



The Legal Connection

where legal technology & people connect

2013-03/04

#ABATECHSHOW Wrap Up: Part 1 – The People

I go to ABA TechShow in Chicago every year for the people. Period. I always have. As a virtual assistant, I spend most of my time doing my job very well – but alone.

Being alone so much, in fact, is what prompted me to take two steps outside my comfort zone ... well one HUGE leap outside; and one tiny one. The tiny step was to find, join and participate in the list serv maintained by the American Bar Association's GP/Solo Section known as Solosez. This list is open to the public, but is mostly monitored by those with some tie to the legal profession – and covers every possible topic imaginable – discussions range from the care of cast iron to practical questions when running a law office.

It was through Solosez – and specifically my wish to meet fellow sezzers Ben Schorr, Deb Matthews, Carolyn Elefant and Gina Bongiovi in real life, that I forced myself WAY outside my comfort zone: I flew, alone, to a strange city to attend TechShow. The year was 2009 and I have attended every TechShow since. Not only have I attended every show, in each subsequent year I have brought along 10-40 people with me (through my SuperPass groups); and this year I added becoming a part of the faculty – which entailed 2 presentations, manning the concierge booth and co-hosting a Taste of TechShow dinner – added to my annual meet up – all in under 3 days (and foolishly how I thought I'd get out to tour the close by museum!!)

How did the whirlwind that is TechShow go this year?

First off – the 4th Annual LegalTypist Meet Up, held on the night before TechShow, was a resounding success! 40+ people enjoyed the relaxed networking and dive bar food at The South Loop Club. Many thanks to everyone who came by, the sponsors and specifically @Netdocuments and @MarriotMurdock for helping me put this gathering together and making it such a success.

Equally a hit was the Taste of TechShow dinner I co-hosted with @IndySoloEsq on Friday night. Generously sponsored by Thomson Reuter's new practice management product Firm Central and attended by the delightful @BLVickers @PamelaParalegal, @rjsisson, Derrick W, Dennis V, Jeff L and @garrettlaborde, I thought nothing could be better than bacon wrapped dates but must admit I keep thinking about the deep fried chocolate dessert!

Next, I'm sure you're all wondering how my own presentations went. Long story short, I think well – I was able to intelligently convey my ideas, and I don't recall saying anything that I regret! ;) A special shout out to my first session co-speaker – @NatalieKelly who was aware of my phobia of public speaking and gently coached me throughout; and to fellow virtual bud @PamelaParalegal for her unyielding support and smiles from the front row.

Another shout out to @PamelaParalegal for grabbing me as much schwag as she could while I was coordinating the PPT for my second presentation. My absolute favorite has to be the green Magic 8 Ball given out by Sure Payroll!!

Missing from this year's TechShow experience was @AlanKlevan @amyderby and @gregorybell whose first year companionship is one of the reasons I say I go to TechShow for the people. Hopefully they will be back next year (mark your calendars now: March 27, 28 & 29 <-yep my bday again!). Also, while manning the concierge booth – I did see @jaredcorreira hurry past once or twice, but dang it we still have to meet IRL!

Head on over to the next page for pictures from this year's TechShow events and to page 9 for comments from a few LegalTypist SuperPassers.

til next month!

Here's as many twitter peeps as I could think of that I did get to connect with (if we met and you are not on the list – contact me and apologies!): @jeffrey_Taylor @bschorr @BobAmbrogi @CarolynElefant @glambert @garrettlaborde @tim_baran @DonnaSeyle @econwriter5 @rajuip @ernieattorney @psuba98 @ChelseyLambert @themaclawyer @mrsmaclawyer @pegeeturner @allisonshields @kevinokeefe @peggygruenke @david_bilinsky @craigbayer @markrosch @karlseelbach @kprochnow @Wolf_Pinther @rkodner @rtrautz @danpinnington @AdrianaL @bburney @cesiagreen @stephkimbro @njatty @jimcalloway @Molly_McDonough @stevenjbest @samglover @barronhenley @nerinopetro @nancyduhon @blorish @macsparky @jackhaycock @cschlein @JoanHFeldman @WilliamWilson



Spring - Time for a Cleanse?

Ever thought of trying a cleanse? For centuries people have used this practice to detoxify their bodies. The idea is that our bodies work very hard to digest and eliminate the foods we consume on a daily basis. Cleansing is a way to give our bodies a much-deserved break. In a typical cleanse you replace all meals and snacks with juices, for about three to ten days. What you consume and when you do it is usually set out in the cleanse plan. You start the cleanse knowing how long you are going to do it, and exactly what to do in that timeframe. You also have expectations about what you're going to get as a result of the cleanse, why else would you do it? How about trying a practice cleanse?

