Comparing Alternatives for Business-Grade
File Sharing

INTERMEDIA
The Business Cloud™

Goal of this report

This report compares and contrasts various alternatives for file sharing in a business environment:

- On-premises versus cloud options

- Consumer-grade versus business-grade options

- Feature by feature comparison of the top five business-grade cloud services: Intermedia SecuriSync, Box for Enterprise, Box for Business, Dropbox Business and Microsoft OneDrive for Business.

Selecting a file sharing solution for business

In a modern business environment, the document creation process is dynamic, collaborative and iterative. A person might write a draft on a thin client at work, finish editing with a tablet at home and send it out to colleagues and coworkers for review. Collaborators across the globe might edit the document using a variety of devices. According to a survey by Sophos, the average technology user carries 2.9 mobile devices. It's no wonder that the final document emerges from a multi-person, multi-device, multi-location, multi-version workflow.

Given the need for distributed, cross-platform collaboration, which technology solution should IT choose to for this essential activity? IT has to choose between on-premises file servers and cloud file services—and then has to choose again between the various cloud options.

The ideal solution should bring together all elements of the dynamic workflow with simplicity, security, robustness and cost-effectiveness. This report makes it easy to compare and contrast your options to find the one that's best for you.

On-premises vs. the cloud

On-premises file servers
On-premises file servers are the traditional choice. They provide a central file repository, shared access and IT control over access permissions.

- File servers are a big step up from manual file sharing methods such as email or thumb drives. They work very well within the four walls of an organization.

- However, remote access to files is a challenge. It typically requires a VPN (Virtual Private Network) connection. This in turn requires IT to set up a VPN server and firewall and installing VPN client software on all devices accessing the file server.

- Support for the file server is generally limited to devices running the same operating system, e.g. Windows.

In the face of these limitations, there is no easy way to collaborate with individuals outside the organization—such as partners, suppliers or customers—without heavy IT coordination and effort.

Another drawback is that organizations have to purchase and maintain the hardware and software to operate a file server. In additional to the capital expenditure, this incurs ongoing electric, real estate and maintenance costs.

Cloud File Sync & Share Services
Like traditional file servers, cloud-based file sync & share services provide a shared,

centralized file repository. The difference is these services are easily accessed from any location or device, which facilitates the needs of a far wider scope of users, devices and capabilities.

• It is just as easy to support users inside an organization as outside.

• Users, partners, suppliers and customers can all connect without a VPN.

• Cloud file sync & share supports a wider range of mobile and computing devices, such as iPhone, Windows Phone, Android and Blackberry.

• The service provider maintains the hardware and software, so customers are relieved of that overhead and expense. Instead, they pay a monthly fee.

Conclusion

The advantages of cloud file sync & share service—mobility, cost-effectiveness, external sharing and easy collaboration—make it a superior solution for file sharing. The broader scope and ease of collaboration allows workers and businesses to be more productive.

But not all file sync & share services are equivalent. Some have their roots in the consumer world, while others are more tailored to the needs of business. It's important to understand the differences between consumer-grade and business-grade options.

Consumer-grade vs. business-grade cloud services

	Business-grade file sync & share	Consumer file sharing	Traditional file server
Central File Repository	🟢	🟢	🟢
Shared access & collaboration	🟢	🟢	🟢
It control over users access & permission	🟢	🔴	🟢
External file sharing - without VPN and client software installed	🟢	🟢	🔴
Avoid server & storage capital expense	🟢	🟢	🔴
Avoid hardware management and power, cooling and rack space costs	🟢	🟢	🔴
Monthly fee for service	🟢	🟢	🔴
Cloud-hosted and accessible via internet	🟢	🟢	🔴
Scalable to a large number of users and capacity	🟢	🔴	⚪ Maybe*
Robust security to safeguard data privacy	🟢	🔴	🟢
High reliability and uptime	🟢	🔴	⚪ Maybe*
Wide range of mobile and computing devices supported	🟢	🟢	🔴

🟢 Good   🔴 Bad   ⚪ Gaps

* Depends on the design and features of the systems hosting the file servers

Consumer-grade cloud services are low-cost. Sometimes they're even free. And they're designed to be very easy to use. Their evolution has been driven by the ever-growing need for easy access to digital files. Because they're so simple and so affordable, these file sharing services have become very popular, even in business. Cisco Systems projects online file sharing traffic to grow 22% annually from 2013 to 2018.

