



Mapping Your Path to the Cloud

A Guide to Getting your Dental Organization
Set to Transition to Cloud-Based
Dental Education Software

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Why the Cloud?

Mapping Your Path to the Cloud



As a busy dental organization, you don't have time to worry about the IT side of running a modern clinic. You want to spend your days providing the best patient care possible, not worrying about updating your electronic health record (EHR) management system or what might happen if your server crashes. That's why you're considering a move to cloud-based dental education software.

You've heard about the many benefits such as reduced IT costs and the ability to access your clinic data from anywhere at any time, not to mention the improved efficiencies cloud software providers can offer.

While the thought of transitioning to a cloud-based system can seem a bit overwhelming, it's actually relatively painless—as long as you properly prepare and understand the changes a cloud-based system will bring to your clinic.

This guide will help you map-out your move, making your organization's transition to the cloud as smooth as possible.



Cloud Benefit

Work when and where you want. When your EHR data is stored in the cloud, you have 24/7 access to patient data or to check the schedule even when you're away from the office. This is a great benefit for dental organizations that have multiple clinics.

Ready for Web-based Dentistry?

Preparing Your Organization for the Cloud.



As cloud computing becomes more popular and financially feasible for dental education organizations, many are moving to Web-based platforms such as axiUm Ascend—and this trend is only expected to continue in the coming years.

If you're ready to become one of those institutions, it's time to start thinking about what you need to do to successfully make this transition. Here's your checklist:

- Develop a Strategy
- Do your research
- Make sure your Internet is up to speed
- Have a backup plan
- Make necessary upgrades
- Understand the costs
- Prepare your team
- Make the move
- Note all the things you leave behind



Cloud Benefit

Freedom of choice. With cloud-based software, you can access your patient data from any device you choose, whether it's a Mac, a PC or an iPad. Everyone on your team will have the same experience regardless of the technology they use.

Automatic updates. Once you move to the cloud, you'll never again have to download, upgrade, install or maintain your dental education software. It will happen automatically on the server side so, every time you log-in, you're using the latest version of the system.

What is Your Game Plan?

Developing a Strategy



Before you can start migrating to the cloud, or even seriously talking with vendors about the services they provide, you need to put a plan in place. Start by determining what workloads or data you want to move to the cloud and what data security practices you already have in place. Outline the IT challenges you'd like to overcome and what goals you plan to achieve by switching to a cloud-based solution.

Next, think about the many benefits that come with cloud-based software, including enhanced compliance, automatic system upgrades and disaster recovery. Make a list of what's most important to your dental organization and bring that list when you start meeting with vendors.

Remember the cloud platform you choose should be customizable enough to meet your dental education institution's requirements. If you outline your requirements, goals and IT challenges as part of your strategy, you'll know exactly what you need from your cloud-based software.



Cloud Benefit

You'll never lose your data.

Cloud-based systems offer automatic backup and disaster recovery with off-site backup storage. Even if there's a catastrophic event, you'll still have access to everything you need to keep your clinic operations open and seeing patients.

You'll save money. Not only will you deal with far fewer IT problems, you'll eliminate the costs associated with calling an IT professional for help, as well as any money you lose during down time.

Do Your Research

What to Look For



Everyone is talking about the cloud these days, but a lot of confusion remains about what this buzzword means. Simply put, it involves moving the computing resources your organization depends on, from local servers to professionally managed off-site server farms that you access from a secure connection via the Internet.

You'll no longer need to install and maintain your EHR management software. Instead, you'll access your software over a security-enabled Internet connection through a browser. This Web-based solution is known as 'software as a service' (SaaS). With SaaS, you run your clinic management system—from patient scheduling to treatment planning to dental student evaluations—and access your data as if it were in your office. The IT burden and data storage are handled off site and you can access your software and your data from almost any Internet-connected device.

As the popularity of cloud computing continues to grow, more and more companies are offering cloud-based EHR management options. To find the one that's best for your organization, you need to know the tough questions to ask SaaS vendors about their solutions.



Cloud Software Features

- The ability to handle images and other documents. As dentistry and dental education become more and more digital, you'll need a system that enables you to store digital x-rays and other images on the cloud.
- Integrated eServices for insurance, billing and patient communications.
- Granular rights administration that enables you to control what information specific users can access and modify.

