

# Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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December 17, 2012

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Use of online storage services for congregation documents

Dear Brothers:

We have received reports that some are using online storage services for congregation documents. We have researched this matter and would like to provide the following guidelines so that these services can be used appropriately and securely.

In general, there is no objection to the use of such a service. However, if your body of elders chooses to do so, you should select the appropriate service for your needs and establish and maintain a suitable security protocol for those using the service.

**Select a reputable online document service:** Many have had good success with free commercial services, such as *Dropbox*, *Google Drive*, and *SkyDrive*, for storing documents. If properly secured, the free commercial document storage services are usually sufficient. Carefully review the security policy of any service provider while being mindful that no service of this nature is perfectly secure. Some may be inclined toward renting or managing their own shared server, however, this is discouraged because of the time and expense that could be required for ongoing maintenance and support.

**Utilize good security practices:** While some may be concerned about the unintended disclosure of information by those managing the server or by some other unauthorized party, the greatest security risk generally rests with those using the service. For instance, most online document storage services require only a password to access, sometimes referred to as one-factor authentication. This means that the security of your data is at risk without a strong password or if the password is not carefully protected. Therefore, it is important to carefully manage account passwords, change passwords periodically, and not use shared e-mail accounts or shared passwords for login credentials.—*g01* 6/22 p. 31.

**Exercise good judgment when posting documents online:** It is permissible to store documents that would normally be posted on the congregation information board. For example, a schedule of the upcoming public talks along with who is the assigned speaker, chairman, and *Watchtower* reader or a list of the brothers assigned to serve as attendants, sound/stage/microphone handlers, and so forth may be posted. Ultimately, you should view an online storage service similar to how you would view a USB flash drive. If you would feel uncomfortable putting certain files on a USB flash drive that could get lost or fall into the wrong hands, then it is likely not a good idea to store them online.

**What should never be stored online?** Any information of a *sensitive* or *confidential* nature, including judicial matters, should not be stored online or be distributed electronically. The same is true for documents already available on the *jw.org* Web site.

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It is our prayer that you will be blessed with wisdom, insight, and good judgment from Jehovah as you care for this matter. Please be assured of our warm Christian love and best wishes

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation  
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

cc: Traveling overseers

PS to secretary:

This letter should be retained in the congregation permanent file of policy letters. You may wish to update the congregation copy of *Index to Letters for Bodies of Elders* (S-22) at this time as well.