Assembly

The **Hidden Costs of IT** in Legal Case Management Software

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At a busy firm, it's common to sign off on an IT invoice without having time to truly go over every line item and understand what you're paying for. Do you know what your IT is actually costing you if running legal case management on-premise?

The cost to run case management software locally involves more than you may think. It's easy to assume that the fees to maintain a cloud case management subscription will surpass on-premise case management fees after a certain amount of time. However, it's important to look beyond the cost to acquire the software and weigh other factors.

The real operating costs of servers

The most obvious expense with on-premise software is the servers used to power it, but it's about more than just the hardware. If your server isn't updated every three to five years, chances are your warranty is up. And with outdated servers and server software, you're at risk of losing irreplaceable client and case data in the event of a malfunction or disaster scenario.

Buying a brand-new server will destroy your return on investment (ROI). Say you purchase a server for 15 people at the firm initially, but then your firm grows to 30 people. The server you purchased no longer keeps up with your workload, slowing productivity until you are forced to buy another server that you didn't account for in your budget.

Every server purchase most likely could require re-purchasing software such as Windows Server, Microsoft SQL Server, Exchange Server, and Remote Desktop Services. Or, at the very least, acquiring more licenses for those products to handle your growth.

Firms pay these upfront costs, at minimum, every five years for each server. To maintain on-premise software, there are monthly recurring costs to consider, including managed IT services and case management application maintenance fees. Despite these expenses, your on-premise solution most likely does not have redundancy to account for hardware or software failure.

To maintain your servers, you're paying for server maintenance, an IT person, and money you can't get back from downtime. When you have server issues, you're responsible for getting parts ordered and replaced and your firm is down while you wait.

> Go back to the last time your firm had to back up the system. How long did it take? Can you find out how much you paid in overtime the last time a server was down? The numbers may surprise you.

> "I know exactly what [Neos] is going to cost me every month. This has completely stabilized the risk trajectory for what our technology budget is."
>
> Matt Schad, Schad & Schad

The high cost of **fully managed IT services**

When an IT vendor provides managed services for your firm, you're essentially paying them for access to a private cloud. Firms that go this route are often paying for managed IT on a per user per month basis.

A good estimate for an average hourly IT labor rate is $150 multiplied by implied annual labor hours. It's not uncommon for a 10-person firm to pay the provider $250/month for firewall protection, $75/month for help desk, $200/month for storage, and $500/month for GPU cards to power on premise software.

This can add up to $100–$130 per user per month, which alone can cost more than some subscription-based cloud case management solutions. Keep in mind these IT providers frequently raise the price each year.

And IT providers often bill hourly without an itemization of what went into those hours.

Estimate your Average Hourly IT Labor Rate

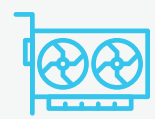| IT Labor		Firewall		Help Desk		Storage		GPU Cards
$150	**+**	**$250**	**+**	**$75**	**+**	**$200**	**+**	**$500**
per hour*		per month*		per month*		per month*		per month*

*Common rates for 10-person firm

Ask yourself if the IT team is clearly explaining what the issues are when invoicing and not just using technical jargon.

Costs associated with **on-premise vs. cloud case management**

	On-premise case management	Cloud-based case management
Dedicated server	✓	
Server maintenance	✓	
Windows server license	✓	
PC minimum requirements (processor, RAM, disk space)	✓	
Expense tracking	✓	
Installation	✓	
Configuration	✓	
Product server support	✓	
Recurring maintenance contract with IT vendor	✓	
Backup data & recovery	✓	
Microsoft 365	✓	✓
Network, printers, etc	✓	✓
Virus protection	✓	✓
BYOD (bring your own device - Mac, Android, etc.) *Optional*	✓	✓

To determine how much your firm is paying per year to run on-premise case management, take all the IT expenses and divide that total by 5 years. Then, compare the figure to our yearly costs for Neos.

Seamless collaboration and more in the cloud

Time is money and moving to the cloud helps firms be productive. With a cloud-based system like Neos, not only can you open up your work for the day from any device anywhere you are, you can also save money on lighter devices. There is no difference in performance when you use a cloud-based system so new machines don't have to be expensive ones with fast processors.

Because cloud applications are centralized, you won't lose productivity to workers in multiple branches or working from remote locations.

With a cloud-based solution like Neos, you won't lose productivity within documents, either. Because Neos is integrated with Microsoft 365, document storage and management are built into the program. Gone are the days of overwriting documents when another user is working.

