

## GOOGLE DRIVE

As living in the "information age" suggests, we are increasingly using more information in more ways to get more things done. We all need more tools, and importantly, more space to store the information, so that we can extract value from it. But a lot of the information we use, is regulated by laws, standards and an ever growing body of governance and compliance rules. Breaking these regulations can have seriously unpleasant outcomes, ranging from legal sanctions to personal liability. So, we have to think carefully how we treat the information we work with, who we share it with, and where we store it.

Google Drive for staff seems like a cheap and easy to use storage option, with a number of useful tools and broad accessibility. But there are a number of considerations to take into account, before we rush to store all our information there. Importantly, Google Drive does not comply with our current understanding of the POPI act regarding personal information. It is not the recommended place to store any personal information. The same can be said for any type of information (research data included) that carries any contractual obligations. It is also not backed up like our on-site network drives, and can become infected or corrupt due to a number of reasons, so data loss can be an issue. Don't treat Google Drive, or any other off-premise storage service, as a like-for-like extension of your local storage.

We have more information to work with, more ways to work with it, and increasing demands for compliance in how we handle it. Work is currently underway to bring our fragmented information governance policies together in a single framework, with clear guidance on treating different types of information. Until such time, please consult with IT before using Google Drive, or any other external platform as a general storage facility for all your data.

