

A dentist in a white lab coat is smiling while holding a tablet. The background shows a dental office with a green chair and a counter with various dental tools. The entire image has a blue overlay.

# A Dentist's Perspective on Moving to the Cloud

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DDS

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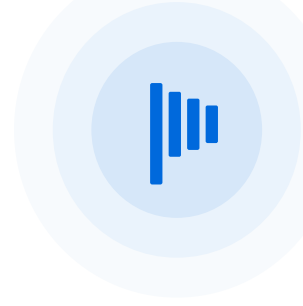
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# Introduction

**As dentists, it's our mission to provide the best healthcare experience to our patients. But as managers, we're also challenged to develop efficient operations. And our entrepreneurial spirit drives the demand for continual growth and profitability. Every part of the mission relies on exceptional technology. A few years ago, I realized that my server-based solutions were getting in the way of my long-term goals.**

Before migrating my practice management platform to the cloud, I spent thousands of dollars annually on IT support, data back-ups, network monitoring, and more. That's not to mention the cost of installing and maintaining an on-premises server. I also had more third-party subscriptions than my team could monitor efficiently. But we needed tools for practice operations, analytics, communications, accounting, and more. So, we kept adding pieces as we grew.

Many offices get stuck in the same cycle. As we grow and the IT world becomes more complex, we keep adding vendors and tools. In most cases, we build on top of a server-based network that ages by the minute.

My business reporting capabilities were rudimentary and scaling my business to more locations seemed daunting with a server-based model. A series of network emergencies that linked back to the server finally pushed us to make a change. Unless you've dealt with a server malfunction during a double hygiene day, you haven't experienced next-level stress in dentistry.

Implementing cloud-based dental software eliminated these headaches. As a result, I no longer contend with costly monthly IT services, server hiccups, or physical constraints. If my team needs to access practice data, we're just an internet connection away. Our operations move so smoothly that I have to stop and remember the last time we faced a significant IT issue.

A single workstation glitch is much less traumatic than a server glitch when you're connected to the cloud.

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**If you're a dentist ready to remove the restraints of a server-based practice, read on to learn more about the benefits of migrating to a cloud practice management solution.**



# 1.

## The Risks and Compromises of Server-Based Dentistry

Our practice management software forms the backbone of our daily operations and dramatically influences our growth potential. Server-based systems have been the standard in our profession for many years, and every team member relies on smooth functioning to serve patients at total capacity. But we're navigating a fast-moving environment, and this operating model carries multiple risks and unseen costs today.





## CONSUMER RISKS

Modern patients are consumers first, and they've grown accustomed to quick and convenient healthcare. In fact, convenience is now the #1 factor that patients look for in a new provider.

### They're used to tech-savvy features like:

- ✓ **Online scheduling and appointment reminders**
- ✓ **Anywhere, anytime access to test results, notes, and records**
- ✓ **Online patient portals**
- ✓ **Direct billing and text-to-pay options**
- ✓ **Multiple communication channels**
- ✓ **Telehealth capabilities**

If we can't provide these conveniences, we face more obstacles attracting new patients and retaining existing ones. But **cloud-based practice management software that integrates these tools accelerates the adoption curve for any practice**. Patients appreciate the difference, and staff realizes new efficiencies for smoother days.



## CYBERSECURITY RISKS

Beyond lackluster patient experience, storing data on-site poses serious risks to your practice. Physical servers carry inherent security concerns that can lead to exponential expenses, and problems usually strike unexpectedly. As some practices have discovered, anything that exposes or destroys data can be catastrophic on multiple

levels. Nearly 40 million patient records were compromised in 2021 as attacks on healthcare doubled in the past four years.

Cyber attacks are a primary concern, but we can't overlook physical threats to our IT property. Robbery, fire, flooding, and vandalism threats to your servers need attention in an overall security plan. Dentists with on-site servers face the same threat as any other business and need to take steps to increase physical security. Monitored security services, cameras, server cages, and other measures become essential to protect a vulnerable system that keeps critical data within its walls.

