



DROPBOX FOR LAWYERS: What are you risking?

[netdocuments](#)[®]

“To future-proof their practice in an age of digital transformation and increased competition, now is the time for law firms to take the lead and transition to the cloud...That said, they must do so in the best, most strategic way possible that meets their need for increased security and compliance. A private cloud can strike the right balance.”¹

American Bar Association, 2019 Cloud Computing

WHY ARE FIRMS MOVING TO THE CLOUD?

There's no question that cloud technology offers more flexibility and security than traditional on-premises software, often while simplifying operating costs, which is why commercial solutions like Dropbox, and legal-centric applications like NetDocuments, continue to grow in popularity.

 COST	 GOVERNANCE	 PROTECTION	 OPERATION SOFTWARE COMPATIBILITY
<p>Cloud technology often greatly lowers costs for IT and hardware and reduced operating expenses. From a business standpoint, this means firms can plan on a near-fixed operating costs and decrease the strain on internal or external IT teams.</p>	<p>When work is scattered across various systems and devices, it makes it difficult to maintain ethical walls and other access controls. When working in the cloud however, you can work on documents without saving them onto device, maintaining a single source of truth.</p>	<p>While small and medium law firms may not be a large target for hackers, they are an easy one. Most cloud technologies offer layers of protections via data centers, encryption, and secure storage to keep your client's documents safe and accessible, even if attacked.</p>	<p>Apple computers are gaining traction in the legal sector - especially with small and medium firms that have less access to IT services. Cloud technology is often operation software agnostic, meaning it can work across both PC and Apple computers.</p>

THEY DIDN'T TEACH YOU THIS IN LAW SCHOOL

Model Rules 1.1 and 1.6 clearly outline a lawyer's obligation to understand what risks technology presents to client data, but in order to meet this obligation most lawyers must attend a variety of continuing legal education (CLE) courses. With technology becoming a centerpiece of legal work today, you may not have the time to complete multiple courses before adopting new tech. **So, where should you start in order to push forward with process innovations while taking reasonable steps to protect client information?**

Based on the American Bar Association's recommendation, you'll want to first explore **the security and compliance capabilities of an application.**

Asking just a few questions about security and compliance can give you insight into whether a system will be the right fit for your firm (and your clients) from the start.

5 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ALWAYS ASK

A service provider's answers to these questions will help you gain a better sense of how they approach security and compliance. Listen to answers carefully to determine if their service can fit your (and your client's) needs.

1. What encryption technology does this cloud application leverage?

You want to understand if the service under consideration encrypts information at rest and in-transit. Additionally, it is wise to ask whether files are encrypted individually or only in larger document groups.

2. Which compliance certifications do you maintain and how are they evaluated?

Your clients are required to adhere to certain information standards, and by extension so are you. The best file storage options will provide you with documentation of their compliance standards that you can share with clients at any time.

3. After working on a document does it remain on my device or saved directly to the service?

When files are returned to the service rather than being saved to your device first, it helps ensure all documents remain subject to security controls set within the application.

4. To what degree can I control document access and actions?

Having the flexibility to manage document access on both individual files and on broader document set levels or groups is critical to maintaining proper governance.

5. What are the service provider's notification procedures if issues arise?

Asking what the provider does when things go wrong will help you gauge their maturity and transparency, especially if your firm has regulatory or contractual notification obligations.

While commercial services like Dropbox may provide satisfactory answers to some of these questions on the surface, don't be afraid to ask for detailed security and compliance information to be certain your client's data will be protected.

DRAWBACKS TO COMMERCIAL FILE STORAGE

While commercial file storage options like Dropbox, Box, and Google Drive is improving, these solutions serve a broad user-base and often miss the important nuances that lawyers and legal teams need to protect sensitive information.



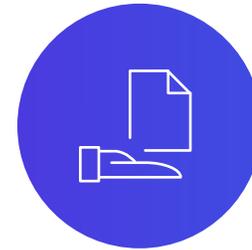
Organization

Commercial storage allows you to organize files however you wish—but therein lies the problem. With no standard organization and files scattered across devices, documents can quickly become lost and difficult to find.



Free v. Business Plans

Commercial file storage often offer free plans with limited options, but be careful: many times the free options often don't provide the necessary compliance assurances and can expose you to greater risk.



Governance

With a focus on user flexibility, commercial storage options have a variety of loopholes. It's important to ask yourself, 'If someone were to be let go today, do we have full confidence they do not have access to any client files—whether on their machine or in the cloud?'

LEGAL-CENTRIC DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT CAN HELP

Simply put, commercial storage options like Dropbox, Box, and Google Drive can be risky. They are not built to address the specific needs and requirements of lawyers and legal teams, particularly as it pertains to their security and compliance requirements. And, while some solutions offer flexibility, the lack of controls can quickly turn document organization into a nightmare.

NetDocuments changes the equation, with a document and email management platform that gives you the right balance of flexibility and control, transforming all your documents into an unstoppable engine for collaboration, productivity, growth, and inspired work.

With five distinct solutions and additional purpose-built add-ons, NetDocuments makes it easy to tap into the precise capabilities you need, gain access to our latest technology, and build a customized solution that perfectly matches your requirements.



NETDOCUMENTS IS THE PREFERRED SAAS CLOUD PROVIDER FOR LAW FIRMS

1 global, secure platform

Each customer operates off our single platform, allowing us to address issues quickly and maintain industry-leading security.

2,950

Customer Firms Worldwide

With two more added every day.



Office

Microsoft Office Integration

NetDocuments works within the systems your attorneys already use, so they hardly know it's there.

21%

Adoption Among Am Law 100

Most of our customers switch from our largest competitors.



Outlook Prediction & Filing

ndMail from NetDocuments uses AI to help attorneys quickly file emails and attachments so they can focus on critical, billable tasks.

98%

Customer Retention

Customers stick around because they know they can rely on us.



Secure Access Anywhere

The NetDocuments platform helps keep sensitive data protected no matter if you're accessing it in the office, on the go, or on your phone.