

Modernising Legal Organisations with Cloud Solutions

Migrating from on-premise systems to SaaS



OPUS

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Transitioning legal organisations to a cloud-first environment

It's recognised that cloud technology is the way forward for IT and telecoms infrastructure.

Reasons for mass adoption over the last few decades include scalability, ease of use, and simple integration with line of business apps. Yet, businesses like law firms and government bodies have traditionally been slower to adopt new practices, often hindered by the complexities of data protection and the demands of regulatory compliance.

These barriers to adoption are now lower than they've ever been. Thanks to constant innovation and dedicated partner support, legal organisations are now moving their IT infrastructure to the cloud.

If you're poised to begin your cloud journey, carefully weighing the advantages of enhanced remote work capabilities and productivity gains against cost concerns and risk management, read on to discover the opportunities for legal organisations and how straightforward the initial steps can be.

In 2022:

40% of law firms said cloud adoption played a fundamental role in enabling collaboration for virtual teams - a 37% increase since 2020



Why are legal firms late to cloud adoption?

Before we delve into the specifics of implementations, it's important to consider why on-premises infrastructure remains in use despite the widespread shift to cloud-based solutions across various industries.

It's a common observation that the legal industry is often so bound by governance and compliance processes that even simple tasks, like opening a web browser, can feel slower and more cumbersome than the actual work performed within it.

When you get past all the red tape, however, businesses, even those as risk-aware and highly-governed as the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), thrive in their new environments.

So, what's really holding back cloud adoption?

What are the reasons behind the slow transition of IT and telecoms services to the cloud?

And are those reasons justified or do they reflect hesitation within a traditionally conservative industry?



As part of our MoJ and wider Government strategy, we are putting cloud first. The MoJ has been taking strides toward this for a few years via Digital's Platform and Architecture modernisation and hosting offers. Technology Services has now adopted two core platforms, with the needs of users very much at the centre of everything we do. Our aim is to make technology more reliable and resilient while reducing costs and bringing services in-house, where practical.



Emma Harley,
Technical Product Manager at the MoJ.

1. Data security and confidentiality concerns in legal organisations

Given the handling of large volumes of highly sensitive and confidential client data, it is essential for legal organisations to ensure secure storage while adhering to stringent regulatory and compliance standards.

It's always been the view that your on-premises servers or even paper documentation is impenetrable. Hackers can't access your private network and you've got a solid security system to keep unwanted visitors at bay.

So why change? Why migrate to the cloud?

Alongside the benefits of competitive advantage, boosted productivity, and attracting better talent (more on these points later), we must also highlight that the "risk" of cloud security is proven time and again to be that of misconfiguration, also known as human error.

In fact, according to a Cloud Security Report by Check Point, the overriding reasons for cloud data breach are:

- **Misconfiguration**
- **Data exposed by users**
- **Account compromise**

All these are possible flaws in both cloud and on-premises deployments. The common denominator isn't technology, it's humans.

23% of misconfigurations are due to the insecure use of data backups



2. Lack of internal expertise and siloed technology

In large legal organisations, it's common for IT and telecom functions to be split up. The person tasked with managing your phone system has a totally different skillset to that of your systems admin, looking after their own niche responsibilities.

This has long discouraged advances toward more modern technology solutions. After all, if you invested in your people to specialise in these core areas, what will they do when you upgrade? What new training is required and what's the cost associated?

Fortunately, this is blinkered thinking. Just as we're accustomed to getting the latest iPhone and using it straight away, cloud applications must be simple to use and with short learning curves.

To succeed cross-market, and especially in industries like legal and government, any new app introduced to a business has to come with near-zero resistance when even the most tech-adverse employee comes to use it.

This extends to the implementation and administration, too. In a perfect world, any of your IT resources should be able to roll out the latest cloud phone system. We're talking about drag and drop builders and usernames and passwords, rather than PBX programming and installation of line cards.



3. Existing long-term contracts

When moving to software as a service (SaaS), nine times out of ten, there's an incumbent solution in place. The temptation here is to let the agreement run to its end, often at the detriment of productivity and cloud enablement.

On the face of it, letting a contract expire seems the most feasible option. It's certainly the one that makes the most financial sense on paper. But it's not the balance sheet where legal secretaries and consultants do their work.

