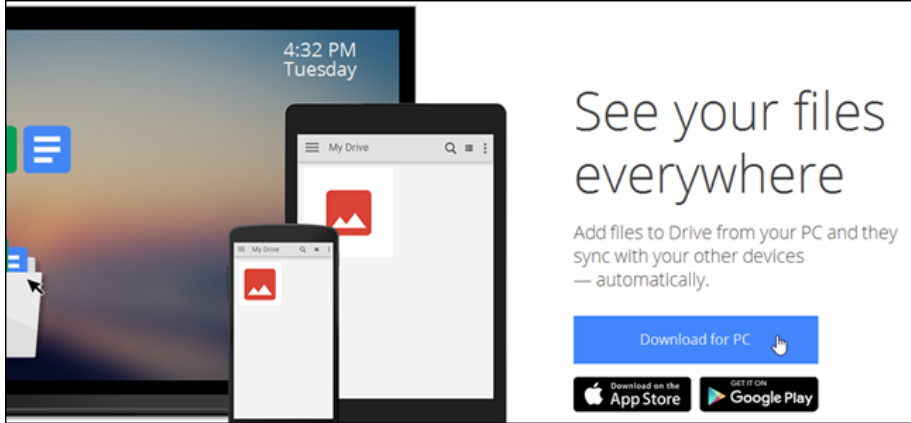


## How to Use the Google Drive Desktop App to Sync Your Files Anywhere



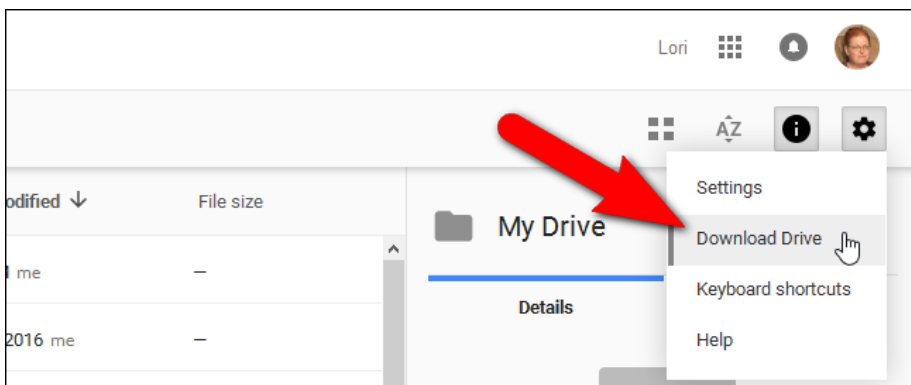
Google Drive has become one of the premiere cloud storage options for millions of computer users over the past few years. But it isn't just about Google Docs and Slides—you can also use it to sync your other files across computers, and access them offline, without a browser.

This means no more opening up sluggish web browsers, or waiting on a sub-par Internet connection to get to the files you need. Here's our guide on how to use Google Drive's desktop app.

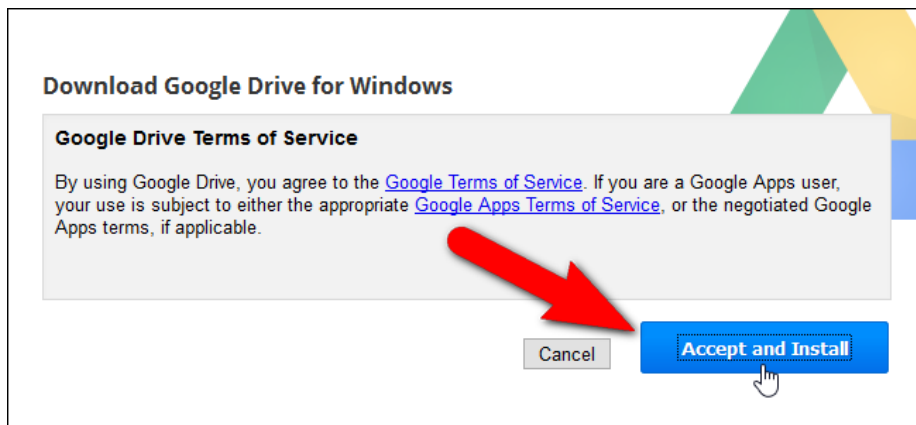
NOTE: We're using Windows 10 in our example, but this will work in Windows 8 and Windows 7 as well. We refer to File Explorer throughout this article, which is equivalent to Windows Explorer in Windows 7.

### How to Download and Install the Google Drive App

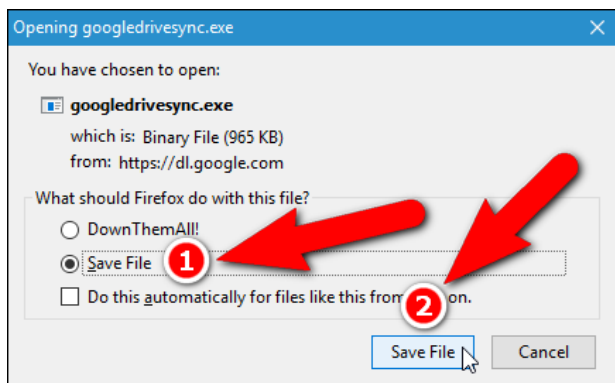
If you're currently logged into your Google Drive account in a browser, you can download the Google Drive app for your PC by clicking the Settings (gear) button in the upper-right corner of the browser window and selecting "Download Drive" from the drop-down menu. Otherwise, you can visit <https://www.google.com/drive/download/>.



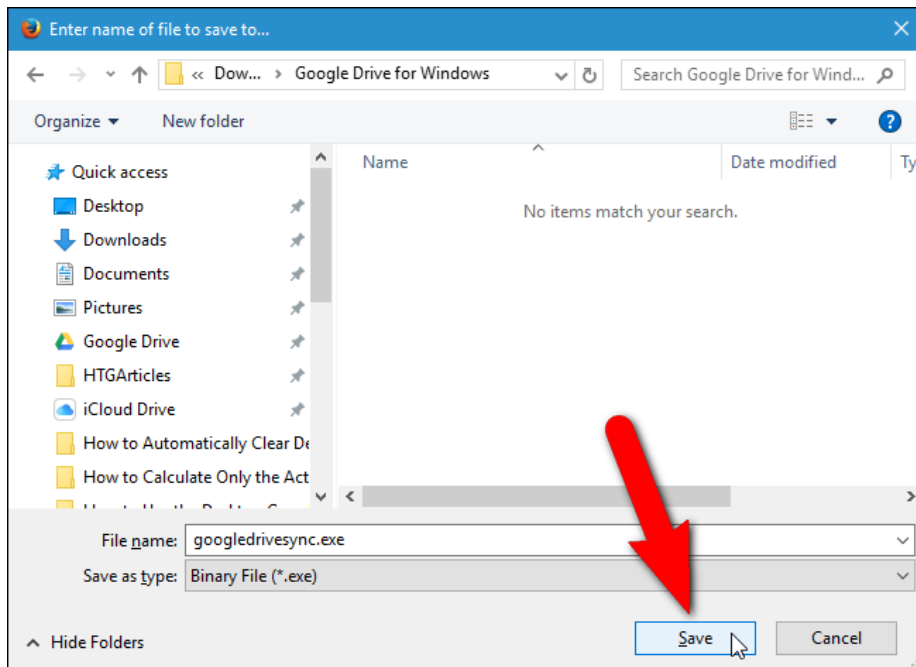
You will notice that the type of computer you're using was detected and the label on the button reflects that. Click the blue "Download for PC" button to automatically download the correct version of Google Drive for your system.