We even **installed low-cost water leakage monitors as an additional protective layer against unforeseen damage to all parts of our property**. But it's a relief knowing there isn't a server to worry about, too.

If your practice uses an on-premise server, the word "patching" intensifies an owner's headaches.

Patching server vulnerabilities is time-consuming and unreliable. Some of the most significant data breaches in recent history occurred due to poor patching, and Equifax lost control of over 143 million records in 2017 because they failed to stay up to date with patches.

**Modern dental cloud services feature automated patches and 24/7 security monitoring by the best available systems.**

There's also no need to pay extra fees for these services since they're part of your fixed subscription with a reliable vendor. I've gladly paid this predictable cost every month for this feature alone.





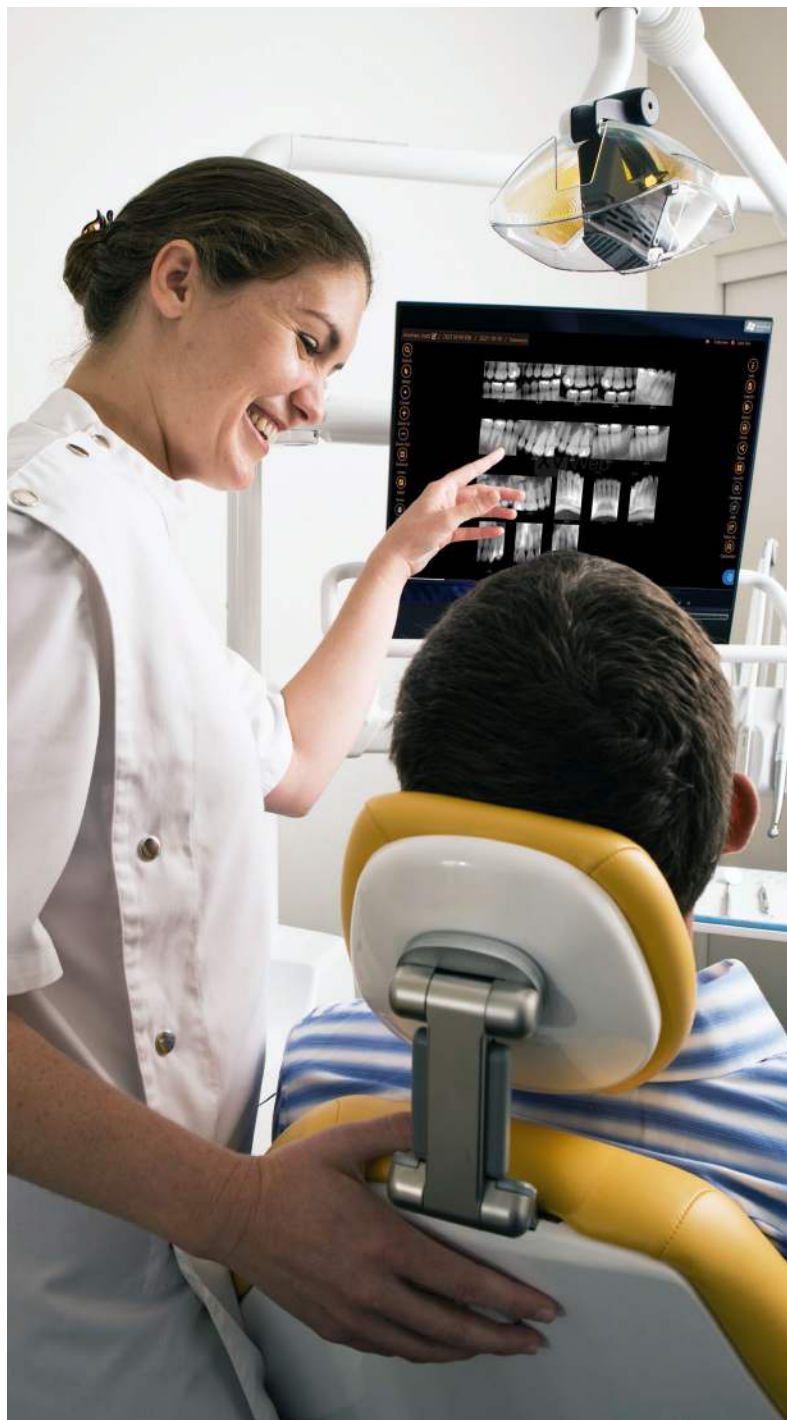
## FINANCIAL RISKS

The goal of any dental practice is to **reduce overhead and increase profitability without sacrificing the patient experience**. On-premise servers present numerous costs that consume your budget and include surprise costs when you least expect them. This daunting reality adds a barrier when you consider scaling your operation to a new location; every location requires a complete server-based network. Contrast that to a cloud-based model that simply needs an internet connection from workstations, including laptops.

**Expenses involved with on-premise servers that you can eliminate with the cloud include:**

- ✓ The expense of purchasing and installing a server
- ✓ The cost of numerous third-party software subscriptions
- ✓ Hiring IT staff for regular maintenance and crisis service
- ✓ Continuous monitoring of server and patches
- ✓ Server cages, cameras, and other forms of physical security for the server
- ✓ Installing and maintaining equipment (servers, switches, etc.)
- ✓ Replacing old servers every 3-5 years
- ✓ Lost production due to server failure and delayed repairs

Migrating to the cloud cuts costs for a dental practice in a single location or across an entire region. As dentists, we can focus more on improving the quality and efficiency of our operations. We're more equipped to scale our practice and open new sites with predictable costs and simple cloud-based workstations. The possibilities, and savings, are endless.





# 2.

## Debunking Common Cloud Myths

There are still many myths surrounding cloud adoption despite many industries abandoning servers years ago. Misconceptions about the cloud can keep some dentists from analyzing the benefits deeper. But the following myths can be put to rest when you migrate to a cloud-based solution.