Toxins To Target

No one can define what you find toxic better than you. I'm including some choices that might resonate. You can design a cleanse to deal with one type of toxin at a time, or you can go for a "master cleanse" and work on all of them. Likewise- choose your timeframe. Maybe you're up for a short cleanse- or maybe you're ready to devote a month to turn-around.

Environmental: There is data that shows you are more effective when your environment supports you. Look around your work space. Do your office and client areas represent you well? Serve you well? Are things easy to find? Are there piles of files waiting to be dealt with? Do you have the furniture and equipment you need? Have you set things up so that "temptation" is minimized? [do you have your internet alerts silenced?] Is there anything you've been "meaning to take care of"?

Procrastination: Really, do we need to talk about this? Do it, delegate it or dump it. Clear the energy, get it off your plate. If you can't do it NOW, then schedule it on your calendar and know you are going to do it.

Lack of Focus: A stealth toxin, but one of the most deadly. The root cause of mediocre results. Often taken far less seriously than the author recommends!

Under Utilization: I'm being sneaky here. First thought is what you expect- the state of having more capacity to do legal work than you have client work to fill.

Cleansing your practice of that requires marketing action. The second thought is related to full utilization of *you*-exercise and fitness. Cleansing yourself of that takes time management and activity. Both cases can be classified as "toxic", and both cases do affect many other parts of your life and your overall happiness.

The Theory Behind a Practice Cleanse

What do you get after a cleanse? A fresh start. Less "stuff" to get in the way of pure progress. New energy. Who doesn't love a fresh start? The idea is that you'll feel so great that you'll change your habits and you'll end up bringing fewer of the toxins back into your fresh, clean practice in the future.

Possible Pitfalls

If you don't change your habits, the effect of the cleanse will be short-term. You know how chronic dieters regain the weight they lose, and, often, more? Same thing. You need to commit to making changes ongoing in order to make the cleanse worth your time and effort. Bringing a partner into your commitment, an accountability buddy- will help you ensure success. Make a bet, a pact, check-in with each other weekly and plan to celebrate success together.

The Bottom Line

Here's the bottom line. Legal Typist gives me a theme every month, and sometimes it's a stretch. This month is "clean". Read last year's column if this one's not up your alley. However, while the cleanse analogy might be a little offbeat, when I started really thinking about it- it's not a bad idea. Just like a boot camp or a jump start, framing a practice cleanse might just give you the push you need to ramp your game up. Get rid of anything you need to stop doing. Start doing anything you should do. Turn pro.



Barbara Nelson helps entrepreneurial attorneys move their practices from successful amateur to full pro status. If you're interested in finding about the next session of The Practice Target seminar, sign up to receive updates here. <http://successfullysolo.com/subscribe/>

Who knows your passwords?

I do a lot of work in estate planning so one of the things that I make sure people know about is the importance of making sure somebody else can access your digital life.

It is becoming more and more important that you have passwords written down somewhere, even though people argue that is bad security, because if something should happen to you, who can access your e-mail account.?

This is especially important if you use e-mail like I do to basically store your entire life.

Other people use programs like EverNote or they use things on their phone. If you don't have somewhere information about how to access all of this, then who is going to be able to get to it if something happens to you?

This is doubly important for attorneys because you may have important client material in your e-mail or on your password protected folder in your computer. If something happens to you, who is going to know where to look and who is going to know how to get into it?

There are different ways to organize your passwords.

My father has a book; he literally has a three ring binder and he writes all of his passwords in that.

I use a program on my phone called LastPass. You lock it with one master password and you can list all of your passwords by type. It lets you list your logins and passwords by type. It is convenient but so is the book.

Either way, whether it is through a phone or through a book, my password is accessible and if something should happen to me then another attorney picking up my case files would know where to look and what they need to do.

So as a small firm attorney it is important to make sure that I know that my practice is covered no matter what happens – even something to me!



Justin Meyer has an Android phone, in case you care. He is an estate planning and business attorney in Hauppauge, NY and is licensed in NY, NJ and FL. To contact Justin, e-mail him at jmeyer@meyeresq.com. For more about his practice, please go to <http://www.meyeresq.com>



Technology – it's Madness, Madness I Say!

What is this thing we call technology?

Fess up – your first thoughts were programs and apps, laptops and tablets, wireless devices and hot spots; all the things that keep you connected.

