

## General Knowledge Management Approaches for Nonprofits

Approach	Description	Pluses	Minuses
<b>Physical Copies</b>	<i>Physical copies allow for easy retrieval of printed documents enabling information to be accessed by anyone who knows how documents are organized.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inexpensive</li> <li>• Easy to use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cumbersome</li> <li>• Take up a lot of physical space</li> <li>• Cannot be accessed from everywhere</li> </ul>
<b>Emails</b>	<i>Emails help to exchange digital messages, data and documents from an author to one or more recipients, while automatically generating submission date/time stamps.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiar and easy to use</li> <li>• Cheap and already integrated into a workflow people are already using</li> <li>• Can be organized into folders for easy retrieval</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not secure</li> <li>• Tracking best versions can be difficult with long email threads</li> </ul>
<b>Spreadsheets</b>	<i>Spreadsheets help to structure data in a tabular format allowing for sorting, filtering, and reporting on individual rows of data.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very flexible</li> <li>• Can easily transform and manipulate data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very little validation</li> <li>• Version control between multiple parties can be cumbersome</li> </ul>
<b>Shared File Drives</b>	<i>Shared file drives allow computer resources to be remotely accessed from another computer – typically via a local area network, virtual private network or an enterprise intranet – transparently, as if it were a resource in the local machine.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to establish and manage the structure</li> <li>• Easy to set up on an organization's network</li> <li>• Easy to access (assuming VPN is available)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No version control, anyone can edit content</li> <li>• No tagging and categories for search and navigation, flat file structure</li> <li>• Have to be logged in to network to access it</li> </ul>
<b>Shared Online Documents</b>	<i>Shared documents allow two or more people to use the internet or a piece of software to access a document at the same time allowing live, collaborative editing and peer to peer review.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good collaboration tools</li> <li>• Ability to simultaneously edit with other users</li> <li>• Widely accessible when shared (i.e. Google Docs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have shared access or know URL to view documents</li> <li>• No ability to search and filter through documents</li> <li>• No access to prior versions of a document unless copied</li> <li>• Changing between formats can be difficult</li> </ul>
<b>Cloud Hosting</b>	<i>Cloud Hosting helps you to create folders (containing resources), which can be shared with large groups over the internet enabling sharing of data-processing tasks, centralized data storage and access to services from any computer.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible from outside of the server</li> <li>• Easy to access with log in credentials</li> <li>• Easy to establish and manage the structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slower than shared drives</li> <li>• Have to know where things are in folder structure</li> </ul>
<b>Proprietary Document Management System</b>	<i>Document Management Systems (DMS) enable the tracking and storage of documents. These systems are usually capable of keeping track of the different versions modified by different users (history tracking).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically large competent teams behind them</li> <li>• Good support for issues</li> <li>• Thoroughly developed and tested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expensive</li> <li>• You can't change customization, less flexible</li> </ul>
<b>Custom Software</b>	<i>Custom software is developed to meet an organizations specific requirements and can therefore fit the preferences and expectations of an organization.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailored to fit an organizations needs and requirements</li> <li>• Stage by stage development leads to higher efficiency of software</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance may require constant contact with the developer</li> <li>• Can be overly complex making upgrades and updates more difficult</li> <li>• Expensive</li> </ul>