With Neos, you can collaborate on a document with your colleagues in real time, never experiencing time lost to overwriting files or waiting for others to close out of a document.

Cloud solutions like Neos release automatic updates each month so you're constantly receiving the latest productivity-boosting features (both from Neos and Microsoft, as a result of the integration).

Priceless factors to consider

▶ Cloud Storage

When you own your own servers, you are responsible for your own security, and servers require constant protection against attacks. Cloud-based case management, on the other hand, is powered by security from leading technology security experts at Microsoft, Amazon, or Google, protecting your data with rigorous security measures 24/7. Companies like Microsoft typically act on security threats before the public even knows about the vulnerability.

In order to protect your firm with on-premise software, you have to remember to keep your virus protection software updated—and make sure it's still running at all times. On-premise systems can also be more vulnerable to malicious actions, for example by disgruntled employees or criminals.

▶ Data Protection

Your data is the crown jewel of your law firm so why would you take any chances on it? You can put a price tag on server maintenance, but you can't put a price on the peace of mind that you won't lose client data to a server fire or lose significant productivity due to a server going offline. With more remote work today, in many cases this means additional productivity losses from driving into the office to fix problems like down servers.

In contrast to on-premise case management, cloud-based programs back up your data for you automatically, multiple times throughout the day. You don't need to maintain daily backup copies of your data in external places. Because Neos runs on Microsoft SharePoint, backups automatically occur every 60 seconds.

▶ HIPAA Compliance

Do you truly know what HIPAA compliance requires? Is your server locked in a cage? Are you using two-factor authentication? If you aren't, you most likely are not in compliance with HIPAA. A Microsoft Azure-based solution like Neos, paired with sound internal security policies, helps protect your client medical data.

Protect your data & firm

60
second backup interval to ensure your data is safe

24/7
security from leading technology security experts

HIPAA
compliance without the hassle

"Neos is the most robust and user-friendly software on the market. I don't know how a firm could live without it. The cost of Neos is a drop in the bucket compared to what we're getting out of it. It's such a small investment it's almost not worthy of calculating."

David Cohen
Cohen Kolodny Abuse Analytics
& former Needles Desktop user

Assembly

Making the switch can seem daunting but it doesn't have to be. We make the process of migrating your data and system seamless and we're constantly improving it with significant investments to our Product, Professional Services, Development, and Customer Success teams and resources.

With Neos, you can:

✓ Scale your infrastructure indefinitely as your firm grows

✓ Rest easy knowing your data is safe with the protection of the Microsoft® Azure cloud platform

✓ Stop worrying about server failure and downtime—Neos has a greater than 99% uptime guarantee and redundancy is achieved by using four different Microsoft Azure data centers in the US

✓ Enhance security and avoid unwanted access with Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)

✓ Receive updates automatically as enhancements are made to the platform—no installation required

✓ Avoid server, maintenance, IT, and IT overtime fees

✓ View a real-time feed of all pertinent case activity with the Activity Feed

✓ Grow your firm with end-to-end client management using advanced Intake features
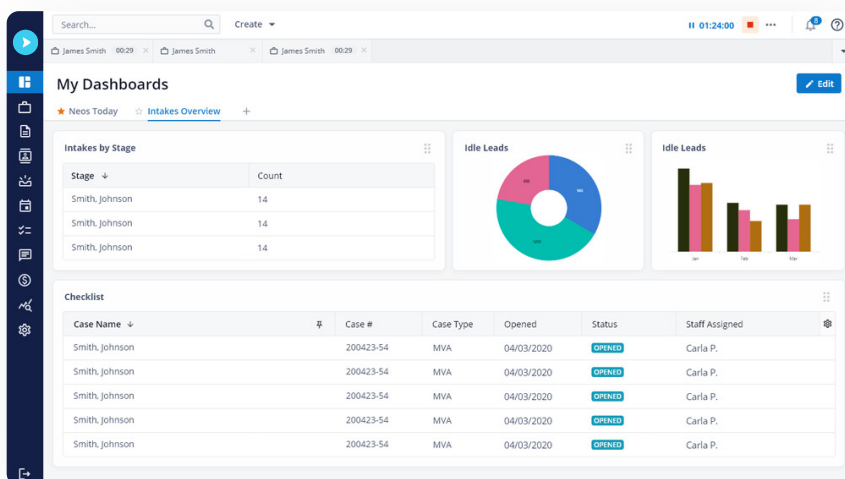
If your firm would like to learn more about making the switch, contact your account manager or reach us at **sales@assemblysoftware.com**

Get a Demo ▶