<grunt> **technology good** <grunt>

How many email accounts do you have? Me, at last count, 9 ...

Have you ever stopped to consider the multitude of ways that the Internet has invaded our lives? We bank/invest, blog, download/upload, blog, email, watch TV and movies, listen to music, play games; we shop, plan our trips, look for work, market our businesses; we attend classes, do research, read books and newspapers; we communicate using VoIP, IM, chat, text, social networks; etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

I get it. We live in the digital age.

We tweet, Skype, post, pin, insta-, etc. Often with little thought about who might see or read what we've chosen to share or, even that once it's out there, it's there F O R E V E R. Our lives are like an endless holiday letter: Dear Everyone, I'm going to tell you about every single meaningful and meaningless thing that happened to me, near me ...

Am I the only one who really doesn't care how long you had to stand in the checkout line or that you're going to take a 'potty break' so you'll be away for a few minutes and we shouldn't worry? I kid you not; that was posted by someone I know. I finally hid her comments because it was an ongoing stream of useless minutiae of her every waking moment.

Oh, yes the FB syndrome ... how many friends do I have today? Why in the world is someone that didn't have the time of day for me in grade school or high school or college trying to be my 'friend' now? Or, oh please lord; don't let it be true ... being un-friended. The horror!! Srsly?

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Is social media a reasonable substitute for socializing? Sometimes I worry that I spend so much time isolated with my laptop as the center of my little working universe that my IRL social skills have atrophied ...

What has happened to us as a society that it has become 'acceptable' behavior to use one's devices or 'i-thingies' (thank you Andrea 🙄) in social situations?

Not long ago, I participated in an online discussion forum in which we were invited to describe and discuss 'technology from the past or present that does not involve electronics.' I'm not quite sure how to describe my reaction to some of the postings. I suppose as a so-called digital immigrant, I was a bit dismayed to realize that some of the participants were hard-pressed to think of technology as something other than a gadget, device or program. Can you name any?

Let's see, pencil/pen and paper; chalkboards/white boards and erasers; math tables; slide rules; abaci (yes, it is the correct plural of abacus); using pie plates for fractions; textbooks (the kind with pages and covers); mnemonics (do you know this one: HHeliBeBCNOF NeNa MgAl SiPS ClArKCa?); manual typewriters ...

So many of us limit our definition of technology to 'tech' that we forget that at one time, a chisel and stone (or chalk and a chalkboard) were considered high tech.

Admit it, you still use pens and legal pads too!!

“B.E.” – Before Electronics

Oh sure, when we were growing up we had calculators (remember those bulky TI ‘pocket’ calculators?), projectors (movie, overhead, slide), copiers (Xerox, mimeograph), and so on ... back then, computers, cellphones, and tablets were the stuff of Star Trek (c’mon, y’all know I’m a Trekkie!)

Have we come so far that we have forgotten the basics?

Does anyone even remember the challenges associated with researching and writing a paper? Trudging down to the local library with a list of key words, or, if you were lucky, authors and book titles; tackling the card catalog – surely you remember the Dewey Decimal System – and jotting down the book number, title, and author; and wandering the stacks to find your books (or, when you were really lost, finding the courage to ask the librarian for help...).

My eyes were always drawn to the books that weren’t on my list. I can remember sitting on the floor of many a library, surrounded by books and lost in another world while I read about the history of Troy, or the life of Cleopatra, or the stories of the gods – Greek, Roman, Norse, etc.

Once I had my books, I’d find an empty table and create a fortress of knowledge. I’d read, make notes, tear off strips of paper to mark my place, and pray the library had an inexpensive, public copier. I assembled my notes on index cards, organized my thoughts, and then I wrote and re-wrote my paper *in longhand*. In college, the expectation was that papers would be typed – that’s right – on a typewriter...

Truthfully, I think our reliance in e & i-things has created a generation that lack basic skills and socialization. Googling topics and reading on a device lacks the charm and civility of going to the library and holding a book with real paper pages.

Have basic skills like spelling, grammar, math, etc. been diminished by access to electronic crutches like spell check, grammar check and

calculators? How many cashiers no longer know how to ‘count back’ change? < sigh>

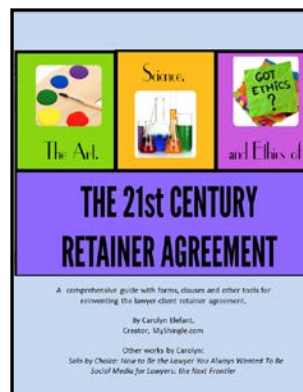
Has the e-age made us lazy? As kids, we would go outside to play. We invented games and interacted; today we have computer games and Wii. That laziness extends to how we interact and share information. So many people blindly believe and forward misinformation because it comes to them from ‘reliable’ sources. What happened to vetting information?