### 1 "THE CLOUD WON'T PROTECT YOUR DATA"

Despite the robust security measures of cloud platforms, there's still a misconception that it's better to have our data on-site where it seems to be under our control. Some still believe that their data will become more vulnerable on the cloud, not less. **That couldn't be further from the truth.**

Cloud platforms use dozens of security frameworks and controls extending beyond our on-site capabilities. IT professionals work around the clock to keep cloud data safe in multiple, high-security locations. **All our data stays encrypted during uploads, downloads, and storage, and the only users with access to the encryption keys are the customers.**



Few organizations can encrypt their data this way with their servers, especially if they're a smaller enterprise. And updates require full-time attention since what's current today is outdated tomorrow. Plus, secure internet connections connect your workstations to the cloud on closed networks not open to other users. It's yet another security measure that will protect your patient records and transactions.

## **2 "IT'S HARD TO AUDIT CLOUD DATA"**

Another prevalent myth is that it's difficult to audit data stored on the cloud and monitor security protocols and data batches. While you can seize, tag, or place data in digital evidence bags with physical servers, that's a limited capability in a smaller operation.

By contrast, you can conduct far more efficient, detailed audits on the cloud than on-premises with the proper tools. Conducting an audit in a cloud-based environment eliminates many of the pain points involved with a physical one. And it's more likely that audits are completed when you're partnered with a proven dental software vendor.

## **3 "CLOUD COMPUTING IS MORE EXPENSIVE THAN IN-HOUSE COMPUTING"**

You may think that migrating to the cloud costs more than using on-premise servers since it's a newer technology. This myth primarily has to do with a practice's starting point and the need for general IT hardware to operate any system. But cloud migration may come down to timing if you've recently upgraded to a new server.

While it's not wise to migrate to the cloud directly after upgrading your servers, it can still be more cost-effective in the long run. Upfront costs are minimal if you already have a network since you're likely to eliminate the most expensive hardware requirements, and the savings associated with cloud computing add up quickly.

