File Transfer

File transfer is the transmission of files from one location to another. One of the most important challenges around file transfer is getting files from sender to receiver in the most efficient and secure manner. A common method of file transfer at law firms is attaching files to an email message, which is often unsuitable for transferring large files. These restrictions lead many employees to turn to Internet-based services outside the firm to transfer and store files.

What is the Cloud?

The term “cloud” is used to describe computing resources that are not housed on a local PC or laptop. Instead, the resources are delivered as a service over a network, including the Internet.

Cloud Storage

Cloud storage refers to services that allow users to save electronic files in a network location, not a local computer location, and thereby extend sharing capabilities.

Cloud Services

Cloud services are categorized as public or private. Public cloud services are available to anyone on the Internet and examples include Internet-based email, Dropbox, iCloud, and Evernote. Private clouds utilize a controlled access network, such as a firm extranet or private service like Biscom, to share files in a secure environment.

Risks

Web-based email accounts are often used to send and store files so they can be quickly and easily accessed while outside the office. Hackers have successfully exploited program vulnerabilities and taken control of web-based mail accounts, evidence that personal email accounts are not secure environments for the transfer or storage of firm files. Public cloud storage lacks security controls, making files vulnerable to unauthorized access. Using these types of services often violate security policies and/or regulatory compliance requirements and are void of firm governance.

Best Practices for File Transfer and Cloud Storage

* Know the firm policies related to file transfer and follow the specified procedures. Learn the correct process for transmitting electronic files, especially when using mobile devices. In situations involving the transmission of large files outside the firm, use the firm-approved method to deliver those files.
* Avoid transferring work product through non-firm email channels, especially web-based email services.
* Avoid using public cloud storage services for client information and work product, and follow approved processes for storing files.