

# YOUR LEGAL FIRM'S GUIDE TO A SERVERLESS FUTURE



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Geeni

# INTRODUCTION

With a typical lawyer's workday scheduled and recorded by the minute, the last thing legal firms need while supervising teams and handling client cases is computer problems.

Even with a smoothly running IT ecosystem, managing systems and handling computer hardware places a heavy burden on a firm's budgets and time.

Today, many legal companies are considering future-proving their firms' IT systems with serverless computing. Undeniably, the idea of investing in migrating to the cloud is gaining more traction worldwide, with the number of law firms shifting their data and applications spiking in recent years.

This whitepaper answers the question 'what, how, and why serverless?'

Before exploring the benefits and concerns that legal firms face when migrating to the cloud, it is essential to understand the technology.



# WHAT IS THE CLOUD?



The cloud is basically a network of servers spanning multiple locations worldwide. Cloud computing is a pool of shared computing resources that can be rapidly provisioned or released with minimal management effort or human interaction.

Each server in the cloud provides a unique function. For instance, you can have a server using computing resources to run online applications such as Microsoft Office 365 or Teams. On the other hand, you can have a cloud server that allows users to store or access their data.

A prime example of cloud computing is Google Docs. When you edit a file on Google Docs on your office computer and then pick up from where you left when you get home, you are using the cloud. Another example is when you take a photo and upload it to your social media account on Pinterest or Instagram.

Characteristically, social media platforms use cloud services to allow users to store their data in the cloud. The cloud also makes it possible for you to upload documents on Dropbox and share them with other users. Of course, we have only mentioned a small portion of the cloud, and there are many other cloud uses, including communication, streaming, note-taking, etc.

The examples demonstrate how we encounter and interact with the cloud daily, both at work and home.

# **IDG'S 2020 CLOUD COMPUTING SURVEY**

IDG's 2020 Cloud Computing Survey put fresh statistics behind cloud migration.

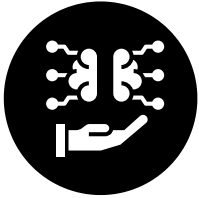
The poll results show that 81% of organizations have at least one application or a portion of their computing infrastructure in the cloud, up from 73% in 2018.

Besides, the survey discovered cloud-first applications might become more prevalent over time – currently, 46% of organization's cloud-based applications were purpose-built for the cloud, while 54% moved from an on-premises environment.



**54% of  
organizations  
moved from an  
on premise  
environment in  
2020**

# CLOUD COMPUTING FEATURES



## No. 01 – **Convenient, On-Demand, Self Service**

Needless to say, cloud computing services are convenient. The cloud offers ease of use and allows users to access applications through web browsers installed on their computers or smartphones. An organization can unilaterally provision computing resources with minimal human interaction with a cloud service provider.



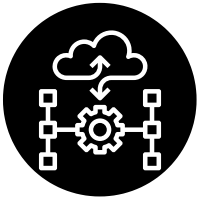
## No. 02 – **Any Location Access**

Cloud computing capabilities are available over the broad network. Therefore, users can access cloud services through standard mechanisms that allow use by various client platforms, such as workstations, laptops, and mobile phones.



## No. 03 – **The Cloud is Elastic**

Since cloud services are elastic, it is easy for users to access additional computing resources on the fly and easily scale in the cloud. Conversely, if you need to reduce the resources, you can do so automatically. This scalability feature of cloud-based solutions allows organizations to pay for only the spaces and computing power they need to meet their operational needs. Cloud's rapid inward and outward elasticity commensurate with users' demands.



#### No. 04 – **Resource Pooling**

Cloud service providers pool computing resources to serve multiple consumers using a multi-tenant model that dynamically assigns and reassigns different physical and virtual resources.



#### No. 05 – **Measured Service**

Cloud systems leverage a metering capability to control and optimize resource use automatically. In this case, a cloud service provider and client can monitor, control, audit, and report cloud resource usage, providing transparency for all stakeholders utilizing a service.



# Why move to the Cloud?

Although many sectors are migrating to the cloud, many lawyers might be apprehensive of moving applications from desktops to the cloud. But, unquestionably, using the cloud as the backbone of the legal practice's information management offers numerous benefits.

For instance, migrating to the cloud provides improved productivity, 24/7 accessibility, IT cost reduction and security. In addition, the ease of use and the capability to access applications through browsers like Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Explorer, or Google Chrome without the need to download applications to a computer or laptop makes the cloud a big on-demand deal for legal firms.

Lawyers move to the cloud to enjoy working efficiently and cost-effectively as they forgo the need to purchase high-end servers and computers to get their work done.

