

# Pastoral Care Cloud

## What's to Consider?



We at Pastoral Care are aware many churches are working through the options of which would be the best Cloud option for the management of their pastoral records.

Pastoral Care Cloud is an Australian innovative solution engineered from the ground up to provide security, cost effectiveness and features that are unique to Pastoral Care Software.

This document explains some of the issues we dealt with in coming up with the technology to best serve the church.

### Web & Security

Security needs to be at the foremost concern for any church management system, not only with protecting the valuable information entered but as well who the church allows access to the data.

Alternative Cloud based systems to Pastoral Care Cloud are web based, these systems present a front door to the world for hackers to break in with gaining access to the data. What is played down to the general public is the major issue of cybercrime in which a complete field of operation often happening unnoticed exists called Black Hats. These are hackers who infiltrate with the purpose of stealing data from web based database systems. You will never hear of a Black Hat infiltration from any web database provider unless it hits the media because this information would destroy that company. The internet is often assumed as a safe place because we all use it; internet security is a huge business behind the scenes, just like virus scanners have to be updated daily because of new daily threats, web based databases are constantly being exposed to new threats. It's one thing to view news articles, watch a movie or listen to some music on the internet, when you start to take responsibility for putting your congregation's personal information on the internet you need to be well informed so that you can have confidence of a secure system.

### Our Security Model

Pastoral Care Cloud does not expose your data as an online active database; rather it is an online synchronization technology where the church master database resides safely and securely on a church computer where the Pastoral Care Cloud program called Cloud Host manages all the data synchronization. Think of it this way, the Cloud Host program is like a church secretary, who is the gatekeeper. Someone calls in informing the church of a new family and all their personal records, it's our Cloud Host program which updates all the changes and then informs all the other Cloud users of the changes automatically.

There is no perfect Cloud system, we openly acknowledge the weakness of the internet and have developed our technology to give the church the best possible secure system to protect your data.

When using Pastoral Care Cloud not even we at Pastoral Care can access your data and we know how the system works. The alternative web base system exposes not only your data to be hacked but also to unknown people who run the web base service, often overseas people who are hidden from your access. One area of concern is Child Safe records in which Pastoral Care only allows access to the records the church give permission to, a web based system allows strangers who manage the web base system access to all the records.

Further to enhancing the security of Pastoral Care the only users who can access the church Cloud data are people who have Pastoral Care installed with the same unique registration details as the church office installation. We also go further than this. Each computer has a unique ID that the church office approves via our Cloud Host program. This unique ID gives that workstation permission to work on the church Cloud network. A web based system does not offer this kind of security as it's an open system to the world.

A web base data management system compiles all the records of all the churches that use the service in one location, this itself is a concern because this is the most attractive environment for a hacker attack as once they break through they can access every church that users the service. Pastoral Care Cloud does not centralise the church database, each church that users Pastoral Care Cloud has its own master database that is stored and run within the church which is completely independent of every other church.

Not mentioned here for security reasons, we also have multiple other unique security measures to further protect an already robust system.

## **Flexibility**

Pastoral Care has been designed to be a total flexible solution. In that often we have a church office with many computers where Pastoral Care can be run in network mode. This creates a totally closed system independent of the internet. This setup can then add our Cloud Host program where the system still remains independent of the internet with our Cloud Host program being the bridge to allow remote users to view and update any records.

Pastoral Care can also be setup for the smaller church where the Pastor runs Pastoral Care on his laptop and if he chooses to allow another user to access the Pastoral Care records via Cloud for example just to manage the Roster program.

Because Pastoral Care is a full feature desktop application with full Cloud capabilities it offers speed, features, performance and flexibility, these are offered far in excess of what a web based system can offer with the limitation of internet bandwidth available as well as the restrictions of the features an internet browser offers.

## **Costs**

The web based alternatives to Pastoral Care cost a monthly fee with the fee often determined by how many people you keep records on. This approach we find unacceptable as a wise method of stewardship of the congregations giving, we at Pastoral Care decided we needed to engineer a more powerful solution that did not include ongoing fees. The Alternative web base system locks you in so

if they increase the monthly fee you have no option but to pay this increase to keep access to your data. Also adding more records to a web based system your fee will increase as it's often a cost determined by record total. Pastoral Care has no restricting on the amount of records it can keep, whether it's 100 or 10,000 the cost is the same!

## **Reliability of Service**

Web based data management systems relies 100% on a reliable internet connection. Pastoral Care doesn't rely on the internet to work. If the Pastoral Care database is stored in a church office then no computer in the church office requires the internet to run Pastoral Care as each computer is connected to the database using network mode. For the Cloud Guests away from the church office our unique system means if the church office internet is down or the remote guests internet is down then the remote guest can still fully function using Pastoral Care. Our unique Cloud technology will then update any changes once the internet is resumed with no delays experienced by any user.

Often over looked and assumed with a web base database service is that a company will always be around. If the company folds or swallowed up in any merger what happens to your data or who has access to the data is out of your control. Pastoral Care Cloud runs totally independent of Pastoral Care Ministries and although we have been operating for 28 years and are as strong as ever your data and Cloud service is in your control and is not determined by our existence.

A web based system also relies on the providers servers being operational 24/7, if there is any failure or interruption to the service this will mean the church will be off line. With Pastoral Care as mentioned if the internet goes down or even if there is a hardware failure at the church office Pastoral Care Cloud remains operational.

## **Pastoral Care – Better than Cloud**

We are truly excited with Pastoral Care 13 to offer an innovative Cloud solution that is better than what has been previously known to be available. We have the solution which directly deals with the issues of security and cost while giving you a powerful desktop application that can run independently of the internet working or not.

We have designed a solution that gives your church the tools to manage your own church Cloud network securely, which means only the people you choose can access the sensitive congregation data with a service that is totally independent of us.

All of this for one fixed price, no ongoing fees, security and reliability of service... Pastoral Care 13 with Cloud... better than Cloud!