**For dental practices with aging servers, it's the perfect time to switch to the cloud. You'll gain more long-term benefits by using cloud-based dental software instead of buying a new server.**

## **4 "CLOUD SOFTWARE HAS GREATER LATENCY THAN SERVERS"**

Some dentists fear that using the cloud will result in latency and slow down operations. But high-speed internet connections feature fast lanes to and from the cloud. Latency is often the result of an IT department 'backhauling' data for better security. In other words, they route traffic through their internal networks, and that causes a more significant latency and a poor user experience.

Latency may become a noticeable issue if an organization chooses to backhaul with cloud computing. But cloud providers feature excellent security and perimeter measures, and there's no need to backhaul data for security purposes in a dental office. Modern cloud-based dental software programs don't have latency issues if the organization ensures stable, high-speed internet connections for all workstations.





# 3.

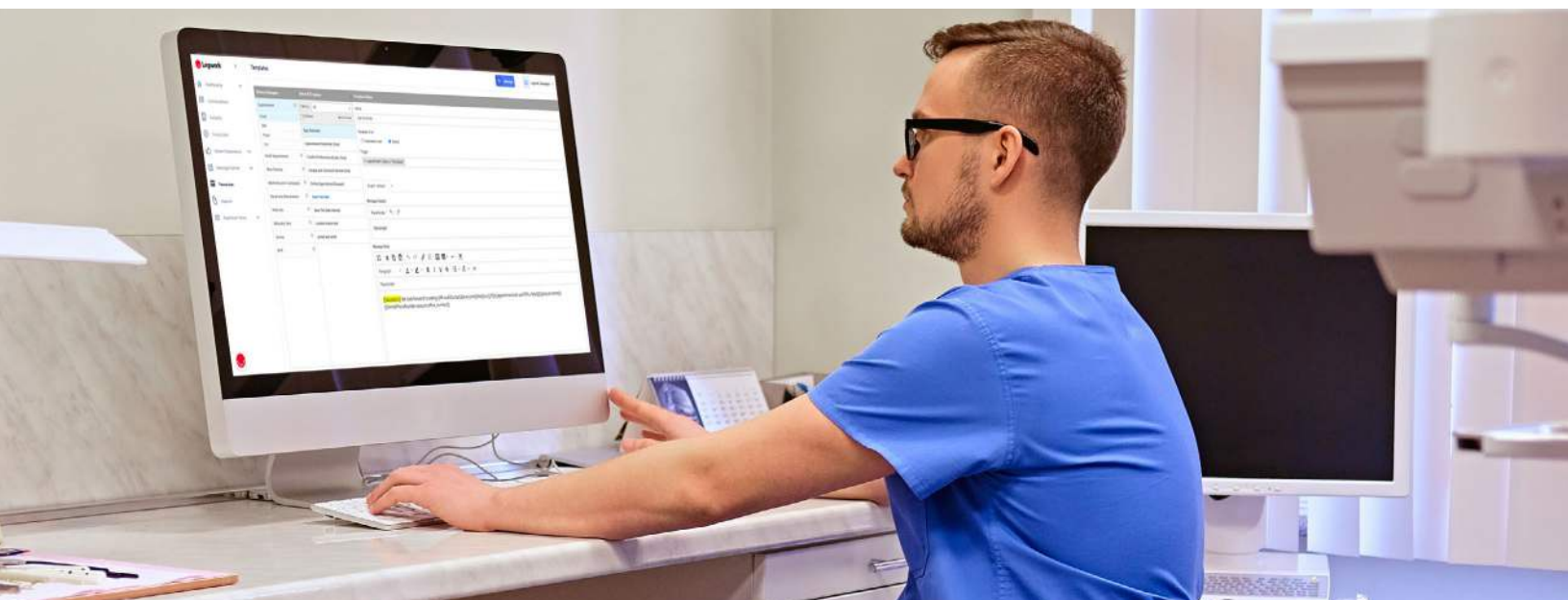
## The Benefits of Using Cloud-Based Dental Software

With some of the common myths in the rearview mirror, it's time to see how your practice could benefit from the cloud. I'll admit that I was initially skeptical after years on a legacy system. But once I saw all that we gained, I knew that it was the right choice. It turns out there are many reasons why 94% of all enterprises now use cloud services; here are a few.