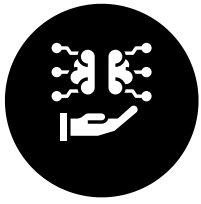


## 32%

*Solicitors Regulation Authority conducted surveyed the factors that will impact most on the legal sector next year. Participants mentioned tech and innovation as the leading factor with 32%, ahead of other factors like COVID-19 (29%) and EU exit (24%). Cybersecurity came in fourth place with 16 percent.*



# WHY MOVE TO THE CLOUD



## No. 01 – **Delivering operational innovation by migrating to the cloud**

Initially, clients blocked lawyers from adopting cloud services. However, all that has changed, and most legal firms serve customers who host sensitive information in the cloud. Gartner forecasts worldwide public cloud end-user spending to grow 23% in 2021.

According to Sid Nag, research vice president at Gartner, last year's events allowed IT officers to overcome any reluctance of moving mission-critical workloads from on-premises to the cloud. "Even absent the pandemic, there would still be a loss of appetite for data centers," stated Sid.

Gartner's insights on cloud technology indicate that cloud computing represents one of the most valuable innovations in current IT and business strategies. In separate research, analyst Craig Lowery recommends that infrastructure operations leaders implement profound changes in the structure, missions, and roles of and within IT organizations to ensure their organizations' ongoing success and relevance.



## No. 02 – **Reduced Investment on Systems and Infrastructure**

Migrating legal firm's systems to the cloud converts hefty capital expenditures to predictable and reduced operating costs. Even a small law firm requires a server that securely and reliably hosts clients' information and legal software. However, physical servers in offices (on-premise IT environment) require maintenance to keep running. Besides, law firms need IT personnel to fix IT hardware and software during breakdowns.



### **No. 03— Removing Single Points of Failure**

Law firms can deploy cloud services to store systems, programs, and data. Migrating to the cloud reduces the risk of data loss and breach significantly. On the other hand, virtualizing a firm's IT infrastructure helps law firms to easily reset their systems to the last stable state in case of an incident.



### **No. 04 – Case Administration from Any Location, at Any Time**

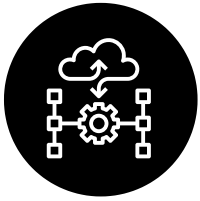
Without a doubt, on-premise servers and systems limit lawyers and their staff to using a single desktop or laptop from the office. However, today's competitive environment means that clients demand flexibility and agility.

In effect, law firms' workers must handle off-site cases, meetings, courthouse appearances, and remote communications.

Cloud computing allows law companies to install everything on virtual servers, creating an opportunity for anyone to log in to work anytime, from any location, on any device. In this case, lawyers have easy access to documents from any location, overcoming the problem of being chained to the antiquated server in the office data centre.

With Google's Suite of Apps, or Microsoft's Office 365 and Teams, lawyers and their employees have access to clients' data and material wherever there is an internet connection, giving them the freedom to work productively on the go.

Teams, Office 365, and other cloud SaaS solutions enable multiple contributors on a document and allow you to differentiate between their contributions. Besides, you can limit user access and permissions while allowing collaboration in real-time. This cloud capability cuts down on time wasted emailing documents back and forth and ensures that all employees and clients access the most up-to-date copies of essential files.



## No. 05— **Cloud Computing Enhances Security**

Even as law firms embrace technology, none wants to be the feature in a cybersecurity-related headline.

Against this background, many lawyers adjudicate on keeping this application and information on-site and avoid sharing it with cloud vendors. However, the belief that on-premise systems are secure is not true.

Even with basic security controls like a firewall with occasional spot checks, it is not sufficient to keep cybercriminals at bay.

Quite frankly, experts who intimately understand law firms' business operations develop cloud computing systems that provide secure environments to store and process sensitive data.



## No. 06 — **Efficient and Reliable Centralized Systems**

Certainly, even small law firms have branches in other locations, or remote employees, making handling applications and data more complex.

At the same time, legacy tools that enable remote access to on-premise infrastructure are slow and clunky, resulting in negative experiences for lawyers working on the go.

On top of that, running separate offices may result in data duplication and siloed operations.

Migrating to cloud services allows law firms to handle documents, software, data, and communication in a centralized system that everyone can access and uniformly experience. Instead of running costly, disjointed systems, lawyers and their staff can enjoy a seamless experience that boosts efficiency and reliability.

# POINTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MIGRATING TO THE CLOUD

Even as more legal firms migrate to the cloud to centralize their operations and transfer some IT responsibilities to a service provider, many are still concerned about whether cloud computing services can meet all their requirements. [IDG's 2020 Cloud Computing Survey](#) discovered that the biggest challenges organizations face when it comes to taking full advantage of cloud resources are data privacy and security challenges and controlling costs.

