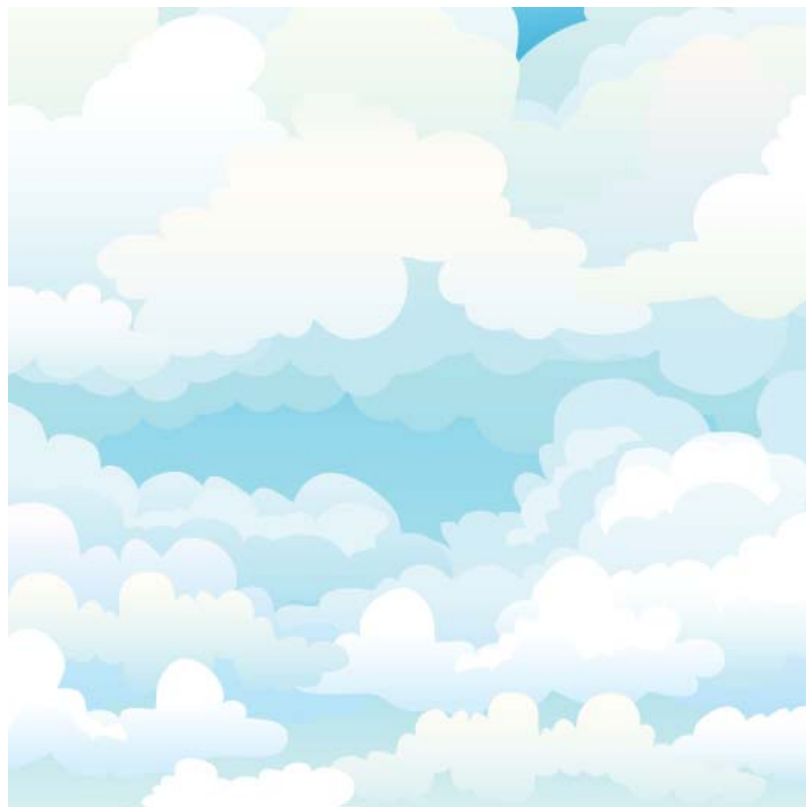


Jobst Elster Interviews Rick Varju

In May, Jobst Elster, Head of Content and Legal Market Strategy for InsideLegal, reported on [*cloud-based systems*](#) for law departments. To continue the conversation, he interviewed [*Rick Varju*](#), Director of Projects & Infrastructure Operations at Foley Lardner, LLP, about cloud computing.



1. WHAT IS THE FIRM'S ATTITUDE TOWARD AND ADOPTION OF CLOUD APPLICATIONS AND SERVICES?

Firm leadership understands the value that hosted applications and services can offer, provided we maintain full ownership and control of our data and the hosted service provider meets and maintains industry standard data security requirements. We've been moving closer and closer to a "cloud first" approach to new application and services planning and provisioning over the past couple years. Today, more and more of our new technology discussions start off with a focus on whether the cloud-based offering of the application can be pursued as an alternative to hosting it all internally.

2. CAN YOU PROVIDE SOME DETAILS ABOUT WHAT AREAS/TYPE OF LINE OF BUSINESS APPLICATIONS YOU ARE ACCESSING VIA THE CLOUD AND LOOKING AT MOVING FORWARD?

Cloud-based services the firm currently leverage include NetDocuments DMS; Chrome River expense reporting and invoicing; Meeting Room Manager conference room scheduling; Absorb Learning Management System for

internal training delivery; LexisNexis eBooks legal library online; Vuture marketing communication automation; Proofpoint for spam email filtering; and our firm website hosting. Others on the future consideration list or currently being migrated to the cloud include Relativity for litigation support and e-discovery; cloud-based time and billing; Mobile Device Management; Human Capital Management (HCM); desktop office suite; email and secure cloud file storage; and telephony services.

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3. WHAT DO YOU AND YOUR PEERS SEE AS THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES WITH CLOUD TECHNOLOGIES NOW AND IN THE FUTURE?

Easy access and availability to services via the Internet and a web browser from any device is hugely beneficial for our highly mobile lawyers. Agility and the move to more of a consumption-based usage model are also very attractive. Having the ability to easily and quickly grow or shrink cloud app or service usage, as needs change, can be both cost-effective and extremely advantageous, especially in (mergers and acquisition) M&A-type situations. Leveraging cloud services also allows the business to shift more of its IT spend from CAPEX to OPEX. From an operations standpoint, IT should ultimately be able to reduce the level of valuable support resources focused primarily on infrastructure and operational support and apply more toward innovation instead.

4. WHAT ARE CONTINUED BARRIERS AND STUMBLING BLOCKS WHEN IT COMES TO CLOUD ADOPTION?

The overall user experience (performance) and integration with Microsoft Office and other core applications continues to be a big challenge for many hosted solutions. Connecting to hosted services over the Internet can often result in unpredictable or inconsistent performance. Making sure you have sufficient Internet bandwidth and the most optimal service configuration and delivery from your ISP is critical. Security can be a barrier as well as a benefit. It's obviously a barrier in those situations where a cloud provider cannot meet all your specific security needs or requirements. However, in many cases, the overall security posture and dedicated internal security teams of the larger cloud service providers can offer greater levels of security for a firm's data than they can themselves.

5. WHAT SHIFT HAVE YOU NOTICED IN THE WAY FIRM USERS WORK IN A CLOUD/AS-A-SERVICE ENVIRONMENT?

All of our cloud services are fully integrated with the desktop we deliver to our users. However, the fact that some services are cloud-based gives our lawyers more options when it comes to accessing them, either via the corporate desktop or any other device with an Internet connection.



RICK VARJU
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Infrastructure Operations at
Foley Lardner, LLP*

INTERESTED IN WHAT TECHNOLOGY FIRMS ARE BUYING?

[Click here](#) to read a recap of the 2015 ILTA/InsideLegal Technology Purchasing Survey.