The Opening dialog box displays. Select the "Save File" option and then click "Save File".



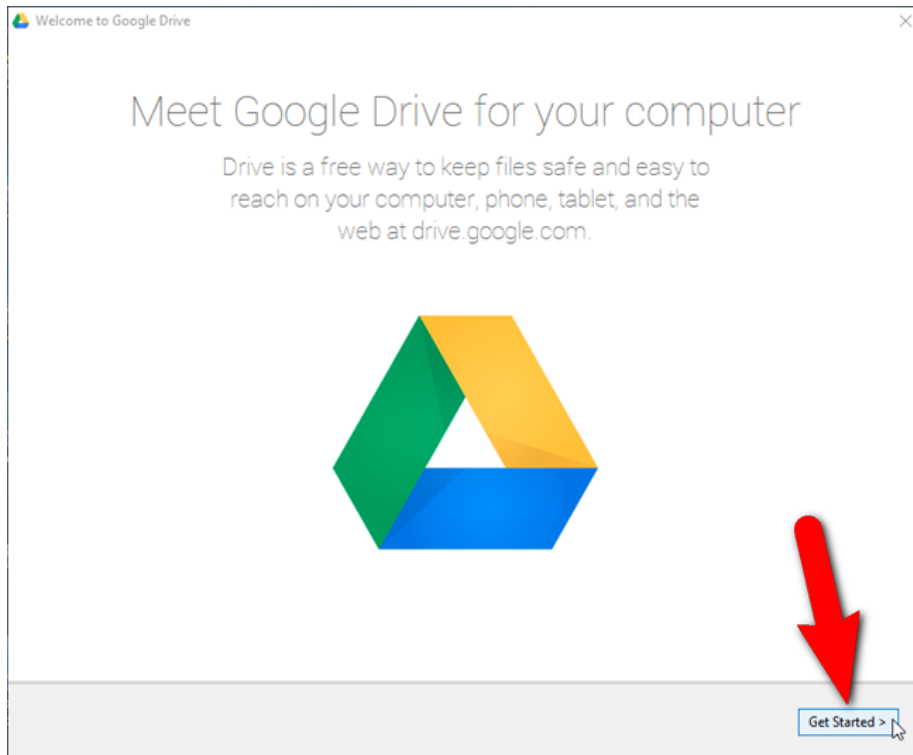
In the Save dialog box, navigate to the folder in which you want to save the Google Drive installation file and click "Save".



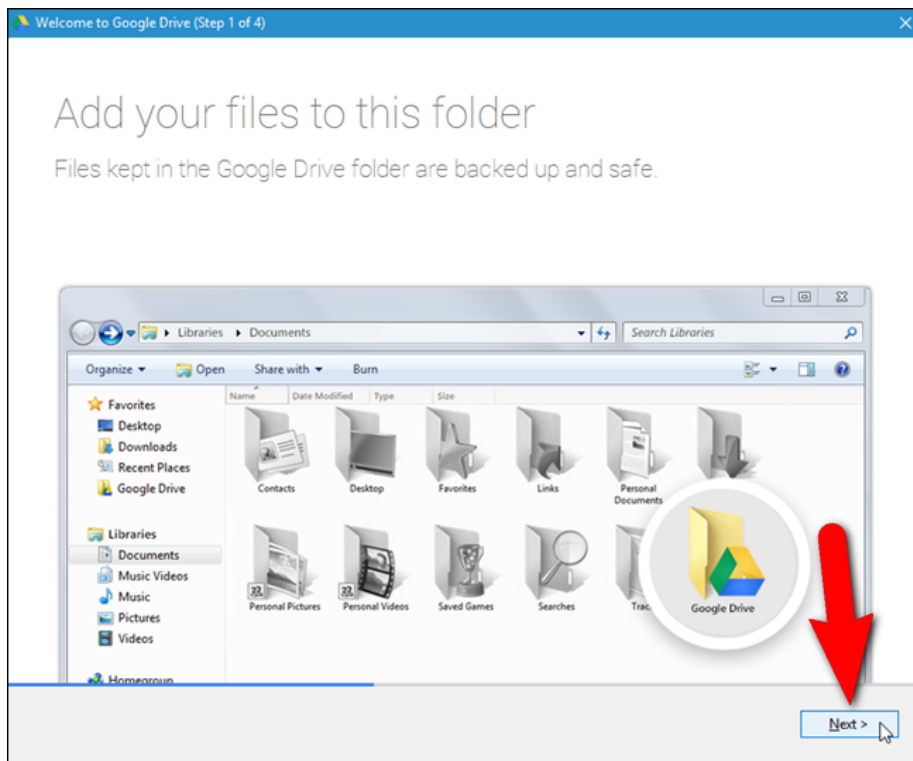
To install Google Drive on your PC, open a File Explorer window, navigate to the folder in which you saved the googledrivesync.exe file, and double-click on it. The installation process is automatic. The next section takes you through setting up Google Drive to access your Google account and start syncing your files.

## How to Connect Your Google Account to the Google Drive App and Sync Your Files

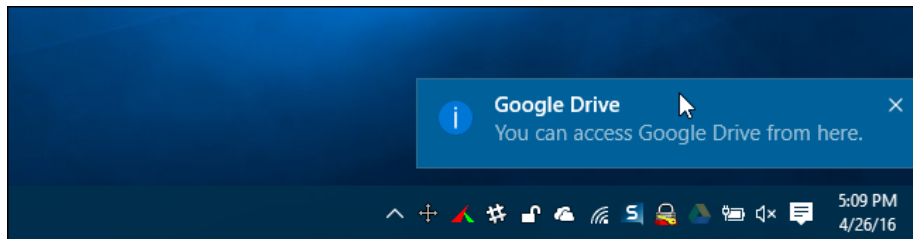
When the installation is finished, you'll see a Welcome to Google Drive wizard, which will help you set up Google Drive. Click "Get Started". The wizard will ask you for your Gmail address, your password, and a verification code, if you have two-step verification enabled on your Google account.



