



## The Evolution of Legal Networking Sites

Written on January 25, 2010 by Donna Seyle

As social networking sites proliferate, discussions have begun regarding the value of such sites and whether their value is increased or diminished by being “closed” (membership and login required) or “open” (anyone can join in at any time). One very lively conversation is taking place at Martindale-Hubbell Connected (Social Media Policy Group) in response to a blog post entitled “Competing Interest of Open v Closed Networks.” (registration required) In one of the comments, Mike Mintz of Martindale-Hubbell makes the statement that “scarcity of information is a diminishing commodity.” I couldn’t agree more. As more people join in the proverbial conversation (and we all love conversation), it is virtually impossible to keep up with the amount of information that is circulated. (My husband says he knows I’m on overload when my hands start shaking while on the computer.)

While “open” networks are really the heart of social networking, “closed” networks are evolving in such a way as to provide specific information and engagement opportunities for professionals and businesses who are aligned in their purposes, interests and efforts. I have recently encountered one such networking site, www.MyLegal.com, which has very successfully identified a closed network niche, and in doing so, provides a significant resource for lawyers and legal vendors.

It was in reaction to the information overload presented by so many networking sites that www.MyLegal.com was created. Lisa DiMonte, CEO of MyLegal.com, describes the venture as a site for lawyers and the people who serve them. By narrowing the scope of membership, the creators could then concentrate on expanding the functionality of the site to create more opportunities for interaction, education and collaboration.

However, the MyLegal.com team has done so much more than muffle social networking “noise.” By focusing on functionality, they have raised the bar on the services and benefits of site membership to a very new level.

The site has its own channel on BlogTalk Radio and hosts free podcast interviews of distinguished guests on issues impacting the legal industry. It seeks out and hosts product demos and reviews, press releases and white papers to keep its visitors informed of the latest legal news and information, and aggregates a searchable calendar of related events, which may be the most comprehensive searchable list available. Members of the site can contribute events, articles and

blogs, upload press releases and create product demos. Public or private groups that are linked to pre-existing organizations can also be created, and the associated forum discussions provide an organized and searchable solution for ongoing and past discussions. Threads and replies can be posted into multiple public forums simultaneously, enabling professionals to share their knowledge and expertise and to ask questions openly or anonymously and obtain answers from industry experts. Perhaps the most dynamic aspect to these postings is that all content is searchable by thread title, text, author or date.

Once you have registered and created your account, everything you post or schedule is at your fingertips on your profile page. The members area is searchable, enabling you to find compatible talent and create your own network(s) within the site for ease of collaboration on industry trends and technology, business strategies, etc.

MyLegal.com is about to release its Service Provider Directory. Each service provider's listing will include detailed company information, services provided, coverage areas and credentials. They will soon also offer social media packaging, a service that automates the syndication of an article, a press release, a product demo and talk radio appearance. Future projects for the site include the addition of a weekly newsletter listing upcoming legal events. The Service Provider Directory offering will be expanded to allow the addition of video with distribution and share features, as well as provider review and ratings. Development further down the road will include enhanced search capabilities to allow users to weight within searches specific criteria that are important to them in finding a service provider.

The MyLegal.com team consists of William DiMonte, Principal; Lisa DiMonte, CEO; and Kathy DiLorenzo, Vice President of Business Development. Combined, they bring over 65 years of experience in the litigation support space.

MyLegal.com offers a glimpse into the evolution of social networking sites, which, through innovation and thought leadership, is evolving to include web-based production in addition interaction. The site offers the legal community some new advantages: all the benefits of social media, the added bonus of directly connecting lawyers to service providers and opportunities to take those connections to the next level.

### **DISCLOSURE**

For the benefit of the FTC, I have received absolutely nothing in return for highlighting [www.MyLegal.com](http://www.MyLegal.com) in my blog post.