A Guide to Dropbox for Lawyers

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Cloud-based technology is on the rise for law firms. Clio's *2020 Legal Trends Report* found that 79% of lawyers use cloud technology—such as Dropbox for lawyers—to store their firm's data. In addition, 62% of firms let clients securely share and sign documents electronically. These numbers show that legal professionals are increasingly benefiting from more flexibility, efficiency, and adaptability when dealing with documents.

However, not all cloud-based document management systems and tools are created equal. This prompts an important question: Is a cloud-based tool like Dropbox an effective and secure option for lawyers?

Dropbox is one of the most popular document storage applications. As a cloud-based tool, Dropbox removes the need for cumbersome physical servers. Dropbox allows attorneys to upload, share, and access essential files and information whenever and wherever they are. Still, it's a lawyer's responsibility to ensure the tools they use are secure to keep client information confidential.

In this blog post, we'll explore the pros and cons of Dropbox for lawyers. Read on to find out if Dropbox is right for you and your law practice.

Is Dropbox secure for lawyers?

Dropbox for lawyers is a great way to store and share documents and information securely. Also, Dropbox offers multiple security features to keep files secure, including Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption, permissions-based access, and optional two-factor authentication (akin to Google's two-factor authentication). Together, these factors help make sharing and storing data in Dropbox more secure.

Also, as this Dropbox customer case study showcases, it can be a powerful way for lawyers to collaborate under complex circumstances. In this case, non-profit lawyers used Dropbox Business to enable casework collaboration with attorneys around the world. This enhanced collaboration allowed the lawyers to take on more cases, ensure higher security for client files, and collaborate in real-time across the United States and the Middle East. With this enhanced international collaboration, the lawyers ultimately won in resettlement cases for refugees facing persecution.

However, as with any technology you use at your law firm, you must be aware of and monitor potential risks. Most notably for lawyers, Dropbox's current terms of service include mandatory binding arbitration and bans class actions against the company. Also, keep in mind that Dropbox could give user information to law enforcement in certain situations.

An alternative for lawyers is Clio. For example, Clio's industry-leading security applies in-transit and at-rest encryption using industry best practices to keep your firm's data secure when stored and transmitted. Clio also offers role-based permissions and two-factor authentication for enhanced security.

Read about Dropbox's transparency policies,and learn more about encryption for lawyers and how to choose the right technology solutions for your firm.

Pros and cons of Dropbox for lawyers

When looking at Dropbox for lawyers, there are different versions to choose from.

Dropbox Basic is free and gives you 2 GB of storage when you sign up. With the free account, you can access and share documents and files from any device—including your computer, smartphone, and tablet. The free version includes features like file sync backups, 30-day file recovery, version history, and shared links (where recipients don't need a Dropbox account to view and download the file).

Is it worth it to upgrade to a paid version? That depends on your needs. When you upgrade to Dropbox's paid Business plans, you get more flexibility, features, storage, and users. You get 3 TB and 1 user for Professional accounts to as much space as needed and 3+ users for Advanced plans. Some features you'll also get:

- Longer file recovery and version history periods
- Shared link controls (to manage visibility and access to shared files)
- Larger file transfer sizes
- Branded sharing options
- Remote device wiping (for lost or stolen devices, or when a team member leaves)

Key pros and cons of Dropbox for lawyers

Still, considering if Dropbox for lawyers is a good fit for your law firm? We've summed up some key pros and cons to consider:

- **Pro: It has a simple, user-friendly interface.** Dropbox is easy to use and user-friendly. The other party doesn't even need an account to download files.
- **Pro: It's popular with lawyers.** Dropbox is easy to use, and lots of lawyers are already comfortable using it. According to the American Bar Association's *2020 Legal Technology Survey Report*, 67% of respondents already use Dropbox's online file storage service.
- **Con: It can get cluttered**. While Dropbox lets you store your files, it can easily get messy and disorganized very quickly. You need to stay on top of keeping documents organized, which can be time-consuming.
- **Con: It's not lawyer specific**. Dropbox is a great file sharing and storage tool for individuals and businesses, but it's not made for lawyers. It lacks some legal-specific features that are nice to have. For example, Clio's legal document management software offers legal-specific features. These features include the ability to filter and sort legal documents by customized categories, folders, authors, and dates, or the ability to pull from case records in a single click.

Alternatives

Dropbox isn't the only cloud-based document storage option for lawyers. Tools like Google Drive, OneDrive, and Clio also offer secure document storage and collaboration features.

Google Drive

Google Drive is a cloud-based file storage and synchronization service that lets you store and access documents from anywhere (both from your desktop or mobile devices).

Integrations are a key benefit for Google Drive. You can integrate Google Drive with other Google tools like Google Calendar, Google Contacts, and Gmail—and you can also integrate Google Drive with Clio. Clio's Google Drive integration makes it simple to share, sync, edit, access, and share your files. The integration creates a Google Drive folder that contains all of your Clio files. When you add, remove, or update files in Google Drive, those changes are reflected in Clio.

Microsoft OneDrive

Part of Microsoft 365, OneDrive for Business is a cloud-based file storage and synchronization service where you can store, collaborate, and access your documents and files from anywhere. In OneDrive for Business, you can add shared files from Teams or SharePoint, upload files, and more.

Similar to Google Drive, OneDrive also integrates with Clio (the integration creates a folder in your OneDrive containing all of your Clio files). You can also integrate your Office 365 Calendar, Office 365 Contacts, and Outlook with Clio.

Clio

Clio Manage's legal document management software makes it easy to work securely and efficiently—whether you're at the office or working on the go. Also, Clio features unlimited storage—legal documents, images, audio, and video files can be stored and are automatically backed up. As previously mentioned, Clio offers industry-leading security features, as well as time-saving and productivity-enhancing document features including:

- **Keyword search capability**. Find the document you need quickly by searching for keywords within the document's title, metadata, or text contents.
- **Filter and sorting**. Find documents fast by filtering legal documents by customized categories, folders, authors, and dates.
- **Electronic signatures**. Review, prepare, and send out documents for signature by email —the signed documents are automatically and securely saved in Clio.
- **Remote and mobile document access**. Redline, annotate, and work with legal documents on your mobile phone or laptop with Clio.

Dropbox for lawyers is a great tool for lawyers

Cloud-based technology and document storage can offer many benefits for lawyers, giving attorneys the ability to access documents and information from anywhere, at any time. However, when considering the top tech tools for lawyers, lawyers need to look for secure and truly time-saving tools.

Dropbox for lawyers can largely fit the bill. By choosing a Dropbox option with the right storage and security features, lawyers can gain invaluable cloud-based storage and access. However, lawyers must also do their due diligence to consider the pros and cons of Dropbox to ensure they can keep client information confidential.

Dropbox for lawyers can be a useful tool that enhances productivity and lets lawyers access information on the go, but it's not the only option. Alternatives like Clio, for example, offer secure cloud-based document storage, and features tailored to lawyers and law firms.

Whichever cloud-based document storage apps you use, be sure they can help your law firm data stay secure, and that they are a good fit for how you work.

About Clio

Clio is the global leader in legal AI, powering legal work across the profession, from law firms of every size to corporate legal teams, government agencies, and courts. Its Intelligent Legal Work Platform unites the business and practice of law, connecting the people, information, and processes behind legal work. Clio's AI brings the context together with legal sources drawn from Clio Library, a growing collection of more than one billion legal documents. Over 400,000 legal professionals in more than 130 countries rely on Clio to run their legal world. Learn more at www.clio.com.