COMPUTER BASICS - UNDERSTANDING THE CLOUD

INFORMATION AND DATA LITERACY > 1.3 MANAGING DATA, INFORMATION AND DIGITAL CONTENT

TARGET GROUP	AGE GROUP	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	FORMAT	COPYRIGHT	LANGUAGE
Facilitators	N/A	Level 1	Background information, Video clip	Protected by United States and international copyright and trademark laws	English, French

This resource provides background information on the cloud; what it is and why people use it.

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General Objective	Knowledge acquisition
Preparation time for facilitator	less than 1 hour
Competence area	1 - Information and data literacy
Name of author	GCFGlobal.org
Resource originally created in	English

WORKSHOP DIRECTIONS

1 ## What is the cloud?

You may have heard people using terms like **the cloud**, **cloud computing**, or **cloud storage**. But what exactly is the cloud?

Simply put, the cloud is **the Internet**—more specifically, it's all of the things you can **access remotely** over the Internet. When something is **in the cloud**, it means it's stored on **Internet servers** instead of your computer's hard drive.

Watch the video below to learn more about the cloud.

2 ## Why use the cloud?

Some of the main reasons to use the cloud are **convenience** and **reliability**. For example, if you've ever used a **web-based email service**, such as **Gmail** or **Yahoo! Mail**, you've already used the cloud. All of the emails in a web-based service are stored on servers rather than on your computer's hard drive. This means you can access your email from any computer with an Internet connection. It also means you'll be able to recover your emails if something happens to your computer.
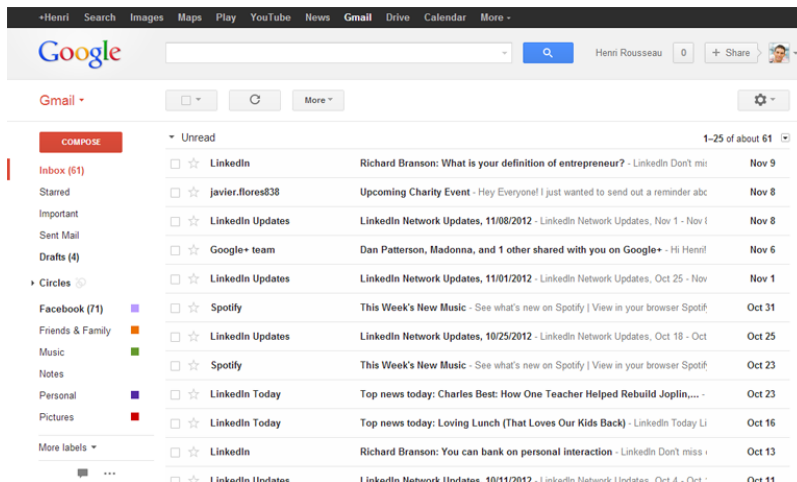
Let's look at some of the most common reasons to use the cloud.

- **File storage**: You can store all types of information in the cloud, including files and email. This

means you can access these things from **any computer** or **mobile device** with an Internet connection, not just your home computer. Dropbox and Google Drive are some of the most popular cloud-based storage services.

- **File sharing**: The cloud makes it easy to **share files** with several people at the same time. For example, you could upload several photos to a cloud-based photo service like Flickr or iCloud Photos, then quickly share them with friends and family.
- **Backing up data**: You can also use the cloud to protect your files. Apps like Mozy and Carbonite **automatically back up your data** to the cloud. This way, if your computer ever is lost, stolen, or damaged, you'll still be able to recover these files from the cloud.


3   What is a web app?

Previously, we talked about how **desktop applications** allow you to perform tasks on your computer. But there are also **web applications**—or **web apps**—that run **in the cloud** and do not need to be installed on your computer. Many of the most popular sites on the Internet are actually web apps. You may have even used a web app without realizing it! Let's take a look at some popular web apps.