The downside of consumer services is that they lack many of features necessary in a business environment. These include robust security, rapid support, guaranteed uptime and independent IT control over access permissions.

Without these features, file sharing is risky for businesses due to the potential for downtime, data leakage and inability to adhere to IT polices.

THE DANGER OF INACTION

Employees feel empowered by the Bring-Your-Own-Device trend, which has led to a proliferation of personal IT services being used in the workplace—often without the approval or even knowledge of the IT department. These consumer services create security, availability and compliance risks. They can also lead to the co-mingling of personal and corporate data.

Shrewd IT departments will regain control by offering business-grade file & sync services with superior features and access controls to motivate employees to switch by replicating the functionality and ease-of-use they find in consumer-grade services. In fact, the analyst firm Osterman Research recommends that businesses deploy enterprise-grade file sync & share as a replacement for non-enterprise tools.

Business-grade cloud file sync & share services offer much better security, support, uptime, and control. Many good business solutions are available on the market. However, they are not free (quality never is!) and feature sets and pricing vary significantly.

Compare the top 5 business-grade cloud file sync & share services

There are five leading business-grade cloud file sync & share services: SecuriSync, Box for Enterprise, Box for Business, Dropbox Business and OneDrive for Business. The tables and text below examine their relative strengths and value for business environments.

The evaluation criteria are:

- **Security—How well does it safeguard the privacy of your business data?**

  Data privacy is critical. If your information falls into the wrong hands, it could be used against your business. It could also exposes you to legal and regulatory liabilities.

- **Reliability—What is the expected uptime or availability of the service?**

  Uptime refers to system availability. With the trends of globally distributed workforces as well as home working, it's critical to have 24/7/365 access to maintain business productivity.

- **Internal & external sharing—How easy is it to safely collaborate inside and outside the company?**

  A business-grade solution should give users granular control over the sharing and access permissions of both internal and external users.

- **Mobility—How broad is the support for mobile devices?**

  File sharing needs to embrace the devices people are already using. This means that all users should have synchronized, up-to-the-minute access to the latest file versions.

- **IT control & integration—Is it easy for IT to deploy, maintain and assure security for the service?**

  The service should integrate with Active Directory to avoid the need to recreate identity information. It should let IT retain complete control its confidential and sensitive information, regardless of accidental or malicious user behavior. And it should be easily integrated with other essential tools and services, especially office productivity applications.

- **Pricing—What is the service's monthly charge?**

  Pricing matters, though just as important, what is included in the price? In other words, what is the overall value proposition?

- **Onboarding and support—Can the service provider assist with migration to the cloud service? How solid is the support after the service is up and running?**

  Many businesses have existing solutions and users that need to be migrated and set up in the new cloud service. Does the provider offer comprehensive assistance, or leave you to figure it out yourself? And if a problem arises later, is timely, knowledgeable technical support available?

	SecuriSync	Box for Enterprise	Box for Business	Dropbox Business	OneDrive for Business
At-rest encryption	Good	Partial	Partial	Partial	Bad
Account-level encryption key	Good	Good	Bad	Bad	Bad
In-transit encryption	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Remote wipe of data	Good	Good	Bad	Good	Bad
Audit Log of all events	Good	Good	Good	Good	Gaps — Only via SharePoint

Good ●   Bad ●   Gaps ●

- Encryption—Strong encryption is the foundation of data privacy because it enforces a password key to view and edit files. Airtight encryption protects data both in transit over the network and at rest while stored on the computer or mobile device. All sync & share services provide in-transit encryption, while only SecuriSync fully encrypts data at rest. OneDrive lacks at-rest encryption. Box keeps unencrypted file copies for full-text searching, and Dropbox Business unencrypts files for deduplication, both of which are potential security exposures.

