

Own Your Cloud Archive — move the cold half of your Google Drive & Gmail to a read-only archive you control.

Stop paying for storage you never open, without losing a single old file. smallestbusiness.com

1. Decide what's cold

- ☐ Split your **working set** (touched in the last ~12 months — keep it in the cloud) from your **cold record** (rarely opened).
- ☐ Note any **retention** / **compliance** obligations. Cold does **not** mean safe to delete.

2. Export everything — Google Takeout

- ☐ Export **Drive** (original formats) and **Gmail** (as `.mbox`) from `takeout.google.com`.
- ☐ Pick a sane archive split size; download every part.
- ☐ **Spot-check** the export: file counts and a few opened files match the originals.

3. Stand up the archive host

- ☐ An always-on box: mini PC, NAS, or a spare desktop — disk **at least 2×** your data.
- ☐ Install **Docker + Docker Compose**.
- ☐ **Files:** FileBrowser Quantum — web browser with **folder sizes**, per-user scopes, read-only.
- ☐ **Mail:** local IMAP (**Dovecot**) + webmail (**Roundcube**) to browse the `.mbox` — or a lightweight mbox viewer.
- ☐ Mount the data **read-only** (`:ro`) so nothing can ever be edited or deleted by accident.

4. Domain, HTTPS & access

- ☐ Subdomains on **your own domain**: `drive-archive.*` and `mail-archive.*`.
- ☐ DNS **A record** → your box (add **dynamic DNS** if the office IP changes).
- ☐ **nginx** reverse proxy + **certbot** (Let's Encrypt) for HTTPS.
- ☐ **One account per user**; restrict each user's scope to only their own folders.
- ☐ Optional hardening: VPN or IP allow-list; force HTTPS.

5. Back it up — the 3-2-1 rule

- ☐ **Copy 1** — the live archive disk.
- ☐ **Copy 2** — Takeout on a USB drive, kept in the office.
- ☐ **Copy 3** — a second USB copy off-site (home).
- ☐ **Test-restore:** actually open a file from each copy.

6. Verify, THEN delete

- ☐ Every subdomain loads; each user can **see and download** their files.
- ☐ A handful of old emails / files are present and openable in the archive.
- ☐ **Only now** delete the old data from Google — keep the last ~12 months live.
- ☐ Confirm the space freed; **downgrade or cancel** the storage plan.

Recommended tools

Need	Tool
Export Drive + Gmail	Google Takeout (<code>takeout.google.com</code>)
Web file browser (folder sizes, read-only, per-user)	FileBrowser Quantum — <code>github.com/gtsteffaniak/filebrowser</code>
Run the services	Docker + Docker Compose
HTTPS + reverse proxy	nginx + certbot (Let's Encrypt)
Browse the Gmail <code>.mbox</code>	Dovecot + Roundcube (or an mbox web viewer)
Home/office dynamic IP	a DDNS updater (e.g. <code>ddclient</code>)
Backups	rsync + two USB drives

Watch-outs: Read-only is **not** a backup — keep the 3-2-1 copies. *Verify before you delete* from the cloud. The box is internet-exposed, so keep it patched and use strong passwords.

Full build story + the bcrypt trick that kept every password through the migration:
smallestbusiness.com/blog/file-server-migration-keep-passwords