

# Top Tech Tools for REALTORS®



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**Wisconsin REALTORS® Association**  
**2022 Annual Convention**

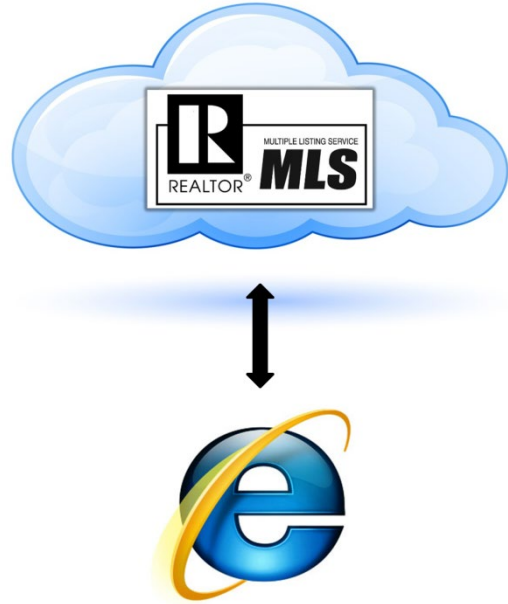
## 1 WHAT IS WORKING IN THE CLOUD AND HOW WILL IT HELP ME?

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### 1.1 WHAT IS WORKING IN THE CLOUD?

“The cloud” is not a mist floating above us—it’s a physical infrastructure composed of numerous computers that store individuals’ folders with files. Working in the cloud is performing work on the files in those folders. You already work in the cloud when you access the MLS. Working in the cloud is made possible by obtaining an account from a cloud storage service for a fee.

Working in the cloud enables you to work on your files stored in the cloud from any location and your work will be accessible from any location. Automatic syncing between computer- and cloud-based folders produces two results: 1) whenever you add or delete a folder or file from your computer, that folder or file is instantly added or deleted from your cloud account, 2) whenever you change a computer-based file, the corresponding file in your cloud-based folder is instantly changed to match the changes you made on your computer-based file.



### 1.2 HOW WILL WORKING IN THE CLOUD HELP ME SUCCEED?

Working in the cloud will help ensure your success as a real estate professional because it offers many advantages, including: 1) being able to easily transfer your folders from the cloud to new computers, 2) to utilize the cloud folder on your computer as a My Docs folder, 3) to obtain access to the same material on different computers, 4) to have another backup, and 5) to easily share folders with others.

The efficiencies of working in the cloud will save you valuable time, provide greater security, and enhance communication to better your relationships with clients.

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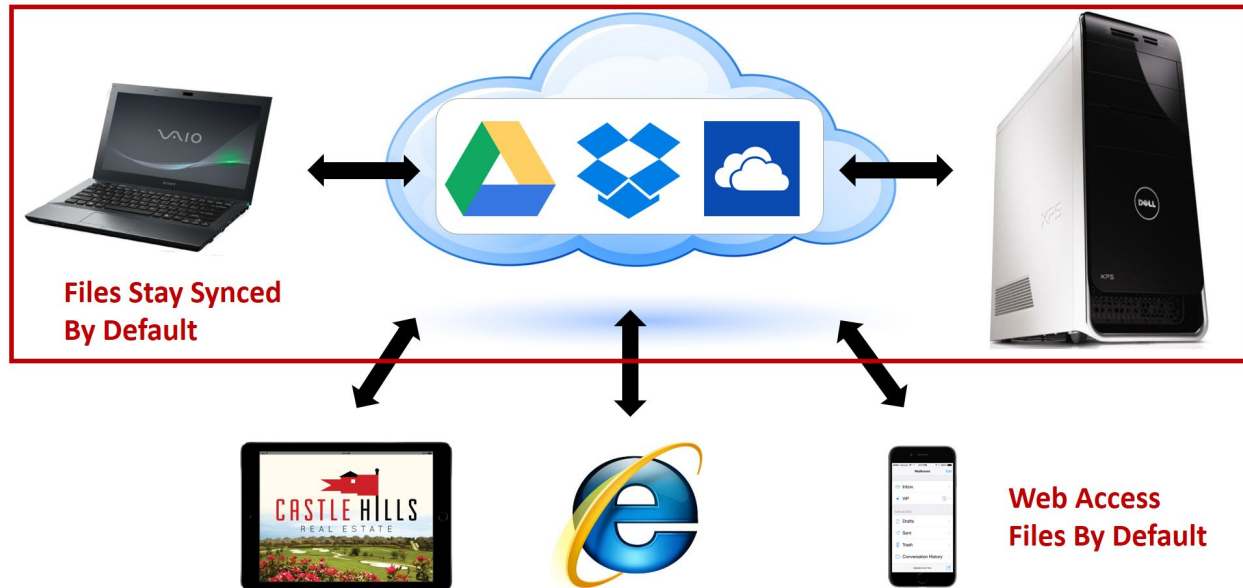
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## 2 HOW DO I BEGIN WORKING ON THE CLOUD?

