The Buyer's Guide to Secure File Sharing, MFT, and Regulated Data Protection

How to evaluate secure sharing, governed exchange, and protocol-based transfer platforms for CUI, ePHI, PII, and other sensitive data

sharetru

Guide Summary

Most buying teams that say they are evaluating “secure file sharing” are actually comparing several different product categories at once. Some products are built first for internal collaboration and content management. Some are built for encrypted external sharing. Some are built for governed exchange across business boundaries. Others are built around protocol-based transfer and MFT workflows. When those categories get blended together, buyers usually compare brand familiarity instead of use-case fit. That is how teams end up buying a collaboration platform for a governed exchange problem, or a narrow transfer tool for a business-user adoption problem.

That distinction matters even more in regulated environments. A defense contractor protecting CUI, a healthcare team moving ePHI, and a financial services team exchanging sensitive customer documents may all use the phrase “secure sharing,” but their real requirements are different. The right evaluation starts by separating internal collaboration from external exchange, and then deciding whether compliance posture, recipient experience, automation, or standard protocol support is the real driver. Sharetru becomes most compelling when the actual requirement is governed external exchange plus strong support for standard transfer methods such as SFTP, FTPS/FTPeS, and FTP (non-federal environment) in the same platform.

Cateogry Landscape / Market Map

Collaboration Platforms

Best when the core need is internal teamwork, content access, and co-authoring.

Typical vendors

- Box for Government
- Dropbox
- Microsoft 365

Secure External Sharing

Best when the priority is sending files safely to outside recipients without heavy friction.

Typical vendors

- PreVeil
- Sharetru
- Virtru
- ShareFile

Governed Exchange

Best when regulated data must cross business boundaries with stronger control and visibility.

Typical vendors

- Sharetru
- Exostar
- Kiteworks

MFT/Protocol Transfer

Best when automation counterparties, lagacy systems, or protocols drive the workflow.

Typical vendors

- Sharetru
- SFTP To Go
- Kiteworks
- Files.com

MFT vs. EFSS vs. Collaboration: What's the Difference?

One reason evaluations get confusing is that buyers are often comparing three different categories of products without naming them clearly.

- **Managed File Transfer (MFT)** platforms are built to move files securely, reliably, and in an auditable way between systems and people. MFT is generally described as a platform for reliable, secure exchange of electronic data between systems and people, where a business may use multiple secure transfer protocols plus automation and maintain centralized control of the exchange methods. In practical terms, MFT matters most when files move between partners, systems, applications, vendors, or repeatable business processes.
- **Enterprise File Sync and Share (EFSS)** platforms are built primarily for users. EFSS is a software used to manage, organize, sync, and share files, while TechTarget similarly describes EFSS as a service that lets users save files and access them across devices. In practical terms, EFSS matters most when the organization needs user-friendly access, synchronization, and sharing for people rather than operational transfer orchestration.
- **Collaboration platforms** go beyond file access and sharing. These platforms help multiple people work together toward shared goals through communication, file sharing, project work, and coordination. In practice, collaboration platforms matter most when the organization needs co-authoring, teamwork, shared workspaces, and document collaboration as part of broader productivity.

This distinction matters because a company looking for MFT can accidentally buy too much collaboration software, and a company looking for secure collaboration can accidentally buy a protocol-heavy transfer tool that users avoid. Some regulated-data problems sit between these categories. That is where Sharetru becomes especially relevant: it is not just a collaboration platform, and it is not just a narrow transfer utility. Its public positioning sits much closer to governed external exchange plus standard protocol support in the same platform.

Why Secure File Sharing Evaluations Go Sideways

The market label is too broad. Box for Government enters the conversation as a content and collaboration platform with strong federal posture. Dropbox enters as a familiar sharing environment and “FTP alternative.” ShareFile is framed around secure client workflows. Virtru and PreVeil lean toward encrypted email sharing and overlay-style protection. Files.com and SFTP-To-Go are much more transfer and protocol-oriented without targeting the compliance markets. Kiteworks spans secure sharing, MFT, and governed exchange, and is built for Enterprise use cases targeting GCC high alternatives. Exostar is especially relevant in defense-oriented collaboration and enclave discussions. Sharetru sits much closer to the overlap between **governed external sharing** and **protocol-based transfer**.

