



# Digital Sovereignty in Healthcare:

A Dutch hospital deploying Nextcloud

Case Study





## About ZGT

ZGT (Ziekenhuisgroep Twente) is a Dutch hospital with two locations (Almelo and Hengelo), and one small clinic in the Dutch region of Twente. They work with a variety of other (academic) hospitals and are experts in oncology, complex diabetes, and obesitas. The hospital provides important care in a region with some 390,000 inhabitants and every year they handle about half a million polyclinical visits, 25,000 clinical admissions, and 52,000 daily treatments.





## IT infrastructure

To ensure high availability, ZGT has set up four separate data centers. These are divided over two locations. The locations are fully mirrored to provide redundancy. A dedicated fiber connection bridges the 30 kilometer distance between the two main locations.

## Digital Sovereignty First: Deciding on Nextcloud

ZGT recognized a need for an efficient way for the staff to collaborate and share data.

### Key reasons for introducing Nextcloud:

- Internal collaboration and data sharing
- External document sharing
- Avoiding explicit use of unsecured collaboration tools
- Compliance
- Vendor independence
- Keep data on-premise
- Web client

“Everything that goes wrong - just look at Corona - boils down to information, to documentation, communication and sharing. We want to encourage people to share this knowledge and optimize work.”

“We have a firewall rule, and I guess every hospital does, and it has the word 'dropbox' in it. And it goes into a black hole. And there's also Google docs, WeTransfer and other black holes. With these platforms we don't have any control. So we have to offer an alternative that is as easy to use, but under our control.”

“Our health care data is very valuable, it is like digital gold. With Nextcloud, we get easily through audits because all data is within our own data center.”

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**Jeroen Agten**

Coordinator ICT at ZGT





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**On the contrary, the team pointed out that a migration to Microsoft 365 would have been not only a compliance risk but also potentially very expensive.**

We've seen other hospitals accept the offer of free Teams, but Teams is integrated in the other products part of 365. So users start using those too, and it becomes a lot bigger than you perhaps initially were looking for.

DMS, then looked into Share- Point. That would have cost an insane amount of money because it would need a big, long and complicated implementation project from a big IT service provider. Then we discovered you can do 99% of that in no time in Nextcloud.

We want to be pro-active in our choice, and keep our options open. We have looked at

"Nextcloud doesn't touch the underlying file structure, all documents are easily available.

Many other platforms put info in the database and you can't easily get at the documents themselves. Now, if we had decided that Nextcloud didn't work for us, we could have given the docs back to the users with a simple copy action. That was a big advantage for us."

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Ronald Maatman





## Results

Nextcloud is popular with users, putting pressure on the team to enable additional functionality.

"Several users did look further and ask for other Nextcloud apps. Can we use ie. the dicom viewer app? Can you add this next week... And yeah, we say "indeed, it is useful" so we tested several apps and implemented some of them.

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**Hans-Christiaan Muns**  
Senior System-Engineer at ZGT

"It is great to see a product that speaks for itself and people ask for it. Often products don't get accepted because users don't need it or it doesn't work for them. With Nextcloud you see a hunger for more. We look at the different use cases if there is added value for ZGT; we need to test the app before we can put them in production. This takes time."

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**Jeroen Agten**  
Coordinator, ICT at ZGT

## Roll-out and user training

The roll-out of Nextcloud was incremental, starting with the IT department itself, adding the wider Information Management organization and then expanding to more teams.

"The repo team added all their documents since 1993, our storage got 100Gb of documents in one night. That wasn't entirely our intention but Nextcloud held up."

When Nextcloud is rolled out in a new department, a team member from IT will give a short Nextcloud course. It takes a bit to explain the way collaboration works in Nextcloud. Users are used to the old 'J-Share', the shared drive they used to have access to.

After the user training we want to have feedback from our users. We want to learn from our users what they find useful and what functionality they are looking for. Perhaps missing functionality can be filled up with an extra Nextcloud app, or additional training is needed."



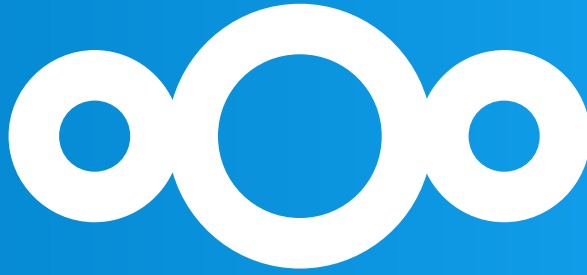
## Closing

Together with Nextcloud and partner The Good Cloud, we created a scalable Nextcloud infrastructure which can serve all of our users.

In the coming months, we are rolling out Nextcloud to the rest of the organization. The positive responses from users are a big motivation to move forward!

The biggest challenge we are facing is the fact that most of the organizations we are collaborating with are using Microsoft products.





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