Do Your Research

What to Look For (Continued)

Some of these questions include: What level of security protects your data as it moves between your browser and the cloud-based server? Does the software provide data and activity logging, to create a security audit trail you can use to track each user who accesses patient information? What is the price structure and what features are included at each level, if there is tiered pricing? How much training and support is available? How often is the software updated and how are new and improved features communicated to practices?

When you go through a demonstration of the software, make sure your staff has a chance to interact with the system in order to make sure everyone understands the interfaces they will use.

Before you make your final decision, ask other dental organizations already using the cloud about their experiences. Their advice will not only help you choose the right vendor, you'll learn how they put a cloud-based system in place which will help you prepare for your own transition.



Cloud Software Features

(Continued)

- Security audits to identify possible system weaknesses.
- Data protection that includes multiple data centers with fully redundant power, application servers, routers, bandwidth and data storage.
- Complete automatic backup and disaster recovery with full tape backup and a comprehensive disaster recovery plan.

Check Your Internet

Speed, Uptime and Reliability



Once you choose a platform and move to the cloud, you become completely reliant on your Internet connection. Now is the time to contact your Internet service provider to find out the guaranteed speed and guaranteed uptime for the Internet connection at your organization.

Ask about their uptime and reliability statistics to give you a better idea of how many outages you can expect. If you're not happy with the answers you get from your current Internet Service Provider (ISP), call and research other providers to see what they offer.

This is an important step because a slow Internet connection will only lead to frustration and trouble accessing your data, while completely losing your connection will leave you unable to retrieve your data until you get the Internet back up and running. You will want a connection providing at least 16 Mbps for downloads and 3 Mbps for uploads.



Cloud Essentials

Make sure the provider you choose stores your data in two completely different locations in separate geographic zones. By doing so, you don't have to worry about a natural disaster destroying both your primary system and your backups.

Have a Backup Plan

Prepare for Disasters



Even if you have the best ISP with the fastest speeds and highest reliability, you'll likely still deal with outages from time to time. To make sure you can still access your data when these outages occur, invest in a low-cost hotspot from a wireless carrier as your back up. The connection may not be as fast, but it will keep you online until your broadband Internet returns.



Cloud Essentials

Make sure you have uninterruptible power supplies, or UPSs on hand in your practice, in case the power goes out. They'll provide temporary power to your desktop computers and other essential hardware, which means you'll still be able to access your EHR data even during a power outage.

Make Any Necessary Upgrades

Check the Technical Requirements

Whether you're using desktops, laptops or iPads to access your clinic's data, there are certain technical requirements they'll need to meet for the best possible results. Talk with the manufacturer to make sure your computers have the browser, operating system, RAM and bandwidth necessary to easily access your data. If they don't, plan an upgrade before making your move to the cloud.

Because cloud-based software is based in an Internet browser, the system you bring to your organization should be easily accessible from computers, tablets and even smartphones. Moving your practice to the cloud can be a perfect opportunity to add tablets, laptops or other internet connected technologies.

Understand the Costs

Many cloud-based EHR software providers charge a monthly fee for the service they provide. Before choosing a platform, make sure you know the monthly subscription fee and what features and services it includes. While some cloud software applications charge a base fee with additional charges for additional software features, other applications, such as axiUm Ascend include every capability of the software in a single monthly payment.



Cloud Benefit

Before officially transitioning to the cloud, make sure your team members are comfortable working in a virtual environment and are ready for the switch. Let them know how long the transition will take and make sure it doesn't interfere with their daily responsibilities.

Do you have multiple locations to manage? Cloud-based systems enable you to move from clinic to clinic, without worrying about maintaining separate EHR management systems or replicating patient files.

Prepare Your Team for the Cloud

Get Your Team on Board



Before you can transition your dental education management software to the cloud, you should make sure your team is on board. Involve them in the research and demonstrations and get them excited about the benefits cloud-based software can bring to your clinic – from increased security, to the ability to access data from any computer.

Remember this will be a change for your team members and they'll need some time to adjust. To help get them there faster, put together a detailed implementation plan that includes training. Follow that with a training program designed to educate them about the cloud, the new software and anything new they will need to do with the new software platform.