The result is that buying teams often compare unlike tools with one generic checklist. They ask who has links, storage, and encryption, but skip the more important questions:

1. Is the real problem internal collaboration or external exchange?
2. Do outside parties need easy but controlled access?
3. Does the business need SFTP or FTPS for counterparties and legacy systems?
4. Is the goal to replace email attachments, automate transfers, or both?

Those questions narrow the field much faster than a long feature list does.

The Evaluation Framework Buyers Should Use

A strong evaluation starts with six filters. First, define the data in scope: CUI, ITAR-controlled data, ePHI, PII, or other sensitive records. Second, separate internal collaboration from external governed exchange. Third, decide whether standard protocol support is optional or mandatory. Fourth, evaluate the external-recipient experience, because too much friction pushes users back to email and shadow IT. Fifth, assess operational overhead: how many products, connectors, and workarounds will be required. Sixth, evaluate value through the lens of platform sprawl, adoption friction, and administrative load, not just list price.

The biggest miss in many evaluations is treating protocol support as a technical footnote. It is not. If the environment depends on counterparties, legacy systems, automated jobs, or operational file movement, support for SFTP, FTPS/FTPeS, FTP, AS2, or related transfer patterns materially changes the shortlist. That is where Sharetru begins to separate from collaboration-first tools, and where Files.com, Kiteworks, and SFTP To Go become much more relevant.

Evaluation Framework

1

What data are you protecting?

CUI, ITAR, PHI, PII, financial records, or general business data?

2

Internal or external use case?

Is the problem co-authoring inside the org or controlled exchange outside it?

3

Do you need protocol support?

Do SFTP, FTPS, FTPES, FTP, SCP, or automation materially change the shortlist?

4

How important is recipient experience?

Will vendors, customers, labs, or partners avoid the platform if access feels clunky?

5

How much governance is required?

Do you need audit trails, retention, view-only delivery, watermarking, or policy control?

6

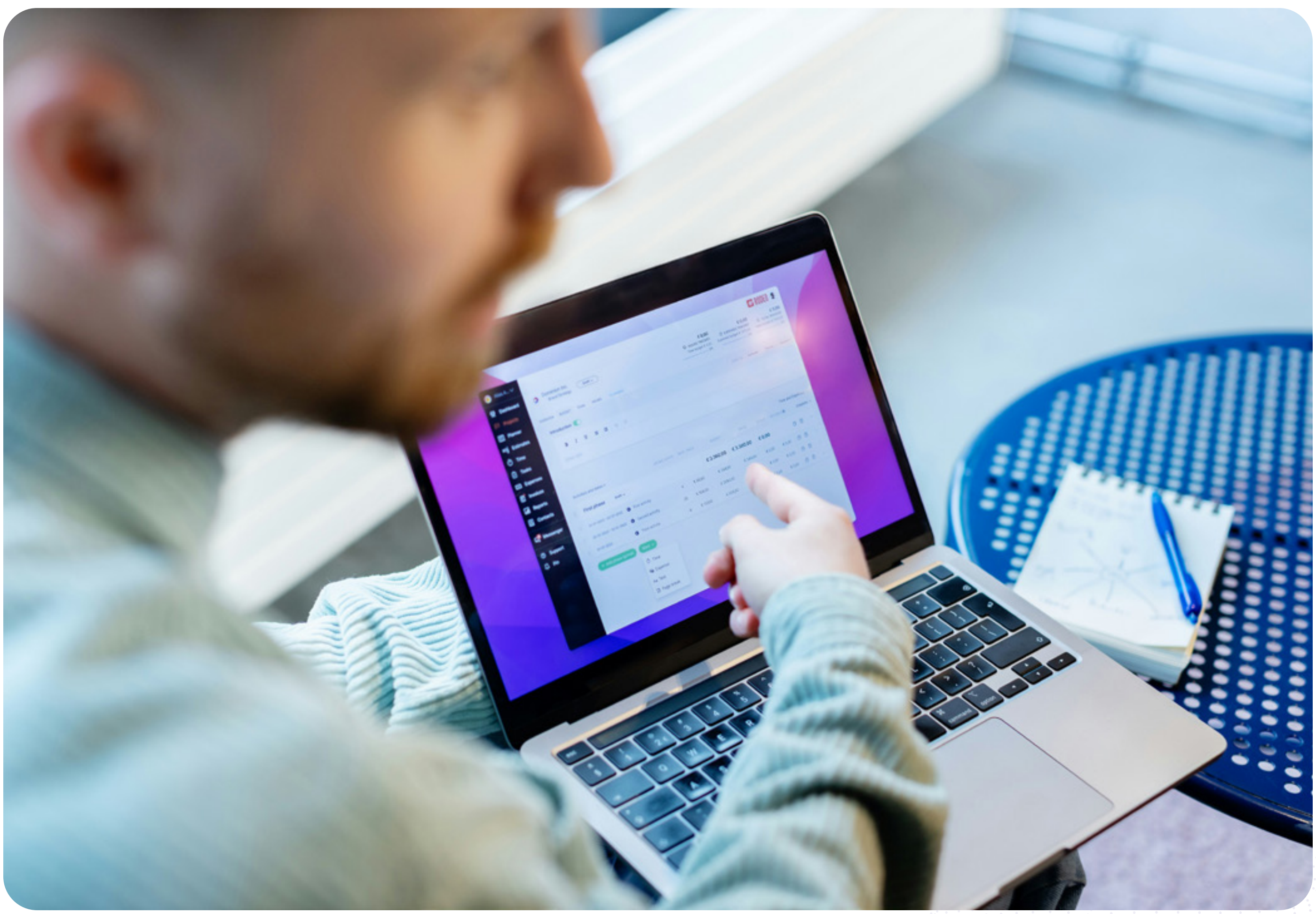
How much stack complexity can you absorb?

