



The Legal Connection

where legal technology & people connect

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September Theme = Tech+Cool

In thinking about this month's theme, I realized that tech allows me to do some really cool things.

Certainly I can conduct business from anywhere; but mostly I can do things much more efficiently with technology than I ever could in the non-digital world.

Take this newsletter, for instance. I have been producing/delivering it to an ever growing audience of, for the most part, legal people, for 6 years now.

It started as just me and my ramblings on all things digital/webby and has evolved into a collaboration of myself and those in the legal profession (who I respect), who contribute their expertise for the benefit of my subscribers. Even my contributors use tech in interesting ways:

Barbara Nelson used technology to create a wordle. Check it out on page 2.

Microsoft MVP Ben Schorr shares with us his impressions of the latest Windows mobile operating system on a Lumina smart phone.

The Rural Lawyer, Bruce M. Cameron, wraps up the articles in this issue with his wonderful contribution on page 6.

Suffice it to say, without technology I would not be able to produce this webzine; nor would I have been able to expand on the concept and develop/produce a series of companion webinars.

In fact, two TLCxn webinars are done with recordings ready for the new membership area of The Legal Connection site (Web Presence 101 with AmicusCreative owner Fred Cohen, Esq. and Web Presence 201 with Jared Correia, Senior Advisor to the Massachusetts Law Office Management Assistance Program); and four more are scheduled between now and end of 2012. You can flip to the last page for more information, the dates and to sign up for upcoming webinars. Don't forget to note the special discount code only visible to those who receive this ezine via email!

Technology has made my mobile lifestyle possible; it has given me the tools necessary to work on my own terms (OK that's much harder than I ever worked for anyone else) – but they are my terms and tech allows me to live by them.

I hope you use tech to make your life the one you wish to be living too!

til next month...

3 Ways Remote Receptionist Services Can Make Solos Look Cool

As a reader of The Legal Connection, you're tech savvy and have a wide range of cool gadgets, apps, and services that help you run your firm efficiently and produce quality work for your clients. But did you know a virtual receptionist service can help make exceptional first impressions for your practice? The right remote receptionist service can make you look:

Responsive. Being busy seems to come with the territory; as a solo, you're the attorney, marketing department, sales team, customer service, IT guy or gal, accountant, and oftentimes the receptionist as well. And the receptionist duties may fall by the wayside as you're concentrating on doing a stellar job on the rest. A virtual receptionist service can connect calls when you're available (wherever you are) and email or text your messages to you when you can't or don't want to be reached. Having a receptionist service promptly answer your calls is a great way to be able to focus on what you do best without sacrificing your image.

Bigger. We all know size doesn't matter, but appearing professional certainly has an impact. Some new clients aren't expecting to speak with an attorney on the first ring, and it can make your

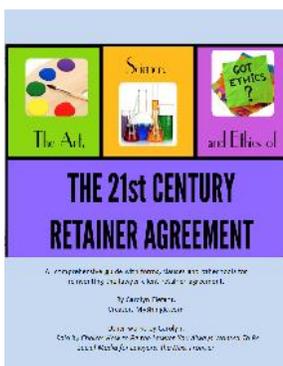
practice seem less than established. A friendly receptionist service can inspire trust in new clients and reassure them they've chosen a tried and true attorney.

Cheerful. When you answer your own calls, do you sound happy every single time you pick up the phone? It's tough to sound upbeat when you've just been interrupted in the middle of working on a big case, are in a rush, or just plain having a bad day. Thankfully, there are virtual receptionist services out there that specialize in happy, positive interactions with your clients. They'll answer your calls with a smile and patiently assist your clients, giving you and your callers greater peace of mind.

Being a solo doesn't mean you can't have a little help; hiring a virtual receptionist service can help you get more done and look good!



Katie Wilson is a Sales and Marketing Associate at Ruby Receptionists. Harkening back to an era when every call to an office was answered by a friendly receptionist, Ruby Receptionists provides personalized live, virtual receptionist service to small businesses and professionals throughout North America. Visit: <http://www.callruby.com> to learn more.



The Retainer Agreement is one of the most important contracts that you'll ever draft or sign as an attorney.

From the terms of the Retainer Agreement to its design, a Retainer Agreement is a reflection of your practice and the way you do business - making it a potential selling tool for your firm. Most of the retainer agreements for free online or even those drafted by various Bar Associations can provide a good starting point, but many do not address the multiple issues that lawyers must consider when dealing with 21st Century problems and do not generally reflect 21st Century form or style.

In this ebook, you will find a discussion of the changes that are driving the need to reinvent the retainer agreement as well as language that you can cut and paste or modify and use in your agreements.



<http://ow.ly/dNseF>

Windows Phone

So Hot It's Cool!

A few weeks ago my friends in Redmond sent me a Lumia 900 (featuring Microsoft Windows Phone 7.5) to try out. Almost as soon as I got it unboxed I made a beeline to get it activated so I could give it a spin. In the next few hundred words I'll give you a summary of my experience.

First Reaction

It's the most beautiful phone I've ever seen. Seriously. I support mobile devices for a living so I see them all – iPhones, Androids, Blackberries... THIS phone, the Lumia 900, is gorgeous. The hardware is nice enough – it's compact but feels solid and substantial. The screen is large but not ridiculous. It's very thin. The camera is o.k. though perhaps not quite as good as the one on my Droid 4.

When you turn the Lumia on though...and those multi-colored tiles slide into view. Wow. The first time you see it will make you inhale. The screen is clear and crisp and the colors are vibrant.

After the first 20 seconds though, I'm done with ascetics and I want to know how well the darned thing WORKS!

