whether they are on your desktop, or with your clients or your staff. You can share the documents or other files you save in your Dropbox folder with anyone you choose, and you or they can easily access them from anywhere they have connectivity and on almost any device. all of your devices. Offline access is also available, with the system syncing, uploading and downloading when the user returns to an online status. With the ability to share files of any size, even with people who don't have a Dropbox account, collaboration is simple. There are free and business subscription versions available.

Box.com offers secure management of files, documents and photos with 10 gigabytes in the free version. The stored content can be accessed on any device, and users have the ability to preview more than 200 file types prior to downloading them. For collaboration, the app lets users give feedback by making comments and alerting colleagues or clients. The system also offers search functions within Word, Excel, PDF and PowerPoint files, and has a collection of partner apps that let users annotate, e-sign, edit and perform other advanced functions.

Perhaps the best known, **Google Drive** offers a free plan that offers 15 gigabytes of online storage, with the ability to share any type of file, including the Microsoft files, music, images, photos and videos. Files can be easily shared with other users, or accessed by the initial user on all of their mobile devices or computers. Business plans start at less than \$2 per user per month.

Microsoft offers its **OneDrive** for professional file sharing and storage, with the system automatically built into computers and devices with Windows 8 and 10, making it simple to use and share folders or files. Office 365 subscribers get 1 terabyte of storage included, with additional plans available for business users.

Evernote has long been a favorite for professionals wanting to track their to-do lists, jot down notes, keep up with paperwork and share these documents with others, but the system also offers solid file-sharing options, with simple to use design and a variety of add-ons, such as the ability to save web pages for future viewing or sharing with colleagues. The system works across multiple devices.

ShareFile offers secure collaboration for professionals and clients, with options for virtual data rooms and client portals. The app offers advanced document sharing and tracking features, as well as the ability to collect feedback from those with access to a shared document, as well as approvals processes and due date management. The system is SOC 2 and SSAE 16 compliant and uses advanced security features, including the option of a remote memory wipe function for lost devices.

ZohoDocs offers similar functions as other file sharing apps, with the ability to upload a broader array of file types, including Zip files. The system can also upload or import files from GoogleDocs.

For firms or individuals who need to share video files, **Vimeo** offers private video sharing for controlling who sees the content, as well as private review pages. Users can add embedding and downloading tools, and private links can be shared with select individuals such as staff or clients, prior to making videos public. The system supports sharing of even large videos. The free plan allows up to 500 megabytes per week of storage, while various business plans allow up to an unlimited amount of storage and data transfer.

Xender makes it easy to share any file type almost instantly, but is all the rave with music and video fans. Xender is different from most file sharing systems, in that it doesn't use mobile data storage, instead allowing direct transfer via wifi to other devices or computers within range. This is especially useful for those who want to share files or content with their other devices.

HighTail (formerly YouSendIt) is geared more toward the creative community of digital art managers, musicians and programmers. It offers more team control functions than most competitors, with the ability to assign action items and follow-ups to specific staff, as well as due dates. The system also maintains version controls, and offers high resolution previewing of large files.

With **SugarSync**, users can easily add specific files or entire folders to their cloud-based storage and sharing platform, with the ability to access and edit the documents from any devices. The app automatically updates files across all devices when changes are made, and includes easy search functions. Files can also be shared with non SugarSync users. Pricing starts at about \$7.49 per month for 500 gigabytes.

Need to send a quick fax of a document? The **FaxBurner** app makes it as easy as taking a pic with your smart phone, then sending it for free, up to 5 sent pages per month, and 25 received pages per month (plans are also available for business users with

higher volumes). The app includes integration with Dropbox, Box.com and other storage apps, and automatically produces received apps into PDF format. The system also offers e-sign functions.

Your Tax Software: Most professional tax systems now offer client portals or other document sharing functions. The capabilities and integration of each of these systems varies widely by vendor, so check them out to see what features they offer.

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