- Encryption key—Generating a unique encryption key for each user account creates a higher wall of data isolation. SecuriSync and Box for Enterprise offer this feature.

- Remote wipe—Remote wipe allows IT administrators to erase business data if a device is lost or stolen or if an employee leaves the organization. All services offer remote wipe except Box for Business and OneDrive.

- Audit log—Audit logs provides a record of file and folder adds, changes, deletes for internal audits and compliance. All services offer this feature, though OneDrive only as part of hosted SharePoint.

	SecuriSync	Box for Enterprise	Box for Business	Dropbox Business	OneDrive for Business
99.999% Uptime SLA	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴

🟢 Good　🔴 Bad　⚪ Gaps

- 99.999% uptime—Only SecuriSync provides a 99.999% uptime guarantee, which is the same SLA offered for all Intermedia cloud services. This SLA is delivered through Intermedia's world-class data infrastructure: SSAE 16 Type II-audited datacenters, redundant Internet providers and firewalls, multiple Intrusion Prevention Systems, dedicated, full-time certified security personnel and rigorous physical security.

	SecuriSync	Box for Enterprise	Box for Business	Dropbox Business	OneDrive for Business
Granular sharing permissions	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴
Sub-folder sharing	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Group sharing	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴
Free secure external sharing and collaboration	🟢	⚪ $35/user	⚪ $15/user	⚪ Free, not as secure as SecuriSync	🟢
Share large files and folders as web links	🟢	🟢	🟢	⚪ No password protection	🟢

🟢 Good　🔴 Bad　⚪ Gaps

- Granular, sub-folder and group sharing—Granular sharing permissions allow users to set permissions uniquely for each collaborator. Permissions may be co-owner, modify or view-only. Sub-folder sharing allows sub-folders to have different permissions than parent folders. Finally, group sharing is a convenient way to share files with large, defined groups such as Exchange distribution lists. These permissions are automatically updated as members are added or dropped from the lists. SecuriSync supports all three sharing features, Box supports some features, while Dropbox and OneDrive do not support any of them.

- Secure external sharing—Secure external sharing provides a way to collaborate with external users who do not have file sharing software installed on their computers. External users can be granted permission to view, edit and upload files securely in a web browser. SecuriSync offers this feature without charge, while Box charges per external user. Dropbox has this feature but it lacks security, and OneDrive does not offer it.

- Web links—Sending web links to share files and folders is both convenient and intuitive. All services support this feature, though Dropbox lacks password security.

	SecuriSync	Box for Enterprise	Box for Business	Dropbox Business	OneDrive for Business
Unlimited file size	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🔴
Full-text search	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴
Selective Sync	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Available for iOS, Android, Windows Phone and BlackBerry	🟢	🟢	🟢	⚪ No Windows Phone	⚪ No Blackberry and Android

🟢 Good　🔴 Bad　⚪ Gaps　　*OneDrive has a 20K file sync limit and 5K file limit per folder

- Support for mobile devices—All file sharing services compared here support popular mobile devices, including Apple iPhone and iPad (iOS), Android, Windows Phone and BlackBerry.

- Selective sync—All services support selective sync, which enables users to conserve local storage and network bandwidth by selecting which folders are stored and synchronized locally.

- Unlimited file size and full-text search—Additional powerful features are support for unlimited file sizes and full-text searches across mobile and computing devices, whether the files are stored locally or centrally. SecuriSync offers both features, while Box offers full-text search only, Dropbox offers unlimited file size only, and OneDrive offers neither.

	SecuriSync	Box for Enterprise	Box for Business	Dropbox Business	OneDrive for Business
One control panel for all cloud services	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢
Active Directory integration	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Group Sharing with Exchange Distribution Lists	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Office/Outlook integration (Windows)	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴

🟢 Good　　🔴 Bad　　⚪ Gaps

- User management—Business-grade cloud services provide a control panel for IT to manage all user access and permissions for file sharing.