Instead, it is the specialised applications for functions such as document management and timekeeping that are currently in use and hindering employee productivity. If the barrier to adopting new functionality which could enhance efficiency and drive company profits is existing contracts, then your organisation may be incurring hidden costs in other, less tangible areas. Ending an established partnership can be challenging but it is often more cost-effective in the long run.

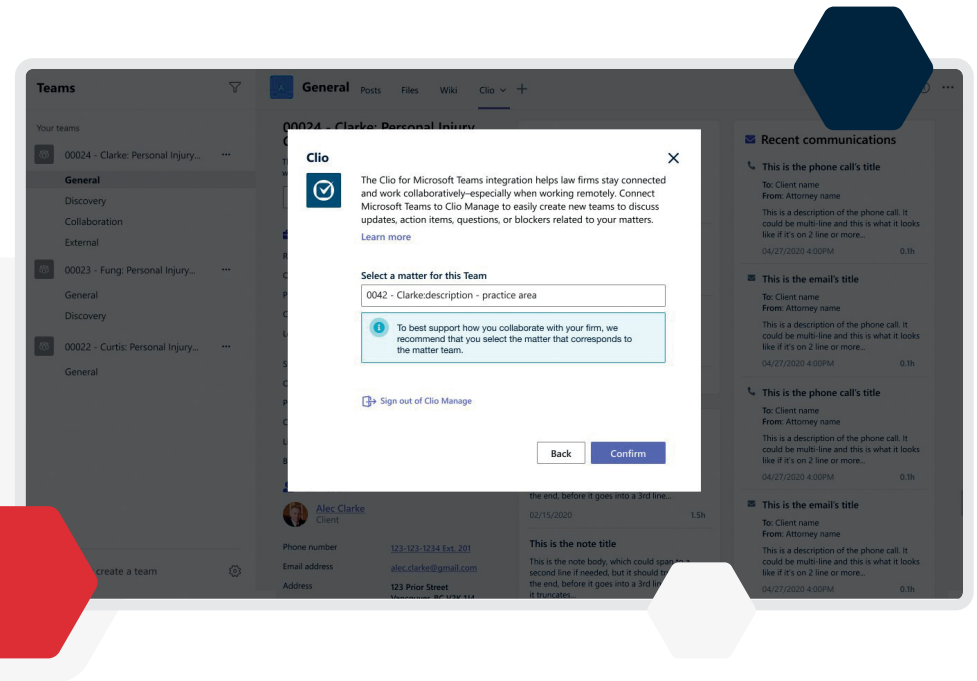


4. Lack of integration with specialist apps

Using niche apps like Clockify, Clio, LawStack, or even industry-agnostic apps like Adobe Scan has often meant legal reps are working in silos, switching between apps all day long.

Due to customer demand and the advent of open APIs, it's now possible to build your own custom integrations or utilise out-of-the-box options with the majority of software.

When reviewing the unified communications as a service (UCaaS) market, for example, vendors will have an extensive list of CRM integrations.



What are the cloud opportunities for legal organisations?

To understand the opportunities waiting for your business, we must first examine the technology and look at common problems legal teams are looking to overcome.

It's rare to find a problem that can't be solved with the introduction of cloud technology combined with the right people and processes alongside it.



With our client Monckton Chambers we reduced costs by 50% through modernising infrastructure, adopting cloud technologies and enhancing their cyber security strategies.

Ashley Wyatt,
Senior IT Sales Consultant



1. Employee retention and the war for talent

The “war for talent” is a term coined by Steven Hankin of McKinsey & Company in 1997. It was originally in reference to an increasingly competitive landscape for recruiting and retaining talented employees.

Due to the widespread adoption of remote working, it has become a significant issue that legal firms are losing staff because of inadequate technology to support a remote workforce. With limited talent available, top candidates are increasingly opting to join legal organisations that offer robust remote working technology. Discussion about desktop as a service, which collaboration apps are used, and flexible work policies are now commonplace during the interview process. You can only have these conversations if the underlying tech exists.

And it's not just remote working. The best legal staff demand the best tech to support them. They know that they are more productive when using certain systems, which leads them to decline offers from firms that are lagging behind.

Think about it. If you knew you were starting a job that limited your productivity, would you take it?

Productivity on the whole is at stake. We're talking about outcomes in a specific timeframe.