### INCREASED DATA SECURITY

Cybersecurity needs to be a top priority for dental practices everywhere, and the threat continues to grow. As of 2021, hacking accounted for 74% of all healthcare data breaches. In addition, the healthcare industry is one of the top targets for cybercriminals. Local data storage is vulnerable and often offers attack points for HIPAA breaches, and a cloud solution that eliminates local data storage dramatically reduces that threat.



**Cloud-based dental software also gives your IT team complete visibility of all practices from a secure, centralized access point.**

But a single practitioner traveling across the country enjoys the same access to practice data as an operations manager monitoring 150 sites in multiple states. That's the benefit of using a single software solution in the cloud.

Organizations of any size can also manage rights and permissions for an entire staff. You control access to patient records and other sensitive data, and adjustments for any location can be quickly made. Unless they have access set by you,

HIPAA standards set clear boundaries and carry severe consequences for violations. In 2020, the Department of Health and Human Services executed more financial penalties than any other year since they started enforcing HIPAA compliance.

**A cloud-based solution will help you quickly stay in compliance with all HIPAA standards. These include:**

- ✓ **The HIPAA Security Rule**
- ✓ **HIPAA Privacy Rule Standards**
- ✓ **HITECH Act**

The right cloud solution keeps your data in compliance, and your business benefits from teams working behind the scenes to bolster security measures in real-time.

Lastly, nothing will bring your practice to a halt like when an on-premise server goes down. Without access to clinical data and x-rays, treatment may not be possible. And without access to financial data, collections and cash flow may stall. That leads to costly

downtime and IT repairs, including waiting for new hardware.

With the cloud, multiple layers of redundancies ensure you never experience downtime and face the threat of on-site failures. A laptop and a hotspot can even keep an entire operation moving in a crisis.



**ACCESS PATIENT INFORMATION INSTANTLY FROM ANYWHERE**

If you have an on-premise server, you rely on direct server access to view data. Remote access programs can be installed, but it's one more third-party management challenge. That's an inconvenience that you don't have to live with if you're on the cloud.

**Cloud-based dental software lets you create and use a single patient and provider record, and it automatically updates, which negates the need for duplicate records.**

If you're outside the physical office and need to pull up patient records, you can do so on your smartphone. All you need to view x-rays, review clinical history, or look at business analytics is an internet connection and a browser. There's no need for third-party patient software to bridge into analytics or patient communications. Instead, you can complete all those tasks through one platform that you can access anywhere, including the beach.

Larger organizations eliminate many management nightmares with cloud-based software by accessing records across multiple locations. If you're focused on growth, you won't need to invest in new servers and hardware for your enterprise to scale quickly.



## THE SCALABILITY OF CLOUD SOFTWARE

Speaking of scaling your operation, it's effortless with a cloud-based system. Thanks to the savings realized by switching to the cloud, you'll have extra capital with more predictable IT expenses. There's less initial outlay for expensive hardware for new offices, and you can keep track of your new records using the same system you do in your original location.

If you thought scaling and adding new locations was impossible, it's time to switch to the cloud. After using cloud software for a few months, what once seemed impossible became essential to the entire team.

Beyond initial savings, the benefits extend throughout your operations. Everything from centralized financial reporting to patient communications helps the entire organization. Training and accountability become more cohesive and standardized for smoother growth.