Second Reaction

The answer is...it works really well. It's fast and smooth. The UI takes a bit of getting used to and I had to figure a few things out, but the device itself is more responsive than any smartphone I've ever used and whereas my Droid 4 seems to get bogged down with too many apps or something the Lumia 900 running Windows Phone just stays smooth and fast all day long.

“What about the apps?” It's true that Apple has a lot more apps in their store. So what? How many Korean language Angry Birds knock-offs do I need?

The Windows Phone has all of the apps I really need and most of the apps I really want. Most importantly, as a business user, the Windows Phone has Word, Excel, PowerPoint and an extremely good OneNote client. Not a program that reads Word documents. Not a runtime app that can open and play PowerPoint presentations. Actual Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote apps from Microsoft.

The e-mail and calendar are excellent and the calendar even syncs and lets you work with tasks from your Outlook/Exchange mailbox. The browser is fine (no browser is great on a 4.3" screen), the navigation app is quite good and some of the apps like Seismic are both beautiful and functional.

Third Reaction

AT&T's data network in Northern Arizona is pretty poor. I realize we're not far from rural areas, but even in some parts of Flagstaff coverage is practically non-existent. Coverage varies in different areas so your mileage may vary but I'm excited to hear that Verizon, who has a much better network here, will be getting Windows 8 phones later this year.

Conclusion

This is one super cool phone. And, frankly, if you're looking for a mobile device for your business I think this should be the default choice. It's very fast, very capable and has a great set of apps for getting the job done on the road. Apple and Google will have to do something spectacular soon otherwise the next set of phones my firm issues will be Windows Phones.



Ben Schorr is a legal IT guy, Microsoft MVP, author of several books to help attorneys better utilize Outlook and is a valued member of the Solosez list. Visit Ben's website and be sure to sign up for his Monday Morning Technologist. www.rolandschorr.com



The Jamaican Bobsled Edition

September marks a time of transition here on the prairie; the oppressive heat of summer is giving way to the more temperate climates of Fall and the cultivators, sprayers and mowers that are the hallmarks of summer field work make way for the lords of the harvest - the combines, grain trucks, and gravity wagons.

September is also County Fair season, a time when the best, brightest, and coolest are showcased in newly painted barns and newly mown fields; a time for the 4H and FFA kids to shine, for Miss Emma to prove once again that her apple pie still reigns supreme, and for the local implement dealer to demo the latest in super-tractors (an event that can best be described as a Top Gear's slower cousin - you know, the one you'd like to write a special needs trust for).

While I must admit that a certain amount of lust runs down my spine when a super-tractor shoots past, 600 Hp diesel bellowing, at an outstanding 8.5 Mph (sure that 458 Italia will go faster, but can it self-steer or carry 20,000 pounds?) I find that these masterpieces of agricultural technology lack that *je ne sais quoi* to be truly cool tech. For me, cool tech goes beyond the merely functional; cool tech needs to be transformative - it is not that the tech does the job or even does the job well, it is that because of this tech that the way my job gets done is fundamentally altered for the better.

The problem with cool tech is that someday, perhaps someday soon, it becomes common place. Back in the dim, dark recesses of the digital revolution (the '80's), when people still wrote theses on Selectrics a

cool little program called LaTeX arrived on the scene and transformed scientific writing (mainly because most computer geeks and grad students lacked secretarial support and were willing to invest the time squinting at CRT's and cursing EMACS rather than face a typewriter). Today WYSIWYG word processing and page layout are common place, but back then - Wow, oh Wow was it cool.

The problem with most lawyer tech is that it's not all that cool; the paperless office is practically de-regueur, laptops are ubiquitous, and tablets have yet to have that breakthrough application that makes them transformative. Yes, I am fully aware that iPads are the current must-have fashion technology and that there are 1000's of extremely useful applications out there - but even with those vast numbers of apps, tablets seem intent on reproducing the functionality already available to laptop and desktop users albeit with a slightly more unique and slightly less functional interface. The sad thing is that coolness lies just within the tablet's reach; it is just frustrated by the lack of the digital world equivalent of the fine line pen - I've yet to find a stylus/app combination that writes well, most seem intent on replicating the penmanship exercises from kindergarten (fat pencils, wide lines, huge letters and smudges) rather than of legal pad and pen. Frankly the odd short hand found in Palm PDA's provided a better writing experience than the current crop of styli and handwriting apps.

I know that there is cool lawyer tech out there, hanging just the other side of the bleeding edge waiting to transform the world. It just has not made it out to the County Fair.



Bruce M. Cameron Having decided that going to law school and opening a solo law practice would be a sufficient response to the male midlife crisis, Bruce now practices Collaborative Family Law and Estate Planning in rural Minnesota. When not in the law office, he can be found on his small farm where he and his wife are at the beck and call of a herd of horses, a couple of cats, a few dogs and one extremely spoiled parrot. <http://www.rurallawyer.com>



October 10 - SEO It's Not Rocket Science - truly a master at understanding and applying appropriate SEO tactics to your web doings - Conrad Saam goes over the ins and outs in plain English.

November 7 - eDiscovery 101 - you know you need to know about it, but when will you have the time? A basic understanding of eDiscovery can literally save you and your client's \$1,000's and Kelly Twigger is just the attorney to teach you.

November 14 - Social Media Best Practices. Are you or someone you know new to social media? Do you wonder if you're doing it "right" or do you feel like you're spreading yourself too thin? If so, sign up and learn the best practices from Jennifer Ellis, Esq.

December 12 - PDF - Tech and Techniques. You know you should be more digital less paper, but just can't seem to get yourself there? This 101 on pdfing is for you!

More info or to register: <http://ow.ly/dKm3u>

WANNA GO MAC?

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