



# File-Sharing Solutions for the Construction Industry

See how the right choice in file-sharing services can address your collaboration, IT and client service needs and give you a key advantage for your projects.

The best construction firms stand out to clients through their prompt and clear communication and fast and efficient project management, and the same applies to their technology management. The right choice in file-sharing services can address general contractor, project manager and IT needs and gain a key marketplace advantage as a result.

A good file-sharing service fosters collaboration between clients, colleagues and vendors. It allows simple, paperless transfer of the large files that are typical of the construction industry — files that are often too big to share by email or other means. It works seamlessly with common software and offers robust security and administrative features. In other words, a good service makes everyone's lives easier.

### Collaboration

Construction projects are complex, and many hands touch each file. Contractors, subcontractors, architects and engineers must work together to share large amounts of data, including complicated files like assemblies or renderings. The submittal process alone can generate thousands of documents.

Good file-sharing services simplify file transfer procedures, reducing the need for the exchange of physical documents. By doing so, they allow faster communication. They also enable firms to earn LEED points by reducing the energy consumption associated with printing and copying documents. Everyone involved in the project benefits.

When evaluating a file-sharing service and its collaborative capacity, look for flexible, scalable storage and transfer with features such as:

- Unlimited file storage for referencing old data
- Transfer of up to 100 GB for a single file
- Support for multiple devices per user
- File check-in/check-out for concurrent access
- A print driver for seamless integration with industry software

Collaboration must also be simple. A good service is compatible with common platforms and tools such as Microsoft Outlook, and offers functionalities such as drag and drop for files that make workflow smooth.

### Integration

While compatibility with common software is useful, integration with industry-specific applications may be even more so. It is helpful for a file-sharing service to have an API that allows it to translate between third-party applications — for instance, BIM software. To ensure that you can pull files directly into your file-sharing service from any software you use,

look for a print driver feature that will allow you to work seamlessly with all of your current tools.

To maximize project efficiency, a service should also integrate with common directories like Microsoft Active Directory (AD). This alleviates the inconvenience of multiple user IDs and passwords.



### Security

Construction firms regularly deal with sensitive or proprietary information. In this area, security is a primary concern. A file-sharing service must protect your information when stored, transferred to others and accessed on various devices out in the field. Look for a service that offers accredited safeguards recognized throughout the industry and recommended by trusted organizations like the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The service should also meet annual certification standards like SSAE 16 and ISO 27001 — both approved by the U.S. government.

**For protection of stored data**, a service should employ 256-bit AES encryption while running daily virus and malware scans and regularly updating its firewalls. It should also offer

physical protections in its datacenters, like hurricane-rated roofs and redundant power sources.

**During data transfers**, a service should utilize NIST-recommended SSL and TLS protocols. You should be able to email a secure link to files rather than sending an attachment. This link should feature security options like password-protection.

**Files on devices** such as smartphones or tablets should be secured by encryption and through features like remote wipe or self-deletion to protect them in the case of loss or theft.

### Administrative functions

There's more to security than encryption. Comprehensive administrative control is also a security feature. You should be able to configure access to each file and folder — for instance, ensure a client can look only at a final draft, or restrict sensitive documents to certain user groups. A good service can also track all information related to a document, such as who has accessed it, when, and whether they downloaded it.

Firms also need to be able to assign limited functionality to lower-level administrators. These administrators keep a project ticking along; they need granular control over group and user permissions, bandwidth quotas, auditing and a host of other details. This leaves upper-level administrators to tasks like managing directory structures and enforcing password expiration dates so that they can maintain good project organization and security.

Comprehensive administrative control also enables a certain level of protection for documents themselves. File versioning, for instance, creates a copy of every draft of a file. Tracking versions of complicated documents like technical specifications can help maintain integrity in every phase of a project.

Good file-sharing services are of great use to construction firms. As the world grows more

complicated, the ability to store and transfer large volumes of digital data will only become more necessary. To get ahead of the trend, firms can seek out trustworthy, reliable file-sharing services with proven track records that make collaboration easier, security tighter and projects more efficient.

See how you can get ahead of the file-sharing curve with Citrix ShareFile at [www.ShareFile.com](http://www.ShareFile.com).



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