### 2.1 CREATE A CLOUD ACCOUNT.

Cloud storage services include Dropbox, Google Drive™, OneDrive, and iCloud®. Dropbox and Google Drive may be easily used with either a Windows or a Mac operating system

To create an account at Dropbox or OneDrive, simply click on Sign up at [dropbox.com](https://dropbox.com) or [onedrive.live.com](https://onedrive.live.com). For a Google Drive account, you must first sign up for a Google account at [accounts.google.com/signup](https://accounts.google.com/signup). To create an iCloud account, click on Setup Instructions on [icloud.com](https://icloud.com). You will need to create a username and a password.

### 2.2 INSTALL CLOUD STORAGE SOFTWARE.

Next, install the cloud storage software program on each of your computers. Use the same login and password on each computer so all the computers will stay in sync with each other. Only create one account regardless of how many computers you install the app on.



Create an account

or log in

First name

Last name

Email

Password

☐ I agree to the [Dropbox Terms](#). Learn about how we use and protect your data in our [Privacy Policy](#).

Create an account



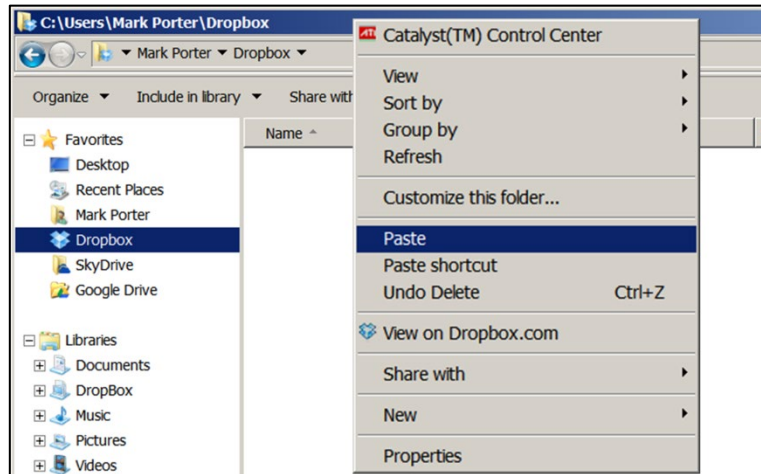
Sign up with Google

## 2.3 INSTALL AN APP ON YOUR SMARTPHONE AND TABLET.

All cloud storage services have apps you can install to enable you to access your cloud-based files on your smartphone or tablet. To do this for OneDrive, Dropbox, or Google Drive, go to your App Store and search for and install the appropriate app. The Mac app for iCloud is included in OS X and the iPhone app may be accessed through the iOs.