## 1. Security First



Without a doubt, there are valid concerns about data security and privacy concerns in the cloud.

The idea of transferring, processing, and storing law firms' information, including personal and sensitive business data, somewhere up in the cloud makes lawyers that deal with such a vast amount of information doubtful

Indeed, cyber-attacks target any organization or individual that stores confidential information in the cloud to use it to commit fraud, blackmail, or other criminal activities.

As more organizations migrate to the cloud to leverage capabilities like scalability, reduced costs, less IT burden, and rapid deployment, the trend creates a complex conundrum for law firms.

Undeniably, legal practice has an increased need for security and compliance, thanks to sensitive personal information, and lawyers are understandably concerned about the safety of utilizing cloud computing services.

# POINTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MIGRATING TO THE CLOUD

Cybersecurity was a top concern to attorneys in firms of all sizes, according to the [American Bar Association's Legal Technology 2019 Survey Report](#).

The previous version of the extensive survey of attorneys in private practice on the use of technology in the profession concluded that all attorneys and law firms should have appropriate comprehensive, risk-based security programs that include appropriate safeguards, training, periodic review and updating, and constant security awareness.

**The 2019 results show that while law firms have made progress in some areas, they must go further to design and implement appropriate solutions. In this case, they must recognize issues, consider the available options, and implement tailored programs for the firms while migrating to the cloud.**

Reasonably, there is no such thing as absolute security, regardless of where a law firm stores its applications and information. However, reasonable security standards apply in the cloud.

While wide usage of technology is not a justification for its use by lawyers, alternative information storage and preparation methods have inherent risks of disclosure or misuse.

This being the case, law firms have the ethical obligation to vet cloud vendors exhaustively. Lawyers must understand who accesses their confidential data, how the cloud provider handles it, and the steps taken to prevent access to unauthorized intruders.

# POINTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MIGRATING TO THE CLOUD

**Some of the reasonable precautions recommended by the ABA Committee for lawyers vetting cloud computing providers include:**

1. Acquire a general understanding of how cloud technology works
2. Review the terms of service when choosing cloud service providers
3. Learn the protections existing within the cloud for data security
4. Determine the additional steps, such as data encryption, that law firms should take before submitting sensitive information to a cloud-based system
5. Peer review to determine if a cloud-based service provider is effective in data security measures or is oddly vulnerable to cyberattacks
6. Training for lawyers and staff regarding appropriate cloud computing security controls and considerations

## 2. Financial Cost

Undeniably, cloud migration can be an uphill, expensive task for law firms. In fact, financial concerns touch on almost all migration activities.

For instance, lawyers must meet the cost to make the migration itself. This expense is in addition to the long-term financial risks of slow adoption and awareness training once the migration takes place.

Sometimes, these organizations may require redesigning their application architectures for the cloud and investing in the expertise and tools needed for a successful migration.

# POINTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MIGRATING TO THE CLOUD

Positively, cloud migration eventually sees returns of increased efficiency, lower admin costs, and streamlined rapid processes.

Despite the intimidating initial migration and training costs, a successful, financially practical cloud adoption is feasible.

A Gartner's study shows that cloud adoption will succeed in the long term, but only if organizations make fundamental changes in their organizational mission and team member roles.

**85%**

*Of existing core IT applications, are not designed using the principles of cloud-native architecture, rendering them incompatible with most cloud platforms.*

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BEST PRACTICES LAW FIRMS CAN FOLLOW TO AVOID PRICEY CLOUD MIGRATION INITIATIVES?

- Lawyers should focus on planning, including implementing a robust change management plan to manage the project scope and minimize business disruptions. In addition, a recent study recommends users determine the best migration path for each existing application (cloud versus on-premise).
- Examine your business requirements, objectives, current IT operations state, and cloud options to identify potential issues and opportunities.
- Migrate your workload (data and applications) to the cloud incrementally to enjoy flexibility while avoiding investing much money upfront.

# POINTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MIGRATING TO THE CLOUD

## 3. Skill Shortage

Despite the many benefits of cloud computing, the migration process complexity can stop law firms on their tracks.

In addition, the organizations may face challenges in finding the right people with expertise to manage an effective transition from legacy to cloud systems.

A **Gartner research report recommends** that organizations need to understand the balance of required current and new cloud skills, retiring old roles and functions, and replacing them with new ones. On top of that, law firms can update roles with adjacent skills applicable to traditional public cloud infrastructure and SaaS operations.

