

Networked secure storage FAQ

Research Data Toolkit Guidance for Researchers

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How do I access my networked shared storage?

All staff have a personal area (U:drive) and departmental shared area (S:drive). If you are using a Windows machine on the staff network with the Novell client, your U: and S: drives should appear automatically when you open 'My Computer' or press Cmd-E.

What is the easiest way to use my U:drive?

Once you have opened U: for the first time make a folder within it to work in (Right click... New Folder). Click on this folder once to highlight it, then hold the Alt key down and drag the icon to a blank part of your desktop to make a shortcut. You can also Alt-drag the folder to your favourites area in an open file explorer, or on Windows 7, to the new taskbar. On subsequent sessions all you have to do is open one of these shortcuts, which will open your network storage, and then you can work start working with documents there.

Can Apple Macs use networked storage?

Yes - as long as the Mac is on the staff network. Finding your network storage is more difficult, but once you locate it the experience is just as good as for Windows. If you are a researcher RDTK can assist you, otherwise you should ask helpdesk@herts.ac.uk for the path to your network storage and find your way via Cmd-K (Go...Connect to Server...). Once you have mounted your network drives for the first time, follow the advice about working with shortcuts in the previous question, using the equivalent Mac commands (to make a shortcut/alias, use Cmd-Alt-drag).

Why should I bother with all this?

Your desktop machine and most particularly your laptop are prone to failure. Even if you have a good backup policy in place, none of the devices you use for this are as robust and safe as your networked storage. In addition your U:drive is available wherever you are in the world provided you can get a network connection – away from your desk at UH; at home; at a conference.

But isn't working remotely using the VPN just too difficult?

It need not be. There are some of extra steps to start working remotely via the Virtual Private Network (VPN), but once they are out of the way it is easy. Here is how to get started:

1. if you are connected at home: proceed to step 4
2. if you are at UH, but away from your normal Ethernet connection: connect to the wireless network by opening a web browser, request any page, and login in at the wireless network prompt, then proceed to step 4
3. if you are elsewhere: connect to a public wifi zone or broadband dongle
4. if you have used and installed the Network Connect Application before proceed to step 7
5. otherwise, go to <https://uhvpn.herts.ac.uk> and login in username@staff
6. click 'start' next to Network Connect which is the first item on the left hand side of the VPN page. This will install the Network Connect Application. (it doesn't take long!). proceed to step 8.
7. open the Network Connect Application and login. On Windows this is located in Programs > Juniper Networks > Network Connect. On Mac this is in the Applications folder (cmd-shift-A). After login, your machine is allocated a UH IP number and is effectively part of the UH staff network again.
8. On Windows, right click the red capital N (for Novell) in the system tray at the bottom right of your screen. Login using your normal UH username and password. If the login fails: click 'Advanced>>' on the Novell login window; select the Staff context from the drop down list to the left of the 'Contexts' button (for example, 'Information Hertfordshire.B-Staff.Accounts.herts'); then login again. This step isn't necessary on the Mac, so smile and proceed to 9.
9. Open one of the shortcuts to your networked folders. There will be a short delay while your machine mounts the drive, but then everything should work just the same as in your office at UH.

Once you have been through the process once, and have a connection to the Internet, **proceed directly to step 7**. At home, for Mac users, it is just one extra step to use networked storage, for Windows Novell users it is just two steps. Network Connect is very reliable and maintains a robust connection until you 'disconnect' or log off from your machine.

What if I am using some other kind of device or don't have Novell on my Windows Machine?

You can still access your storage but it is more effort because you have to use a web browser rather than a shortcut on your desktop.

1. go to <https://uhvpn.herts.ac.uk> and login in using username@staff
2. click 'Staff Store' (the fifth item down on the right hand column of links).
3. at the 'Netstorage' page, login again using your normal UH username and password
4. download items by clicking on folders and then individual documents
5. upload (save to the network store) by clicking on the 'file' link at the top of each folder

How do I share some data or documents with a small number of colleagues from my research group?

It will depend on the circumstances and people who need to share the data. It may be possible to create a folder inside an existing S:drive and limit access to a research group, or it may prove more appropriate to create a special provision, mapped to R: to support your research activity.

Can external collaborators or research students access my shared network storage?

Staff of other UK universities and other appropriately qualified people can be given access to networked storage via the VPN. The position with regard to research students is governed by their HR status. Many research students are employed in some capacity by the University and therefore qualify as 'staff'. If they are not employed, they cannot be given access to any staff resources. In this case, there may still be alternatives - RDTK may be able to recommend a solution for mixed-multi-user research data management.

How much networked storage do I get?

The standard personal allocation is 5GB. If 5GB is insufficient for your needs, or you need a large shared resource contact helpdesk@herts.ac.uk. Your additional requirements can usually be accommodated.

Will access to my networked storage be fast enough?

Usually yes, particularly within the UH local network, which is very fast. You should be able to work with most individual files with little or no discernable difference. There may be a delay (called latency) to open and close larger files depending on the speed of your connection, but it will normally be acceptable.

If you want to test the speed of your connection use <http://www.speedtest.net/>

Internal transfers on the UH staff network are about half as fast as writing to a locally attached portable hard drive, but about 2 times faster than the speed of writing to a memory stick. Here are some example transfer times:

for a typical 500KB (kilobyte) MS Word or Excel file:

- UH Staff network Ethernet: less than one second @60-70Mb/s (megabits/second),

- UH wireless network: less than one second @10Mb/s
- Typical cable home broadband: less than one second @20Mb/s
- Typical telephone home broadband: 1-2 seconds @ 4Mb/s

for a 50MB (megabyte) MS Access data file:

- UH Staff network Ethernet: 6 seconds @60-70Mb/s (megabits/second),
- UH wireless network: 40 seconds @10Mb/s
- Typical cable home broadband: 20 seconds @20Mb/s
- Typical telephone home broadband: 100 seconds @ 4Mb/s
- Copy to USB memory stick: ~ 10 seconds
- Copy to USB mounted portable drive: ~3 seconds

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