



Document Management in the Cloud

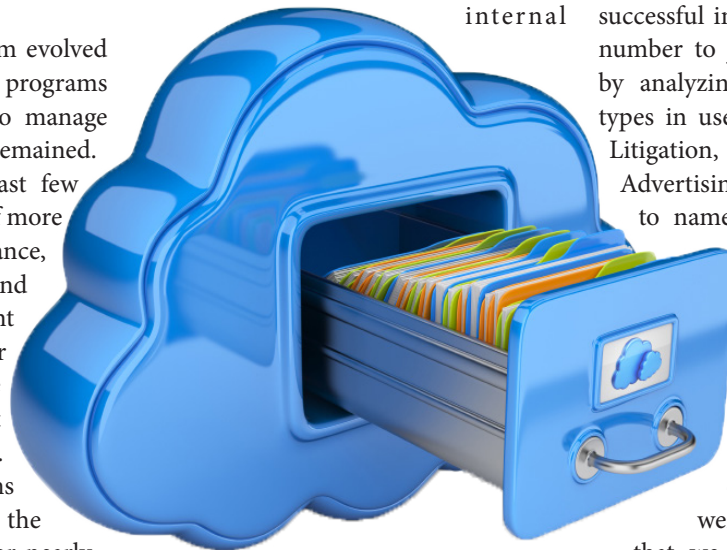
By **Judi Flournoy**, CIO, Kelley Drye & Warren LLP

Law firms are unique in that the product they produce is in the form of documents whether they be briefs, agreements, contracts, etc. As such, the management of documents including naming conventions, versions and security drove the industry to adopt document management as part of the core application ecosystem.

Over the years, that ecosystem evolved to include numerous other programs but the fundamental need to manage documents effectively has remained. The key difference in the last few years is the implementation of more robust information governance, including retention and disposition. Add to that client security requirements and or regulatory requirements like HIPPA and the persistent need to manage knowledge. This evolution has driven firms like Kelley Drye to evaluate the platform it had been using for nearly two decades and make the determination to move to a cloud or SaaS (software as a service) based system.

When Kelley Drye's Knowledge Management Steering Committee undertook the evaluation of alternatives to the then on premise document management system (DMS), the group specifically looked at products that were more future focused where ease of use, ease of access and security were incumbent features. The solution chosen was NetDocuments (www.netdocuments.com) a cloud based DMS with a long history in legal but with a more current history with large firm migrations to their platform.

After finalizing the decision to move from the on premise platform, the real work began. Within the context of any large, complex project, the amount of planning that went into the migration to the cloud based platform was as comprehensive as any project we had ever undertaken. Our team consisted of internal



resources and external resources including subject matter experts from the NetDocuments team and external project management resources from CornerStone IT.

We began by identifying key stakeholders and forming a project Steering Committee. This committee met each month to review the project both from a technical as well as policy perspective. The role of the committee was to weigh in on key decisions such as how much of the legacy data would be migrated into the new platform. We spent months determining that we really did not need to migrate all of the documents. We set a fifteen-year threshold, migrated

any document that had been touched in fifteen years and archived the rest for future disposition.

We also tackled the number of document types that we had. The legacy platform contained two-hundred and fifty-five document types ranging from .DOC to Agreement. We were successful in narrowing down the total number to just over ninety by going live by analyzing the existing documents types in use in each practice area e.g. Litigation, Corporate, Labor, Tax, Advertising Law, International Trade to name a few. Presenting those statistics to the individual practice focus groups gave them the ability to make the informed decision and to map the legacy document types to the more clearly refined document types that we were recommending. Note that we started by recommending seventy-nine.

The fact that we are at ninety-one is still a significant improvement over the two-hundred plus we had and frankly most were either rarely used or not used very effectively.

We also did a thorough review of security and how that was applied in the legacy system and how best to apply security in the new cloud based DMS. We did a little housekeeping and while we did migrate just under ten million documents, we eliminated eighteen servers.

The question on Cloud is often asked in

this way. Is it secure? To the particular question we were able to demonstrate through our partnership with NetDocuments that their hosted DMS was in fact, more secure than our on premise DMS had been. With SOC 2+, HIPPA, FINRA, FIPS Level 3, and their utilization of erasure coding, dual custody encryption, and applying a unique cipher key per digital file had and have to this day a high level of confidence in the security of our data.

In choosing NetDocument or a Cloud based DMS, we were keenly interested in adopting a platform that would take the firm will into the future where new development in Artificial Intelligence could be brought to bear in our everyday work that we do on behalf of our clients. In a recent development, NetDocuments has fulfilled that commitment to innovation through its acquisition of ThreadKM that has since been rebranding ndThread.

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These are the reasons you make the financial and resource commitment to such a large, complex and relatively expensive project. To be clear, we did not move off the legacy DMS just to go to the Cloud. We moved off of the legacy DMS because we knew that in order to serve our clients more effectively and efficiently we needed a better toolkit and one that would not only provide better collaboration capabilities but also provide the level of security that our clients expect.

In closing, if you are evaluating moving some or all of your system(s) to a Cloud based platform the keys to the success of that initiative are: evaluation, planning, communication, training and execution.

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Judith Flourney