



How Cloud-Based Apps Enable Fast, Secure Collaboration for Law Firms and In-House Counsel

With 60 percent of attorneys adopting the cloud, law firms and in-house counsel can strongly benefit from the security advantages that these apps provide for their data.

By Johanna Marmon

I. Introduction

More than two years after the world made its unprecedented pivot to remote work, it is clear that the decentralized, on-demand workplace is here to stay. A Citrix survey of 900 business leaders and 1,800 knowledge workers across professional services, healthcare, finance and other industries finds that 63 percent of respondents report that giving employees flexibility where they work is now a key determinant in the job market.¹

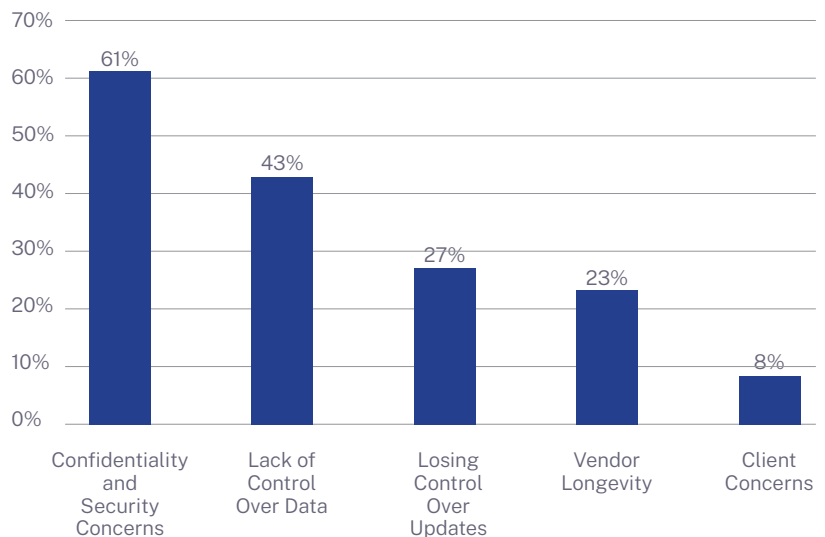
A significant reason this shift to remote work is successfully taking hold is the rapid adoption of technology. Specifically, this involves cloud-enabled tools that allow for greater web-based data storage, secure document-sharing and better collaboration no matter where workers or their offices are physically located.

In the legal industry, law firms and in-house counsel are following this trend, with about 60 percent of legal professionals using the cloud, according to the American Bar Association's 2021 Cloud Computing Report¹. The benefits for legal organizations adopting the cloud are many. For example, uploading to and working on files within a cloud platform or tool means less reliance on manual document delivery and email. Email has file-size constraints and security vulnerabilities since messages are neither encrypted nor authenticated.

Legal professionals, however, are not always aware of the benefits of the cloud and how these platforms and technologies ensure data security, privacy protection and, ultimately, greater collaboration regardless of employees:

Cloud Concerns for Attorneys

While six in 10 attorneys are adopting the cloud, legal professionals still have concerns.



Source: American Bar Association 2021 Cloud Computing report

- Cloud-based applications offer attorneys greater means to properly secure and transfer data, especially through utilizing encryption, which helps protect against cyber criminals or bad actors who can use email to steal sensitive data or plant malware.
- Enterprise-grade solutions, such as Citrix ShareFile, are specifically also designed to allow attorneys to enable anytime, anywhere access to files. ShareFile and other secure document-sharing platforms allow legal professionals to quickly and seamlessly share files and collaborate with coworkers and clients, both internally and externally.

II. Sharing legal data securely through the cloud

While attorneys remain concerned about the security and privacy of data, legal professionals are sometimes not aware that cloud-based applications can help. The ABA report on cloud computing found attorneys were still ranking security as their biggest concern when it comes to cloud adoption.²

Cloud computing offers multiple security features. That is because the servers that power various cloud platforms are housed in off-site data centers that have robust security and access controls, while the files themselves are encrypted. The security features of document-sharing apps like ShareFile are similarly robust.

ShareFile's rigorous protection and compliance protocols help safeguard data. This includes utilizing Amazon Web Services data centers. Client files are also stored using 256-bit encryption, which is one of the most secure encryption technologies and is implemented most often for extremely sensitive data. In addition, ShareFile gives attorneys and their organizations the ability to manage their data storage, which can help meet regulatory compliance requirements while optimizing performance.

On the file transfer side, ShareFile uses protocols to ensure client authentication and authorization. It secures files in transit using the same 256-bit encryption it does during file storage.

ShareFile also uses sophisticated security technology to ensure file integrity and verify that a request to download, view or otherwise use a file is coming from a known source. Finally, ShareFile download links are randomly and uniquely generated and guard against so-called "guessing attacks."

On the security side, Citrix Analytics for Security utilizes machine learning and artificial intelligence to provide visibility and insights into how ShareFile is used.

As soon as threats are detected, file or folder access can be restricted or locked out. Citrix Analytics for Security also detects excessive logins or logins from unfamiliar places to keep data safe. These features provide added assurances to attorneys that privileged data is protected. Attorneys must keep client data safe and secure, so being able to safeguard files from threats—either internal or external—is a top priority. Compromised data is catastrophic for law firms and in-house counsel, and using analytics to detect threats can help minimize the damage.

"People are concerned about security in the cloud, but ShareFile has many security features that reduce risk," says Laura Kaminski, product marketing manager at Citrix. "If a malware threat is detected, files are quarantined and access is cut off until the issue is resolved."

All of these features are behind the scenes. ShareFile legal users can exert direct control over their files and share them according to their preferences or the needs of their clients. ShareFile can also help ensure compliance with regulations, such as HIPAA or those enforced by FINRA. Legal professionals can create customizable access rules to control who sees which files, whether and how often they are downloaded, and whether a sign-in is required to view them.

III. Ease of use

For law firm attorneys or in-house counsel, switching to cloud-based platforms such as ShareFile for extra security does not need to be difficult. Legal users do not have to abandon the technologies they already use and are familiar to reap the benefits of the cloud.

ShareFile integrates with Microsoft 365, but removes some of the cumbersome barriers for file sharing with non-employees and others outside of the organization; instead of wrestling with large attachments, ShareFile creates a secure link that a recipient can quickly access with no downloads required. ShareFile also includes integrated e-signature capabilities that enable users to send documents for signature straight from files and folders.

IV. Conclusion

As cloud computing continues to make inroads within the legal industry, law firms and in-house legal teams should seek to leverage tools that enable efficiency and simplified workflows in a secure, protected environment. The best cloud-based apps that allow collaboration and document sharing:

- Have customizable, granular permission settings to keep client information confidential;
- Facilitate work in a secure environment that has robust controls and best-in-class security features;
- Allow for internal and external collaboration;
- Improve operational efficiency by allowing users to access files on any device, anytime; and
- Have a simplified user interface that requires minimal training and ramp-up time for users.

"ShareFile enables secure file-sharing and allows attorneys to work how and when they want," says Kaminski.

Johanna Marmon is a writer in upstate New York who has been reporting on trends impacting the legal industry for more than 15 years

¹ "Work rebalanced: The Citrix hybrid work report," Citrix, June 2022
<https://www.citrix.com/fieldwork/flexible-work/citrix-hybrid-work-report.html>

² "2021 Cloud Computing," American Bar Association, 2021 Tech Report, November 10, 2021.
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice/publications/techreport/2021/cloudcomputing/

¹ "2021 Cloud Computing," American Bar Association, 2021 Tech Report, November 10, 2021.
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice/publications/techreport/2021/cloudcomputing/