



DATA TRANSFER IS REBORN AND SECURE IN THE CLOUD

A buyer's guide to modern FTP services for exchanging large files





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Cloud computing has had a seismic effect on business IT, creating perhaps the biggest wave of change in the way organisations deploy and consume technology in 25 years. Cloud services provide low upfront costs, reduced administration and ubiquitous access from any browser-based device. Add value-based subscription pricing, ease of use, superior manageability, minimal upheaval and security and you have a generally superior environment.

Take file transfer, for example, where organisations increasingly have the need to send complex formatted documents, often including rich graphics or multimedia. According to research organisation SINTEF, 90 per cent of the world's data has been created in the last two years. And in situations where thousands of counterparties connect to an internal FTP server, transferring large files becomes a significant drain on an organisation's internet bandwidth and severely impacts other business-critical services.

Now contrast this with cloud offerings where savvy operators provide their own physical global infrastructure, meaning a single solution can be deployed across a global business with full data residency compliance. Which is an increasingly important consideration given governance rules.

Cloud is often associated with lack of security. In reality, cloud vendors can offer many security benefits, as opposed to disadvantages – for example, opening connections to many external parties on internal FTP servers represents a higher, rather than lower, security risk. And the SFTP protocol (a highly secure version of FTP) fully addresses security concerns as data is encrypted in transit and, unlike FTP, only requires a single port on the firewall.

Aside from security, choosing a specialist service provider does have practical advantages. These include the ability to innovate faster than their customers could and provide better levels of support for the solutions required. So there are many compelling reasons to considering cloud data transfer platforms, but before making a choice of supplier it is imperative to think through all the file transfer requirements across the organisation and deploy an extensible platform that is secure and compliant.



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A BUYER'S CHECKLIST

Firstly, demand multi-protocol support

Your cloud data transfer provider must provide this if you want to pursue the ideal of a single solution to be deployed across a variety of enterprise data transfer requirements. The range of file transfer protocols provided address a range of business workflows – flexibility is key to future-proofing your decision.

Let's examine the strengths of weaknesses of each protocol.

- 1. HTTP**
HTTP is great for providing collaborative interfaces but file sizes are restricted to 10GB.
- 2. HTTPS**
HTTPS has the same interface positive as HTTP plus greater security but it's also restricted by file size.
- 3. FTP**
FTP has many strengths. It's synonymous with reliability, can send files of unrestricted size and it can be used with the many standard and free clients that are available. Also it automatically resumes (rather than restarts) when transmission is broken and existing services reliant on FTP can easily be swapped out for a like-for-like replacement, helping to reduce costs. However, FTP is not particularly flexible when it comes to the need to collaborate.
- 4. SFTP**
SFTP has all the advantages of FTP with higher levels of security provided by end-to-end encryption and a single port required on the corporate network for all file transfer.



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Secondly, expect a high level of functionality as standard

Look out for the following list:

- **Administration.** A full control console.
- **Process.** A simple information workflow engine.
- **Governance.** Full auditing for security and compliance.
- **Brand.** Be sure you can retain your corporate identity when deploying in the cloud and avoid consumer-grade services full of pop-up offers.
- **Accreditation.** If you are outsourcing, procedures and policies must be verifiable as enterprise-grade.

Finally, expect a lot more than standard

Innovative platform providers offer:

- **Manageability.** Greater collaboration and information flow control through lower-level programming controls of the FTP/SFTP protocol, not just HTTP/S.
- **Speed.** Ultrafast data transfer over an uncongested network.
- **Confidence.** Levels of security commonplace in core financial transaction processing, such as SWIFT messaging or payment card clearing.
- **Extensibility.** An API that enables customisation or integration with automated workflows or other in-house services.

Conclusion

By adding cloud to a data transfer platform that supports secure protocols; you have a solution that takes the best of the new IT architecture. It provides the ability to send large files securely and conveniently and with brand equity stronger than ever.