We expect instant gratification and information ... I think we need to disengage from the e-world for several waking hours each week and get back to real life. Give me a book, highlighter, pen and notebook ... at least I’ll be able to entertain myself when the power goes out.



Pamela J. Starr, CBA, J.S.M.,

Virtual Paralegal Extraordinaire and tenacious redhead from the GSOT. As the lead paralegal and owner of **StarrParalegals, LLC**, Pamela also blogs as her alter ego, ‘[Pamela the Paralegal](#)’ and has launched ‘[Sessions with a Starr](#)’ - a Career Mitigation® platform devoted to helping professionals redefine their career options in an e-based economy.



The Retainer Agreement is one of the most important contracts that you’ll ever draft or sign as an attorney. Not only do Retainer Agreements protect clients from overreaching by unscrupulous lawyers, but they can immunize lawyers against malpractice claims and non-payment by clients.

Written by practicing attorney, Carolyn Elefant of www.myshingle.com fame and published by LegalTypist, this ebook is full of practical considerations and has an Appendix of forms and sample language.





THE DROID LAWYER

Android Tech Madness

There's nothing quite so frustrating as getting a new device and not being able to figure out how or what to do with it. When that happens, you can, with ample adjoining frustration, comb through the thousands of "handy" tech sites and forums searching for an answer. You might even try calling your tech-savvy friend and seek his/her advice. Certainly neither works out well, and usually ends up crashing a program or device.

Fortunately, you don't have to be stranded when you're using your Android device. Here's a list of quick tips for improving or fixing your device:

1. **Misbehaving Apps** - this is a common, but easily solvable, Android device problem. I wrote an entire post about solving this. Check out the post [here](#).
2. **Set up Security** - Protecting yourself from unwanted visitors is important. You can easily set a password or pattern for your device by going to **Settings > Security > Screen Lock**. I recommend setting a password (the highest security), or at a minimum, pattern for convenience.
3. **Hiding Unwanted Apps** - I can't stress enough how important it is to be on the latest and greatest Android operating system - right now that's Android 4.2.2. Most devices though will be running an older version of the OS, which makes getting rid of manufacturer-standard junk apps slightly more difficult.

If you happen to be running Android 4.0 or greater, you can "hide" an app without installing it, simply going to **Settings > Apps > Click the app > Click Disable**.

If your device runs an older version of Android, you'll need to root the device. Here's a how-to post I wrote on getting rid of bloatware.

4. **Add Smoothness** - with a quick click, you can change how the animations appear. Click **Settings > Developer options > Advanced > Set Window animation scale to .5x**. This changes how the windows appear and give a smoother, more crisp look.

5. **Take a Screenshot** - Devices running Android 4.0+ can take a screenshot easily with **Power + Vol Dwn**.

6. **Install SwiftKey** - this is the hands-down best keyboard for Android phones and tablets. The app contains a darn good next-work prediction feature, plus great speech to text capabilities. One of the app's greatest benefits is that this app *learns* your habits and behavior from your social media and text messages.

Getting worked up about a misbehavior app or function is maddening, but it doesn't have to be if you'll worry. Take a few minutes to curb your device madness.



Jeffrey Taylor is an attorney in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, who helps plaintiff's injury clients, small business, and immigrants. Jeff is also the author of *The Droid Lawyer* blog, which discusses Android devices and tips to help lawyers using them. You can follow him on Twitter (@jeffrey_taylor) or on Google+.



The Rural Lawyer: Spring Cleaning

Spring brings the hint of spring out here to those of us on the prairie and the reminder that once again it is time to prepare for the coming growing season; to clean the winter cobwebs from our houses, barns, and equipment. Now, being a guy, my barn and garage are generally kept cleaner than my office - basically, my toy boxes are in better order than the behind-the-scenes part of my workplace.

Generally, shoveling out my office or chasing the dust bunnies from their nests behind my monitor is a time for putting my cerebrum in neutral and letting the week's problems percolate down in my unconscious; a kind of purposeful procrastination - it is amazing how often I can get a solution and a clean keyboard at the same time!

Though for reasons best known only to the imp of the perverse, my recent meditations while cleaning have wandered far from the useful preferring instead to traipse down the corridors of the primitive, testosterone-fueled, reptilian portions of my brain. Leaving me to ponder the odds of finding a comfortable sun-baked rock close by or to contemplate the utility of mounting my war-horse and leading a Celtic hoard off to seek plunder and conquest.