- Active Directory integration—This capability leverages the corporate usernames and passwords in the Active Directory database and automatically propagates them into the file sharing service. This integration simplifies setup and lets users access the corporate address book. All services support these features, though Microsoft only supports Active Directory from its more comprehensive and higher-priced Office 365 cloud service.

- Office/Outlook integration—Integration with Microsoft Office and Outlook makes it easy for users to share files and work together within these familiar applications. For example, SecuriSync can be configured from the Outlook interface to send links instead of file attachments. This conserves storage space in inboxes and sent folders and skirts file size limits. Box and SecuriSync offer Office and Outlook integration, but Dropbox and OneDrive do not.

- One control panel for all cloud services—While Box and Dropbox services are limited to file sharing, Microsoft's Office 365 and Intermedia's Office in the Cloud offer **a single** control panel for a broader set of cloud services. As businesses add services, it becomes exponentially easier and less costly to deploy and manage them if there is a centralized control panel. This is where the value of a broad cloud service offering comes into play. However, the Microsoft and Intermedia offerings are not exactly the same. Both offer Exchange-hosted email, file sync & share and instant messaging and conferencing. Microsoft includes office productivity applications like Word, Excel and PowerPoint, while Intermedia's Office in the Cloud offers an enterprise-grade Hosted PBX phone system and AppID single sign-on (SSO) and identity management across all cloud apps, even from diverse vendors.

	SecuriSync		Box for Enterprise	Box for Business	Dropbox Business	OneDrive for Business
Pricing	$4.99/ user	$14.99/ user	$35/user	$15/user	$15/user	$2.50/ user
Included Storage	10 GB	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	25 GB

- Monthly price—At $4.99 per user, the monthly price for SecuriSync is a small fraction of Box or Dropbox. Even so, SecuriSync offers a richer set of sharing and collaboration features than the higher-priced alternatives, making it the clear winner for value. OneDrive for Business has the lowest monthly price at $2.50 per user. However, it delivers the least number of collaboration and security features and is not an optimal choice for business productivity.

- Included storage—Initial storage capacity varies among services, though all can increase it as needed. More importantly, what can users and businesses can do with the storage? This is where the respective feature sets make a real difference.

	SecuriSync	Box for Enterprise	Box for Business	Dropbox Business	OneDrive for Business
24/7 Support and Onboarding	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴

🟢 Good   🔴 Bad   ⚪ Gaps

- Onboarding and support—Of the five services compared here, only SecuriSync provides both comprehensive setup assistance free of charge as well as 24/7 technical support. Phone calls are answered within 60 seconds and emails within an hour.

Conclusion

Of the five business-grade file sync & share services compared in this report, SecuriSync stands out as the best value—with the best feature set—for secure, reliable, easy-to-use file sharing.

	SecuriSync		Box for Enterprise	Box for Business	Dropbox Business	OneDrive for Business
Monthly price	$4.99/ user	$14.99/ user	$35/user	$15/user	$15/user	$2.50/ user
Included storage	10 GB	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	25 GB
Unlimited file size	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🟢	🔴
Support for all PC/ Mobile platforms	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Granular sharing permissions	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴
Sub-folder sharing	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Group Sharing	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴
Free Secure External Sharing and Collaboration	🟢	🟢	$35/user	$15/user	Free, not as secure as	🔴
In-transit/At-rest encryption	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	⚪ Partial	🔴
Account-level encryption key	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴
Lock files for editing	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢
Active Directory integration	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Office/Outlook integration (Windows)	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴
Full-text Search (web/ mobile)	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴
Remote wipe of data	🟢	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🔴
Audit Log of all events	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	Only via SharePoint
One-stop shop for Cloud Services	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟢
99.999% uptime SLA	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	None	🔴
24/7 Support and Onboarding	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴

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