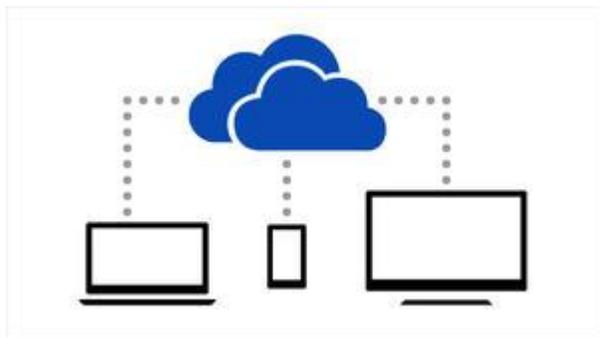


# 10 plus reasons to use SkyDrive

Simple to set up and easy to use, SkyDrive offers some convenient features for sharing and accessing files.



Everyone wants to work smarter, and SkyDrive helps users and organizations do so in two ways: file sharing and access. It takes only a few clicks to share and access files using a number of compatible devices and from almost any geographical location.

## 1: Ease of use

My niche in the support world is finding the easiest and most efficient solutions. For both users and support personnel, SkyDrive fits into that theme nicely. Thanks to SkyDrive's seamless integration with Office (2010, 2013, and 365), sharing files requires only a few clicks. In fact, Office 365 defaults to SkyDrive. Even novice users can share files on SkyDrive with little or no training. Accessing is just as easy -- a few clicks and you're working from home on the proposal you saved to SkyDrive while at work.

## 2: Few requirements

Besides the obvious PC and mobile devices you use, SkyDrive requires only two things: Internet access and a Microsoft account. The first requirement is almost moot. Thanks to free Wi-Fi, you can connect almost anywhere. The second is easy to acquire; you just sign up. If you don't have an account, Microsoft Office will help you sign up the first time you try to save an Office file to SkyDrive. Just follow the prompts.