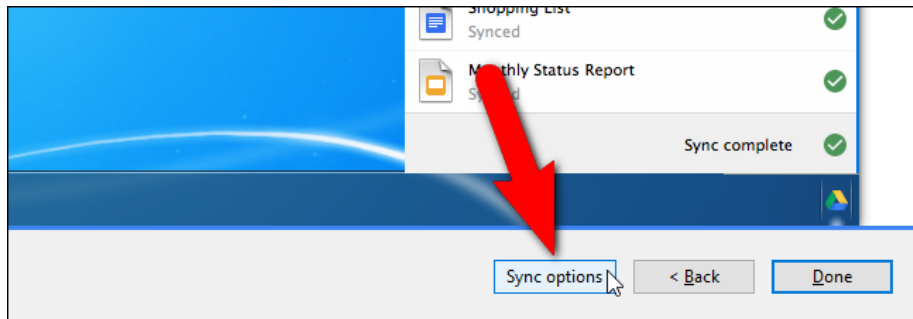
Once you've entered Google Drive account information, another wizard displays. This one shows you info about Google Drive. Use the "Next" button on each screen to advance through the wizard.



When you get to the last screen of the wizard, a notification displays in the lower-right corner of your Windows desktop.



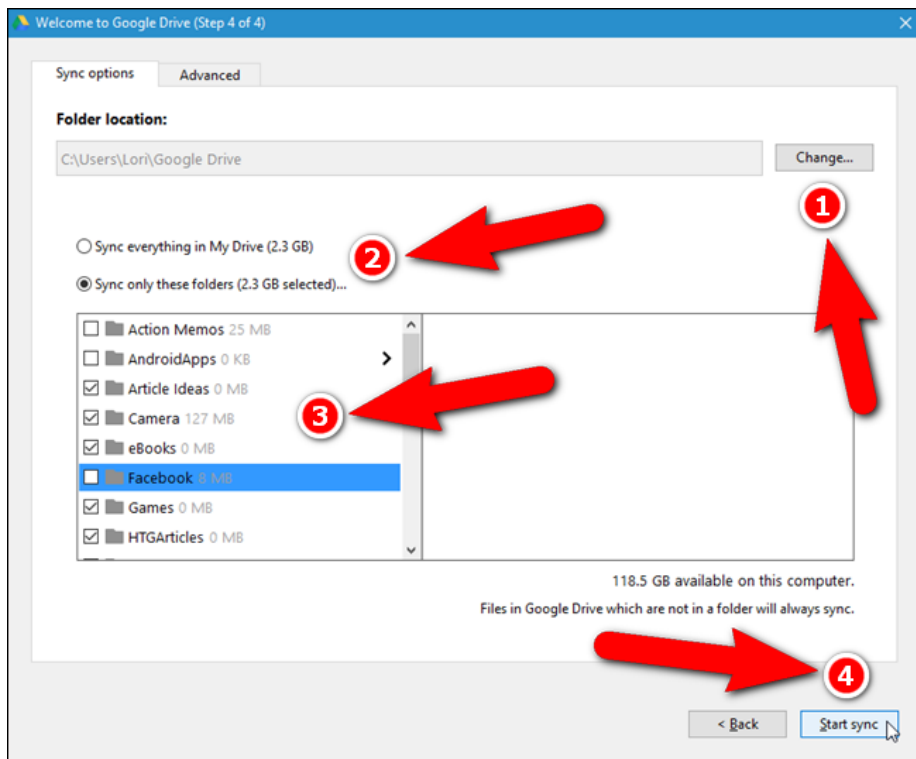
On the last screen of the wizard, click the “Sync options” button at the bottom.



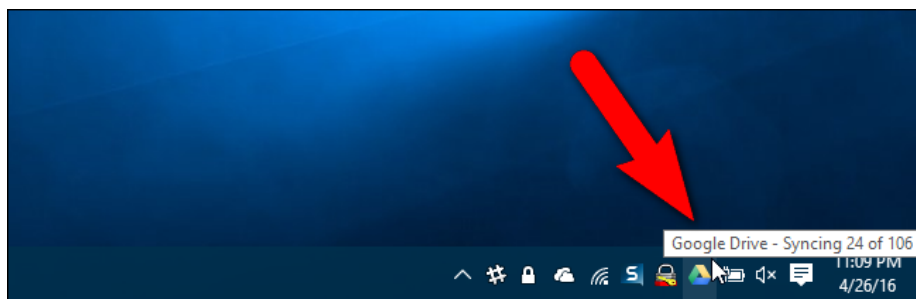
The Sync options tab displays. By default, files from your Google Drive account will sync to the “Google Drive” folder in your user folder. However, you can choose to sync to a different folder using the “Change” button.

Next, you can choose which folders in your Google Drive account you want to sync and download to your PC. To sync all the files in your Google Drive account, select “Sync everything in My Drive”. If you only want to sync certain folders, select “Sync only these folders”. A box displays showing a list of all the folders in your Google Drive account. By default, all the folders are selected. Click the check boxes next to the folders you don’t want to sync, making sure there is no check mark in the box for each folder you don’t want to sync. Then, click “Start sync”. The files you chose to sync from your Google Drive account start downloading to the folder you specified on your PC.

NOTE: Files in your Google Drive account that are stored in the root of your Drive account (not in a folder) will be automatically synced no matter what.

