No cloud could equal gaps in your law firm's security

So, it's 2017 and your law firm still hasn't transitioned to the cloud. What's your hesitation? Everyday, your practice handles countless pieces of sensitive information, which require the highest level of security. If your firm hasn't grasped the cloud, you could be leaving yourself and your clients vulnerable to potential security breaches.

A constantly changing IT environment

The last 10 years have brought about significant changes in the world of information technology. Whether your firm is an established practice with 30 years of experience or a relatively new endeavor in the legal community, it is vitally important that you keep abreast of changes to the IT landscape. Let's look at some of those changes and how they may affect your legal practice.

- **Internet of Things (IoT)** – As your office equipment increasingly communicates with your computers, it transforms your legal practice in various ways. From smartphones and smartwatches to connected coffee makers and voice controlled devices, IoT objects add convenience to your professional life. Unfortunately, there is a potential price to pay for all of that convenience. Each IoT device provides an additional entry point for hackers and most law firms are ill-equipped to handle the possible risks. An AT&T Cybersecurity Insights Report survey found that 85% of 5,000 responding businesses plan to utilize IoT devices. However, only 10% of those surveyed felt confident in their abilities to secure these connected objects. Adequately securing IoT devices requires protections built into the devices, as well as the connections that link the devices to one another. This means that these

devices are only as secure as the network you use to connect them. If you haven't taken measures to secure your practice data, your IoT devices could be placing sensitive client matters at risk.

- **Mobility** — As the world becomes more mobile, so does the legal industry. Attorneys are able to leave their offices and handle matters from anywhere in the world. You no longer have to sit at your office desk to complete work. WIth laptops and smartphones, you can conduct business in the courthouse or while eating lunch in a cafe across town. Again, this increased mobility increases your susceptibility to threats. Do you have systems and policies in place to ensure that your attorneys and staff members are working over secured networks? Public wifi is not secure and information transmitted over these networks can easily be intercepted.

The other threat to mobility centers on the physical devices you use to make it possible. Laptops and flash drives can be lost or stolen, placing stored information in the hands of anyone. With the cloud, there is no need to store valuable information on easily accessible laptops and flash drives. You can set the parameters of access to provide an extra layer of security for your most important client data.

I know that switching to the cloud may seem like a large challenge, but cyber security is constantly changing, creating new and more serious threats for your legal practice. Isn't it time you at least consider updating your firm's security measures?

About Erika Winston:

Erika Winston is a freelance writer with a passion for law. Through her business, The Legal Writing Studio, she helps legal professionals deliver effective written messages. Erika is a regular contributor to TimeSolv and a variety of other publications.