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Organize your law practice, and your life, online

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A few weeks ago I encouraged you to explore Google's free, online Web applications, such as Gmail, Google's word processing platform, Google Docs and Google's online calendaring system.

One of the reasons I recommend using Google's applications is their compatibility with innumerable free Web-based productivity applications and organizational tools.

Many programs are designed to interface with Gmail and Google Calendar, making them particularly useful and convenient.

One of the most popular task management programs is Remember the Milk (www.rememberthemilk.com), a free Web-based application that allows you to create tasks, to-do lists and schedule regular reminders for approaching deadlines. It can be accessed using most smart phones, and is compatible with iPhones, Blackberries and Windows Mobile.

Tasks can be added either online or via e-mail and RTM will send reminders via e-mail, SMS or instant messenger. RTM also integrates with Google Calendar, allowing all tasks to appear on your calendar. You can also use RTM to easily access Google maps when interfacing with Google Calendar in order to determine the location of your daily tasks or appointments.

I use RTM to remind me of tasks I tend to forget, such as car inspections and annual doctor's appointments. It also can be used as a tickler system for important dates, such as looming statutes of limitations.

When RTM is used in conjunction with another Web-based application, Jott (www.jott.com), the ability to create and manage tasks and schedule appointments becomes mind bogglingly simple.

Jott is, at its essence, a voice transcription service that you access using your cell phone. You simply make a phone call and dictate short notes and reminders and schedule appointments on your calendar. RTM then automatically adds the items to your calendar. Jott can be accessed online, and is fully compatible with Outlook, Google Calendar, Blackberries and iPhones.

Using your Blackberry, you can simply and easily reply to e-

mails, and create to-do lists on your iPhone with a phone call.

Jott also is compatible with TSheets, a Web-based time tracking system. With a single phone call, you can track time spent on a particular matter.

Until recently, all features on Jott were free; however, over the summer Jott enacted a fee-based pricing plan that is quite reasonable, all things considered. Various features are available for either \$4 or \$13 per month.

If the idea of a voice transcription service appeals to you, but you're not interested in a fee-based system, there are free alternatives that include many of the features offered by Jott.

First, there's ReQall (www.reqall.com), which allows you to dictate notes, to-dos and shopping lists using a cell phone. It recognizes certain words, such as "buy" and "meet" and automatically files those memos in the appropriate category of your account. Reminders can be e-mailed to you at intervals that you determine.

It has a really nifty iPhone application, which I find particularly useful, and also is compatible with Windows Mobile, integrating some of that system's calendaring programs.

Finally, another free Web-based voice transcription application is Dial2Do (www.dial2do.com). With Dial2Do, call a number on your phone and record reminders or send e-mails and text messages. The application comes in handy if you're frequently on the road and need a viable hands-free alternative for communicating with friends and colleagues.

The Web-based applications I've described here are rapidly increasing in popularity due to their ease of use and accessibility. And, of course, you can't beat the price.

For busy lawyers attempting to manage law practices and home lives, such organizational tools can't be beat. I think you'll find them to be useful and time-saving alternatives to the traditional methods to which you're accustomed.

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