

Special
E-print
Edition



As seen in

Money
June 3, 2009

Lots of rivals pop up for YouSendIt file-transfer service

Services offer way to send attachments too big to e-mail

By Jefferson Graham
USA TODAY

YouSendIt used to be the only way to get around stingy e-mail attachment size limits, but with lower bandwidth costs and speedier Internet connections, a host of competitors have emerged to offer bigger file transfers at lower prices.

YouSendIt is a website offering a way to get video clips, music files, huge photos or graphics files to friends and clients without clogging up e-mail in-boxes. You simply upload your material to the site, and it takes care of the rest. The service is free for files up to 100 megabytes, or \$9.99 a month for files up to 2 gigabytes.

The company, which has been around since 2004, dominates Google search results for queries such as "big e-mail attachments" or "send big files." So dozens of competitors have come up with similar names — such as MailBigFile, TransferBigFiles and SendThisFile.

"Every successful business has copycats," says Ranjith Kumaran, YouSendIt's CTO and founder.

Many of YouSendIt's competitors are based elsewhere. Sendspace is in Austria, DropSend and MailBigFile are in the United Kingdom, SendYourFiles is in the Netherlands — places where they don't have to comply with U.S. copyright laws that restrict transmission of illegally obtained movie, TV show and music files.

Gartner analyst Frank Kenney says the managed-file business is worth \$600 million today and will grow to \$1 billion by 2012.

"Our e-mail boxes have gotten smaller, we're not getting the room we necessarily want to have to send big files, and we need help," he says.

Fueling the demand for file-transfer services: File sizes are growing. Higher megapixel counts on digital cameras mean



By Asa Mathat

YouSendIt: Founder and CTO Ranjith Kumaran.

bigger file sizes for photos. And the popularity of homemade video creates a problem for folks who want to e-mail clips. Video files are huge: One hour of uncompressed video is 13 GB.

Many corporate e-mail accounts limit attachments to 5 MB, while free e-mail programs will give you only 5 to 20 MB. (MSN's and Yahoo's limits are 10 MB, AOL mail is 16 MB, and Google's Gmail is 20 MB.) That's enough for a small group of uncompressed photos, PDFs or graphic files, but not enough for most videos or bigger photos.

Which leads frustrated consumers to sites such as YouSendIt.

Most offer a limited free plan and charge for sending bigger files. Sendspace charges \$6.99 a month to send 1.5 GB files, while

DropSend is a flat \$5 for up to 15 files monthly, with file size not to exceed 2 GB.

The services eliminate the need for traditional e-mail attachments. Instead, you upload material to the service, which sends a link — and not the actual file — to recipients, who can then download it for themselves.

Creating a file-transfer site is "relatively easy," says Hamid Shojaee, CEO of Arizona-based Axosoft, a software company that runs the TransferBigFiles site. "That's why there are so many. We put up ours in a weekend."

An app for that

YouSendIt isn't sitting still. Today, it unveils its first iPhone application, to track

files and confirm delivery. It's aimed at the corporate market, which provides the bulk of the company's 100,000 paying subscribers (out of 8.8 million total users).

Corporate clients include the city of Los Angeles, where 30,000 employees use the service to move encrypted files, and Tribune Broadcasting.

Ari Pitchenik, creative services manager for Tribune's WPIX-TV in New York, uses YouSendIt to send promos and commercials to clients and other stations.

"In the past, we'd burn them on DVDs

and send it out via Federal Express, or use an internal FTP (file transfer protocol)," he says. "This is much easier. Anyone can click a link and download a file."

Even with all the competitors, and a lousy economy, things look good for the company, which has yet to turn a profit. Kumaran says he's seen more demand for the service this year and that the second quarter was its biggest quarter ever.

"We're seeing companies having less resources — which means less IT support — so we think we'll thrive in this economy."

How YouSendIt works

Step 1: Register for the site. It's free.

Step 2: Sign in.

Step 3: In a box that looks remarkably like an e-mail message:

- ▶ Fill out recipient's e-mail address.
- ▶ Write a subject line.
- ▶ Enter a message.
- ▶ Attach a file of up to 100 MB.
- ▶ If your files are larger, you'll have to sign up for a monthly subscription, which starts at \$9.99.

How some of the file-transfer services compare

E-mail is rarely an option when you have a big file to ship, because e-mail boxes have attachment size limits: Yahoo and MSN Hotmail, 10 megabytes; AOL Mail, 16 MB; and Google Gmail, 20 MB. Some other options:

	Cost	Size limit	Monthly upload limit	Pay
DropSend	Free	Up to 2 gigabytes	5	\$5 monthly to send up to 15 files, also up to 2 GB.
MediaFire	Free	Up to 100 MB	None	\$6.97 monthly for files up to 10 GB.
Sendspace	Free	Up to 300 MB	Up to 1 GB in daily uploads	\$6.99 monthly for up to 1.5 GB files; 20 GB in monthly uploads.
TransferBigFiles	Free	Up to 1 GB	None	Free
YouSendIt	Free	100 MB	Up to 1 GB monthly	\$9.99 for files up to 2 GB.

Source: USA TODAY research