While it may be cliché that lawyers bill by the minute and don't mind a slow-loading PC, the reality is that we're all trying to get as much done and get it right first time in the shortest time frame possible. After all, the more you get done, the more you bill.

Likewise, there's the old adage that lawyers are used to working long hours. However, if we adopt a model where increased productivity means more billable hours completed in less time, it could actually lead to more free time for everyone. In other words, the more efficiently lawyers work, the faster they can reach their billing goals, potentially reducing the need for long hours.

As much as there is an argument for legal teams knowing what they're getting themselves into, and while it's highly publicised on television, the happier and less stressed any workforce is, the better they'll perform.

2. Facilitating remote work while remaining compliant

Embracing remote work as the new standard and understanding the benefits of such a shift will inevitably involve addressing potential compliance challenges.

This is particularly true in the legal industry, where data protection, call recording, and disaster recovery are critical priorities. Acknowledging these essential needs, cloud providers have not only developed workarounds but also created advanced technologies that deliver all the functionality of a secure, on-premises system, even while working remotely or from home.

One example is the deployment of Microsoft Teams Phone Mobile to facilitate remote working in a manner that you can still record calls while adhering to compliance.

The Microsoft Teams mobile app enables you to access files and communicate with colleagues and external contractors. However, by enabling Teams Phone Mobile with the appropriate compliance-driven call recording option, you can make and receive calls with the same level of security as your existing solution. Additionally, you can process payments in full compliance with PCI DSS regulations.

Even when we look at new technologies, like generative AI, there are so many uses for things like Microsoft Copilot with meeting summaries, inbox prioritisation, and first drafts created by prompts. Paralegals, lawyers, and clerks alike will all welcome the productivity gains. When properly integrated with your existing systems and governed to the highest standards, your data remains secure, eliminating the "hallucinations" that businesses once feared.



3. Introducing new technology without risk

One of the major obstacles to cloud adoption is the perceived risk.

When changing any technology, there is always concern about:

- **Change**
- **Adoption**
- **Learning**
- **Pushback**

These are all alleviated by using the right technology partner and appropriate communications planning. However, often the overriding fear is the risk of introducing new technology and there being a security breach.

It's well-documented when any firm suffers a cyberattack or any data breach whether it is cloud or on-premises. The reputational and monetary damage can be devastating.

That's why we advocate for minimum change solutions with significant cybersecurity software by its side.

Take Sophos Endpoint Detection and Response, for example. While the natural start to your cloud journey might be your phone system, it pays to start your cloud experience with the industry's most robust zero-touch endpoint defense.

Lawyers will be using Teams, or any platform you select, to make calls and send messages across multiple devices, freeing them from being tethered to their desks and allowing them to capture notes in real-time.

Devices in use include:

- **Office desktop**
- **Laptop at home**
- **Laptop in hotels**
- **Laptop in courtroom lobbies and meeting rooms**
- **Mobile phones in all the above**

The point here is that these devices change location and could be susceptible to potential breaches or attacks. That is unless you take the necessary steps to protect them.

In the case of Sophos Endpoint Detection, you get instant visibility of suspicious activity across your endpoints and servers so you can act before adversaries can impact your systems.

It's not all down to you, either. Most managed service providers introduce a level of proactive cybersecurity consultancy as opposed to just software. Here, you're getting the best of both worlds:

- **High-end cloud security and threat detection**
- **Experience and expertise from subject matter experts skilled in cloud transformation**

4. Establishing a network for cloud technology

When making changes to your setup, like phone systems and IT infrastructure, you must ensure what lies beneath can support it. In many legal organisations, however, the reliance on a legacy network causes more problems than it's worth counting.

Whether it's granting VPN access on a daily basis or diagnosing slow network performance, these minor but frequent tickets clog up precious time for IT admins and interrupt the flow of key billing personnel in your business.

While the budget may not be there for a standalone network overhaul and modernisation, as part of a larger project, there is a case for new networking and connectivity technologies, like Secure Access Service Edge (SASE—cloud-native architecture that unifies SD-WAN with security functions like secure web gateway, cloud access security broker, and zero-trust network access into one service.)

The ability to rely on a single architecture for all networking requirements, while putting in place futureproof infrastructure for your next-gen phone system and cloud apps, becomes a no-brainer when the business is aware of the benefits of the cloud.



