Dropbox

- Sync only the folders you need on your computer
- Request files from others (even if they don't have dropbox)
- Direct Download Trick
- Storing/sharing music, images or videos
- Built-in document scanner
- Your virtual wallet
- Bonus idea

Dropbox is cloud based data storage that synchronizes with computers/devices. Dropbox is excellent for collaboration among teams.

Synchronization Settings
When you install dropbox, it automatically installs a folder on your computer named "dropbox." By default, everything you put in this folder synchronizes with your dropbox in the cloud. Synchronization happens both ways. If you log into dropbox.com and upload, delete or rearrange files, the same changes will happen to the files in the folder on your computer. It gets really interesting when you share folders with others. Whatever they do to the shared folder will be synchronized across all devices and in the cloud.

HOWEVER, you do not have to synchronize everything to your devices. Since dropbox offers online storage by the terabyte, synchronizing everything isn't advised. You need to change your synchronization settings.

1. Click the dropbox icon on you menu bar or system tray
2. Click the gear icon
3. Select preferences
4. In the new window, select "sync" on the top
5. Under Selective Sync, click the button "choose folders to sync"
6. Check the boxes of folders you want to sync, uncheck boxes of folders you don't want to sync
7. It may take several hours to add/remove all the folders from your computer

File Requests
Need to get a file from someone that's too big to send through email? Don't want to hassle with thumb drives? Use File Requests from dropbox.

1. Go to dropbox.com/home
2. Select "file requests" from the left side of the screen
3. On the right side of the screen, push the blue button "request files"
4. In the new window, describe what you are requesting

5. Select what folder you want the requested files to end up (by default they will land in your "file requests folder)
6. Copy the link and email/send out to others (you can also type in emails on this window and dropbox will email them the link
7. When others upload their file/files, they will include their name/email and you'll be notified when they've shared the requested file

Application: Right after summer camp or a mission trip, send a link to all the leaders to share their best photos/videos. Within a few days, you'll have all the photos/videos you need to create amazing videos/slides and promoting material for the next year.

Direct Downloads

One of the best things about dropbox is how easy it is to share files/folders with others. Yes, you can invite people to access files/folders via file/folder sharing through their dropbox account, but you can also simply share a file with someone who doesn't have dropbox as well. But there's also a trick.

1. Open dropbox.com/home to see all your files/folders
2. Hover over a file/folder and a "share" button will appear. You can also click on the ellipses (...) to the right and select "share"
3. In the new window, look for the linked text, "copy link"
4. The public link to this file/folder is now copied to your clipboard. You can send this link to others to download the link

The Trick: There's this little annoying thing that dropbox does with this link. When you click on it, it takes you to a dropbox hosted page with several different options. It gives you options to save the file to your dropbox or to download the file directly. When sending this link via text, it will prompt people to open it in dropbox, which is extra annoying. Here's how to fix this.

1. Follow the instructions above. Paste the link anywhere. You'll notice that EVERY link will end with the letters: dl=0
2. Simple edit the link. Change the 0 to a 1. That's it. Once someone clicks that link, it will automatically download the file/folder to their computer.

Video/Music Files

Dropbox is a perfect app for sharing/viewing images, video and audio files. Storing photos from events, tours and programs is great with dropbox. Dropbox is perfect for storing and sharing video files, especially if they're temporary (uploading videos to youtube or vimeo feels so permanent). Dropbox is fantastic for managing audio files without the hassle. I love my iPhone, but I HATE iTunes. If I buy all the audio/video recordings from a conference, I load them in dropbox. I can easily share them with my team and I can listen/watch the breakouts from my dropbox app. However, pay attention to all the data you might be streaming by making files available offline. By default, your dropbox mobile app stores nothing on your phone. It streams

everything you need. However, if you're consuming a lot of video/audio files, you might want to make them available offline. This means the selected files will actually download to the dropbox app on your phone. This is also a good idea for any files you always want access to (especially if you're traveling where cell service/internet is spotty.

1. Open dropbox app
2. On the files page, select the elisps (...) to the right of the file/folder you want to make available offline
3. Select "make available offline"
4. A downward facing arrow in a green circle will indicate that a file/folder has downloaded to your device
5. When you no longer need the file/folder offline, click the elisps (...) again and select "remove from device"

Scan Your Receipts

I hate paper. HATE. Receipts, documents or notes that end up on my desk, my bag or on the kitchen counter. Use dropbox to scan it all. Everything. A digital copy is as good as the original 99.99% of the time.

1. Create a folder in your dropbox account for scanned documents
2. When you see an important document, scan it (a handout in a meeting/class, receipts, a sticky note with something that needs to be done, or even a bill/invoice)
3. Open the dropbox app on your phone
4. Select "create" at the bottom of your screen
5. Scan document
6. Take a picture of the document (dropbox will put a blue line around what it thinks is the document and crop down to just the document)
7. Add additional pages using the icon on the bottom left of the screen
8. Click next in the top right of the screen
9. Name the document (it may be a good idea to retain the date in the name which is by default in the beginning of the file name)
10. Select the location for the document (the folder you created for scanned documents)
11. Either right now or at a designated time every week, move every document you scanned to the appropriate folders (maybe a folder for receipts, a folder for work meetings or even a folder for projects you're currently working on)

Virtual Wallet

It's easy for my wallet to be stuffed with important cards that I rarely need. Health insurance cards, library cards and other membership cards belong in your wallet, but they're wasting valuable space when you don't need them (which is most of the time).

1. Create a folder called "Virtual Wallet"
2. Pull out all the cards you'd like to remove from you wallet

3. Click "Create" at the bottom of the dropbox app on your phone
4. Select "scan document"
5. Take a picture of the card/document (ensure the blue line surrounds the card)
6. Click the "additional pages" icon at the bottom left of the screen if you want to scan the other side of your card/document)
7. Click 'Next" at the top right of the screen
8. Name the file so that you know what the document is
9. Save the location of the document (either choosing one of the folders listed or clicking "choose a different folder"
10. If you "choose a different folder," click "set location" at the bottom right of the screen
11. Hit "save" at the top right of the screen and the document will upload to the folder
12. It's a good idea to make this folder available offline, you never know when you might need some of these documents and not have cell service

Warning: Be careful with your personal data. Do not create a virtual wallet on a dropbox account that other people (outside your immediate family) have access to. Dropbox is a secure app, but I would never upload files that would compromise my identity or finances (never upload your social security number, bank account numbers or credit cards).

Bonus Idea: Curriculum Distribution
Gone are the days that curriculum came in a box… or on a CD/DVD. Now everything is downloaded. EVERYTHING. In most cases, the downloadable curriculum is access from the curriculum website whenever it is needed. Often times, multiple people visit the website dozens of times downloading the same files.

I've found a quick and easy solution for curriculum data management. When curriculum becomes available, have one person download EVERYTHING. ALL OF IT. Once it is downloaded, upload it to a curriculum folder in dropbox. Once it is all on dropbox, it is easily accessible to anyone/everyone who needs it. Share it with volunteers who will edit or prepare the curriculum rather than getting website access codes with everyone who might need it. Once you're done with the curriculum, delete it or move it somewhere less accessible if needed.