Recommendation: Storage options for Staff members at the NWU

1.1 Introduction

A document describing the currently used storage environments: Novell, Google Drive, Onbase, NextCloud and the Microsoft Environment (OneDrive and Sharepoint) in depth, has been circulated. Detail of each has been described and served as input to these recommendations.

1.2 Problem statement

'Where should a user store what when creating documents as individuals or as teams?'

When attempting to answer this, the possible storage solutions should be determined and then what solution should be used for different types of documents.

When a user community is faced with a variety of storage environments, clear guidelines is of great importance as the lack thereof can cause important documentation and information to be ungoverned that poses a great risk to the NWU.

Furthermore, the University Management Committee of 22 August 2022, decided that university records must be stored on NWU approved and supported storage environments.

1.3 Recommendations

The solutions recommended are the **Microsoft Cloud storage options** as well as **NextCloud**. The MS Cloud storage solutions mainly include OneDrive and Sharepoint.

The other 3 options in the guiding document, are not promoted, because:

- **Novell** is in the process of being phased out. A project where content currently in the Novell environment (P:- and other shared drives) will be moved, will be launched during 2023.
- **Google Drive** is an environment where no data governance is in place. Official content should not be stored in this environment.
- **Onbase** has never been an environment where users could choose to store documents. It is used in the background by systems (ex. VSS, Records management) and that will not change in the short term.

To link NextCloud and the MS storage solutions to the problem statement: *'Where should a user store what'* it is important to understand the types of documents (or data) that users create and need to store.

Important and guiding considerations when choosing where to store documents are:

- the level of sharing and collaboration needed,
- the level of privacy and control needed over documents,
- Personal and removable drives, like C:-drives, flash drives and external hard drives, should not be used for official NWU files (per rules approved by the University Management Committee on 22 August 2022).

Summary of Recommended storage solutions

Types of documents	Level of privacy and control	Level of sharing and collaboration	Examples	Recommended Storage solution	Comment
Extremely sensitive	High		Research data sets Litigation documents	NextCloud	On premise storage behind the NWU firewall (50Gb soft cap, can be increased)
Idea generation and quick sharing and collaboration	Low	High	Similar to sharing a file with email or Google drive	MS Cloud	**Teams chat**, Files Tab (OneDrive of chat owner)
Own documents		Low	Similar to P:-drive or local hard drives	MS Cloud	NWU **OneDrive** 15 GB Temporary staff 30 GB Full-time staff)
Teams working together: Departments, Projects, Committees	Low <-> High	High	Similar to shared drives	MS Cloud	**Team site**, Files Tab (Sharepoint site)
Sharing of documents used company-wide	Low	High	Word Templates, Forms	MS Cloud	Sharepoint site

1.4   Conclusion:

Limiting storage solutions to these two possibilities with clear guidelines as when to use which, will have many advantages:

- simplify the new digital working environment.
  - o   documents available anytime, from, anywhere, from any device.
  - o   Collaboration on documents, projects
  - o   Version control of documents
- lower the risk of losing or not finding documents.

Very important is to have the Governance of these solutions in place, such as backup, DR, Popia, etc. Governance is in the process of being finalised for the recommended solutions.

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