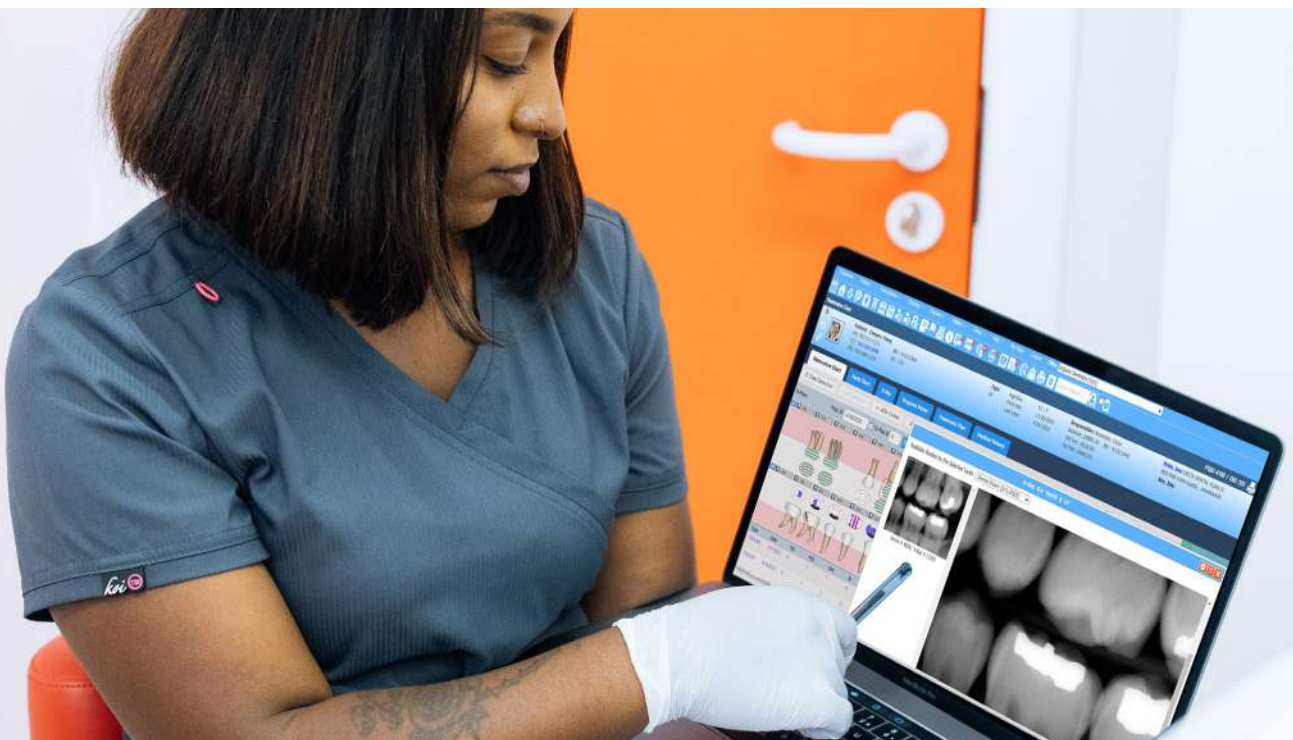
**Moving to the cloud is a way to 'future-proof' your practice and prepare for multiple scenarios.** You won't have to worry about compliance and security, and you'll drastically cut costs. As a result, the future of your dental enterprise holds many possibilities.



## EASIER COLLABORATION

The cloud makes collaboration on documents, data, analytics, and audits smoother. Since everything gets stored in a central location, you can easily share it with others. Team members can view, edit, and review data, documents, and patient records without physical location constraints.

Consider a scenario where you're out of the office, but your hygienist calls with a question about a patient. You can quickly log into their record and review clinical notes and x-rays and discuss the case with accurate data at your fingertips. The patient receives better service and you're working with your team to help them remain efficient.