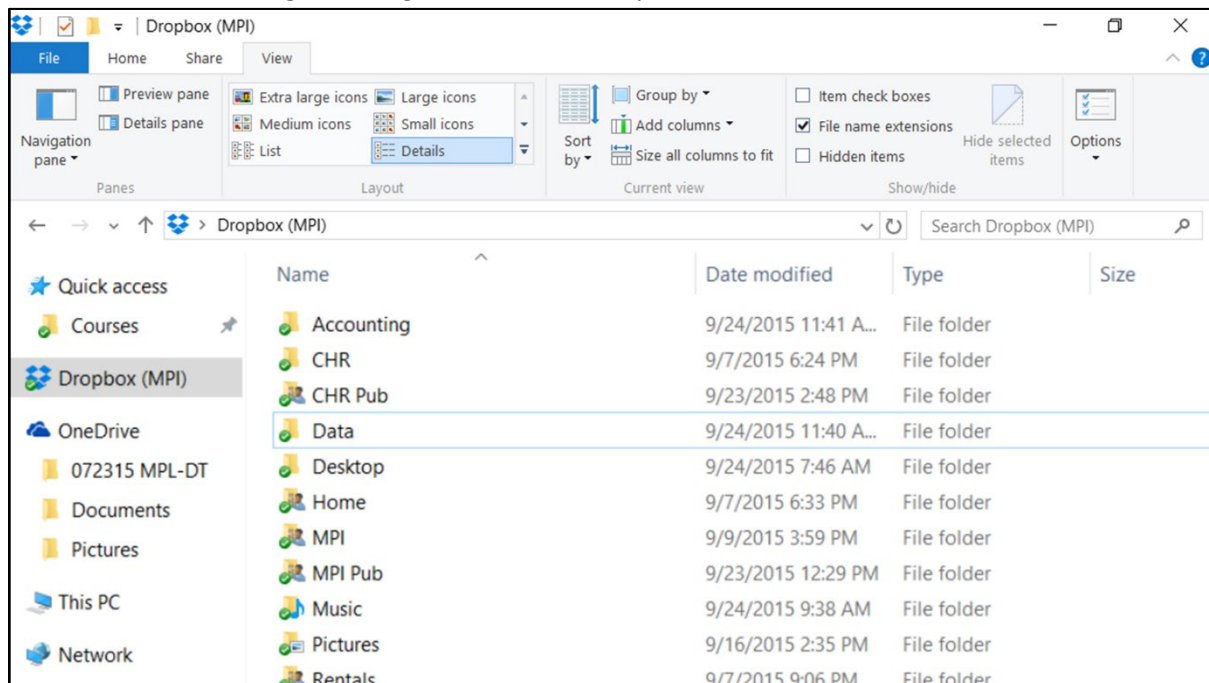
## 2.4 PUT SOMETHING IN THE CLOUD-BASED FOLDER TO SYNC.

Once you have installed OneDrive, Dropbox, Google Drive, or iCloud software on your computer, you'll have a "magic" cloud folder on your hard drive. To move your existing files into the cloud-based folder, simply select the files and **drag and drop** them into the cloud-based folder or **cut & paste** them into the cloud-based folder. Don't be afraid of hitting cut. By hitting cut, you avoid having a mess because you have duplicates of everything. After you hit cut, go over to your cloud-based folder and hit paste.



Anything you put in your cloud folder will be in two places. One copy will be on your hard drive and a synchronized copy will be on the cloud storage service's website.

The trick is to start using the "magic" cloud folder as your new "Documents" folder.



