Cloud Computing: Risks, Rewards, and Impact on E-Discovery

What is cloud computing? Cloud computing is a general term that describes the delivery of computer services over the Internet. Instead of storing data in-house, the data and applications can be stored or accessed remotely. The cloud is a high-speed network of computers that store and manage data. In contrast to the Internet, the “cloud” in cloud computing is a specific type of computer network where the consumer is not directly involved. In cloud computing, the data is stored remotely, with access to the data provided via the Internet or a local network. Different kinds of cloud services are available, including cloud computing, software as a service (SaaS), storage as a service (StaaS), and platform as a service (PaaS).

Advantages of cloud computing include:

- Scalability: Cloud computing allows for the automatic scaling of resources based on demand. This means that a company can quickly increase or decrease its computing power as needed, without incurring the costs associated with owning and maintaining its own hardware infrastructure.
- Cost savings: Many companies choose to use cloud computing because it can be less expensive than building and maintaining their own data centers. Cloud providers often offer lower initial costs and lower ongoing costs, as they have the ability to spread the cost of their hardware and software over a large number of users.
- Increased availability and reliability: Cloud computing provides high availability by distributing data across multiple locations and ensuring that data is backed up in multiple places. This reduces the risk of data loss due to hardware failures or natural disasters.
- Increased access: Cloud computing allows users to access their data and applications from anywhere, as long as they have an internet connection.

Disadvantages of cloud computing include:

- Security: Cloud computing involves the transfer of data across the internet, which can be vulnerable to security threats. The risk of data breaches can be higher in cloud computing, as there is more potential for unauthorized access to data.
- Dependence on Internet: Cloud computing relies on the internet for data access and therefore requires a stable internet connection.
- Data privacy: Cloud computing involves the transfer of data to a third party, which can raise concerns about data privacy and security.

This article continues "Nurturing Practices in Law and Litigation" in the February 22 edition in In-Depth & Settlements.

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Could attorneys, rather than stay confined to the traditional role of what litigators should do and how they should act, take the lead in facilitating non-adversarial practices in health care?