

Tabs3 in the Cloud

Each year more attorneys become interested in cloud technology. With all the options in the market, we wanted to explain the main differences between three cloud options: Tabs3 Connect, Hosted Services, and Remote Desktop.

TABS3 CONNECT

Tabs3 Connect provides access to Tabs3 features anywhere you can connect to the internet, with no app required. From wherever you are, simply go to Tabs3connect.com on your device to enter fees and costs, access your client and contact information, view your firm-wide calendar, and more.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Tabs3 Connect lets you access the Tabs3 information at your office from your phone, tablet, or laptop. You don't need to install anything on your phone or laptop as Tabs3 Connect is entirely accessed over the internet through a browser. When you access your firm's data through Tabs3 Connect, data is encrypted using Secure Socket Layer (SSL) as it is transferred from your office to your mobile device. This is the same level of security most banks use to secure communication transfers. For further protection, data is not stored on your device, but remains on the server in your office.

BENEFITS

Tabs3 Connect gives you the best of both worlds: Quick access to the features you need on the go, and the full-featured software at the office or on your laptop. You can add, review, and edit fee, cost, client, contact, and calendar records so you won't forget any time or costs incurred while you are out of the office. You can also use the Matter Manager to review email, client notes, documents, transactions, phone records, and billing summaries for your clients. Tabs3 Connect's interface was designed with the mobile user in mind, so a stylus or zooming in on your screen won't be necessary.



Tabs3 Connect gives you access to features you typically need when you are out of the office, but it is not meant to be a standalone option. For example, you will still use Tabs3 Billing at your office to print statements or create matters.

CONSIDERATIONS

Tabs3 Connect is available at no additional charge for firms enrolled in maintenance plans for both Tabs3 and PracticeMaster Platinum. Alternatively, an annual subscription can be purchased for each user by firms who have a Platinum license of either Tabs3 or PracticeMaster.

HOSTED SERVICES

Hosted services allow you to access a virtual desktop anywhere you can connect to the internet. Hosted service providers are a great option for firms that want to use Tabs3 software when out of the office. Hosted Services can be thought of as a computer you can log into through a website. Instead of being tied to one physical computer or device where your files, applications, and data are stored, you can run Tabs3, PracticeMaster, and other desktop programs from your laptop, desktop computer, or tablet by logging in to your provider's website.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

For a monthly fee, your provider hosts your files, programs, and data on a server, which they house and maintain. You then use a web browser on any computer or device to log in with a personal ID and password to access your computer's virtual desktop. All your favorite programs, icons, and wallpapers will still appear on your screen. If you want to use Tabs3, just click the icon and the program will open, as usual. Nothing will change with how you use Tabs3 software – the only difference is that the data is hosted by a provider.

BENEFITS

Because you can access your virtual desktop from any device with a browser, hosted services are optimal for multi-office law firms or attorneys frequently working from home. This option could provide faster processing than a typical multi-user Tabs3 setup because the processing will be done on a fast server where the data is stored, but it still will not be faster than a single user setup or Platinum software. You can avoid the IT hassle of setting up a network and keeping up to date on all updates and virus protection. All of that is handled by the provider. Your provider also stores and backs up all data through their server, so this can provide enhanced data security and peace of mind.

CONSIDERATIONS

In order to get the most out of hosted services, you should switch your entire environment over to the hosted environment, not just Tabs3 software. However, talk with your provider about the software that needs to be switched over. Tabs3 and many other applications run well in a virtual desktop environment, but not all do. You should also determine how important mobility is to you. Most traditional desktop software is designed to be used with a mouse, so it may be more difficult to use some features with the touchscreen of your phone or tablet. You should also consider your bandwidth. Hosted Services rely on internet connectivity, so a slow internet connection will result in poor software performance. These concerns and others should be discussed in advance with your provider, who should give you a well-documented and customized migration plan.

If you're looking to host Tabs3 software through a provider, in order to comply with the Tabs3 license agreement, the provider will need to be located within the United States.

To get you started researching the different options, we asked a few Tabs3 clients who they recommend for implementing a hosted environment. The following providers are able to host in the United States and are recommended by at least two or more current Tabs3 clients, but you will need to complete your own research to decide which hosted service provider fits your needs:

- Legal Workspace
- Uptime Legal Systems
- ProCirrus
- AirDesk Solutions
- AdarIT
- WAMS, Inc.
- Lan-Tech, Inc.

REMOTE DESKTOP

Remote Desktop allows you to connect to your office computer across the internet from virtually any computer, tablet, or smartphone. Remote Desktop allows you to see and control your office computer as though you were sitting directly in front of it. You can run Tabs3 and PracticeMaster through Remote Desktop just like normal, and there is little impact on speed and performance - only a possible delay from the latency of Remote Desktop itself.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Remote Desktop software captures the mouse and keyboard inputs from the computer you're working on and sends them to your office computer. Your office computer in turn sends the monitor output to the computer you are working on. In other words, you connect your monitor, keyboard, and mouse to your computer at the office. In a typical session, all keystrokes and mouse clicks are registered as if you were performing the same tasks on your office computer.

BENEFITS

Remote Desktop allows you to connect to all your files, applications, and other internal resources as if you were directly connected to the network. It also allows you to keep your data at the office and not on the computer you're working on or on someone else's hosted server in the cloud. Connecting to your firm's data through Remote Desktop can also reduce software costs because it isn't necessary to invest in multiple copies of the same business software packages, like Microsoft Office, for your work and home office as they can be used via a single machine.

CONSIDERATIONS

Using Remote Desktop to connect to Tabs3 software can work well, but it's important to ensure your network is reliable, as Remote Desktop will not correct or compensate for network instability. Additionally, implementing a Remote Desktop can require some IT assistance, so having a knowledgeable IT administrator will be important, especially during business hours. Similar to hosted environments, most traditional desktop software is designed to be used with a mouse, so it may be more difficult to use some of the features with the touchscreen of your phone or tablet.

If you're interested in implementing any of these three options, contact your local reseller and consultant. If you do not have a local reseller and consultant, contact our Sales team at (402) 419-2200 or sales@tabs3.com.