Using the Consumer Cloud

Chances are your staff already use consumer cloud services for their work, whether you've asked them to or not. And whether you know it or not. If office have systems don't work for the way people want to work, most employees will find other ways to get the job done. Land trusts large and small can make a virtue out of this fact to use consumer services to experiment without necessarily going "all in" organization-wide.

- Advantages
    - No infrastructure to maintain, incredibly high up-time
    - Use what you need, often low cost
    - Available everywhere you can connect
    - Rapid innovation and feature addition due to well-funded, competitive market

- Disadvantages
    - No human support means more internal problem-solving to use generalized tools and robot-support compared
    - Sometimes opaque backup/recovery solutions
    - Potential issues around password policies, proliferation of devices with sensitive data on them, etc.

Service	Pros	Cons
Google Drive/Docs (now gSuite)	- Collaborative editing in Docs, Sheets, Slides, Drawings - Full version history for all documents plus much improved "Track Changes" - Drive can store any type of file, similar to DropBox - Free Google Apps for Education accounts for nonprofits provide centrally managed Gmail, Calendar, and Drive. - Incredibly good search	- No easy way to back up Google App documents. Just trust in Google. - Limited formatting in Docs and Slides compared to MS Office. - File ownership needs careful management when staff change
DropBox	- Selective sync allows for detailed control of what ends up where - Easier sharing of PDFs and images vs. Google - Easier integration with MS Office	- Less advanced real-time collaborative editing - Fewer ecosystem benefits beyond file sharing.
Evernote	- Share "notes" that can contain content of many types: text, images, PDFs - Paid plans allow shared annotation of stored documents - Most agnostic about format of shared files combined with annotations. - Very good search	- Fewer ecosystem benefits beyond file sharing. - Less defined structure means more need for standards/practice