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ATTORNEY'S GUIDE TO
SECURING CLIENT COMMUNICATIONS

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for law firms.

Attorney's Guide to Securing Client Communications

The rise of the smartphone has given everyone a powerful mini-computer in their pocket. That means communications that were once confined to the office are now with us wherever we go: at home, restaurants, the airport, and unfortunately, even on vacation.

Between email and text messages, our phones potentially contain every piece of communication we have with clients outside of face-to-face conversations. The possibility of a confidentiality breach brings up new security concerns. Texts and emails need to be kept from prying eyes that could have a negative impact, particularly for sensitive client communications.

There are ways for attorneys to encrypt both of these types of mobile communications. Some are easily accomplished with tools that most businesses have readily available, while others may require the download of third party apps or the assistance of a company versed in online and mobile security. Which method you choose will depend on your type of practice and the level of sensitivity of your client communications.

Email

Use Adobe Acrobat

When it comes to email, it's imperative to encrypt any communication with clients. This is good practice not only because the ubiquity of our mobile devices, but also because of the possibility that email accounts will be hacked or otherwise compromised remotely.

The most common way to encrypt an email is to copy and paste the content of the email, letter or document into Adobe Acrobat Pro and save it with password encryption. In more advanced orientations, it's possible to automate the copy and paste process so that your email server can perform this operation. Adobe's latest Acrobat version has the ability to apply 256-bit encryption. This is one of the best ways to encrypt basic communication with clients using tools that the firm probably already has on hand, and which the client can download for free (Adobe Reader, a free download, is all that's required to view the encrypted documents).

For more detailed instructions on using Adobe Acrobat to encrypt documents, click here.

Implement Key-Based Encryption

For a more advanced security to protect your email, use key-based encryption, this generates unique mathematically-linked keys for the sender and the recipient to decipher the sent document. At any point, you can revoke the other party's ability to view an encrypted document, making it a more secure choice. Users also don't have to enter a password every time they want to enter a shared folder on the network.

Key-based encryption provides additional security above and beyond password-based systems. Firms should upgrade to key-based encryption when dealing with more sensitive matters. It's highly secure and provides an extra layer of centralized security. Legal Workspace, a pioneer in cloud services for law firms, works with firms to implement these types of solutions.

Texting

Safeguard Text Communications

Clients and attorneys alike increasingly use texts to communicate more efficiently. Texting is particularly useful when clients are at work but the attorney needs a quick answer – or simply because the client is more comfortable texting rather than talking on the phone or sending/receiving email. As our devices become more capable, there are fewer functions that cannot be accomplished via text message.

Therefore, it's important to know how to secure these messages as well. There are several third-party applications that you can download to keep text messages encrypted while in transit as well as at rest on the device.

These apps require you to enter a password to access the encrypted data each time you view it. Therefore, there's little chance that someone other than you can see what has been communicated through texts.

Utilizing these apps provides peace of mind knowing your communications remain confidential if your phone is ever lost or stolen.

Here's a list of some of the more functional and popular third party apps for securing your texts:

- Babel
- TextSecure
- Gliph
- CoverMe

When deciding on the best app for your firm, consider your type of mobile device and the level of security required to provide the appropriate confidentiality.

If you worry a bit each time you press send, it may be time to take a look at the security of your client communications. Legal Workspace can help your firm address the security concerns surrounding your mobile communication platforms. It's what we do every day, and we know how to leverage technology for different practice areas and law firm needs. Contact us to find the right solution for keeping your smartphone communications smart.

Legal Workspace is a pioneer in cloud-based work environments and data storage designed specifically for law firms. Learn more or arrange a free demo at legal-workspace.com. Click here to watch our video.