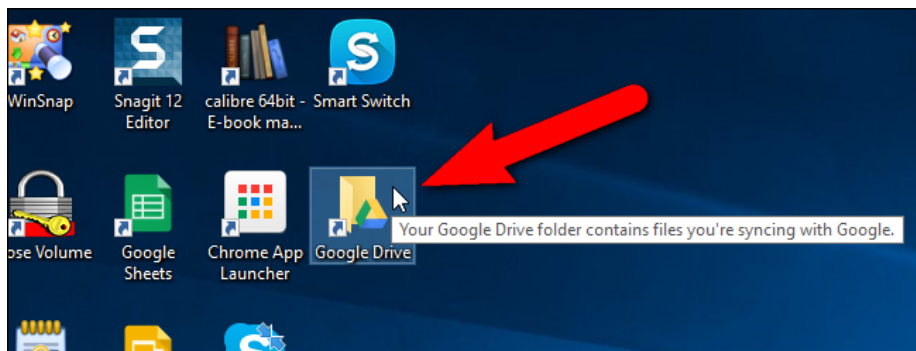


An icon for Google Drive is added to the [notification area on the Taskbar](#). If you move your mouse over the icon, you'll see the status of the sync process. The status on the image below shows files being compared because we had files

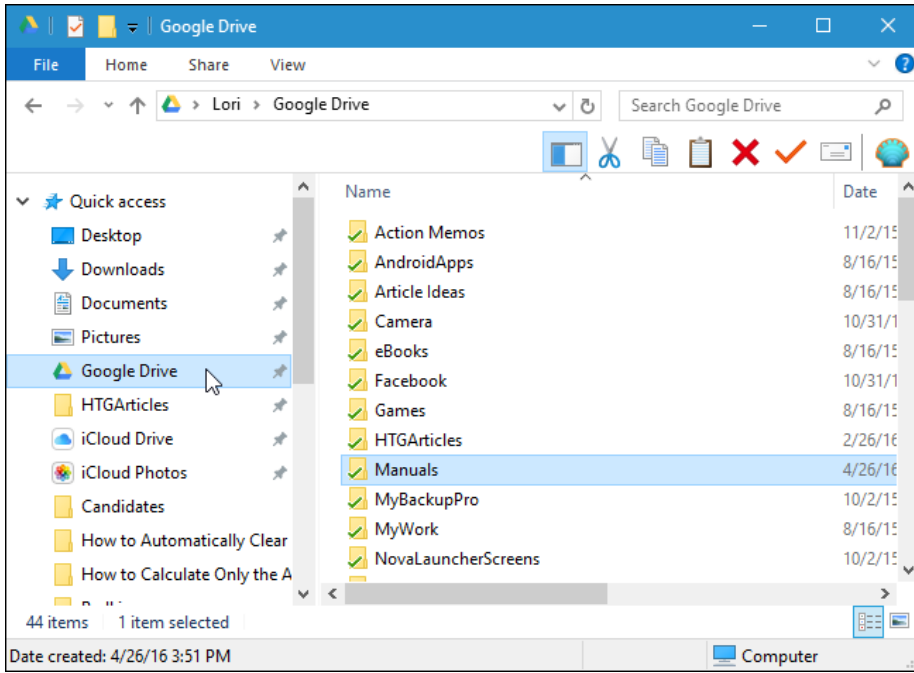


### How to Use Google Drive on Your Desktop

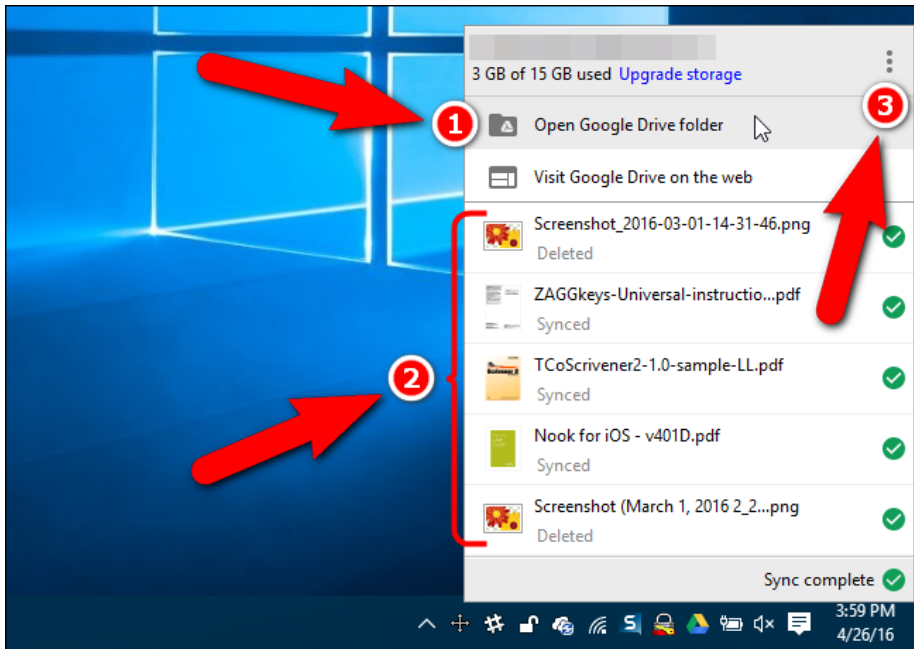
After installing Google Drive on your PC, you should have a Google Drive icon on your desktop. Double-click this to access your Google Drive files.



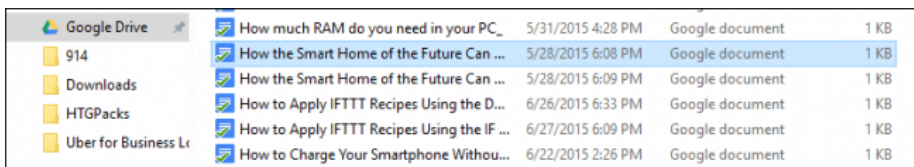
A File Explorer window opens directly to the folder you chose for syncing your Google Drive files. Small green check marks display on file and folder icons to indicate these files and folders are synced with your Google Drive account. To upload any file or folder to your Google Drive account, place it in this folder.



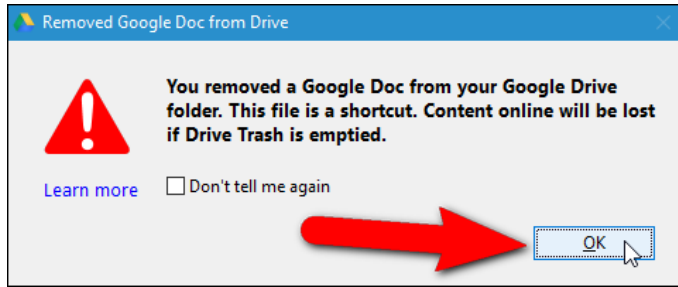
Clicking on the Google Drive icon in the notification area brings up the following popup, which provides another way to access your Google Drive folder and displays a list of the most recently synced files. The three vertical dots button in the upper-right corner of the popup displays a menu that provides access to additional items, one of which is preferences for the Google Drive app. We'll discuss the preferences in the next section.