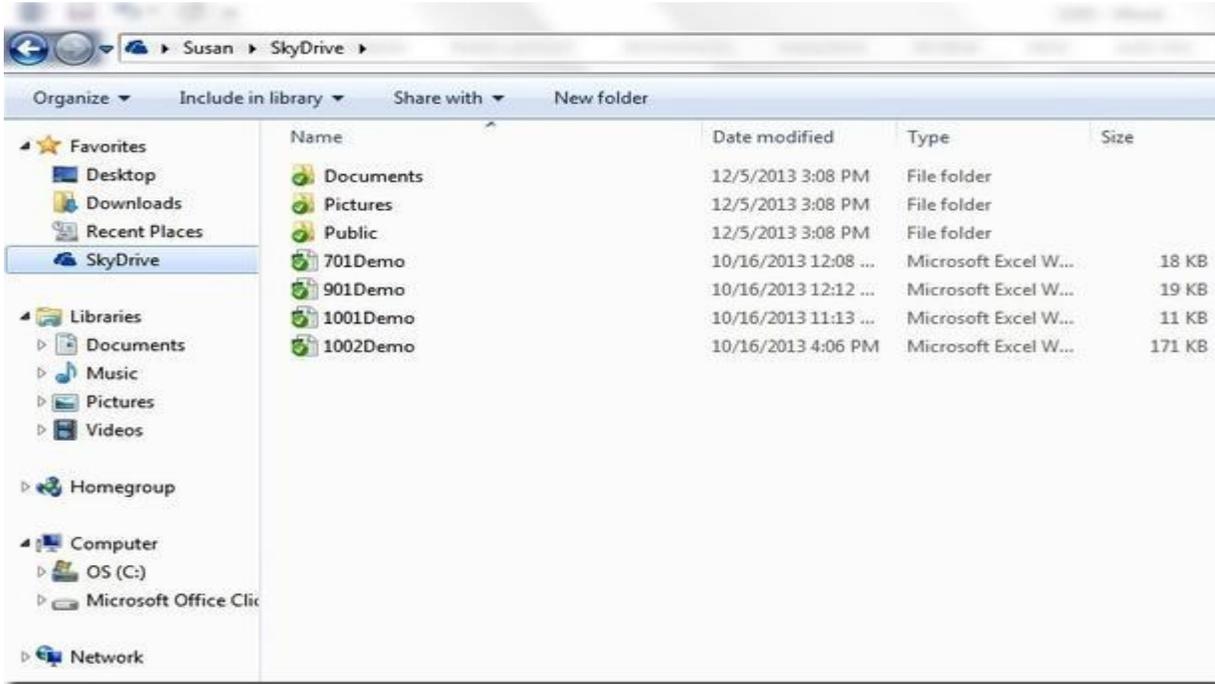
## 3: Quick setup

If you have a Microsoft account, you can sign in to SkyDrive and go right to work. There are no discs to keep up with, no downloads, and no installation process. Just sign in and start working. If you're using Office 2013 or 2010, access to SkyDrive is built into the interface. Just choose SkyDrive when saving and opening documents, as appropriate. Office 2013 will even help you set up your account the first time you try to access SkyDrive. If you're on your own, you don't need any specialized knowledge. If you support users, you won't have to do a thing other than let them know about SkyDrive.

## 4: SkyDrive Desktop

Windows 8.1 has built-in access to SkyDrive. If you're using an earlier version of Windows, you can download SkyDrive Desktop for quick access from your desktop (**Figure A**). SkyDrive is now available via Windows Explorer; you don't have to work from inside an Office app.

**Figure A**



Add SkyDrive to your local system.

## 5: One-click access

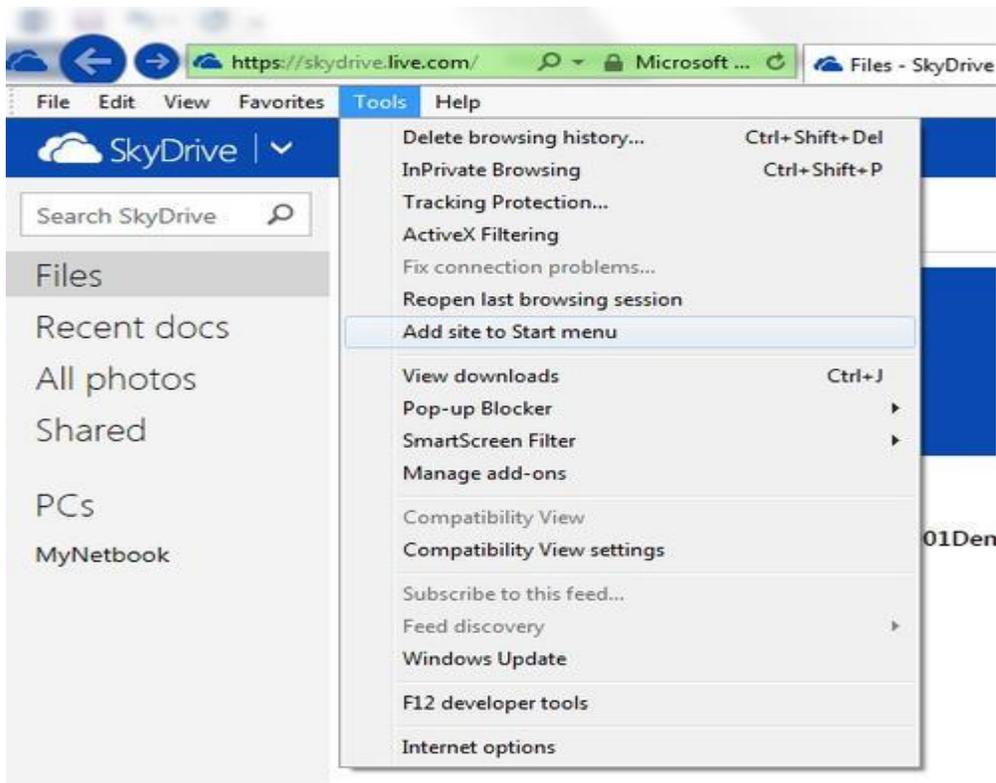
Accessing SkyDrive files is only a click away once you pin the site to your Windows 7 taskbar. With SkyDrive open in your browser, drag the window to the Windows taskbar and drop it. Windows will create a new SkyDrive icon, as shown in **Figure B**. Click it for immediate access to your SkyDrive files. If you're using IE 9 or later, you can add SkyDrive to the Start menu by choosing Add Site to Start Menu from IE's Tool menu, as shown in **Figure C**.

