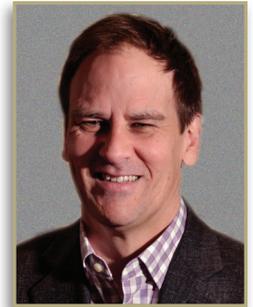# Emerging Technologies'
Perspective

Last month I spoke with a long time Ortho2 customer who needed to replace his tired, out of warranty Windows 2003 SQL server. He asked me to review two bids he was considering for its replacement. The first bid was $12,500 for a new RAID server, SQL software licensing, backup unit, installation and data transfer. The second one was $14,000 for a smaller, rack mounted unit. When he asked me which server he should buy, I quickly responded, "Neither!"

Server and PC sales have been on the decline for many years now as the world moves to smartphones and tablets for most of their computing needs. During the same period, adoption rates to cloud computing in healthcare have escalated significantly, primarily due to the demand for increased availability and security of health records, cost reductions, and improved Internet infrastructure. A recent survey by HIMSS (Health Information Management Systems Society) estimated that 83% of healthcare companies are utilizing cloud computing. For the customer above and many other Ortho2 clients, a move to our cloud-based Edge product can save on both up front and long term costs, as well as providing several other key benefits. Here are the top five reasons you should consider a migration to the Edge Cloud rather purchasing yet another big, expensive server:

1. **Decreased Costs –** The Edge Cloud can reduce expenses in several key areas. This is especially true over the long run by eliminating pricey servers, Microsoft SQL, and other server software and updates, as well decreasing ongoing IT/maintenance costs. Sometimes the cost savings can be dramatic and immediate and more than pay for the upgrade to Edge. Data storage is unlimited in the Edge Cloud, so growth is not an issue – even with your 3D data. No more replacing hard drives, backup media, or buying multiple servers for satellite offices. All your patient data in one secure place.

2. **Increased Accessibility and Mobility –** Smartphone and tablet sales have long surpassed PC sales as people have developed an increasing appetite for mobility and accessibility. By 2017, 87% of the worldwide connected devices will be tablets and smartphones. Mobile devices are the communication device of choice for your patients, so providing mobile applications for them and everyone else in your practice community is paramount. The Edge Cloud delivers real-time mobile applications for everyone relevant in your practice, even referrers and prospective patients.

3. **Easier and Better Backups –** Do you stress over backups? If not, are you checking them regularly? Every year we have a few customers who lose data due to faulty, unplugged, or unverified backups. Backups done on the cloud are automatic and far more reliable than in-office backups. Like keeping your money in a bank instead of under your mattress, cloud computing provides a much more secure way to store and protect your valuable practice data.

4. **Help with HIPAA –** As healthcare moves to the inevitable government mandate for the Electronic Health Record (EHR), private cloud hosting solutions provide many advantages in complying with HIPAA, PCI, and EHR regulations over locally hosted server environments due to the level of security required by cloud vendors. In a recent article, one technologically savvy dentist called cloud computing an additional "HIPAA shield for your office."

5. **New Technology –** I recently read that there are about 5 billion device connections to the Internet in

the world today and that this is projected to increase to 30 billion connections in the next four years. Almost anything you can imagine will be connected to the cloud – homes, cars, refrigerators – everything! In orthodontics, we will see an increase in applications that connect new devices to specific functions in the cloud. Cloud computing offers far more integration possibilities with mobile apps, real-time data access, and eventually wearable technology and virtual reality devices.

So if a new server purchase looms on the horizon in your practice, consider instead a move to the Edge Cloud. As long as you have fast, stable Internet, you could make your office a lot more accessible and mobile while potentially reducing costs at the same time. You'll love the built from the ground up feature set in Edge and the seamless conversion from ViewPoint. Soon in-office servers may be the fax machine of the future – absolutely necessary 10 years ago but just a big, expensive paperweight today! ⏻

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