

# **Needles**® *The Customizable Case Management Software for Law Firms*

## **What is this “cloud” you speak of? Five things you need to know about the Case Management Software and the Cloud**

“The Cloud” is one of the most popular and most misunderstood technical buzzwords in use today. One of the top questions our sales team gets asked is, “Can Needles be in the cloud?” Here at Needles, we know law firms are bombarded with cloud-based options and advertisements for software and hosting packages “in the cloud”. The purpose of this document is to educate on cloud computing and explain how you can take advantage of a cloud based solution for your practice management needs.

### **What is the Cloud?**

The cloud refers to the giant information parking lot that is the internet. The internet is not just web pages and email. You can store your important data there so that it is accessible from anywhere, as opposed to storing it on your own hard drive and it only being accessible from that one place. Instead of being in your hands, it is “up in the cloud”.

### **What is the difference between Web based and Cloud based?**

Many times these phrases are used interchangeably, but they are very different!

Web based refers to a software program that exists only as a website and not as a traditional installed piece of software. Most web based programs are cloud hosted. They are often appealing due to their ease of use and relatively low startup cost. However, most web based practice management programs are entirely too basic.

Cloud based means that the information is stored somewhere on the internet. Traditional software can be installed locally or hosted in a cloud environment. Hosting traditional software in a cloud environment allows firms to take advantage of the feature-rich nature of traditional software without the nuisance of hosting data themselves.

### **How does Cloud hosting work?**

If you are interested in having your data stored in the cloud, you can hire a hosting company. This has become extremely popular, and there are many good companies to choose from. For a monthly fee, they will setup virtual remote computers for you. These computers will have everything that you would usually have installed locally (like Windows, Microsoft Office, Needles, QuickBooks, etc.); but the key difference is that those programs are hosted on the provider’s internet servers and not on your own. This allows you to access this remote environment from anywhere in the world and work just like you do when you are sitting at your own office desk. As part of the package, the hosting company usually takes care of monitoring your network, updating your software, and safely backing up your data.

### **How do I know if Cloud Hosting is right for me?**

It used to be the case that if you wanted to run a robust database system for your law firm, you had to purchase expensive computer server equipment and hire IT professionals to setup and maintain the network. While larger firms may still choose to do this, there are now many options available to firms that don’t want to take on that kind of expense and responsibility. Hiring a hosting company comes with monthly fees that can range from \$60-\$120 per user. Their packages often include Microsoft Office and a hosted email server. While over time, these costs will end up totaling more than buying your own server, there are significantly less upfront costs and potential IT headaches. Think of it like renting vs. buying. If you want to own your own home, wonderful. But if you don’t want the high cost or to deal with the upkeep, renting from a good landlord who is always there when you call can be the best fit for you.

### **Ok, I want to move to the Cloud. What next?**

We have over 2,000 firms all over the country using Needles in many different ways. Based on client feedback, we have identified six hosting companies that are currently successfully hosting Needles clients’ data in the cloud. While they all provide similar hosting services, they do vary in specialties and costs. We recommend properly researching any possible hosting company to make sure they are the right fit for your firm’s particular needs.

**Needles Cloud Hosting Vendor Options (in no particular order):**

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Uptime Systems  
[www.uptimeLEGAL.com](http://www.uptimeLEGAL.com)  
[sales@uptimeLEGAL.com](mailto:sales@uptimeLEGAL.com)  
888-878-4632



AirDesk Solutions  
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