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Keeping university researchers from using Dropbox

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Users have grown accustomed to easy-to-use sync-and-share applications like Dropbox, Google Drive and many more, which tightly integrate into their operating systems and platforms.
Naturally, an obvious need arises to use these tools at the workplace, as well. However, there are strong arguments against embracing such public cloud services, especially in the context of scientific and technical research or even personal data, where special data protection laws apply. IT staffs at universities are challenged to provide solutions for syncing and sharing of data that work in a comparable way to the aforementioned solutions.

Like many other German universities, the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz has decided to use Seafile Pro Edition for this task not only due to low resource consumption but also because of the agile implementation of new features commissioned by the Data Center (ZDV) of our university like Shibboleth authentication. Additional benefits in terms of usability are the ability to invite external guests and the introduction of distinct roles for students, staff and faculty members into Seafile .

Seafile is not only accessible to users at the local university but to all users of universities throughout the whole of Rhineland-Palatinate that each have their own authentication infrastructure.
In this talk, we are going to present the specialties of our setup of Seafile with special regards to performance aspects in our fully virtualized clustered setup with load balancing and to the multi-tenancy aspects of our federated setup.
Our software stacks consists of the Seafile Pro Edition in a clustered setup, a MariaDB and Galera cluster, Memcached, Nginx, Apache and Shibboleth. We are currently experimenting with Ceph as the backend storage solution.

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