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Feasibility Report-Assignment 2
Plan: An Improved System for Small Law Firms to Reduce Security
Risks of Document Managing Software

Introduction

Small Law Firms are general practice firms to specialize in a variety of areas and deal with diverse clients. The client cases range from patents, taxes, civil rights, and owned businesses. These documents must be securely stored in a timely manner by the private attorney who handles incoming legal documents. As a responsible attorney, there must be a system in which legal documents can be easily found and searchable by authorized personnel. Throughout recent years, the development of document managing software has created software specially designed to accommodate high on demand needs of small law firms.

Though document managing software has reduced high volumes of paperwork and complaints of missing legal documents, some small firms are not aware that security risks still remain. This feasibility report will focus on the best legal document managing software that minimizes risks of file-sharing legal documents in addition to maintaining the efficiency of storing legal documents.

Technical Background

In order for an attorney to safely guard documents upon storing them properly and legally, there must be an understanding of the specifications that are able to be administered by the document managing software to protect data of stored legal documents. For instance, the type of data encryption will be identified as basic or AES. AES stands for Advanced Encryption Standard, which is commonly used to protect government and military data. This type of description will fall under Data Protection Strength. Data File Sharing will include tools used to keep clients' information confidential within the firm. Storage space descriptions such as gigabyte and terabyte are categorized under Document Storage.

Background on the Situation

Due to past penalties of missing legal documents and high costs of extra office storage space, attorneys at small law firms have adapted to the use of digital technology to store securely store legal documents and reduce influx of paperwork such as The Cloud. This is a web-based application which allows attorneys to scan, upload multiple documents at once, and have access to them on all devices. According to the New York City Bar Association, though Cloud also has set ups to open-access documents upon permission such as usernames and passwords and contains a back-up data system, there are still ways confidential information is unintentionally accessed by third parties either because

some attorneys are not as tech savvy to follow application security procedures or there is lack of data encryption to restrict access to sensitive information. (November 2013, p.6)

According to Anderson et al., between 2008 and 2011, there has been a 30% increased risk of releasing confidential information that includes medical records, social security numbers, addresses, and financial documents by unauthorized third parties. (2012, p.3). This is considered to be a malpractice and has caused lawsuits and in addition the firms lose their business with clients.

Requirements and Criteria

This report will look at all possible outcomes for private attorneys at small law firms to store legal documents in an organized, secure, and timely manner. The requirements needed to launch the best plan of reducing security risks and maintain efficiency of storing legal documents are:

- A system where access to client data is restricted to unauthorized parties.
- Ensure confidentiality between the client and attorney.
- Contain minimal risks of disclosing confidential information.
- Flexible with storing information on and offline.
- Maintain efficiency of searching and storing documents.
- Quick and searchable access to stored legal documents.
- Provide tech support to ensure system procedures are properly used.
- Minimize costs.

Discussion of the Options

There are better document managing software systems which operate on higher performance than The Cloud application online and provide more privacy between the client and the attorney. In addition, they offer special features that the attorney can use to have more control as to who can access a client's document.

There are three options explored for small law firms to manage the security and portability of legal documents. They are PracticePanther, efilecabinet, and LegalWorks. The functionality for each software is categorized into areas meeting the requirements:

Category 1: Security Measures

According to capterra.com (2017), *PracticePanther*, Rising Star and Greater Experience Award of 2017, is a document managing software that is web-based. It contains password protection with a band grade of 256-bit military grade encryption with AES data encryption for secure data transferring. It provides customized security setting for other parties to have access to the files. The files will always remain locked until permission is granted. *efile Cabinet*, Winner of Supreme Software Award of 2016, is a document managing software that is web-based and has a band grade of 256-bit military grade encryption with AES data encryption for secure data transferring. In addition, it is certified for HIPAA Business Associate Agreement (BAA), in order to protect personal health information in accordance to HIPAA guidelines (HIPAA Act of 1996). It provides an e-signature tool called DocuSign for authorized users as well. Another Document Management

Software, LegalWorks, founded in 2004, allows a user to restrict or allow access to folders and files. However, no type of data encryption is listed.