- **Facebook:** Facebook lets you create an online **profile** and interact with your **friends**. Profiles and conversations can be updated at any time, so Facebook uses web app technologies to **keep the information up to date**.
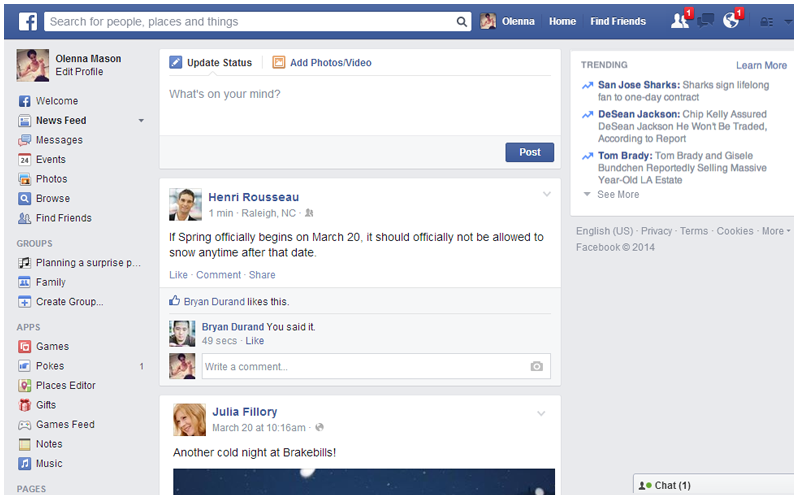
- **Pixlr**: Pixlr is an **image editing application** that runs in your web browser. Much like **Adobe Photoshop**, it includes many advanced features, like color correction and sharpening tools.
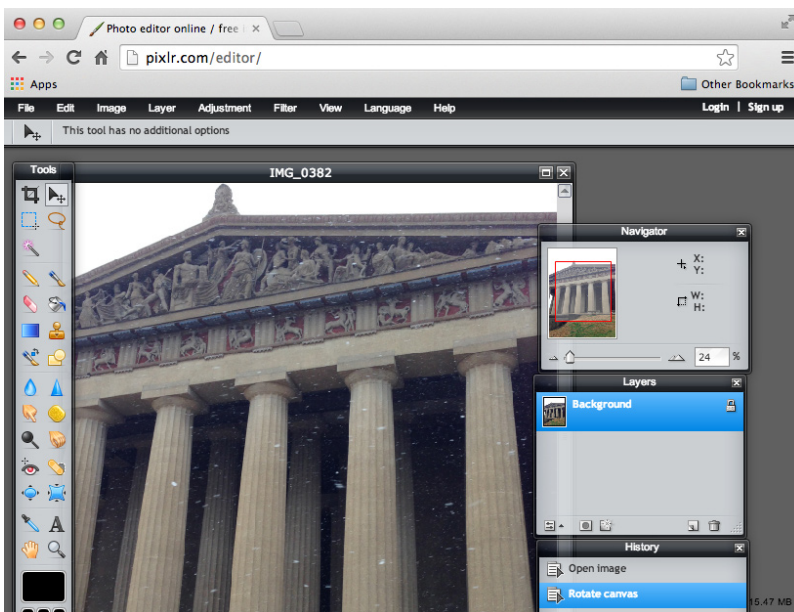
- **Google Docs:** Google Docs is an **office suite** that runs in your browser. Much like **Microsoft Office**, you can use it to create **documents**, **spreadsheets**, **presentations**, and more. And because the files are stored **in the cloud**, it's easy to **share** them with others.

Welcome Back Teachers Week ☆ ▣

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Hello all,

I hope each of you have had a wonderful summer. As you know, students will return for the 2011-2012 school year on August 17th. This means that our official planning week will be **Monday, August 8th through Friday, August 12th**. As usual, attendance this week is required. We'll be going over safety procedures, new testing policies, staff changes, and more. Below is the tentative schedule. Please review this doc again before Monday. Right now we're ironing out some specifics, but I will update and add more details as soon as I have them.

Also, note that the RTI specialist and guidance counselor have arranged a meeting with each teacher to go over your class rosters and discuss any special accommodations. You should receive an email with your exact meeting time.

Feel free to email or call me about anything. As it has been the past month, the school building will be open to teachers and staff Monday-Friday from 8-6. I'll be in my office most days, so don't hesitate to come by.