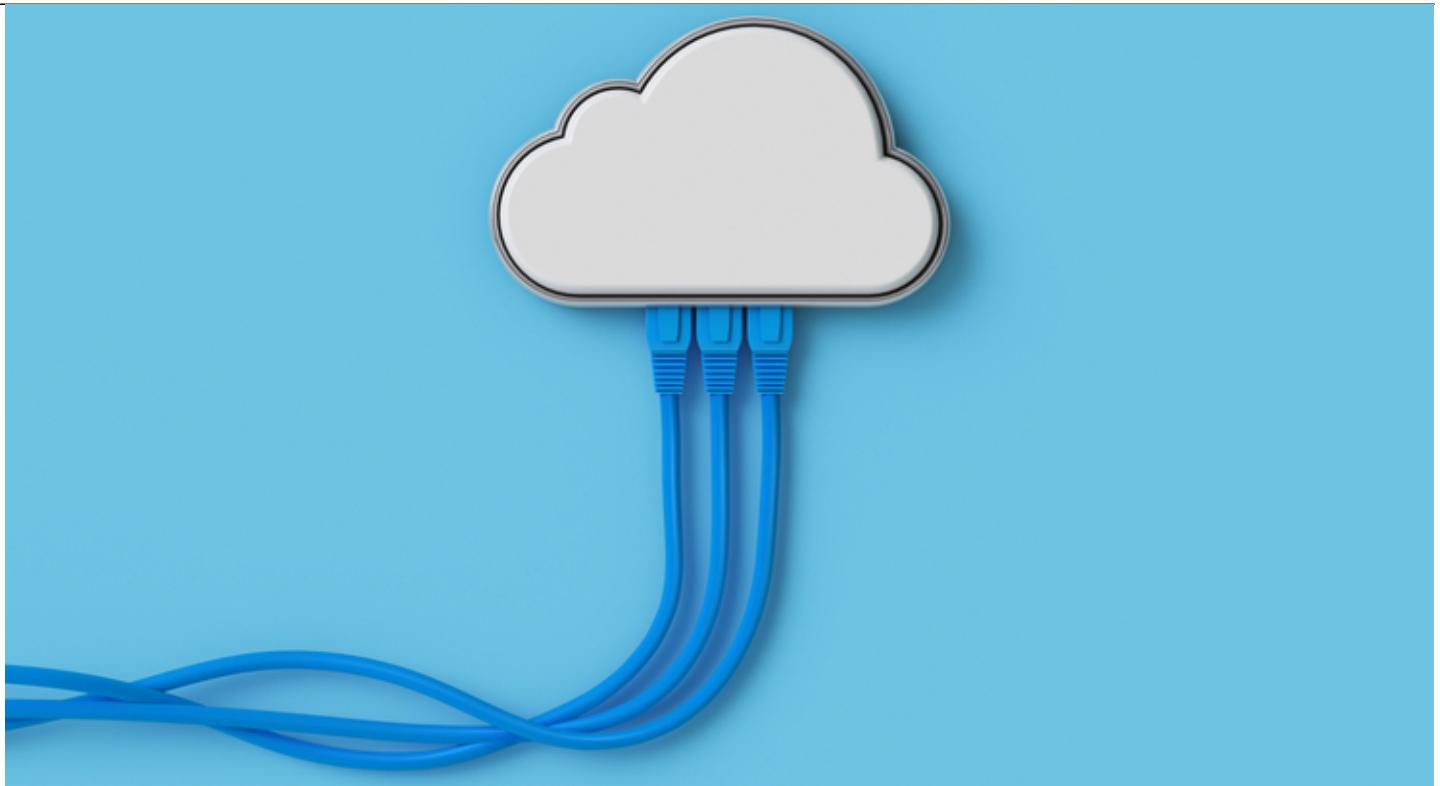




The One Facet that Underpins Every Legal Tech Investment — and 5 Advantages Your Legal Department Gains from It

Law Department Management



If you're like the [82 percent](#) of corporate counsel who recently identified "the greater use of technology to improve productivity" as the most significant change ahead, you're probably evaluating your software options now or will be soon.

Whether you opt to implement a new eDiscovery platform, contract management software (CMS), an e-billing solution, or something else, one aspect lies at the foundation of every smart legal technology strategy: cloud computing.

Opt for "web-based," "cloud-based," or "hosted" services. Select the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) delivery model. Vendors use various terms to identify it, but the cloud-based options for accessing and using their technology are the ones you want to embrace.

Other business departments have been using cloud technologies for years, and the benefits of cloud-based services are well-documented. According to a 2019 McAfee Report, [87 percent](#) of enterprises experience business acceleration by using cloud services. It enables:

- More efficient collaboration;
- Improved employee productivity;
- Business growth;
- Faster time to market;
- Higher employee satisfaction;
- Ability to launch new products; and
- Expansion to new markets.