Category 2: Confidentiality of File Sharing

PracticePanther invites clients to shared folders and provides them with access to files free of charge. According to practicepanther.com, one of the latest features includes the 'Client Intake Form.' This feature replaces the old 'data entry' feature that used to enter a client's personal information. In order for small law firms to save time, time can be saved to send clients secure forms to fill out. To ensure confidentiality, the forms are returned only to the attorney and a new contact is automatically created to store their information in the software. (July, 2016)

eFileCabinet provides the 'SecureDrawer' feature. According to efilecabinet.com, this is a secure and safe way to share files with clients and other authorized employees of the law firm. It is a client portal that offers security encryption and files can be shared more securely than files being sent from an e-mail account. (2016)

LegalWorks does not offer file sharing, but it has the capability to cautiously assign client files to one or more authorized users. No security encryption available.

Category 3: Portability

eFileCabinet is flexible with data transferring on or offline. It has CSV export capability, which means all data can be transferred into an Excel Spreadsheet. It contains a system backup, and files can be saved on or offline. A free mobile app is available. The application can be accessed on smartphones, tablets, PCs, and Macs. Data storage is limited to 1 TB, or terabyte which equals to 1,000 gigabytes of available space. PracticePanther contains a free mobile app as well with access to smartphones, tablets, PCs and Macs. Though this is a web-based application, files can be synced to the Box or Dropbox app and can be saved on or offline. In addition, PracticePanther also exports data to PDF files and can also transfer data into an Excel spreadsheet. The attorney can access files in court or on-the-go. It also contains a back-up system. This document managing software provides unlimited document storage space. According to uptimelegalworks.com, LegalWorks allows users to sync data offline and files are accessed through a database. LegalWorks can be accessed through smartphones, tablets, PCs and Macs. (2017)

Category 4: Document Uploads and Searches

PracticePanther saves time from searching for documents in a file cabinet by scanning documents into a computer and convert them to PDF documents. It maintains the efficiency of storing documents with the document tracking system and client database. It provides document tagging and indexing features. Deleted files can be restored. It has the ability to search documents within seconds. eFileCabinet has advanced searching tools with document indexing, tagging, and file organization into separate categories.

In addition to PDF file conversion, pictures of documents can be taken and uploaded as jpeg files into the software. Deleted files can be restored. Time length on searching for documents depends on the size of the uploaded files. LegalWorks converts scanned and faxed documents to PDF file format automatically. It allows a user to create custom tags and labels for document search

purposes. Documents are searchable through google and uploads directly from the LegalWorks database though deleted files are not recovered.

Category 5: Need Based Training

PracticePanther and efileCabinet offers available training through the web, e-mail, and contact number. PracticePanther offers a support forum where questions can be typed and the tech support team responds by sending screenshots and videos as well on their site at <http://support.practicepanther.com>. In addition, they have tech support through contact and live chat from Monday through Friday from 10 am to 7 pm. eFileCabinet offers tech support through contact and live chat as well from Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm.

There are links of online and desktop user guide training listed on the eFileCabinet website at <http://training.efilecabinet.com>. LegalWorks offers online training which includes access to help guides by category at <https://uptimelegalworks.com/help-files/>. It offers tech support through contacts by phone and e-mail.

Category 6: Cost Comparisons

The monthly cost for PracticePanther is \$49.00 per month provided with a 30 day free month trial. eFileCabinet costs \$50.00 per month with a 14 day free trial. If additional storage needed, the cost is \$10.00 for each additional 100 GB (gigabytes). LegalWorks cost \$49.00 monthly to start off with application support, document and e-mail management. Then to get unlimited e-mail storage, it costs \$69.00 per month. To get all included with unlimited IT support, the cost will be \$89.00 per month, which is vital in pursuing the requirement to keep a document management software for a small lawfirm.