All files in your local Google Drive folder except Google Docs, Google Sheets, and Google Slides files can be edited offline. Google Docs, Google Sheets, and Google Slides files look like they are local files, but they are actually links to the online versions of these files. Normally, when you double-click on a Google file, it will launch into your preferred web browser with the option to either login to your account, or if you're already logged in, launch the file itself in Google Docs, Sheets, or Slides. If you have no internet connection, the Google Docs, Google Sheets, or Google Slides file won't open.



Also be aware that because these files aren't actually stored locally, if you choose to delete a file in your local Google Drive folder, you will see the following dialog box and the file will be deleted from Google's servers as well when you empty your Google Drive trash.



As with any cloud storage platform, you'll only be able to access its full array of features as long as your computer is hooked up to a steady Internet connection. When you don't have an internet connection, clicking on any Google Docs, Google Sheets, or Google Slides files stored in your local Google Drive folder will only open a dead browser page.

## How to Configure Preferences for Google Drive on your PC

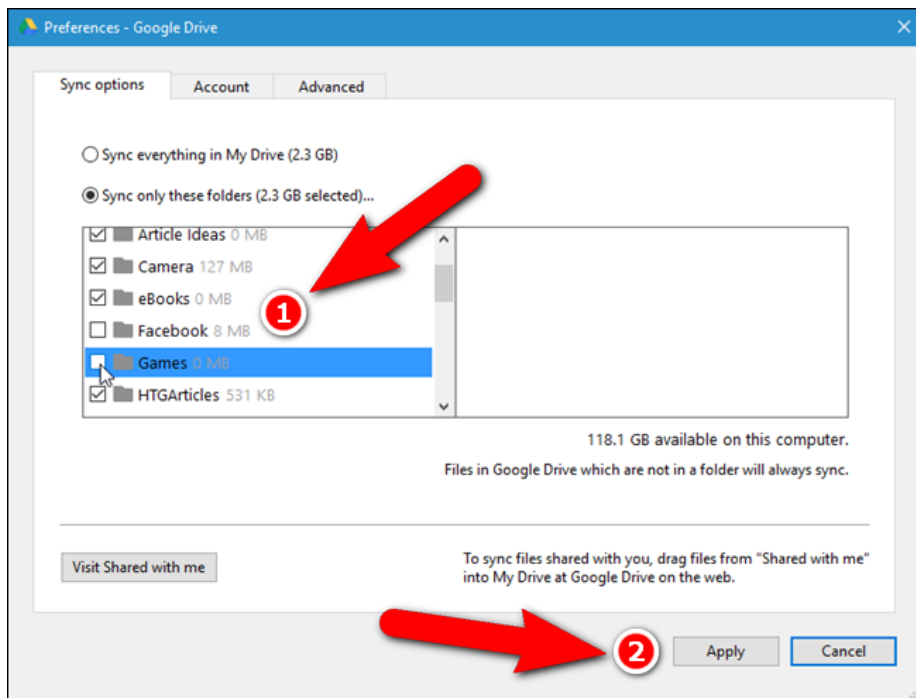
The preferences for the Google Drive app allows you to configure features like what folders or files Google Drive automatically syncs on your account (like you did when you first connected your Google account to the Google Drive app), managing your account storage limit, and how Drive chooses to connect to Google's central servers.

To change preferences for the Google Drive app, click the three vertical dots button and select "Preferences" from the popup menu.

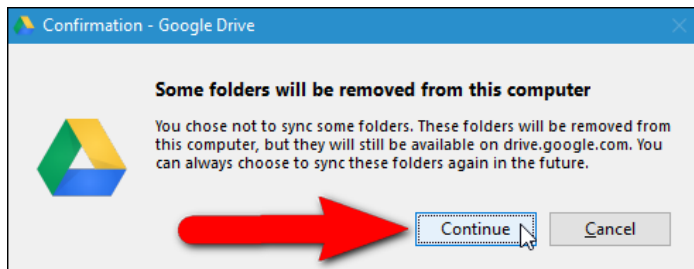


If you synced everything and now you've changed your mind, you can select the "Sync only these folders" option on the Sync options tab and then deselect folders in the list that displays that you don't want to sync.

If anyone has shared files or folders with you from their Google Drive account, you can click "Visit Shared with me". We will discuss sharing files using Google Drive in the next section.



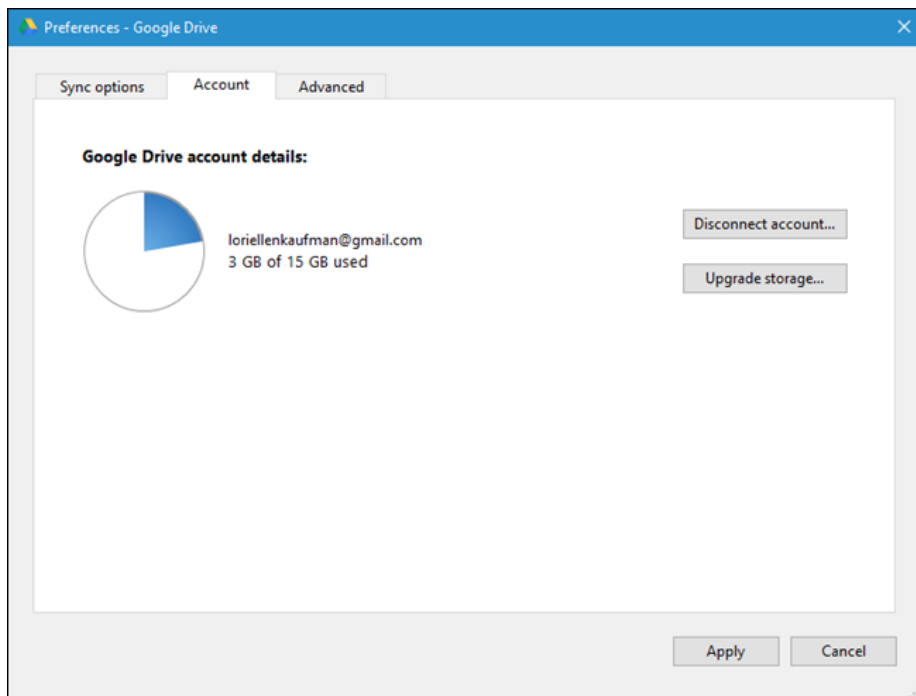
When you deselect folders to unsync them, a dialog box displays warning you that those folders will be removed from your computer. Don't worry. You can always resync them later in the Preferences. Click "Continue" to remove the selected folders from your computer.



The Account tab shows you how much space you are using out of the total space you're allowed, which is currently (as of the time this article was published) 15 GB for free accounts. This tab also allows you to disconnect your account or upgrade your storage.