Now the current snow cover would make it difficult to find any sort of rock much less a sun-baked one and having lazed most of the winter away I am in no shape to don a kilt, anoint myself with woad, grab a broad sword, clamber on to the back of a horse that has spent the last 6 months hoping I'd finally given up this riding nonsense for Lent, and head out for a quick ride through town (plunder and conquest will just have to wait for warmer weather).

Yet there is that brief moment when the "guy" part of my brain actually sits down and weighs the marketing spin that might be available if one were to lead a half-clad pack of crazed Scotts through a sleepy Minnesota town just emerging from the depths of winter against the various downsides to such an enterprise. Outside of the obvious newsworthiness (and potential viral nature) of such an endeavor, it should also score in high in demonstrating leadership (a plus should I ever want to go into politics), organizational skills (ever try to find a band of crazed Scotts in Minnesota), and dedication (you try wearing a kilt in 35 mph winds). Regretfully, the costs of such an operation (salaries, liability insurance, workman's comp, permits, etc) place it outside of my current advertising budget.

Oh well, there's always next spring.



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>

SuperPassers Say What?!?

My 2nd show, I just can't believe I didn't know about this gem of a show 10 years ago! I go to meet the great people who I follow on social media all year long who share a lot of great content. Such a knowledgeable and generous group. It also gives me the opportunity to stay in touch with folks I met during my days at the Cincinnati Bar Association - Jim Calloway, Lincoln Mead, David Blaner, Brett Burney - to name a few. So next year I'll board the Mega Bus from Cincinnati and head to Chicago with my SuperPass in hand. Hopefully, I'll have a few fellow Cincinnati attorneys joining me. Andrea, next year we need to spend more time together!

Peggy Gruenke

LawBizCOO.com



As an attorney, I have attended many conferences on a variety of different topics. I must say the ABA TECHSHOW is the most well organized and informative conference I have ever attended. My hat goes off to the organizers for putting together such an enjoyable and entertaining conference.

As you know, my company launched eDepo.com and the eDepo iPad app at TECHSHOW. eDepo brings synced video depositions and powerful presentation software to your fingertips. The feedback we received at TECHSHOW was truly overwhelming. Our user community is growing quickly and eDepo is quickly becoming the new gold standard for delivering, storing and reviewing depositions. We are very excited about what the future holds and look forward to attending ABA TECHSHOW next year!

Karl Seelbach

CEO & Founder
eDepo.com

This was my first TechShow experience, and it exceeded my expectations. Being from South Bend, IN, I figured it would be easy to take the train in each day on Thursday and Friday, letting me spend the later evening with the family back home. While I enjoyed the train travel, I missed out on the after-hours events. My plan for 2014 is to stay in Chicago (and maybe bring the family with me). It was good to meet some people I'd known of only online (David Sparks, Ernie Svenson, Andrea Cannavina, Marc Matheny, for example) as well as to meet some new folks (Randy Juip, Jeff Lantz). The keynote address by David Pogue was worth the price of admission alone, and the fact he sat down at the piano for a couple of songs was icing on the cake.

As a first-timer, I had to spend a little time getting my feet wet and finding my way around, but I'm already getting excited for next year. My schedule didn't let me catch the Saturday morning sessions (about which I'm bummed), but I won't make that mistake again. I learned a lot from the Mac and paperless sessions, and came back with more ideas than I can possibly implement within a reasonable time. Overall, it was a terrific experience, and next time I plan to do a full-blown cannonball into the pool.

William L. Wilson, Esq.

Anderson, Agostino & Keller, P.C.
<http://thirdapple.com>

After my second year attending ABA Techshow, I found myself as overwhelmed as I did the first time. Thankfully I take copious notes at every session and make a point to review them after I get back. I would also echo the point that the people make the conference - from the unofficial events like the Legal Typist meetup, to the Taste of Techshow dinners (I had a particularly fantastic one with Eric Mazzone and Jim Calloway), to how welcome everyone makes you feel, I leave feeling like the legal tech community is so warm and inviting, and knowing that if I ever have a question, I know who to ask and feel comfortable doing so. I will definitely be back!

Cesia E. Green, Esq.

Wall-Armstrong & Green



LegalTypist, Inc.
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2 MINUTE TECH ASSESSMENT

UPCOMING SEMINARS



WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING



LAW CHARGE

Merchant Accounts Specifically Designed for Attorneys



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