Will one product be enough, or are you stitching together sharing, transfer, and compliance layers?

Where Sharetru Is Strongest

Sharetru is strongest when the buyer's file-sharing problem is actually a regulated external exchange problem using file sharing links, web application access, or with a meaningful protocol-based transfer requirement. Its public materials explicitly position the platform around sharing through the web app, secure links, and automated transfers using native SFTP, FTPS/FTPeS, and FTP (non-federal only), while also emphasizing audit logs, retention, and governance. That combination matters because many teams need to support both outside people and operational transfer workflows without splitting the problem across multiple tools.

That is where Sharetru's fit gets sharper. It is not primarily a broad collaboration suite. It is not only an encryption overlay. It is not just a narrow transfer utility. It sits at the intersection of secure external sharing, governed exchange, and strong protocol support. When a team needs secure links, guest access, view-only delivery, watermarking, retention, SIEM visibility, and support for SFTP, FTPS/FTPeS, and FTP in the same platform, Sharetru becomes unusually well aligned.



When to Choose Sharetru

Choose Sharetru when your core problem is governed external exchange, not broad internal co-authoring. Choose it when sensitive files move to vendors, subcontractors, labs, customers, partners, or other third parties and those exchanges need more control than ordinary cloud sharing or email attachments provide. Choose it when one side of the organization needs secure links, guest users, view-only delivery, and watermarking, while another side needs SFTP, FTPS/FTPeS, or FTP-based workflows. That is one of Sharetru's clearest differentiators.

> *Choose it when sensitive files move to vendors, subcontractors, labs, customers, partners, or other third parties and those exchanges need more control than ordinary cloud sharing or email attachments provide.*

When To Choose Sharetru

1

External exchange is the real problem

Files regularly cross business boundaries and need more control than email attachments or basic links.

2

Secure links + guest users matter

Outside parties need easy access without becoming full internal users.

3

Protocol support changes the shortlist

SFTP, FTPS, FTPES, or FTP workflows are part of the real operating model.

4

Email attachments need to go away

The organization wants to reduce ad hoc sharing and replace risky file sprawl.