During the training, remind your team members of the many benefits cloud-based dental education software will bring to your clinic, and how it can help make them more efficient. Address any fears or concerns they might have, and they'll soon be excited to implement this new platform that will save your organization both time and money.



Is the Cloud Safe?

Only you, and any team members you authorize, can access sensitive patient information. Advanced networking and storage technology enable these solutions to protect your business and patient information.

Data is transmitted fully encrypted using technologies such as Transported Layer Security (TLS), monitored by trained experts and protected by security measures. Platforms such as axiUm Ascend can make it easier to keep your patient data safe – a task that can be time consuming and expensive with traditional on-premise EHR management software.

Time to Make the Move

Stay on the Leading Edge

There's no doubt cloud computing will continue to grow, with more and more organizations expected to make the move in the next few years—and a growing number of dental education institutions are among them.

The benefits cloud-based software brings to dental education are clear. From protecting your data from system crashes, thefts and disasters; to enabling access to images, x-rays, prescriptions, patient data and student evaluations 24/7.

While it might take a little time to prepare your organization and your team to make the switch, the benefits that cloud-based software bring to your clinic make any time you invest well worth the effort. Cloud-based systems such as axiUm Ascend help keep patient data safe, while also saving you money and improving clinic efficiencies.

Eliminating the headaches that come with server-based systems that are prone to crashes, gives you more time to focus on what matters most: providing your patients with the best care possible and ensuring your dental students are successful.

Your EHR management solution is the technology engine that drives your clinic, which means you need a solid, reliable system you can absolutely depend on. axiUm Ascend is a cloud-based solution that taps into all the advantages of a security enabled, web-based architecture that gets better and smarter each time you log in. axiUm Ascend provides instant access to the tools you need from any location, and frees you from the expense and hassle of buying and maintaining your own hardware. If you are interested in finding out more about this cloud-based dental education system, please visit www.axiUmAscend.com



Cloud Benefit

Don't limit yourself. While your dental school EHR management system will likely be your primary cloud-based application, think about other applications and services you might want to move to the cloud. You don't have to move everything all at once, however having a plan in place will help keep you focused and moving toward specific goals.

What You Leave Behind When You Move to the Cloud

Here are a few headaches you'll leave behind when you switch to the cloud:

- The expense and time spent keeping your server operating and up-to-date
The servers powering cloud-based software are maintained by the software provider
- Updating software on a server or individual workstations
Cloud-based software updates constantly and you always have access to the latest version
- Responding to security alerts and applying the latest security patches
Software security is a part of those updates
- Worrying about patient data being stolen during a break-in or going missing, because of a lost laptop or hard drive
Patient data is not stored locally, so there is nothing to be lost or stolen from inside your clinic
- Allowing limited access to your data, only on certain computers
With cloud software you have round-the-clock access to your data on any computer—whether it's a Mac, a PC or an iPad
- Having to choose a specific computer platform for everyone
Cloud systems work from internet browsers and this means they work equally well from just about any type of computer, PC or Mac, or mobile device
- Dedicating space in your organization for computer servers and other equipment
Cloud based systems allow you to work without a local server if you prefer



Cloud Benefit

Work when and where you want. When your EHR data is stored in the cloud, you have 24/7 access to patient data or to check the schedule even when you're away from the office. This is a great benefit for organizations that have multiple clinics.

Top 5 Benefits of Cloud-based Dental Education Software

1

Access patient information, prescriptions, x-rays—anything included in your EHR software—from any computer, whether it's a PC, a Mac, a desktop, a laptop or even an iPad.

2

Access patient information from home or anywhere you choose—24 hours a day, seven days a week

3

Move to different clinic locations without worrying about maintaining separate EHR software systems or replicating patient files.

4

Backup your data automatically without worrying if the backup method you used actually worked.

5

Collaborate with other team members as they look at and enter information into the same files, all from a separate workstation and in real-time.



Your Clinic with Cloud Coverage

Losing or exposing patient information can put your dental education organization at high risk. Cloud-based solutions such as axiUm Ascend help protect you from various threats, including:

- Unauthorized release
- Lost productivity
- Virus and malware infection
- Backup failures

“axiUm Ascend allows our students to access patient records on multiple devices from anywhere and makes it easier for them to focus on dentistry and education.”

*Dr. Jonny Brennan
Associate Dean
A.T. Still University*