### 3 WHAT ADVANTAGES WILL DROPBOX OFFER ME?

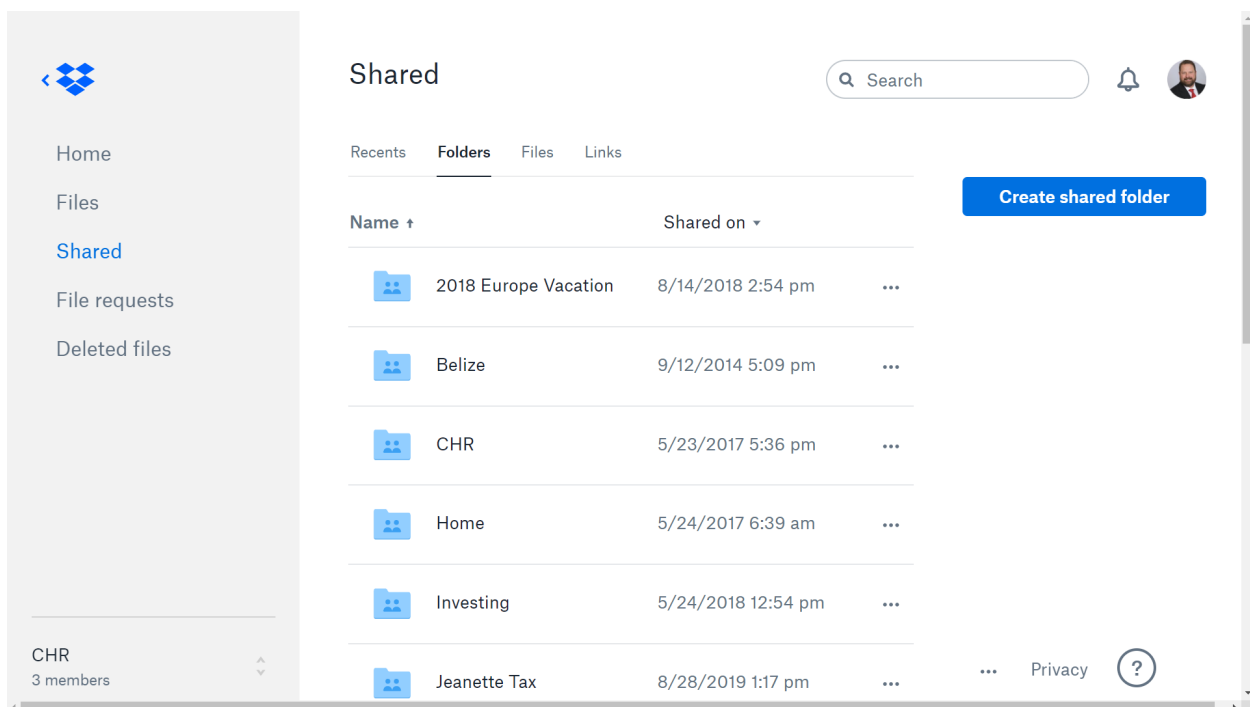
Dropbox will provide you with many advantages: 1) you may access files in Dropbox from any device that has an Internet connection and is located anywhere; 2) you may share folders with others for collaboration that includes the ability to edit, add, and remove files from a folder; and 3) you may email the links of large files to clients rather than as attachments that are too large for them to receive.

By utilizing Dropbox, you will enhance your customer service because clients will benefit from your increased efficiency!

#### 3.1 YOU CAN SHARE FOLDERS IN DROPBOX.

If you want to be able to collaborate on documents with other users, you can invite them to “Share a Folder”. To share a folder in Dropbox, login to your Dropbox account at [www.Dropbox.com](http://www.Dropbox.com) and follow these steps:

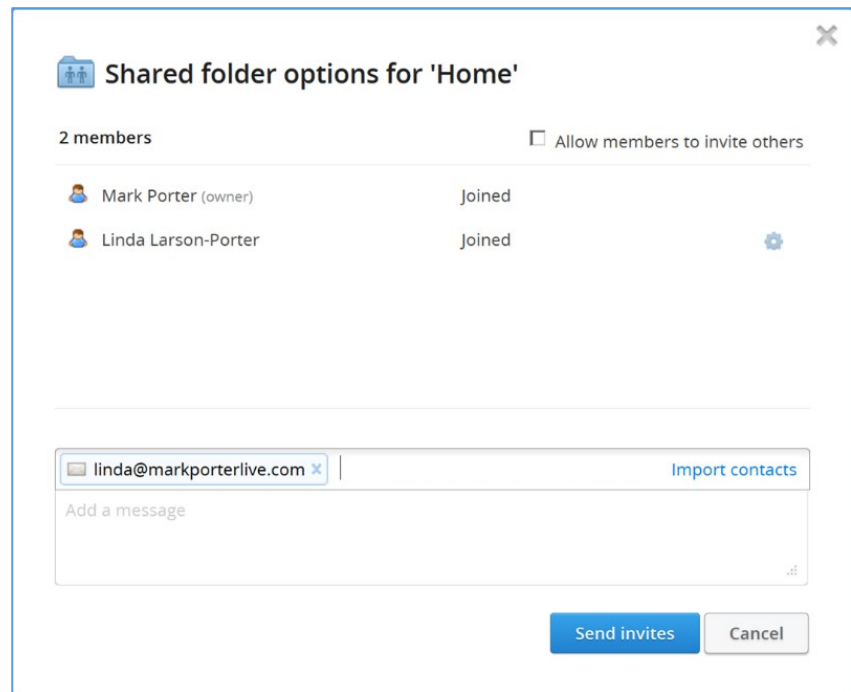
1. Select the Shared icon.
2. Click on the blue New shared folder button.
3. Select to either create and share a new folder OR share an existing folder.
4. If you’re sharing an existing folder, select the name of the folder from the file menu and click Next.