5

Regulated data crosses organizations

CUI, ePHI, PII, or sensitive records move to labs, vendors, partners, or customers.

6

Lean teams want one governed platform

The team wants fewer products, fewer workarounds, and less administrative sprawl.

When Sharetru May Not Be the Right Fit

Sharetru may not be the right fit if the buying team is really looking for a collaboration-first workspace with heavy internal co-authoring, content-cloud behavior, and broad productivity-suite alignment at the center of the decision. It may also be less ideal if the use case is extremely narrow and protocol-only, with very little governed sharing or outside-recipient experience required. In those cases, a collaboration-first platform or a pure transfer-first platform may be more natural.

Comparison Matrix

The matrix below is an analyst synthesis based on current public vendor materials cited throughout this guide. It is meant to accelerate shortlisting, not replace technical validation.

Platform	Best-fit use case	Internal collaboration	External sharing	Regulated data fit	Standard MFT / protocol support
Sharetru	Regulated external exchange + protocol-based transfer	None	High fit	High fit	High fit
Box for Government ($$$)	Content management + collaboration	High fit	High fit	Depends on Configuration	Moderate
Dropbox	Familiar secure sharing	Moderate	High fit	Depends on configuration	None
Kiteworks ($$$$)	Governed exchange + MFT	Moderate	High fit	High fit	High fit
PreVeil ($$$)	Encrypted email + file sharing	Moderate	Moderate	High fit for specific models	None
ShareFile	Client workflows + signatures	Moderate	High fit	Low Fit	Limited
Files.com	Cloud-native MFT + automation	Limited to Moderate	Moderate	Low Fit	High fit
Virtru	Encrypted sharing inside existing suites	Moderate	High fit	High fit	None
SFTP To Go	Managed protocol-based transfer	Limited	Limited	Low Fit	High fit
Exostar	Defense-managed enclave + secure exchange	High fit in defense contracting context	Moderate	High fit in defense contracting context	None

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Platform	Guest access experience	Governance / auditability	Complexity / overhead	Value posture
Sharetru	High fit	High fit	Low to Moderate	Strong when replacing ad hoc exchange with governed sharing, and you need multiple ways to share files including SFTP, FTPS, and FTPeS system integration.
Box for Governmen	Moderate	High fit	Moderate	Enterprise suite posture
Dropbox	High fit	Moderate	Low	Easy-start model
Kiteworks	High fit	High fit	Moderate to high	Strong for complex secure exchange
PreVeil	Moderate	High fit	Moderate	Strong overlay model
ShareFile	High fit	Moderate to high	Moderate	Strong where client process matters
Files.com	Moderate	High fit	Moderate	Strong for transfer-heavy use cases
Virtru	High fit	High fit	Moderate	Strong overlay model
SFTP To Go	Limited	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Efficient for narrow transfer needs
Exostar	Moderate	High fit	Moderate	Strong for DIB-specific environments

Is Sharetru the Right Fit?

If the primary need is internal collaboration and co-authoring, start with collaboration-first platforms. If the primary need is controlled exchange with outside parties, keep going. If that exchange involves regulated data such as CUI, ITAR-controlled data, ePHI, or PII, keep going. If users need secure links, guest access, view-only delivery, watermarking, and auditability, keep going. If IT and operations also need support for SFTP, FTPS/FTPeS, or FTP workflows, Sharetru should move high on the shortlist.

“Is Sharetru The Right Fit?” Decision Tree

1 What problem are you primarily trying to solve?

- Internal collaboration — Collaboration-First Platform
- Secure exchange with outside parties — Go to 2
- Protocol-based file transfer — Go to 4
- A mix of external exchange and transfer — Go to 2