5. Maintaining differentiation and a competitive edge

If competing firms are embracing new technology, you must do the same. That's the bottom line.

Outdated technology could be the difference when clients are appointing your firm or renewing their contract. While clients may not know if you're using a cloud versus on-premises phone system or email server, they will notice the extended lead times and delays in communication.

The same applies to staff. If another firm has successfully completed its digital transformation journey and can attract staff with flexible working policies, it's not just clients who may move to a competitor.



Where to start with your cloud migration

PwC's Law Firms' Study opens with the statement that, "Most law firms have transitioned some key applications for practice management, document management and people systems to the cloud, but there are significant legacy data centre migrations that many firms need to undertake to fully move to the cloud."

However, for those who do complete their migrations, 81% report an increase in profit. These are the firms that start with a methodical plan and a clear goal in mind. If you're approaching your journey to a cloud-first environment, make sure you factor in the following key criteria when planning.



1. Goals and expected outcomes

If your goal is merely to implement cloud technology, you're already at a disadvantage. Your digital strategy must be purposeful and aligned with business metrics and key performance indicators.

For example, your goal may be to transition your entire collaboration estate to the cloud, but the anticipated outcome should be a 30% increase in productivity for all staff within the first six months. Even if the outcome is not directly measurable or tangible, it's essential to outline your expected results when developing your business case and implementation plan.

Goal	Expected Outcome
Improved Collaboration and Remote Access	Seamless access for employees working remotely or across different locations, boosting productivity.
Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity	Robust data backup and recovery solutions to minimise downtime and maintain operations during disruptions.
Streamlined Document Management	Centralised, cloud-based document management system enhancing organisation and version control.
Cost Optimisation	Reduced operational costs due to minimised physical infrastructure and efficient resource usage.
Automation of Repetitive Tasks	Reduced manual workload for administrative tasks, freeing up time for higher-value work.
Integration with Legal Tech Tools	Easier integration with specialised legal software, improving workflow efficiency.
Compliance with E-Discovery Requirements	Faster and more efficient e-discovery processes in response to litigation or investigations.
Improved IT Security Management	Proactive threat detection and response mechanisms in place, enhancing overall security.

2. Make long term plans with short term tactics

As with any project plan, you'll need a long-term view of what you expect to happen when. But, as with the best-executed plans, you must break down your major milestones into actionable tactics and actions that help you achieve these goals.

Remember, cloud technology is just an enabler, so always focus on the outcomes you want to achieve, not just the tools you're using. Consider introducing review gates to ensure your milestone has been reached with all your expected outcomes in mind. At each key milestone, make sure you communicate the progress and benefits to all stakeholders

While seeing the bigger picture is a key trait of the best project managers, being able to condense large projects into smaller easy-to-achieve chunks is crucial when undertaking such a large-scale project.



3. Finding the right enablement partner

If you're driving a Formula One car, you need specialist tyres that combine speed, grip, and durability. Matching with a technology partner must be the same.

You can't just select any managed services provider with a track record of providing cloud services. Rather, you need someone who will work with you as a partner and has experience delivering projects to businesses like yours.

When shortlisting suppliers of cloud applications, ask questions about their legal industry clients' challenges and find out how they overcome them. Ask for an introductory call to the client they showcase.

Consider someone with an ITIL service desk, who operates as a single point of contact between the service provider and the user. This way, you can outsource the management of support tickets and service requests, knowing you're in capable, well-trained hands.

Finding a niche partner with relevant experience could be the difference between becoming one of the 81% of legal businesses experiencing an increase in profit or being labelled as one of the legal firms falling behind with significant migrations that are never completed.



About Opus

Opus is a leading managed service provider specialising in IT, cyber security, UC and contact centre solutions tailored for the legal sector. As the largest privately-owned MSP in the UK, we partner with top technology providers like Five9, 8x8, Microsoft, Sophos, and Mimecast, ensuring clients benefit from cutting-edge business technology, seamless communication solutions, and dedicated support.

We also offer guidance on using AI tools like Microsoft Copilot to help legal professionals streamline workflows, improve document management and enhance productivity across the Microsoft 365 suite of applications.

With expertise across unified communications, outsourced IT, advanced security services, contact centre, and business mobile, our comprehensive, industry-leading solutions enable legal organisations to operate securely, efficiently, and with confidence in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Ready to transform your legal organisation with cloud technology?
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