Once the other users accept your invitation to share the folder, they will be allowed to edit, add, and remove files from this folder.

### 3.1.1 You Can Allow Collaborators to Share Folders.

1. Enter the email address (or import a contact from your Gmail, Yahoo!, or Facebook account) for the contact you wish to share your folder with.



2. If you want to allow this user to share the folder with other people, be sure to check the **“Allow members to invite others”** option. By doing this, you are sharing permission. If you do not wish to allow the user to be capable of sharing the folder, make sure this option is unchecked.

3. Select the blue **“Send invites”** button.

### 3.2 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHARE AND LINK?

The difference between share and link is share is “We’ll both edit this stuff and we’ll stay in sync” while link is just a “go here.”

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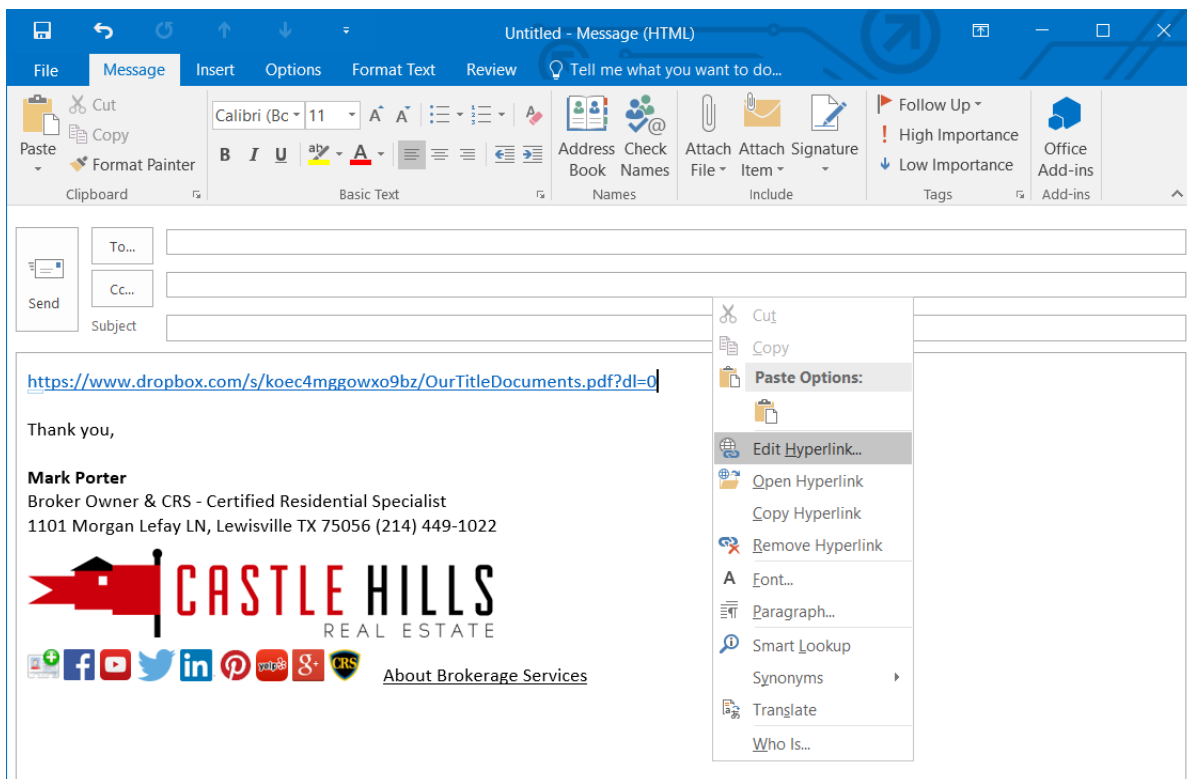
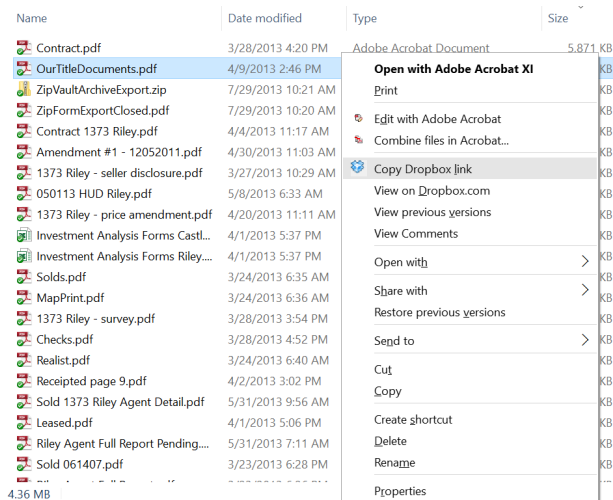
### 3.3 YOU CAN EMAIL LINKS TO LARGE FILES VS. TOO-LARGE ATTACHMENTS.