Summary Table of Comparisons

Document Managing Software	Pros					
	Data Protection Strength	Data Storage	Data Uploading & Searching	Data File Sharing	Data Access	Tech Support
PracticePanther	Data Encryption: AES (protection of government and military data) Capability; Customize Security Settings.	Unlimited Storage Space; File Synchronization; System Back-up; Data export to Excel and PDF format	PDF File Conversion; Document Indexing, Tagging; Document Tracking; Restoration of deleted files; Fast speed with file uploads.	Secured Client Intake Form of clients' personal information open to attorney only; Provides clients with access to	Web-based through Smartphone Tablet, PC, and Mac; Access to Mobile App; Files accessed on web and Box or DropBox	Live Chat and Contact Services 9 hours a day; Support Forum with video and screenshots.

				shared folders.	file apps offline.	
eFileCabinet	Data Encryption: AES Capability; HIPAA Business Associate Agreement (BAA) Certified; Digital Signature Enabled.	Allows up to 1TB storage Space; Files saved on or offline; System Back-up; Data export to Excel format.	PDF File Conversion; Document Indexing, Tagging; File Organization into separate categories; Restoration of deleted files.	Secure Drawer with data encryption and security of file sharing with clients.	Access to smartphone, tablet, PC, and Mac; Contains desktop and online version; Access to Mobile App.	Live Chat and contact Services by phone 9 hours a day; Online tutorials through online manuals and video tutorials for online and desktop version.
LegalWorks	Capable of providing and denying access to users.	Documents can be synced on or offline; Unlimited data storage.	PDF File Conversion. Documents are efficiently searched through the web by connecting to the database.	Clients Files are assigned to authorized users only.	Access to smartphone, tablets, PCs and Macs; Access to Mobile App; Access to data files on and offline.	Tech Support is unlimited through e-mail and by phone; Proficient in offering help user guides online.
Document Managing Software	Cons					
	Data Protection Strength	Data Storage	Data Uploading & Searching	Data File Sharing	Data Access	Tech Support
PracticePanther	Not HIPAA certified	NA	NA	No data encryption while sending or receiving intake forms, or when sharing folders with clients.	NA	Not enough help guide resources available.
eFileCabinet	NA	Storage Space limited.	Large file sizes take time to load.	NA	NA	NA

LegalWorks	No data encryption	No system back-up available.	Web based search increases security risks.	No data encryption	NA	NA
Document Managing Software	Costs					
	Cost Per Annum			Length of Free Day Trial		Other Costs
PracticePanther	\$ 588.00 per Annum; Free Mobile App.			30 Day Free Trial		NA
eFileCabinet	\$ 600.00 per Annum; Free Mobile App.			14 Day Free Trial		\$10.00 for extra 100 GB of storage
Legal Works	\$ 588.00 per Annum. to start and \$1 068 for the total package per annum; Free Mobile App.			No Free Trial		NA

Conclusion

PracticePanther’s most beneficial areas are mostly in unlimited storage capacity, more software accessibility, and provides a database where information is stored, which can grant the attorney access to vital information without having the need to go online. However, not all document management features in PracticePanther are accessed offline as the desktop version for eFileCabinet. In addition, it is offered at a lower price compared to eFileCabinet, but it is limited to protecting very broad data, which is eFileCabinet’s best feature. eFileCabinet offers more advanced data encryption with certified encryption data from HIPAA Act of 1996 with digital signature function added. The file sharing feature, ‘SecureDrawer,’ has encryption to ensure that file sharing between the attorney and the client is protected.

In addition, it contains more advanced and efficient searchable features in locating a client’s legal documents. The desktop version is very resourceful in data security and storing documents. eFileCabinet offers a price product at a higher cost compared to Practice Panther. According to the requirements and criteria, eFileCabinet has most of the benefits that meets the needs of operating small firms. LegalWorks has the least security protection of all three evaluated software applications, though the storing of information offline reduces risk of sharing files through the web, speedy document uploads, and resourceful training guides. It is also not a low cost application when it comes to installing all the necessary features as per the requirements.

Recommendation

Small Firms should consider using eFileCabinet as the primary data management software with its efficient data protection, effective search tools, and storage of clients’ personal information. In addition, small firms can download PracticePanther’s free app as a data back-up in case

eFileCabinet runs out of storage space. The PracticePanther app can also be used to preserve space and avoid spending on extra storage space for eFileCabinet, by storing documents that are not as sensitive as documents pertaining to identity, addresses, and financial documents, in the PracticePanther free mobile app.

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