

Why Is the Cloud Important?

Your physical server
is a ticking time bomb.

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You don't know it yet, but if you are using a local server (server housed in your office) to run your electronic health records software, you may be sitting on a time bomb. Whether you recognize it or not, your electronic health record software is at the center of your practice. The software controls your appointments, patients' vital information, financial records, insurance information, and most importantly your patient records. With the correct setup, it can help your practice thrive. With the wrong set up, it can help your practice fail.

Today's electronic health record software has expanded exponentially in the complexity of the backend coding. This coding complexity requires more resources to accommodate the requirements and features needed for running a medical practice. Because of that, most software is now extremely complex and large. This software now needs to gather information relative to MIPS reporting, financial reports, storage of data, pictures, scans, electronic prescriptions, and notes; all of which will drain limited computer resources. The longer you are in practice, the more data there will be!

What was once acceptable when software was simple is now very outdated and unable to handle these growing demands. Just think of the basic idea of RAM. All of us remember at one time that 1GB of ram was

impressive in a computer. Now we consider anything less than 4GB obsolete. In fact, most experts recommend 16GB. Server-based systems (having a server in your office to run the software) cannot keep up with the heavy load that today's software requires. This in-house server design is old school, limited by the abilities and finite specifications and resources

larger computing access. This system is designed for fast, accurate, safe storage and retrieval in a manner that prevents slow performance or errors. The only limiting factor is your Internet speed. Increasing your Internet to business speed is far more cost-effective than the cost of replacing limited servers.

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of the server. Not only are you running your medical software on this server but, more than likely, other office software is also taxing these resources. This design of having finite resources on a server will most certainly fail since the need for speed and accuracy increases every year.

This is why most software, not just medical software, has moved to the cloud model. In the cloud, resources can increase and decrease as needed to accommodate the heavy drain that today's software places on systems. Data can be maintained in "blob" storage (a way to store large amounts of unstructured object data), sharing resources across the platform to allow for much

ing daily. Slowness, inability to open files, and error codes are all warning signs. Many clients' first thought is to blame the software. More accurately, it is that in-house servers cannot keep up with the necessary resources to run the software. Many IT companies try to combat the drain in resources by increasing the server size or speed of the processors. More than likely, this will not work, nor is it a solution for today's software. IT companies know hardware, but they are far from understanding the intricacies of how software functions, particularly medical software.

The unfortunate part about some
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old server set-ups is that RDPs inherently have slower connections and even drain the systems more. The reality is you are starting with a server that lacks the capacity to run the software and adding connections that will eat up more resources and slow the system even more. This might have worked at one time, but with the heavy resources needed to run software, it is a disaster for performance. There is nothing worse than waiting for your computer to catch up to your software and seeing the spinning circle holding you back from finishing your note or your having to wait to write an electronic prescription.

Cloud computing is here to stay, and it is your future. Besides adding speed, it also comes with some added bonuses. Cloud back-up is part of the all-in package when you choose to use cloud computing; i.e., safe accurate consistent hourly incremental backups

performed for you. No more hoping your back-up service worked or paying for an extra service for back-up. There are also other added bonuses. Sequel data base up-keep and maintenance, necessary for preventing corruption of data, will automatically be performed for you. Most of us do not even know how to do this necessary function nor do we know if our IT companies are even doing it for us!

Ultimately, the local computer server in your office will fail. It is not a case of if, but when. Most experts agree on this point. You may already be seeing the warning signs... slow processing, file saving issues, error messages, etc. Now is the time to act. As doctors, we know about catching the disease process early enough to stop catastrophic results from occurring. Right now, that server sitting in your office or your IT's office is waiting to fail. That ticking time bomb is poised to explode just when your office may

be the busiest! You can prevent this from happening if you move your software to the cloud. The cost of cloud computing that includes back-up is a far better investment than the antiquated old school server housed in your office. More importantly, how can you afford that downtime when your server fails to perform? Most experts agree, using a local computer server in your office will ultimately fail. The only question is ...when!? **PM**



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