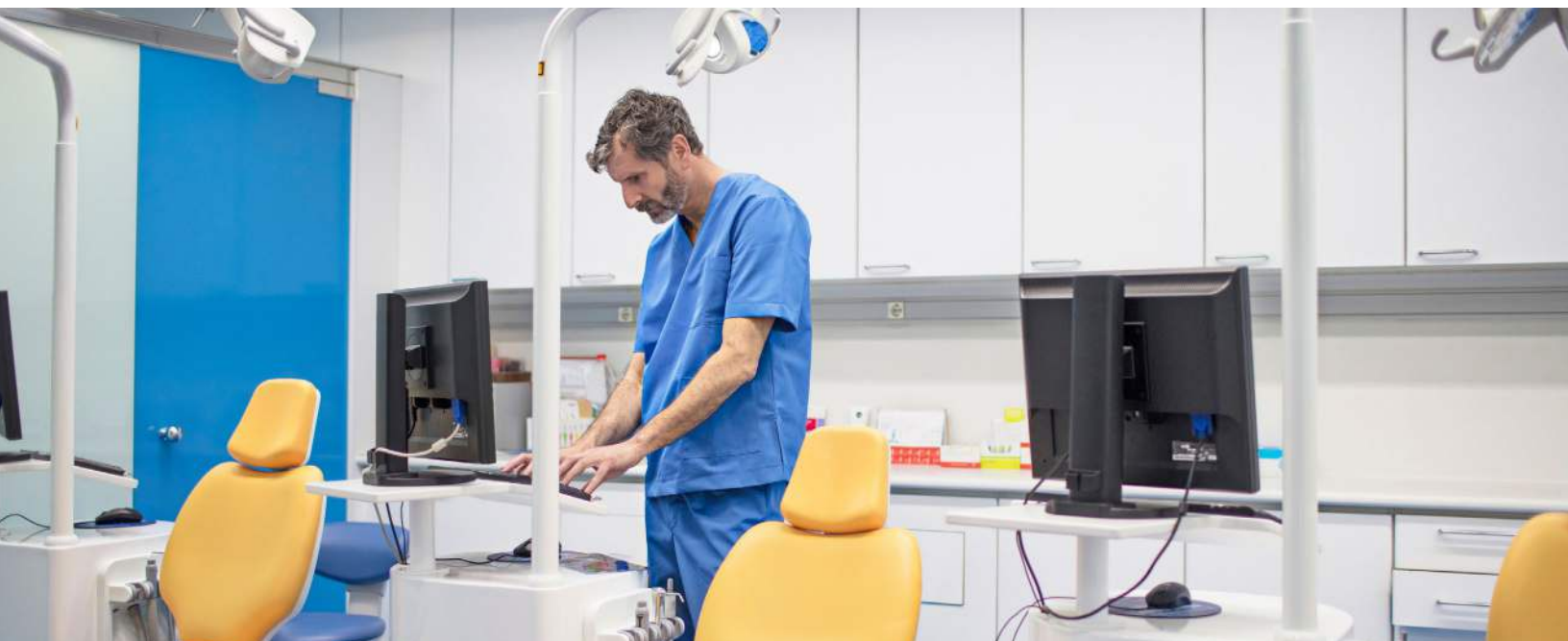
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## Overcoming Cloud Adoption Challenges

Despite the benefits and cost savings of cloud computing, dentists may feel overwhelmed by the prospect of implementing new management software. If your practice has grown accustomed to server-based operations, teams may resist moving away from a system they've used for years.

A skilled cloud service provider knows how to integrate the cloud without disrupting your day-to-day operations. Also, quality providers design staff training to ensure that your staff is all on the same page and knows how to use the software. The best providers understand how to help teams seamlessly move into the cloud.

**Look for a vendor that covers three vital areas: data and image conversion, training, and support**





## DATA AND IMAGE CONVERSION

Converting and migrating your data from another system takes effort, but the right team makes it look easy. Ensure the data conversion team has worked with many tools and has you covered.