Have you ever tried emailing a client a file and they can't receive it because the file is too large? With Dropbox, emailing links to large files instead of sending large files as attachments will help you avoid overloading your outbox (and your recipient's inbox) with files that are too large.

Note: When you share a link, the user will be able to download the file from the cloud in the same way they would an email attachment.

To share a large file via a link:

1. Right-click on your Dropbox folder.
2. Click on the file you want to send.
3. Select the **Share Dropbox link** option.
4. A dialogue box will appear on the lower right of your screen to inform you that the file has been copied to your clipboard. Now you can create a new email message and "paste" (CTRL + V) the link into the message.



5. To display your link as text (instead of as a link): Right-click on hyperlink. Select Edit Hyperlink and update "Text to Display" text to "Alternate" text (e.g., CLICK HERE to download Contract).

## 4 HOW DO I ENSURE THE SECURITY OF MY DATA?

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Certainly, a major reservation you might harbor about working in the cloud is ensuring that the information in the folders you upload to the cloud are secure so that yours and your clients' information does not fall into the wrong hands.

By understanding the security precautions taken by cloud services, you will feel better and you can explain any questions your clients might have about it to them to strengthen your communications and relationship.

### 4.1 HOW SAFE IS WORKING IN THE CLOUD?

- Most cloud services use SSL and AES 256-bit encryption to store and transfer your data.
  - Your data is encrypted and securely stored in many cases at Amazon's Simple Storage Centers (S3) redundantly in multiple locations.
  - It is a good idea to enable the two-step verification process when accessing your data from a new computer.
  - In most cases, the cloud storage service will keep backups of your edited or deleted files for up to 30 days. So, if you accidentally delete a file or save the wrong version of a file, you can restore the file via the service's website.
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### 4.2 DOES THE CLOUD PROVIDE ENOUGH BACKUP?

Dropbox offers a data-protection program called Extended Version History. Extended Version History is an add-on service that backs up your files online, keeps files you delete in case you ever need them, and saves previous versions of files in case you need to view them at a later time for 10 years.

While Dropbox and the Extended Version History add-on offer a great backup solution, there is still something to be said about the value of backing up to DVD. First of all, the Extended Version History is only available to Business Team subscribers and for the period you are enrolled. If you decide a year or two from now that Dropbox is no longer the best cloud service option for you, having your DVD backups will ensure you are not held hostage to the service and will help you remain compliant with IRS regulations for recordkeeping.

### 4.3 PASSWORD SECURITY

Passwords are the first line of defense to protecting you and your client's data. With data breaches and identity theft on the rise – the main cause is often compromised passwords!

Check how secure your password is: <https://www.security.org/how-secure-is-my-password/>

Did you pass the test? Keep in mind the longer the password, the more difficult it is to crack. Here are steps to creating an easy but secure password:

1. Start with a simple phrase: Show Me the Money
2. Create an acronym for your phrase: **SMTM**
3. Add a random string of 4-6 numbers: **98720**
4. Use a special character or symbol: **\$ ! % \***
5. Combine and create your base password: **SMTM98720\$**
6. Next, customize your password for each website by adding a simple abbreviation  
Example: Facebook password – **SMTM98720\$Fb**

Create your own unique combination, switch up capitalizations, the order or add more symbols for greater security!

