



TalkingCloudSeries

netdocuments®

with Foley & Lardner



Rick Varju dives deep with cloud first, cloud security and integrations

Q: Hello Rick. Foley & Lardner has long been known as a technology innovator including the firm's embrace of the cloud. How has your cloud first approach progressed and developed within the past few years?

A: We're still embracing that cloud-first approach. In each situation where a system or application is due for an update, upgrade, or a replacement, we always want to identify what cloud service options are available. Recently, we moved our HR management system to the cloud; are leveraging some additional productivity tools out of Office 365 like Teams, Planner, and OneNote; and, are in the process of migrating to a new cloud-based conference room scheduling application.

In addition to some of the tools our attorneys work with, we also use some cloud-based administrative technologies now. We continue to leverage cloud where it makes sense.

Q: What barriers are you seeing still to the cloud?

A: Security really, while important, is not the biggest barrier for us, due in part to our move to cloud-based services quite some time ago. Over time, we've gotten pretty good at articulating to our clients, the value of trusted cloud services and keeping their data secure.

The bigger barrier is often performance, making sure that whatever service you subscribe to in the cloud performs as well or nearly as well as it would on premises. We struggled with that for a bit. Things have gotten better and we're moving away now from the centralized internet solution model back to a decentralized model. So, we're putting internet circuits back at the local office level. We have virtualization technology now that allows us to deploy things like virtual firewalls. This makes it more feasible for us to do that economically. With more and more of our services going cloud-based, it's important for us to have optimal internet connections and eliminate the laws of physics and latencies.

Q: How are technologies like NetDocuments addressing critical issues and firm challenges that go beyond just document management?

A: Aside from NetDocuments being a very forward-thinking, security-minded vendor, I find that they're very proactive with product integration and very innovative in terms of product delivery.

From a product integration perspective, they are genuinely interested in reaching out to other vendors that we work with to build connectors into their tools and assure that anywhere content is pulled together or built amongst the array of tools that we use, that the information needing to be stored as a record is being synchronized back up to NetDocuments. Bottom line ... from a product integration perspective, they're doing things well and doing things right.

From an innovation perspective, there are a couple things there that are important to us and our clients. One is the filing of email into the official record. It's something that's always been a bit of a challenge so we are very optimistic about the new ndMail product and its ability to learn how attorneys work and offer predictive filing to where email should be filed within which folder or workspace.

For email filing to be successful in a law firm, it needs to be easy for the lawyers and a seamless user experience. NetDocuments and ndMail is getting us one step closer to being able to deliver that to our attorneys.

We are also experiencing NetDocuments' innovation as it relates to data storage and related security. The ndFlexStore gives us a lot of options in terms of where data is stored and secured. For example, it can be stored in the NetDocuments secure cloud, within our own data center at our firm, at the client's data center, or within Microsoft Azure. This gives us flexibility and storage options, which put us in a good position to respond to the most difficult client security requirements.

Q: Lastly, how are you balancing firm productivity while addressing client concerns regarding data security, governance, and privacy?

A: We're continuing to build and maintain a much stronger overall security posture that incorporates a good balance of trusted cloud services, like NetDocuments, and all the other latest and greatest security technologies and services that are available to us. Couple that with security awareness training for our entire user population. I'm a firm believer that you really need to cover all three of these bases, and not just one or two. It's really a collection of all three that builds the foundation of a solid security and governance platform.

About Rick Varju

Rick is the Director of Engineering & Operations for Foley & Lardner and is responsible for the firm's two national data centers, all messaging, WAN/LAN/wireless, telephony, security, database administration, servers, storage, data protection, virtualization, and remote access infrastructure. He is a member of Foley's Technology Leadership Team which plays a key role in focusing the firm's technological capabilities on providing value-added client service. He is also a member of the firm's Data Privacy, Security & Compliance Committee.

About Foley & Lardner

With nearly 900 lawyers in 19 offices across the United States, Europe and Asia, Foley approaches client service by first understanding our clients' priorities, objectives and challenges. Our clients view us as trusted business advisors because we understand that great legal service is only valuable if it is relevant, practical and beneficial to their businesses.