## WHAT IS THE SOLUTION TO FINDING THE RIGHT CLOUD EXPERTS?

- **Cultivate cloud skills internally by training current IT employees familiar with your on-premise systems and processes**
- **Partner with the right cloud services provider with the talent and dedicated resources to support a successful cloud migration**





# POINTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MIGRATING TO THE CLOUD



## 4. Adoption Resistance

Cloud migration brings many changes and disruptions, which typically face a lot of resistance from people.

A recent article published on [Management is a Journey identifies various reasons why people resist change](#).

Robert Tanner, the author, notes that employees fear the loss of status or job security in the organization. Other times, surprise and fear of the unknown may result to change resistance.

Besides, meaningful organizational change does not occur in a climate of mistrust.

### **Some of the solutions and strategies to ensure law firm's organization-wide buy-in and smooth transition to the cloud include:**

- Get leadership buy-in to drive adoption from top to bottom. Law firm managers need to understand the business objectives and migration requirements, enabling them to communicate the business case to other employees
- Identify user-friendly solutions to encourage employees to adopt and stick with them
- Invest in training to help people understand the new and complex processes in the cloud

# MOVING YOUR LAW FIRM'S CROWN JEWELS TO THE CLOUD



.Law firms have been using premise-based legal software for many years now.

After understanding cloud computing features, benefits, and concerns, it is time to consider moving law firm's practice management systems, lawyers' crown jewels, to the cloud.

Legal firms can leverage public cloud services that are currently experiencing tremendous growth.

In particular, the firms can deploy software as a service (SaaS) that remains the largest market segment.

Today, there are much more convenient, affordable, and flexible cloud-based legal applications.

With the availability of such tools, lawyers who were unsure whether it was ethically permissible for them to use cloud computing solutions are now quite clear that cloud-based legal software is a viable, affordable, convenient, and secure option for law companies of all sizes.

# GETTING STARTED WITH CLOUD GEENI

Cloud Geeni offers a complimentary audit of your current IT infrastructure, providing no-obligation information that you can use to inform any future decisions.

Cloud Geeni combines 35 years of technical expertise with the values of a family-run business. We provide unrivaled support for our clients who benefit from a consistent team of engineers assigned to each customer.

Instead of struggling with the complexities, costs, and skills shortage synonymous with cloud migration, **law firms can leverage Cloud Geeni's managed cloud services that give unequalled flexibility.**

Lawyers and their employees can securely access their data, files, and applications on any approved device, at any time, from any place, allowing them to handle clients' cases and other job functions remotely.

What's more, with Cloud Geeni, your infrastructure is in safe hands. We store data in private servers at our state-of-the-art, ISO-accredited UK-based data centers.

We also have robust security measures and a comprehensive disaster recovery system in place to safeguard your sensitive information from external threats, natural disasters, or hardware malfunction.

Cloud Geeni's managed cloud services not only improve performance and security, but it's an incredibly cost-effective solution available on a subscription-based model, meaning you only pay for what you need.

That way, your organization eliminates the heavy financial burden of installing, maintaining, and upgrading your own physical services, allowing you to reduce costs while freeing up your IT team to focus on adding real value to your business.

# GET IN TOUCH

## CONTACT

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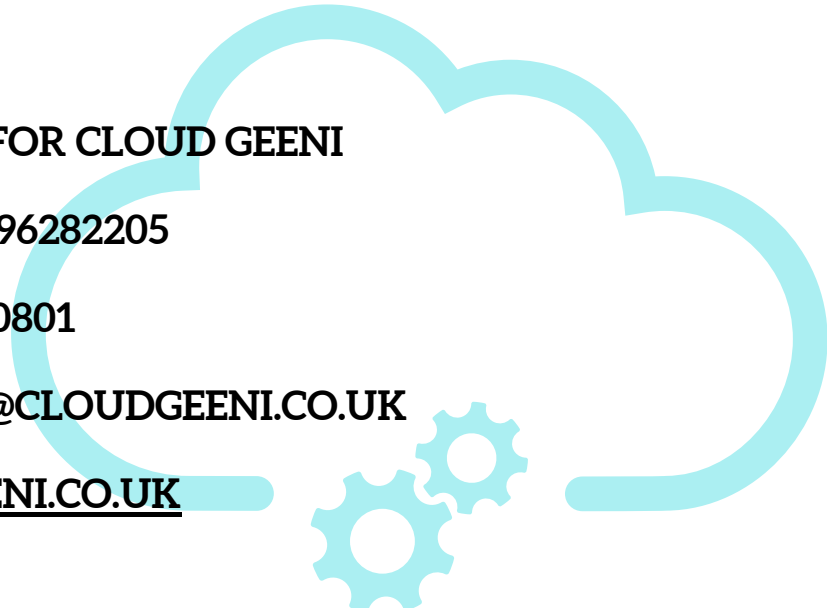
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