## TRAINING

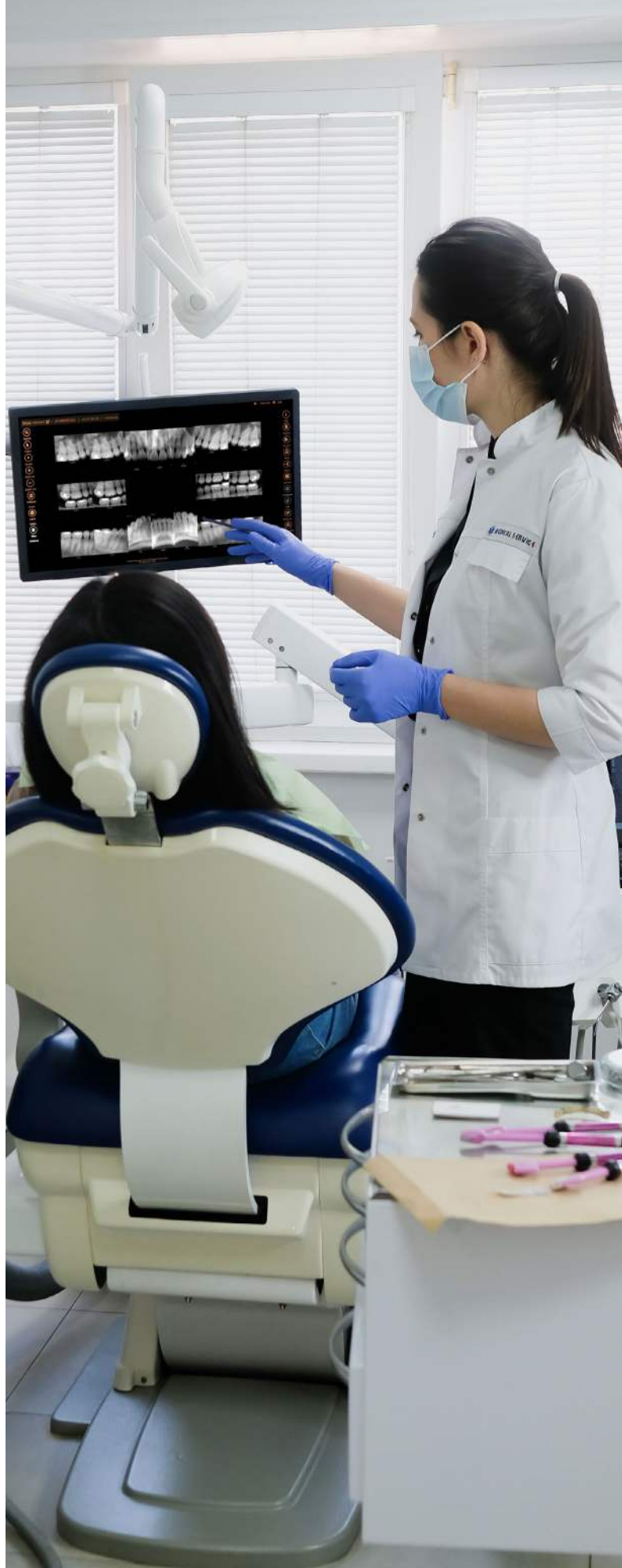
A complete training program includes support for your key admin staff, comprehensive training resources, on-site support for launch day, and more. The proper training makes all the difference before the software goes live.

## SUPPORT

Training doesn't end when your team starts using a new practice management software. Denticon exemplifies a system that keeps teams covered for the long haul.

### This system includes:

- ✓ Nearly 1,000 reference tools with explanations of everyday tasks and answers to frequently asked questions
- ✓ Detailed videos that explain how to navigate with screenshots
- ✓ A glossary of dental industry terms
- ✓ A troubleshooting tool to help you efficiently navigate the knowledge base



# Closing Thoughts: Migrating Dental Practices to the Cloud

Cloud computing deserves serious consideration as dental practices evolve in a fast-paced environment.

Healthcare expenditures are expected to double by 2030, and well-positioned dental enterprises will capture the market share. Cloud-based solutions position practices of every size to save money on IT costs and facilitate growth without technological constraints. Choosing the proper software foundation simply enhances the patient experience, increases your efficiency, and makes it easier to scale.

As you weigh the best solution, **remember this:**

- ✓ **95%** of businesses experience unexpected server downtime
- ✓ **One in ten** servers have at least one outage annually
- ✓ The average server outage lasts **117 minutes**

Fortunately, there's a better way forward.

**SCHEDULE A DEMO**

**Denticon offers the most reliable, comprehensive cloud-based dental software available today if you're ready to elevate your operations. Feel free to get in touch to speak with an expert to explore possibilities!**

Email: [sales@planetdds.com](mailto:sales@planetdds.com) or call 800-861-5098

