

AIRS and its Relationship with the Cloud

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Information to use in the decision-making process

Introduction:

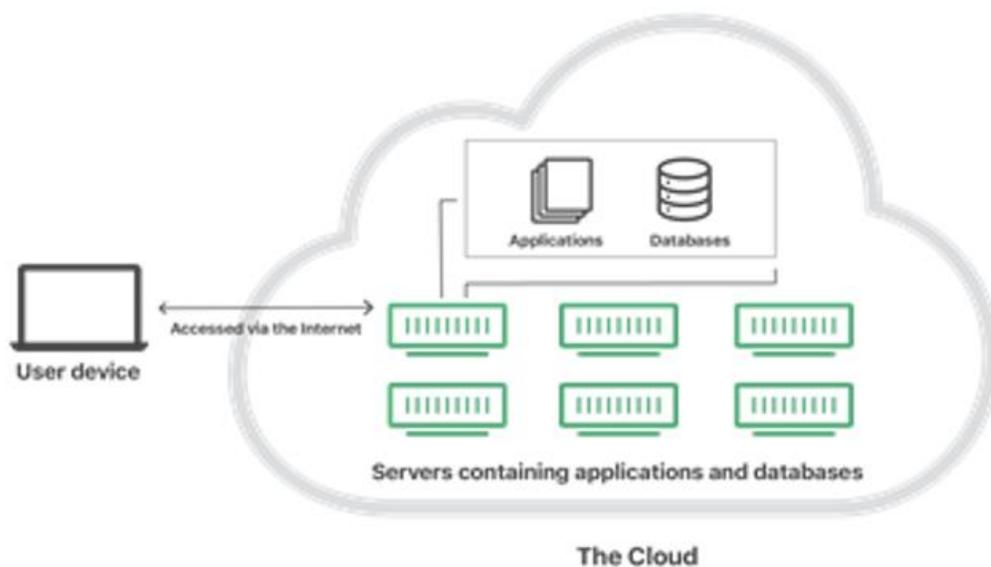
AIRS is meant for standalone or local network access. Having remote user access to AIRS must be carefully considered since AIRS is not a web-based application. This document is intended to help guide you in setting up remote access to AIRS via a remotely hosted solution where the users' connection is a remote-control application like Terminal Server, RDP to workstation, or CITRIX.

Suggestion:

The NYSDOH-AIDS Institute strongly suggests you review this document and discuss the situation with Netsmart before making any changes to your network. They will be able to determine if AIRS will function properly or not.

Cloud Discussion:

The term 'Cloud' refers to servers, applications and databases that are accessed over the Internet. These servers can be anywhere in the world. Cloud-based systems allow for quick deployment of applications and centralized maintenance, at a much-reduced overall cost. Below is the simple basic diagram of cloud architecture.



To Remotely Access AIRS:

AIRS can be accessed using a remotely hosted server so long as the users' connection is a remote-control application like Terminal Server, RDP to workstation, or CITRIX. If you decide to go the hosted route, go slowly, and make sure the environment can maintain a dependable connection.

All users must have complete access to ALL AIRS folders. Users who perform extracts or access the AIRS Utilities must have 'create' and 'delete' rights to all files in the AIRS share. As a starting point, give all users complete access to AIRS. You can always make the permissions more restrictive.

Rules to allow AIRS to run remotely over the internet:

- A) AIRS will **not run dependably** in a traditional Cloud environment.
- B) AIRS will run on **remotely hosted servers**.
 - *AIRS is not an internet-based application* and IT staff are encouraged to *think of this as remote hosting over the internet.*
- C) The following 9 **requirements** must be met for AIRS to be accessed over the internet.
 1. The AIRS application **must** have a *constant connection to the database*.
 - NOTE: Intensive Antivirus scanning can disrupt the flow of data between the AIRS client and the data source.
 2. Users should connect to AIRS using a *remote-control portal* (Terminal Services, RDP to workstations, CITRIX, or other similar products). Note that some of these products might incur additional costs.
 - In the illustration, the "User device" will connect to a server hosting RDP or Citrix portal on Page 1.
 - Agencies **must not** access the AIRS application (urs.exe) outside of this (*remote-control portal*) environment.
 - NOTE: Using any *free* or *trial* versions of remote access applications not mentioned above, may not be configurable to the extent needed in order to run AIRS successfully.
 3. *Load balancing* across servers will cause *interruptions* in connectivity between the application and database and *should not be used*.

4. *DFS replication* can create *intermittent interruptions* between the AIRS application and the database. This feature should be *disabled*.
 - Since replication can cause problems, the AIRS system should be backed up every day to a location on a different device.
 5. *Do not attempt to reconnect lost connections*. Resources should be *released* for lost connections. Users will need to re-login.
 6. *Inactivity timeout* must be longer than the Inactivity Timeout in AIRS.
 - When AIRS times-out, all the files are closed properly and pending updates are cancelled.
 7. Using local resources (the users' C Drive) will seriously *impact performance* and potentially cause data issues.
 8. All users *must* have their own logins to the portal.
 9. AIRS can *never be accessed off-line*.
 - Offline availability must *not* be enabled on the AIRS folder.
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Perspective:

Whoever is managing your connectivity/hosting services needs to know, upfront, that AIRS requires a more traditional environment. Most of the agencies who started off going down the 'Cloud' path have had to dial it back to a more hosted scenario which included abandoning the free software versions. These agencies experienced incomplete records being saved causing AIRS to crash or stop working altogether. In other instances, failed upgrades occurred causing AIRS to cease functioning.

Bottom Line:

AIRS can be accessed via a remotely hosted server so long as the users' connection is a remote-control application like Terminal Server, RDP to workstation or CITRIX. If you do decide to go the hosted route, go slowly to make sure the environment can maintain a dependable connection.