Sharepoint
as a file server

SharePoint Online

Is it the file server alternative your business needs?

Many businesses utilise onsite servers to store important files, data and information. While using onsite methods does hold certain advantages, choosing to move to cloud-based options with additional functionalities and features is an excellent move for just about any organisation.

Designed to support business

As an effective replacement for file servers, Microsoft SharePoint Online has specific design elements developed to support business and does so without the intense setup requirements and expensive migration of traditional file servers.

Read on to find out more what SharePoint Online is, how it can be used and exactly why it's a great move for many businesses – including the specific requirements for setting up your own SharePoint Online cloud server for your organisation.
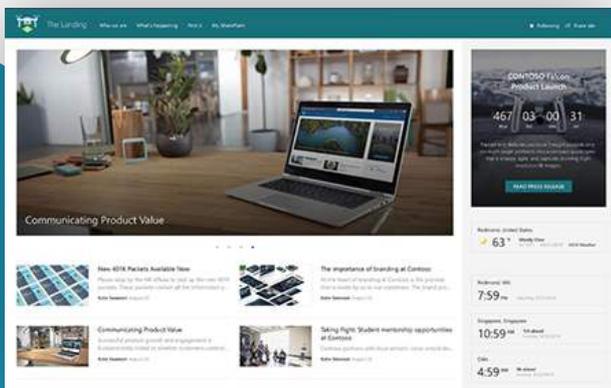
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What is SharePoint Online?

SharePoint Online is one of Microsoft's suite of different cloud-based products explicitly targeted at businesses.

Designed as an effective replacement to more traditional office processes, SharePoint Online as a file server alternative is becoming a more and more popular choice.

Marketed as a cloud collaboration platform, SharePoint provides a functional interface for users, in addition to versatile mobile access it offers an extra facet to Microsoft's OneDrive cloud platform.

Through SharePoint Online, users can seamlessly upload files and data on the go, as well as access folders and information from just about anywhere where internet access is available. This offers a central point where all users, or collaborators, can directly access files; both that are used by Microsoft's other software offerings, as well as files that function within separate software too. SharePoint also provides a recently redesigned admin centre, further adding new functionalities and management options for larger organisations and businesses.

How can SharePoint be used
as a file server?

SharePoint Online offers the opportunity for businesses to take document and file sharing and storage to a cloud-based approach, allowing for greater access and availability anywhere in the world.

As such, it is the perfect choice for businesses looking to upgrade to a more flexible and versatile file server. Users and administrators can store files directly within the provided OneDrive space upon implementing the SharePoint Online system, allowing for quick and easy access. Unlike a classic onsite filer server, SharePoint allows for convenient and easy searching and even the external sharing of files entirely securely.

As a file server, SharePoint provides far more to businesses than more traditional approaches to file storage. This makes the platform more than just a basic file server and adds on plenty of additional functionality that's fully compatible with the full range of Office 365 products available, either as part of the package purchase or purchased separately. For users, accessing SharePoint can be as simple as using any other form of file storage, and provides a central location to keep all vital information and collaborative documents. SharePoint also supports collaboration by working alongside software

such as Word and Excel to allow for multiple people to access a file at once, from different locations. SharePoint builds upon the basics offered by OneDrive, which many employees may already use within their homes for the storage of personal documents and files. SharePoint takes that model and transforms it into something more suitable for company-wide purposes. A wide range of options is available to further add to the functionality of SharePoint, including the ability to toggle syncing as well as the opportunity for Files On-Demand, where files are only downloaded as and when they are needed.

Benefits of using SharePoint
as a file server

There are many benefits to choosing SharePoint Online as the first cloud-based file sharing and storage system for a business.

Primarily, SharePoint offers a central, immediately-accessible location for all users in a way a traditional onsite file server cannot. By going cloud-based, all users – in-office, remote or even in other offices around the world – have the same extensive access to every file they could need, without pushing the abilities and functionality of a more old-school filer server system.

While SharePoint does have a learning curve, especially for businesses who have not yet embraced cloud technology, this curve is relatively small compared to the numerous benefits the platform can bring. Mobile access, for example, is a highly desirable addition for many companies, as well as the comprehensive admin centre that allows for precise management and control of file storage as a whole. SharePoint is designed explicitly with hundreds of users in mind, making it a highly appropriate choice for larger businesses.

Beyond the ease of use and practicality of SharePoint, another huge advantage of the platform is the ability to sync directly to the cloud, as well as the option to reduce the strain collaborator's devices through functionalities like Files-On-Demand. The ability to sync files instantly is a huge benefit to just about any workplace, but combined with Microsoft's stringent commitment to security and built-in backup features, there's no better option available for the majority of organisations.

Instant mobile access via the cloud

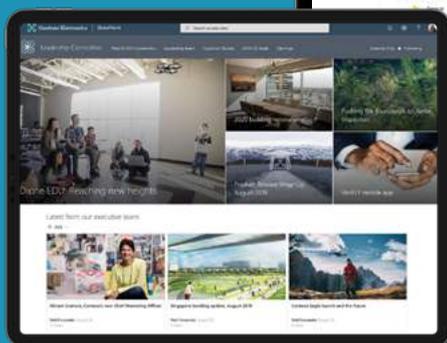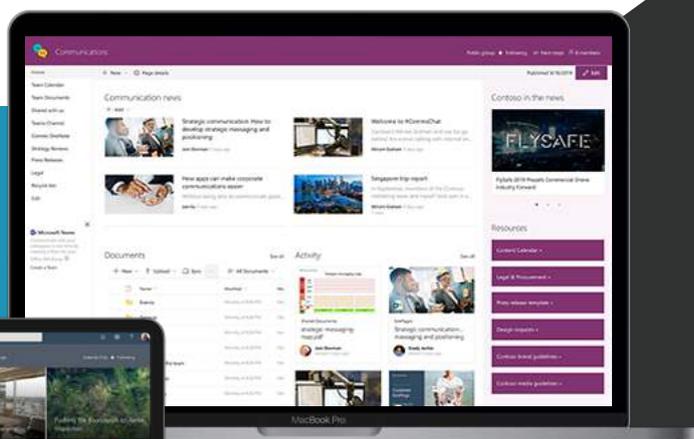Admin centre that allows for precise management

Ability to Sync instantly to the cloud

Requirements
for setting up SharePoint

As part of the Office 365 suite, SharePoint Online is a cloud-based product where a great deal of the physical requirements for running the system is placed upon the platform itself. This means that, unlike an in-house file server, none of the costs related to hardware is required. Microsoft's SharePoint requirements on users are not intensive, and the system is designed to even run from mobile devices. While the cost of setting up a SharePoint Online platform may initially be costly, the price is more than worth the lack of maintenance or hardware requirements over time.

As an alternative to traditional file servers, SharePoint Online is the ideal addition to countless workplaces. Providing a user-friendly and highly secure way to get on the cloud, SharePoint is explicitly developed to support collaborative offices and businesses that run worldwide. To find about more about whether SharePoint Online is the best fit for your company or organisation, contact us today to discuss setting up SharePoint Online as a file server alternative in your workplace.

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