**Figure B**



Add SkyDrive to your taskbar for quick access.

**Figure C**



Add SkyDrive to the Start menu.

## 6: Easy file access

By combining Web Office Apps with cloud storage, you can access your files anytime, anywhere using any number of compatible devices. You can use almost any browser or Windows, Mac, and Linux device. So, for instance, you can share appointments and tasks at work and view them later using your Windows or Android phone (or iPhone or iPad). **Table A** compares supported formats and devices with SkyDrive's competitors.

**Table A**

	SkyDrive	iCloud	Google Drive	Dropbox
Windows format	Y	N	N	Y
Mac format	Y	Y	Y	Y
Android support	Y	N	Y	Y
iPad/iPhone support	Y	Y	Y	Y
Windows Phone	Y	N	N	N
Remote access	Y	Y	N	N
Simultaneous editing	Y	N	Y	Y
Version tracking	Y	N	Y	Y
Social networks	Y	N	N	Y
Free storage	7 GB	5 GB	15 GB	2 GB
Paid storage (annual)	50 GB; \$25 100 GB; \$50 200 GB; \$100	50 GB; \$100	100 GB; \$60 200 GB; \$119	100 GB; \$99 200 GB; \$199

## **7: Plenty of room**

With your Microsoft account, you get 7 GB of free online storage on SkyDrive. It's yours to use as needed and it's more than adequate for most users. You can share work files with colleagues or make them accessible from other locations. At home, you can store photos, music, and so. Table A lists costs for upgrading storage space, but most users won't need more than the free 7 GB.

## **8: Lightweight apps**

When you share a file on SkyDrive, you and anyone you share it with can view and edit the document using Office Web Apps. These free (but limited) versions of Word, Excel, OneNote, and PowerPoint run in a Web browser and default to SkyDrive when saving changes. Even though these apps are limited, their availability adds a lot of flexibility. You can open and edit files anywhere without installing additional software to the device you're using.

## **9: Simultaneous sharing**

Files stored on SkyDrive are accessible by multiple users. Using Office Web Apps, multiple users can even edit the file (with the right permissions) at the same time. Changes are saved immediately.

## **10: Tight security**

Anytime you're working online, security is an issue. Your first layer of security on SkyDrive is its structure. You determine who can see and edit files when you share a document. The good news is that people you share files with don't need an account or a password to see your files -- the link they receive when you invite them contains all the credentials they need.

Keep in mind that you *are* working in a consumer-grade cloud. By that I mean you shouldn't use SkyDrive to back up mission-critical files. SkyDrive can be part of a good backup and recovery strategy. But it should never be the only strategy. In addition, while security is good, your files are still out there. So use good sense before uploading sensitive and/or critical data. Read the full service agreement before making any serious business decisions integrating SkyDrive.

## **11: Third-party add-ons**

Office Web Apps let you view and edit documents, but you can't work with every file format. For instance, you can store and share a PDF file, but you can't open it using Office Web Apps. Third-party products are available for working with non-Microsoft files in the cloud.

## **12: Remote access**

SkyDrive Desktop adds drag-and-drop ease between your local system and SkyDrive. It gets better though. You can grant other-device access to your local PC. SkyDrive only helps if you remember to upload your files. If you forget, SkyDrive Desktop lets you access your system remotely.