NOTE: If you disconnect your account, the Google Drive icon in the notification area will display faded, indicating you are disconnected. You can click the icon to connect to a Google account again. This is useful if you want to switch Google accounts, because we don't know of a way to connect to two Google accounts at the same time on the same PC.





The Advanced tab on the Preferences dialog box allows you to change the Proxy settings and Bandwidth settings (how Google Drive chooses to connect to Google's central servers), but we recommend you leave those on the default settings. The System settings are all selected by default and we recommend leaving these on as well.

If you use Google Drive a lot, the "Start Google Drive on system startup" is a helpful option to have on. The only difference I noticed when I turned off the "Show file sync status icons and right click menu" check box, is that the small green arrows on the files and folders in my Google Drive folder went away. The last option, "Show confirmation when removing items from shared folders", pretty much does what it says on the tin. Again, we'll discuss sharing folders in the next section.

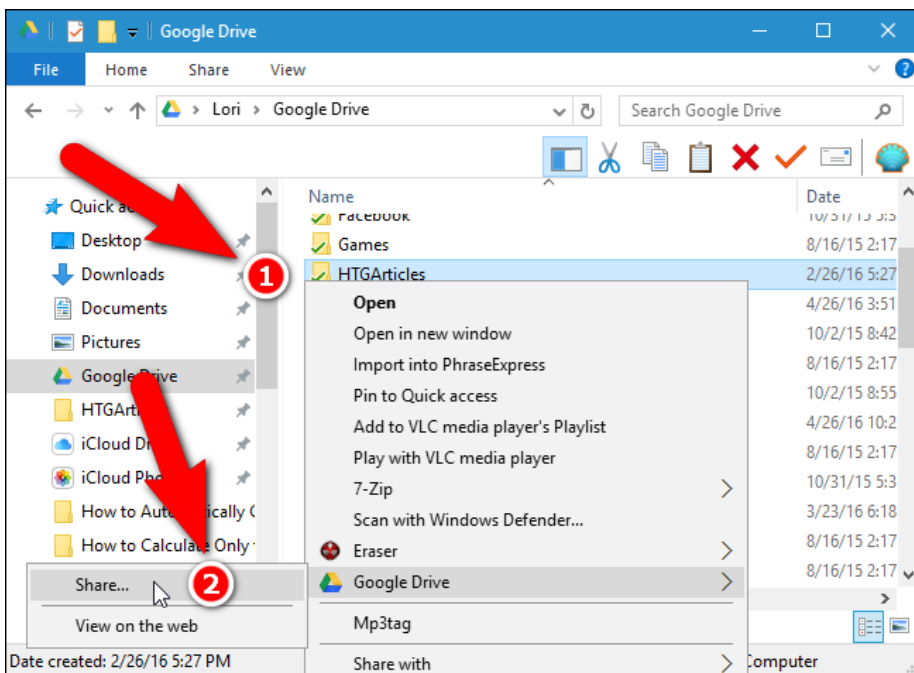
Click "Apply" once you've made your changes on the Preferences dialog box.



### How to Share Files and Folders Using Google Drive on your PC

You can use your Google Drive account to share files and folders with others and they could share files and folders with you. I'm going to share a folder with someone and give them edit permission, which allows that person to edit the files within that folder and add or remove files from that folder.

NOTE: To share more than one file at once, put the files in a folder in your Google Drive account and then share the entire folder.

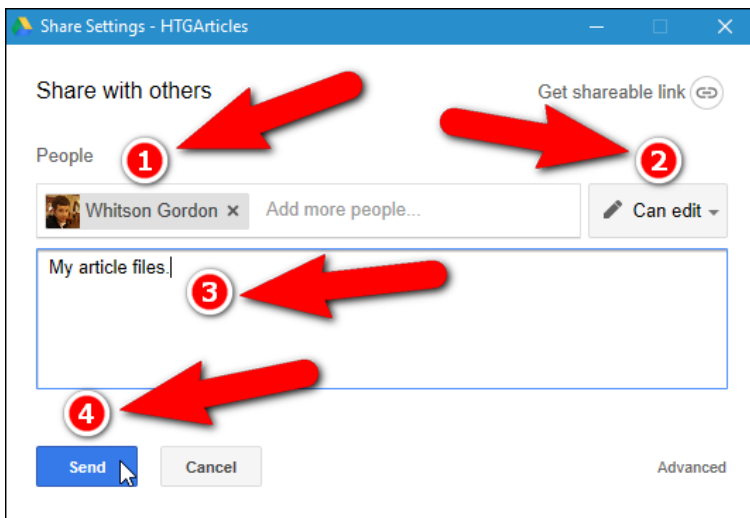


The Share Settings dialog box displays. In the "People" edit box, enter the email address of the person with whom you want to share the file or folder. You can enter more than one email to share with multiple people.

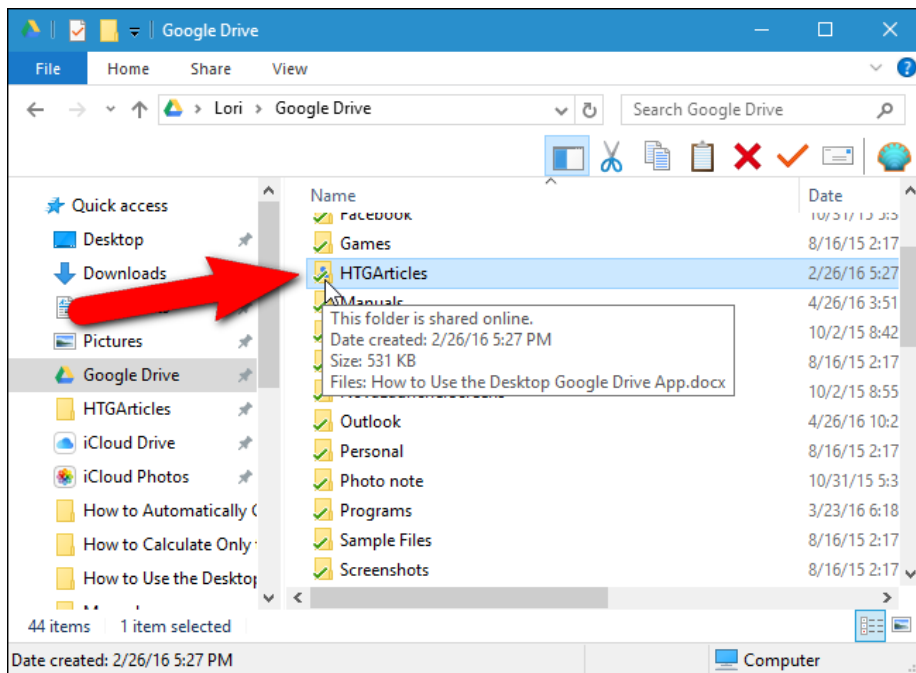
Then, select whether that person "Can edit", "Can comment", or "Can view" that file or folder. Selecting Can edit allows the person to make changes to the file or folder and even share it with other people. If you select Can comment, that allows someone to comment on your file, but not make any changes. You cannot select Can comment when sharing a folder. The Can view option only allows the person to view the file or folder, but not make any changes. Enter a message for the person or people in the box below the People edit box.

