Cloud computing and private practice: Understanding the risks

Presented by
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Introduction

- My name is Andrew Barbara.
- I have been the Managing Director of FocusNet Group for 8 years.
- For 6 of those years I have been developing cloud solutions for private practices throughout Australia.
- Currently, FocusNet Group provides cloud services to more than 30 practices throughout Australia.
- Today I am going to take you on the same journey I took with cloud computing, and help you understand risks and rewards of using cloud services.
Today’s Topics

- What is cloud computing?
- Why is cloud computing relevant for medical practitioners?
- What are the risks, and when should I be considering moving to the cloud?
- If you’re moving to the cloud, what should you be looking for in a cloud service provider?
- Case studies
What is cloud computing?

Definition | History | How it Works
Cloud computing is best described as:

“the delivery of computing services over the internet.”

This can be applications, platforms or infrastructure.
History

- Cloud computing has been around for decades.
- Before the year 2000 it was only available to technology companies and big business.
- In the early 2000’s, high speed broadband provided a more reliable platform for cloud services.
- By mid 2000, large technology companies (Google, Microsoft, IBM etc..) were turning to cloud computing to drive their products and services.
- Today’s cloud applications - Gmail, Office, Facebook and iCloud.
How it works
Why is cloud computing relevant for medical practitioners?

Today’s cloud \ Clouds and clinics
Today’s cloud

- Microsoft, Amazon, Apple and IBM are continuing to shift their technology into the cloud.
- If you use a phone, tablet, pc or mac, you are reliant on cloud computing.
- The reliance on cloud computing is increasing.
- Over the past few years, I have noticed our clients move from “wanting” to “needing” cloud solutions.
5 Reasons why cloud computing is relevant to private practices:

1. Centralised IT Services - manage and maintain IT from one location.
2. Device independence - for employees who want to bring their own device (BYOD) to work.
3. Flexible work - offer employees the ability to work from anywhere at anytime within Australia.
4. Multiple locations - For practices with more than 1 clinic or for specialists who move between clinics.
5. Business continuity and security - Never have to worry about disaster recovery, backups or security.
Clouds and clinics (cont.)

- Centralised IT allows for multiple clinics with a consistent IT experience.
- Staff can move between locations (practice, home, hospital)
- Access to the cloud can be from multiple device types - phones, tablets, Mac’s or PC’s.
- Access to systems 24/7
Clouds and clinics (cont.)
What are the risks, and when should I be considering moving to the cloud?

Security \ Privacy \ Sovereignty \ Integration \ Portability \ Timing
What are the risks?

Now that we know what cloud computing is, and why its relevant for private practices, lets discuss some of the risks of cloud computing.

Risks can be categorised into:
- Security and privacy risks
- Data sovereignty risks
- Integration risks
- Portability risks
Security and privacy

- You have a legal and moral obligation to ensure the security and privacy of your patient data.
- The threat to security and privacy in today’s connected world requires a dedicated solution.
- It’s possible to have better security and privacy in a cloud environment if you deal with the right provider.
- You need to be asking your IT provider -
  - How do you protect my data?
  - Is my data encrypted?
  - Who has access to my data?
Data sovereignty

- Left blank
Integration

- Will all of your clinical services interface with a cloud environment?
- What if you want to add a specialist to the team and they use their own applications and devices?
- When researching a cloud service you’re looking for technology that is flexible, scalable and well supported.
- If you’re making compromises then you need to ask yourself is the cloud right for you.
Portability

- Portability is the ability to move your cloud service, whether that be from one provider to another, or to a different technology with the same provider.

- Cloud computing comes in many flavours, ultimately your cloud provider needs to be able to show you their architecture and demonstrate its scalability and flexibility.

- Clear separation between data and applications (PaaS) and compute (IaaS) is an important feature to look for.
A secure network
Timing

- The IT Lifecycle
- Reasons why the timing might not be right
  - Recently bought a new server
  - IT is not a limiting factor in scaling your practice up and down
- Reasons why the timing might be right:
  - You need to replace ageing IT infrastructure
  - You’re opening a new practice
  - You’re expanding your current practice
  - You want to offer a more flexible work place for your staff
What to look for when selecting a cloud provider

Experience \ Expertise
The truth is that cloud computing will work for some of you and not work for others.

To know if cloud computing is going to work for you, you should:

- Canvas a few different providers to compare offerings;
- Ask to speak with reference sites;
- Identify and assess the risks discussed today;
- Look for experience and expertise;
- Cloud computing provides value for money; and,
- Is it a “true” cloud service
Expertise

- Does my provider know my clinical applications - Genie, Best Practice, Medical Director?
- Does my provider know my 3rd party applications for results, auditing and referrals?
- Does my provider understand common practice equipment - spirometers, ECG’s etc.?
Case studies

\ Fremantle Family Doctors \ Northern Eye \ Ocean Keys Practice
Fremantle Family Doctors

- Started using cloud computing over 3 years ago.
- One of the first medical practices to use cloud computing.
- 30 staff at two practices.
- So why was it right for them:
  - 2 practices with one database
  - Staff to work at both practices
  - Scale up and down with their registrars
  - Wanted to focus on patients and business not IT
  - Dedicated security and disaster recover solutions
Northern Eye Surgeons uses traditional on site IT. It works for them because:
- They understand the technology and how to get the most out of it.
- They like the fact they can see their data on site.
- They have no plans for another practice or more staff, they are happy where they are.
- The assessed the risks and they would prefer to stay with the technology they have always used.
Ocean Keys Practice

- Has been using cloud computing for over 2 years.
- It was being managed by their owner and doctor.
- Wanted a solution that was low on support, high on uptime and allow him to open a new practice.
- In 2 years less than 12 support calls.
- The real advantage of cloud for Ocean Keys is flexibility.
- Cloud computing meant that the owner could offer flexible work arrangements for his staff because he didn’t have any IT limitations.
Conclusion

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- Why is cloud computing relevant for medical practitioners?
- What are the risks, and when should I be considering moving to the cloud?
- If you’re moving to the cloud, what should you be looking for in a cloud service provider?
- Come and see us at our information booth if you want to learn more about cloud computing.