



# YOUR DIGITAL VALUABLES



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# The dangers of having too much data



## BIG DATA SECURITY RISKS IN THE CLOUD

Every time we buy something online or click the retweet button on Twitter we add to the increasing digital monster, more commonly known as 'big data'. In fact, it's predicted by 2015 that mankind will generate five billion gigabytes of information (the equivalent of "all words ever spoken by human beings") every 10 minutes. So, where and how does all this big data sit securely?

Cloud storage is the perfect match for the big data we are talking about. It can provide unlimited resources on demand and commercial companies are increasingly using it. It seems that we are spending a lot of time digitally creating and collecting data and then trying to find somewhere to store it. Some people invest in larger hard drives or use external storage gadgets such as USB drives or discs. But more are now turning to cloud storage as a reliable place to keep it.

Cloud storage simply means saving data to an Internet storage system maintained by a third party. So, instead of storing information in your computer's hard drive or other gadgets, you can save it to a remote database. And the Internet provides the connection between the two.

You are probably already using cloud storage services without realising. For example, Web email providers like Gmail, Hotmail and Yahoo! Mail store email messages on their own servers. Users access their email through the Internet from computers and other gadgets. Other examples are social networking sites like Facebook or MySpace. Members post pictures and other content on the site's servers. While services like Xdrive, MediaMax and DropBox offer digital storage.



## WHAT ARE THE RISKS INVOLVED?

There are concerns about big data security when saved in the cloud. People worry that the physical machines on which the data is stored could be stolen. There is also the chance that a cybercriminal might find a way to hack the system and gain access to the data.

To secure the data there are several techniques that are used:

- ▶ Encryption – a complex algorithm to code information. To access the files a user will need the encryption key. It is possible to crack the encrypted information but most cybercriminals do not have the computer processing power to do this.
- ▶ Authentication – a user name and strong password.

Cloud storage companies also invest a lot of money in their security measures to limit data theft or corruption.



## LOSS OF CONTROL OVER BIG DATA SECURITY: CYBER ATTACKS

We generate a vast amount of digital data each day; often without realising it. But any time we store data on the Internet we are putting ourselves at risk of cyber-theft. Though most Cloud service providers have strict security processes in place, as technology matures, so do the cybercriminals. And the more personal data stored, the greater the opportunity and damage cybercriminals can do.

Strong secure passwords and secret answers are the soft underbelly of your data's security. It is far easier for the cybercriminal to try and hack your personal account instead of trying to hack the Cloud. They rely on our lack of discipline when it comes to maintaining passwords. Do not make it easy for them. Make sure you keep changing your passwords and that they are difficult to break.

## DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Our personal data footprint is now becoming immeasurably widespread and bottomless. All the digital breadcrumbs we leave behind each day create a trail of behaviour that can be captured, monitored and 'mined'. With all our data 'out there' is it possible to guard our privacy in this digital age?

The idea that more or less every aspect of your life is being recorded and perhaps shared by some entity somewhere is quite a scary one. From knowing what kind of food you buy, to where you have recently holidayed; having a digital presence almost certainly means losing some of your privacy. Just keep in mind that any data you store, purposefully or unintentionally, is collected and can be followed or used.



## GOVERNMENT INTRUSION

The loss of data privacy is not new. But instead of just worrying about cybercriminals breaching Cloud security, we now have to consider government intrusion as well. With the recent US National Security Agency leaks and reports on government surveillance programmes, it seems that government bodies may also want to take a look at your data.

## BIG DATA SECURITY

It is nearly impossible to exist in the world today without participating in the global sharing frenzy of data and without being digitally active. Especially as companies actively encourage and reward customers for managing their accounts online.

Big Data is certainly not without its risks. But it can be hugely beneficial for everyone. Interactions with companies such as Amazon or Netflix have become more individualised and personable by recording and following our digital trail. So, we get to enjoy a wealth of improved benefits as they adjust their service based on the information they have collected about us.

### Related Links

[Choose the right cloud antivirus](#)

[Kaspersky Anti-Virus Software](#)

## PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Remember, using the Cloud is like kissing someone you don't know – you have no idea what kind of germs they have and whether you will catch some kind of virus.

There is always a risk when it comes to Cloud storage. Cybercriminals have been around from the start and as technology advances, so do the dangers that come with embracing it. As with any service, you have to consider what level of risk you are comfortable with and stay as prepared as you can be. The key is getting to know the sites and providers as best you can and recognising that your activity online does leave a very distinct footprint.

Big Data is not just a fresh fad or trend: it's fast becoming a new way of life. Make sure you walk into these new and relatively unknown network relationships with your eyes wide open.

