

# What happens when Google Photos storage is no longer free?

Google Photos announced on 11 November that it will stop offering free unlimited storage for high-quality photos on 1 June 2021. Photos uploaded after the date will be counted towards the 15gb drive cap. If the account is inactive or exceeds the 15gb limitation for two years, Google may delete the photos after warning. Users will either need to pay for a recurring fee or look for an alternative if they run out of storage.

By [Andrew Huang](#) 13 Nov 2020



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As such change of policy projected to affect more than 1 billion users worldwide, many may start to wonder what they are ought to do with their existing or any other photos that are taken going forward. Several remedies are available in the market at the moment, such as shifting towards other cloud storage services that offer freemium models or simply upgrading your Google storage plan.

Though most of the tier-1 public cloud storage vendors such as OneDrive, Amazon Drive, Dropbox, or iCloud offer certain amount of free storage space, none of them exceeds Google's whopping 15gb storage space, which means ultimately, it all comes down to upgrading public cloud storage plan regardless of the platforms.

For Google Drive, though it seems like there are several plans available for upgrade, if we consider SSD based laptop like Macbook or smartphone's base amount to be 256gb for most people nowadays, to store this amount of data on the cloud can cost you around \$120 (R1,874) per year. The annually accumulated fee could be a considerable expense.

## Other alternative options?

If managing photos on a public cloud with a recurring subscription fee is not preferred, another intuitive approach is to go back to storing photos on external hard drives. However, this approach never ceases to address the inconvenience of managing and centralising photos and the risk of natural and physical damage. Moreover, external hard drives are vulnerable to other common data loss risks such as viruses and human

error. Besides, it is quite troublesome and hectic to migrate all photos from public cloud to multiple external hard drives.



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If both alternatives do not suffice to the growing amount of pictures in the long run, an on-premise device or private cloud may be a solution. Network-Attached Storage (Nas), a device with terabytes of storage space connected to a more secured home or office network, offers users higher-level data ownership, data protection and recovery features, and comprehensive public cloud level accessibility.

## Data protection and recovery

Data loss often is due to human errors like accidental deletion, hardware failure, or ransomware attack. On top of it, countless celebrity photo leak or data loss incidents from different public cloud providers were reported over the years, making more people aware that the notion of public cloud services being completely safe and secure is just untrue.

Nas solution on the other hand is ideal because several Nas providers have a backup applications ecosystem that helps users to deploy all around photo backup and data protection. By seamlessly integrating the backup solutions with a Nas device, users can achieve various photoprotection strategies without being wary of photos being lost or damaged.

## Low total cost of ownership

Let's put things into perspective. If we use 2tb storage space as a benchmark, as mentioned earlier, if a user is determined to pay for a 2tb Google Drive storage space for \$120 (R1,876) a year to save and maintain the integrity of his or her photo gallery, the total cost of ownership accumulated will grow to (R9,379) in five years, and significantly and ultimately be a heavy burden for many people going forward.

Nas on the other hand only requires initial hardware cost. A two-bay Nas device plus two 2tb Nas drives for Raid purpose still only add up to only around \$450 (R7,038), which is significantly lower than using public cloud services in the long run. Not to mention that a Nas usually comes with two to five years of warranty.

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