Here's why cloud services work so well, and why they will also work well for your legal department:

1. Significant cost savings

The alternative to cloud computing is laying out significant amounts of capital upfront to buy new software and install it on on-premises hardware (e.g., computer hard drives and servers).

Typically, you subscribe to cloud-based software on an as-needed basis, often paying only for the number of users who currently need to access and use the software. That means your company doesn't need to buy expensive servers to run the software and store data.

You also avoid the costly hassle of maintaining and securing on-premises software over time, which includes employing a strong IT team to roll out system updates, stay on top of security threats, deal with system errors and issues, and field user questions.

2. Enhanced security

Security is usually the main concern for lawyers who are considering moving to the cloud. Caveat: No technology will ever be 100 percent secure 100 percent of the time. Thus, we can only ever talk about degrees of safety and security.

With that in mind, do you want to bet that Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud Services, and Amazon Web Services can pump more money into their security budgets than you? Your organization may be large and profitable. But my money is still on the billion-dollar corporations whose business models depend on delivering the strongest security support to customers.

Put simply, cloud service providers are better at implementing stronger security measures than you and keeping them up-to-date in an environment where issues arise quickly. Their efforts help ensure your company can meet the security requirements that any prospect or potential business partner might require — and at significantly less cost than it would take to do it on your own.

3. Instant scalability

Need to put together a massive response to a regulatory or eDiscovery request? Evaluating a major deal with complex due diligence requirements? With a cloud-based pay-as-you-go model, your team can scale quickly and efficiently to meet sudden increases in demand.

With on-premises technologies, legal departments might need to purchase additional computers or servers to handle excess computing needs, knowing that once the emergency is over, any extra hardware they buy will sit around uselessly draining resources. But when you are a clever cloud-based software buyer, you can simply dial down your subscription level when workloads decrease.

4. Remote access 24/7

If you store all your records, files, documents, and data on your company's hard drives and on-premises servers, you must be in your office to get any work done or even to access any information. That's an unimaginable inconvenience, so lawyers tend to cart laptops and thumb drives around everywhere they go, creating a huge security risk if accidentally left behind at random places.

Cloud services eliminate that hassle and give us 24/7 remote access reliably and securely. Click a link, and it's as if you've been magically teleported to the office without ever leaving home. With the

cloud, there are no more 18-hour workdays at the office for lawyers. The cloud enables us to work 24/7 from practically anywhere on earth!

5. Improved collaboration

General counsel need to collaborate with other department leaders to ensure they stay current with the company's overall goals and can proactively identify areas of risk and opportunity. Staying informed involves sharing documents, contracts, data, and communications with multiple unit managers, board members, and senior executives.

And that's just internal collaboration. Consider also the work you need to do and the information you need to exchange with outside counsel, opposing counsel, experts, regulators, business partners, and a host of other third parties.

Cloud technologies allow collaborators to easily share information and work on projects together on one platform. Regardless of their physical locations or the time of day they access the software, everyone's efforts remain aligned because everyone works on the same files and views the same information. Cloud-based platforms such as contract negotiation software offer shared rooms and discussion boards where multiple parties can work together in real-time, which reduces errors and significantly speeds up deal closings.

The work world is expanding

A Gartner survey found [82 percent](#) of business leaders intend to permit remote working some of the time as employees return to the workplace from the stay-at-home orders. The work world is expanding, and the related legal concerns and ramifications are growing increasingly complex.

You need eyes and ears everywhere to stay on top of the organization's legal needs and priorities. What better place to put them than in the cloud where you can also get the cost savings, heightened security measures, scalability, and collaborative advantages that drive business acceleration and legal department success?

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Mack is also an award-winning (such as the prestigious ACC 2018 Top 10 30-Somethings and ABA 2022 Women of Legal Tech) general counsel, operations professional, startup advisor, public speaker, adjunct professor, and entrepreneur. She co-founded SunLaw, an organization dedicated to preparing women in-house attorneys to become general counsels and legal leaders, and WISE to help female law firm partners become rainmakers.

She has authored numerous books, including *Get on Board: Earning Your Ticket to a Corporate Board Seat*, *Fundamentals of Smart Contract Security and Blockchain Value: Transforming Business Models, Society, and Communities*. She is working on her next books: *Visual IQ for Lawyers* (ABA 2024), *The Rise of Product Lawyers: An Analytical Framework to Systematically Advise Your Clients Throughout the Product Lifecycle* (Globe Law and Business 2024), and *Legal Operations in the Age of AI and Data* (Globe Law and Business 2024).