If you want to get a link to this file or folder you can send to people or share on a webpage, click "Get shareable link" in the upper-right corner of the dialog box.

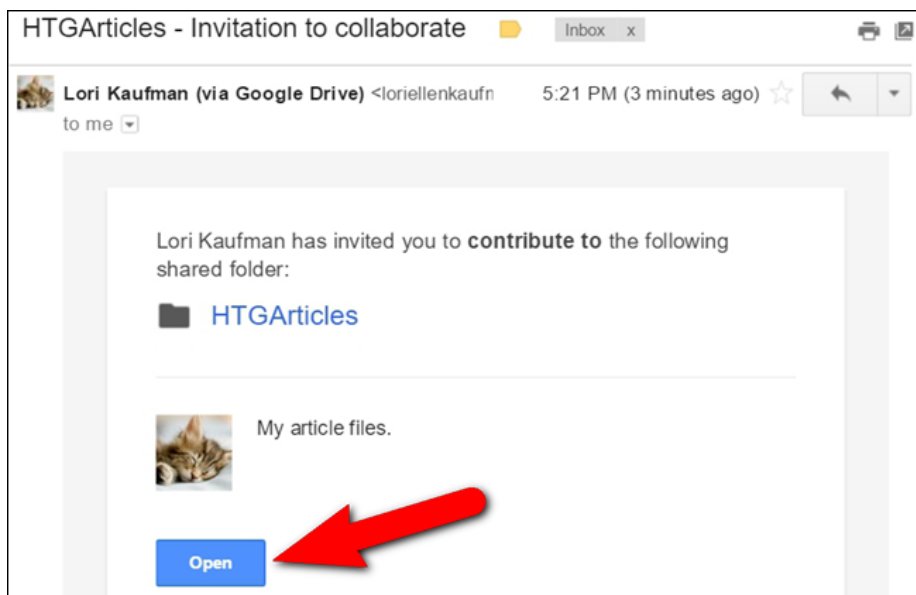
Once you've entered the information to share the selected file or folder, click "Send".



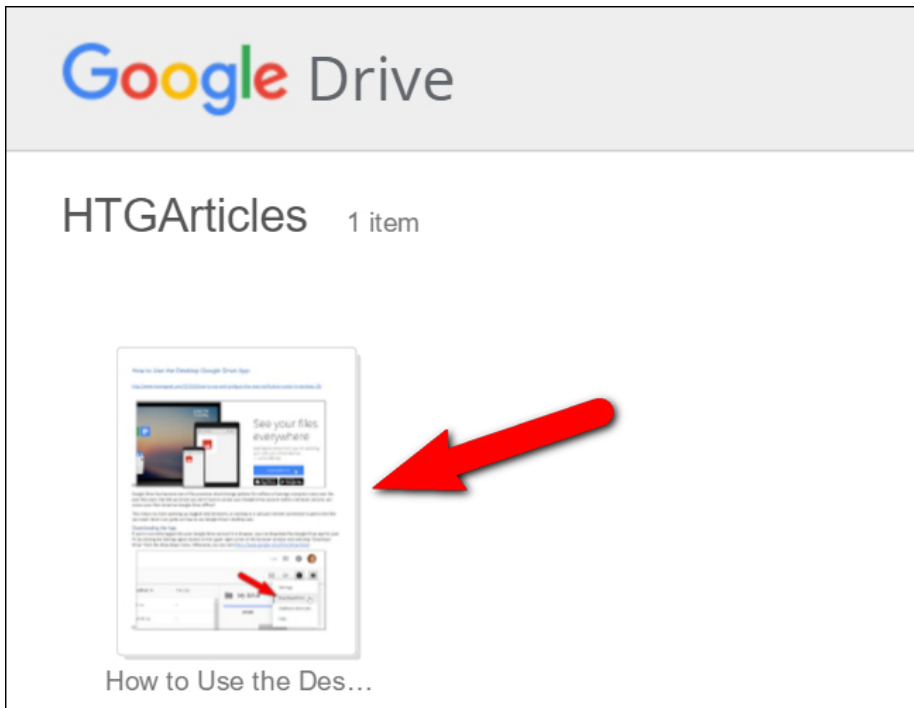
When you've shared a file or folder, a small person icon is added to the file or folder icon in addition to the green check mark.



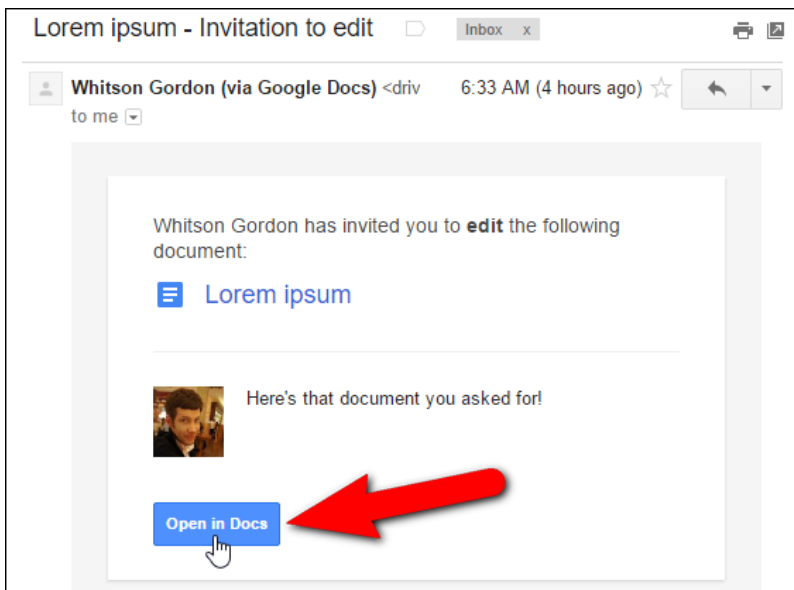
In my example, the person with whom I shared the folder, receives an email with an “Open” button to access the folder. When they click “Open”, they get the option to view the file or add it to their Google Drive.



