



TECHGEAR

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WEBLINKS



AIMEE HESS

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ProcessLibrary.com

Have you ever pressed “Ctrl, Alt, and Delete” to bring up the Windows Task Manager, and looked at all the processes running on your computer and wondered “What in the heck are those?” Copy the name of the process into the search window on this website and it will tell you what it is. It might be okay but might be something malicious.

Scirus.com

This site is a Google-type search engine for scientific information. It indexes and searches scientific websites for your chosen search term. When I have a case that requires scientific background, I visit this site first because it gives me a more focused search than using Google.

Steve’s DigiCams (www.steves-digicams.com)

For anyone who is considering purchasing a digital camera, this is the go-to site for reviews and analysis.

Langenberg Language Translation (<http://translation.langenberg.com>)

This free website provides an interface to several other sites that will translate anything, from a word to an entire document, from English to one of several other languages, or from those languages to English.

Lawyer Marketing with Twitter

BY STEVE MATTHEWS

Have you heard of Twitter.com yet? Perhaps not. And hopefully not, as this article is intended to explain one of the latest web tools on our collective horizon.

What you should know is this: Politicians in the current U.S. election are leveraging it, news outlets such as CNN and the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. (CBC) are offering headlines that can be mixed into your reading stream, and companies such as Southwest Airlines are using it to interact with customers and take feedback.

Twitter is widely considered the fastest growing tool of web influence, and at some point it will have a trickle-down effect for the legal industry.

Giving you a finite definition of Twitter is tricky. Its use varies greatly and depends a lot on the individual user. Technically, Twitter is considered a micro-blogging tool. It is just like regular blogging, but with one significant rule change. After logging in, you are faced with the question “*What are you doing?*” and just like a blog you can share exactly what you’re doing, feeling, thinking, or reading — but all in 140 characters of text or less.

In terms of the options available for legal web marketing, Twitter is the shortest method of discourse we have seen to date. If e-books and web distribution of publications are at the longer discourse

level, and regular blogs are sitting somewhere in the middle, then Twitter is at the short end of our continuum.

So, what can you do in such a short space? Actually, quite a bit. Think chat and discussion, link exchanges, debate, endorsement, or public critique. Twitter is a big dinner table conversation with peers who *you get to choose*. The format is also mobile-friendly, which, in my view, has had a substantial impact on the site’s growth.

With Twitter, like most forms of web marketing, the value is found in the big picture and the cumulative effect of using it as but *one piece* of the web lawyer’s marketing toolbox. The selling point I regularly harp on — exposing one’s practice and expertise online — continues to have a big part to play, even though I don’t see Twitter as a replacement for the personal blog. Rather, when used together, the personal blog and Twitter become a very powerful tandem.

The other point to get is this: Micro-blogging is as much akin to the discussion at the bar after the conference as it is to seeing the presentation earlier in the day. Blogging success is predicated on having a strong social network. (And please, when you hear “social networking,” don’t think Facebook — think relationships!). Twitter, in turn, drives both interest in the ideas you write about and



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extends exposure with an after-post discussion.

Putting my web marketer's hat on for a moment, the value can also be seen in those exchanges leading to further blog-to-blog discussions, ensuing links, and, ultimately, better rankings in the search engines because of authentic exchanges, information-seeking behavior, and discussion.

If you have looked at Twitter and just don't get it, you are not alone. Looking at any one author's contributions, it is tough not to call it drivel. The turning point for many is to recognize Twitter for what it truly is — *pure personal reaction*. That reaction can run the gamut, from academic and insightful, to casual and silly, to at times drivel.

However, I don't think I am alone in seeing marketing value in this type of personal reaction. At the very least, it is valuable for understanding and gauging reaction, and, at the most, partaking in the process. Reaction is one of the most human elements possible within the online experience. That it exists, and is being documented, continues to have a huge impact for all types of marketing. Twitter is simply the latest example.

SOME QUICK TIPS FOR TESTING TWITTER

- The first thing to do after signing up at Twitter.com is to build a follow list.
- Check the follow lists of others. Chances are they already have done the work for you.
- Click on the "follow" button next to their profile picture or at the top of their profile page.
- Can't think of anyone? Follow me at (twitter.com/stevematthews). I'm happy to reciprocate.
- Other legal types on the Twitter (b)leading edge include Kevin O'Keefe, David Lat, Carolyn Elephant, Dennis Kennedy, Brett Trout, Tom Mighell, Rick Klau, Connie Crosby, Simon Fodden, Denise

Howell, Matt Homann, Rob Robinson, Grant Griffiths, Rob Hyndman, Doug Cornelius, Susan Cartier Liebel, and Rush Nigut, to name only a few.

- Use the @ symbol followed by the user name (as in @stevematthews) to respond to individual messages, which are known as "tweets."

- Smile and act like you are having fun.

Editor's note: You can also follow the State Bar of Texas at twitter.com/statebaroftexas ✪

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