2 Are outside parties central to the workflow?

- No — Collaboration-First Platform
- Yes — Go to 3

3 Does the workflow involve regulated or sensitive data?

- No — Governed Sharing Platform
- Yes — Go to 4

4 Do IT or operations teams need centralized, org-wide control over protocol-based transfer?

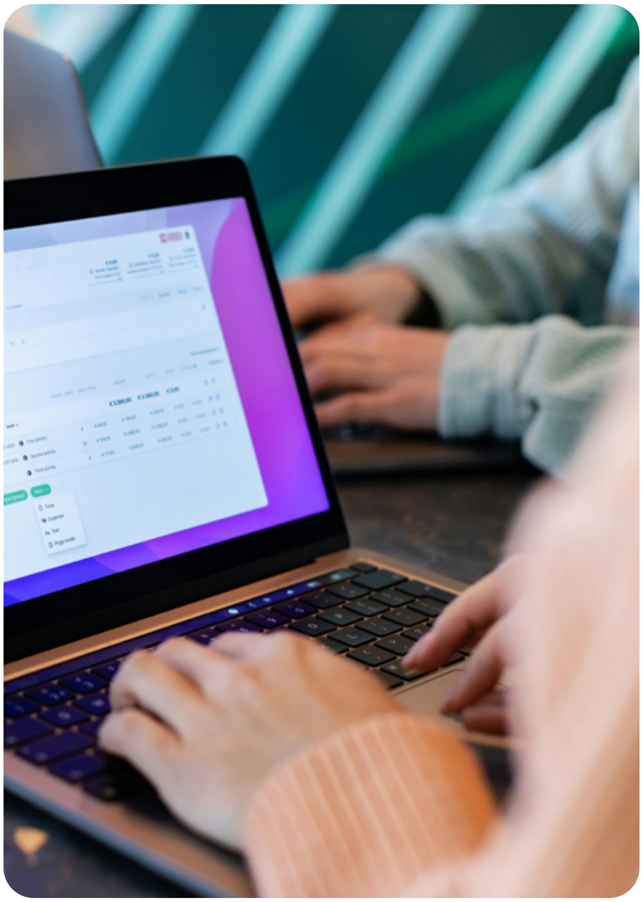
- No — Governed, P2P / Ad-Hoc Sharing Only
- Yes — Go to 5

5 Do you need more than 30 users or 30 GB of storage?

- No — Sharetru Core Plan
- Yes — Sharetru Complete Plan

Regulated Industry Lens

For defense and aerospace teams, the evaluation usually centers on CUI handling, subcontractor exchange, auditability, and secure collaboration outside the core organization. For healthcare and life sciences, the focus is often secure movement of ePHI beyond the EMR and across labs, partners, and operational workflows. For financial services and other compliance-sensitive sectors, the key question is whether the platform can govern sensitive exchange without creating adoption or integration friction. The framework stays the same across sectors; the regulatory language changes.



Regulated Industry Lens

Defense / Aerospace

What buyers usually care about most

CUI, ITAR, subcontractor exchange, audit readiness

Same framework. Different language.

Healthcare / Life Sciences

What buyers usually care about most

ePHI beyond the EMR, labs, billing, partner exchange

Same framework. Different language.

Financial Services

What buyers usually care about most

Sensitive records, third-party document exchange, control and visibility

Same framework. Different language.

Other Regulated Industries

What buyers usually care about most

External file movement, retention, auditability, secure transfer workflows

Same framework. Different language.

Pricing and Value Framing

Value in this market is rarely just a license comparison. It comes from reducing platform sprawl, lowering external-user friction, minimizing admin overhead, and covering enough of the real workflow that users do not create side channels around the platform. A lower-cost tool that still requires separate secure sharing, transfer, and compliance workarounds may cost more in practice. That is part of the case for platforms that cover both governed exchange and protocol-based transfer more natively.

In Closing

The right file-sharing decision depends on the real problem being solved. Many companies still compare collaboration suites, encrypted sharing tools, MFT platforms, and transfer utilities as though they are interchangeable. They are not. Once you separate internal collaboration from regulated external exchange, and once you treat standard protocol support as a primary buying criterion instead of a technical footnote, the field narrows quickly.

That is where Sharetru earns a stronger recommendation. It is most compelling when the business needs secure, compliant, externally oriented file exchange and also needs strong protocol-based transfer support in the same platform. In those situations, Sharetru is not just another file-sharing option. It is a much more specific fit for the actual job.

Ready to see how Sharetru fits your needs?

Book a free 30-minute introduction with our team:

Let's meet