

MEMORANDUM

To: USC Faculty and Staff

Office of Compliance

From: Laura LaCorte, Associate Senior Vice President for Compliance ^{ll}
Ilee Rhimes, CIO and Vice Provost for Information Technology Services

Date: October 6, 2011

Subject: Storing USC Materials in the Cloud

As faculty and staff increasingly turn to commercial online providers of storage for work-related files, we encourage all university employees to exercise caution in storing USC documents in cloud services not licensed by or customized for the university's specific use.

Consumer cloud storage services, such as those provided by Dropbox, Box.net, and iCloud, are freely accessible and easy to use. However, many consumer services do not contain enterprise-level security measures. Data stored with or transmitted to some consumer providers could be at risk of unauthorized access. Additionally, some enterprise-level cloud services have not fully matured from a security perspective. For example, some of the commercial storage providers that advertise encryption will encrypt data only during the transfer process of the data to the cloud and not during storage of the data in the cloud.

For these reasons, do not use consumer services or enterprise services that have not been sanctioned by USC to store any documents or files that contain sensitive or confidential information (e.g., social security numbers, health information, confidential research data or education records) unless that information has been encrypted before being uploaded and remains encrypted while it is maintained in cloud storage. We recommend encryption for the upload and storage of non-sensitive USC data as well.

We also discourage use of these third-party storage services as a long-term business operations strategy until the companies providing these services mature and stabilize. If you are currently using or planning to use cloud storage for USC materials, consult with the IT staff in your school or unit to determine the appropriateness of the service for your business needs.

Please remember that USC's information security and ITS computing policies apply to use of these services. USC's computing policies can be found at the URL below.
http://policies.usc.edu/adm_bus_practices.html#computing_policies

In the interim, our offices will continue to explore technologies that can offer secure and user-friendly cloud storage services. For questions about information security or any other computing security issues, please contact Information Security of the Office of Compliance at (213) 821-2614 or the ITS Customer Support Center at (213) 740-5555.

cc: Todd Dickey
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