



# Mapping Your Path to the Cloud

A Guide to Getting your Dental  
Practice Set to Transition to Cloud-Based  
Practice Management Software.



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# Why the Cloud?

## Mapping Your Path to the Cloud



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

You've heard about the many benefits such as reduced IT costs and the ability to access your practice 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 practice management 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 practice.

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



### Cloud Benefit

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#### **Work when and where you want.**

When your practice 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 practices that have multiple offices.

# Ready for Web-based Dentistry?

## Preparing Your Practice for the Cloud.



As cloud computing becomes more popular and financially feasible for small business owners, more dentists are moving to Web-based platforms such as Dentrix Ascend—and this trend is only expected to continue in the coming years.

If you're ready to become one of those dentists, 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 left behind and don't miss



### Cloud Benefit

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**Freedom of choice.** With cloud-based practice management, you can access your 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 practice 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 practice management, including enhanced compliance, automatic system upgrades and disaster recovery. Make a list of what's most important to you and bring that list when you start meeting with vendors.

Remember the cloud platform you choose should be customizable enough to meet your practice's requirements. If you outline your requirements, goals and IT challenges as part of your strategy, you'll know exactly what your practice needs in cloud-based practice management software.



### Cloud Benefit

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**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 practice 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 actually means. Simply put, it means moving the computing resources your practice depends on from local servers to professionally managed off site server farms that you can access from a security enabled connection via the Internet.

You'll no longer need to install and maintain practice management software. Instead, you 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 practice management system—from patient scheduling to treatment planning—and access your data as if it were in your office. The only change is that the IT burden and data storage is 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 practice management options. To find the one that's best for you and your practice you need to know the tough questions to ask vendors about their SaaS solution.



### Cloud Software Features

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- The ability to handle images and other documents. As dentistry becomes 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 dentists already using the cloud about their experiences. Their advice will not only help you choose the right vendor, but learning about how they put a cloud-based system in place will help you prepare for your practice's transition.



### Cloud Software Features

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(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 practice.

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 practice 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

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Make sure the provider you choose stores your data in two completely different locations in separate geographic zones, 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 in town, 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

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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, meaning you'll still be able to access your practice management data even during a power outage.

# Make Any Necessary Upgrades

## Check the Technical Requirements

Whether you're using desktops, laptops or iPads to access practice data, there are certain technical requirements they'll need to meet for the best possible results. Talk with the manufacturer to make sure your practice computers have the browser, operating system, RAM and bandwidth necessary to easily access your data. If you 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 practice 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 practice management 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 Dentrix Ascend include every capability of the software in the single monthly payment.



### Cloud Benefit

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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 about how long the transition will take and make sure it doesn't interfere with their daily responsibilities.

Practice in multiple locations? Cloud-based practice management systems enable you to move office to office without worrying about maintaining separate practice management systems or replicating patient files.

# Prepare your team for the cloud

## Get Your Team On Board



Before you can transition your practice to the cloud, you have to make sure your team is on board. Get them involved in the research and demonstrations and excited about the benefits cloud-based practice management software can bring to your practice, 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 team training. Follow that with a training program designed to educate your team 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 practice management software will bring to your practice, 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 practice both time and money.



### Is the Cloud Safe?

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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 Dentrix Ascend can make it easier to keep your patient data safe – a task that can be time consuming and expensive with traditional practice 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 small businesses expected to make the move in the next few years—and a growing number of dentists are among them.

The benefits cloud-based practice management software brings to the dental practice are clear, from protecting your data from system crashes, thefts and disasters, to enabling you to access images, x-rays, prescriptions and patient data 24/7, no matter where you are.

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

Your practice management solution is the technology engine that drives your practice, which means you need a solid, reliable system you can absolutely depend on. Henry Schein Dentrrix Ascend is a cloud-based solution that taps into all the advantages of a security enabled, web-based architecture that gets better and smarter every time you log in. Dentrrix 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 a cloud-based dental management system, please visit [www.DentrrixAscend.com](http://www.DentrrixAscend.com)



### Cloud Benefit

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**Don't limit yourself.** While your practice management system will likely be your primary cloud-based application, think about other practice applications and services you might want to move to the cloud. You don't have to move everything all at once, but 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 even worse 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
  - No patient data is stored locally, so there is nothing to be lost or stolen from inside your practice
- Being limited to only having access to your data 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 practice for computer servers and other equipment
  - Cloud based systems allow you to work without a local server if you prefer



## Cloud Benefit

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### **Work when and where you want.**

When your practice 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 practices that have multiple offices.

# Top 5 Benefits of Cloud-based Practice Management Software

1

Access patient information, prescriptions, x-rays—anything included in your practice management 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 office locations without worrying about maintaining separate practice management 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 Practice With Cloud Coverage

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Losing or exposing patient information can put your practice out of business. Cloud-based solutions such as Dentrrix Ascend help protect you from various threats, including:

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

*“If you’re looking to grow your practice, and you want to be on the forefront of innovation and you want to be as progressive as possible in dentistry today and up to speed on what’s out there, go with a cloud-based system.”*

*~ Dr. Eric Osmolinski DMD*