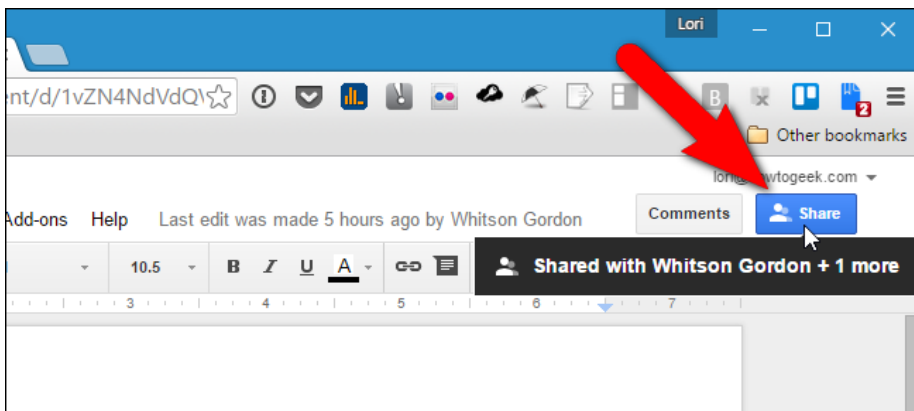
Once they click on the “Open” button, they are given the choice to view the contents of the folder or add the folder to their own Google Drive account. In my example, he chose to open the folder, which opened their Google Drive account in a browser window (or another tab if they were already in a browser) and they see the files in that folder. They can click on a file to edit or view that file, depending on the permissions you assigned to the shared folder.



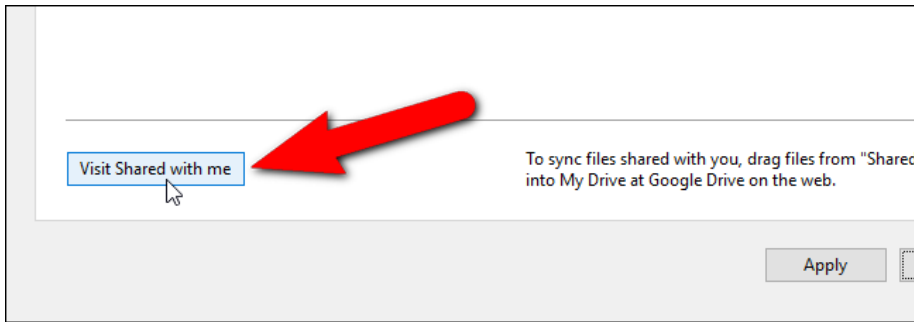
Here's an example of someone sharing a Google Docs file with me. I receive an email containing an "Open in Docs" button.



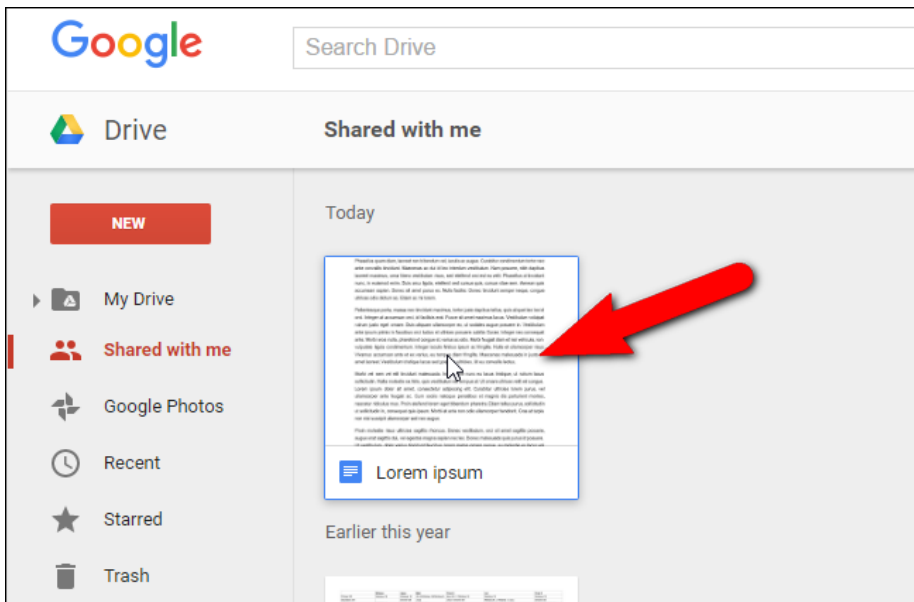
When I click the "Open in Docs" button, a new browser window or tab opens and displays the document. Since Whitson shared the file with the "Can edit" option selected for the permissions, I can edit the file, add comments to the file, and share the file with other people.



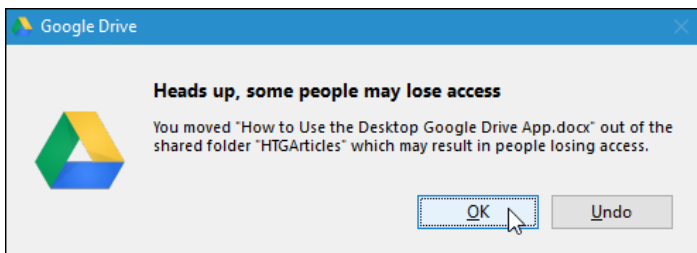
Remember the "Visit Shared with me" button on the Sync options tab on the Preferences dialog box? That now comes into play.



When you click the "Visit Shared with me" button, a browser window opens in your default browser to your Google Drive account and shows you any files that are shared with you. Click on a file or folder to open it.

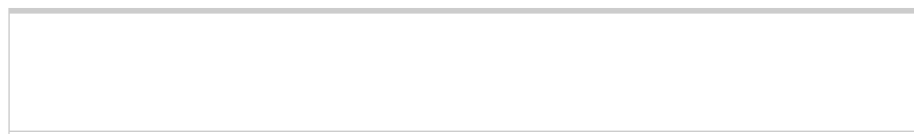


If you delete a file or folder from your Google Drive account that you've shared with other people, a warning dialog displays telling you that some people may lose access. If you change your mind about deleting the file or folder, click "Undo". Otherwise, click "OK" to delete the file or folder.



Google Drive for Windows is a great tool for anyone who wants to easily access their Google Drive files online or offline and control which files are synced with your PC. It's also useful for anyone who wants easy access to their files across multiple devices.

JOIN THE DISCUSSION (6 REPLIES)



Lori Kaufman is a writer who likes to write geeky how-to articles to help make people's lives easier through the use of technology. She loves watching and reading mysteries and is an avid Doctor Who fan.

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