

Google Drive Use-Cases and Speed Test

There are four ways you can use Google Drive -

1. Via a Browser
2. Via a local synchronized directory using **Drive for Desktop (DFD)** on a "normal" operating system (Mac OS / Windows)
3. Via a plugin within a NAS operating system (like "Cloud Sync" on a Synology NAS).
4. Via a tool like [FreeFileSync](#)

Google Drive via browser is fantastic. No complaints. it takes a lot of time to manage manual uploads vs. a mirrored, synchronized folder.

Google Drive is a good place for dead files aka archive and for Google documents (sheets, docs, slides).

Shared Folders vs Shared Drives

Traditionally shared Google Drive folders don't work as a sync-able local directory solution. Instead, it creates a shortcut that's cached and that you can't locally modify. You have to use a "Shared Drive" which functions like a shared Dropbox™ folder.

Active File Synchronization Issues

As of 2025, local instances of Google Drive (eg **Drive for Desktop**) does a pretty good job with simple files as long as you have a fast ISP.

For more complex or larger files, the story is a bit more... complicated. For Production work, you cannot rely on Google Drive for Desktop for active synchronization (EG constantly saving a Photoshop file). They haven't figured out the secret sauce that Dropbox mastered over 10 years ago.

[See the dedicated write up here.](#)

Drive for Desktop Speed Test

65GB folder on 1GB line.

Should take ~22-24 mins if line isn't congested.

Started upload (after confirmed copy) at 10:47AM - no speed or ETA using the app.

Finished download 11am. ☐ - Only 13 minutes. ~683Mb/s or 85.38 MB/s. Pretty good.

This folder was multiple files, which may have been a performance positive as simultaneous file uploading processes faster than 1 file that is the same size.

Google Drive on NAS

(Like a Synology) Works great, just don't put active project files on there.

Google Drive on an External Drive

I don't know if this is a good long-term solution as it's untested, but I have tested it to download a 1.5TB disk image and it seems to work great for those kinds of use cases.

While you can't have your root Google Drive on an external drive, you can sync a folder from "My Computer" which can come from anywhere. If you need to get a massive set of files from Google Drive directly to an external:

- Create a folder on your external drive.
- Open up Google Drive Preferences locally on your computer.
- Select the "My Computer"
- Select "Add Folder"
- Select your newly created folder.
- Navigate to your Google Drive in browser.
- Find the files you need and move, or copy them, to this newly created folder. Obviously moving, rather than copying, would mean that the files disappear for anyone who is shared into that folder, so proceed with caution. You can move directories, and you can copy files, but you can't copy directories (at least in browser).
- Wait for the files to download

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