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#### 4.4 PHISHING EMAILS

Real estate wire fraud is one of the most prevalent cyber crimes in the U.S. According to the FBI Internet Crime Report 2021 – 13,638 were victims of wire fraud in the real estate and rental sector in 2020, losing over \$213 million! Source: <https://www.nar.realtor/wire-fraud>

The highest reported fraud in real estate in 2020 was Business Email Compromise/Email Account Compromise. Fraudsters gain access to title agent or real estate agent emails through phishing attempts. If you've ever received a suspicious email asks you to change your password or click a link to confirm information, then you may have been targeted by a phishing campaign. Learn to recognize these signs of phishy emails and protect your data:

- Be cautious if they ask for sensitive information – i.e. your password or bank account number
- Check domain names – who is sending the email? Is the domain legitimate? Ex:  
[Services@Paypal.com](mailto:Services@Paypal.com) vs. [Services@Paypals.com](mailto:Services@Paypals.com)
- Look out for grammar mistakes or misspellings
- Do not click on links – hover over links first to see the site address. Is it going to take you to a legitimate site URL – Paypal.com vs. paypal.tinyurl.paymentsrvcs.net
- Do not open suspicious attachments

Take this phishing quiz to see if you can recognize all the signs of a suspicious email:

<https://phishingquiz.withgoogle.com/>

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## 5 HARDWARE SOLUTIONS

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### 5.1 RESEARCH TOOLS

The top 3 resources for researching the best laptop:

- [CNET](http://CNET.com) (CNET.com or Shopper.com to compare prices)
- [Laptop Magazine](http://LaptopMag.com) (LaptopMag.com)
- [Consumer Reports](http://ConsumerReports.org) (ConsumerReports.org)

### 5.2 LAPTOP COMPUTERS

#### 5.2.1 Memory

- If your hard drive light is always flashing, you don't have enough memory.
  - Try to buy the maximum memory you can afford for the lifetime of your notebook.
  - If you need to add more memory to your computer, go to Crucial.com to compare the cost of upgrading the memory through the manufacturer or purchasing it from Crucial.com and adding it yourself.
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#### 5.2.2 Hard Drive Speed

Hard drive space is like file cabinet space. It's still there when the power is off, but it has no effect on speed. When you're looking at hard drive choices, you'll want to pay attention to the speed at which the hard drive spins – referred to as rpm (revolutions per minute). Current hard drive speeds include 5400 rpm, 7200 rpm and 10,000 rpm. You can also choose an ssd (solid state drive) hard drive which doesn't spin at all. SSD hard drives are very fast and don't heat up, but are also quite expensive. Of all the individual components of a computer, what bottle necks a computer speed today is hard drive speed. For optimal results, you should avoid 5400 rpm.

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#### 5.2.3 Laptop Docking Station

Make your life easier and eliminate the need for multiple computers with a docking station. A docking station allows you to hook up your laptop to a full-size keyboard/mouse, monitor, printers, etc. to provide you with all of the benefits of a home desktop experience using your laptop. Stop trying to

synch multiple computers. The laptop with docking station set-up will allow you transition easily from working on-the-go to your office.

It's best to purchase a docking station from your laptop manufacturer. If that's not an option, a Targus Docking Station is the next best option. Be sure to compare prices on Shopper.com.

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#### 5.2.4 Important Features

- Screen Size (15" Screen is a good size)
- Light Weight

#### 5.2.5 Top Notebook Computers

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#### 5.2.6 Top Monitors

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### 5.3 PRINTERS

#### Top Printers

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### 5.4 SCANNERS

#### Top Scanners

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<https://www.nar.realtor/membership>

## FAVORITE APPS & TOOLS

- [Placester](#)
- [Fiverr](#)
- [MyOutDesk](#)
- [UpWork](#)
- [Canva](#)
- [NAR + Photofy](#)
- QR Codes

