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Cloud Computing and the Healthcare Industry: Do They Work Together?

April 23, 2013 | [Cloud Storage](#)



The healthcare industry has traditionally been one of the slowest fields to adopt new technologies. Generally, this has to do with fears around security and the privacy of patient data. Healthcare companies have preferred to keep data behind a secure firewall and on-site as opposed to something as intangible as [cloud computing](#).

Recent government mandates, however, have accelerated the transition to cloud computing, especially the requirement to have all medical records online. Online records allow doctors to easily access their patients' records even if they are not in the office.

Due to the changing healthcare IT environment, a recent study by the firm MarketsandMarkets indicates that the healthcare cloud computing market, which is currently only about 4% of the industry, is expected to grow to nearly \$5.4 billion by 2017.

Benefits of Cloud Computing for Healthcare

Many healthcare organizations are currently using some form of cloud computing, especially for online medical records. They may not,

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however, realize that there are more benefits to cloud computing than just the ability to store patient information online. The major benefits include the following.

Scalable: Unlike on-site hardware infrastructure, you can easily scale up or down your [cloud storage solutions](#). Healthcare service providers have a ton of data for each patient, ranging from current prescriptions to tests to appointment information. The amount of data that each healthcare provider has to deal with could easily and quickly overwhelm any on-site hardware. With cloud computing, [cloud server](#) or storage solutions can be quickly scaled up to handle the additional data.

Mobility: Doctors no longer need to be tied to their offices to look up patient information. With more and more physicians only having time in the evening to review patient records and tests, or do research, this often mean being stuck in the office hours after it closed. With cloud computing, doctors can easily pull up medical records remotely.

Cost Reduction: Cost reductions are two-fold: Both the patients and the medical organization see the cost savings. The patient doesn't have to endure paying for the same test twice when they go to different doctors or specialists, or if the test results are lost. Medical offices, especially, don't have to pay for on-site hardware infrastructure and storage and personnel to constantly maintain these records.

Security: The biggest reason why healthcare providers have been reluctant to embrace cloud technologies is the fear of data breaches, which could expose important patient information to the general public. Cloud service providers are now required to meet the same privacy standards as many healthcare institutions, including HIPAA. Look for a cloud service provider that offers HIPAA compliance.

Sharing: One of the main reasons for multiple tests is doctors not having access to records of other doctors. A major cloud computing benefit is the ability to [share and collaborate](#) amongst healthcare service providers. Information is shared in real time, increasing the overall speed and efficiency of care.

Cloud computing companies are offering a variety of cloud computing solutions and [cloud apps](#) specifically for the healthcare industry, including software for order entry, pharmacy records, medical billing and imaging services. As the number of healthcare service providers using cloud computing increases so will the number of cloud-based solutions.

Are you a doctor's office or work in the healthcare industry? Has your office transitioned to a cloud computing solution? If not, what's been holding you back?

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