

GP | Solo

ABA General Practice, Solo & Small Firm Division

Technology eReport

Volume 5, Number 1
March 2006
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Why I Use Internet Postage

By Daniel Coolidge

It seems odd to me that so many of the people I have asked have told me they either do not use or have never heard of Internet postage. Let me enlighten you: it is *not* just printing stamps at home!

Some years back, the U.S. Postal Service contracted with a variety of service providers to allow them to support their customers in printing postage on their own computers. These vendors (Stamps.com, Endicia, and the old stand-by, Pitney Bowes) now all now offer a range of services starting at \$10 per month. Click-n-Ship is offered by the postal service, but only for priority mail and packages.

Now, I am a small firm practitioner—two lawyers, and no secretaries or paralegals. So whatever we do, we have to do it ourselves. One of our offices (we have two) is above a UPS store, so mailing is a once-a-day walk downstairs. The other office is out in the boondocks (my office), and the nearest post office a few miles away. That's where Internet postage comes in. I ship packages, many priority mail flat rate envelopes, and letters and certified mail. I average about eight pieces a day—most of my correspondence is by email.

With Internet postage (I use Stamps.com for historical reasons), I never have to go to the post office. *Ever*. The lone requirement is Internet access, but I guess that's implied in the name "Internet Postage," eh?

I can print stamps, I can print postage on envelopes (customized with my firm's logo), I can print shipping labels with postage, and I even received a free postage scale when I signed up, so I know what amount of postage to put on my packages.

I can do this from any of the computers in my office—it's not limited to just one. (You might ask why a lawyer practicing alone in an office needs more than one computer. I have five. Don't ask. I'm

in therapy.)

I can print everything but the stamps on ordinary paper, or can choose (as I do) to print on special shipping labels that come pregummed. Internet Stamps (they have no date as metered mail does) must be printed on serialized stamp sheets—a minor cost and used only infrequently.) I get free delivery confirmation, I can insure my mail if I so desire, and I receive a detailed report of my postage usage (and to whom sent) exportable to a spreadsheet. This feature makes it really easy to bill back postage to clients.

Yet another advantage is automatic address correction. It will add Zip+4 numbers, identify invalid addresses, and in many cases even suggest corrected addresses. I can automatically import addresses from a variety of applications (including Palm desktop and Outlook, among others) or generic interchange forms such as comma delimited files to which your office software will likely export.

A single trip to the post office takes me about thirty minutes. The \$15 a month I spend on Internet postage service is well worth the saved time to me. And I suppose if I were *really* parsimonious, I could buy sheets of stamps at the post office and use the free Click-n'-Ship service from the postal service for everything else. But I'd lose the one-stop shopping convenience I have, the record keeping, the ease of use, and the really cool looking metered mail with my firm logo on it. I'm going to stay with Internet postage.

Stamps.com Pro
File View Account Tools Help



- Home
- Postage
- NetStamps™
- Mailing
- Shipping
- Purchase
- Address Book
- Activity
- Support
- Store

Return Address

DANIEL COOLIDGE
108 BIBLE HILL RD
WARNER, NH 03278

Delivery Address

Jeffry Allen
County Farm
Okefenokee Swamp, FL 12345

X Clear

More...

Include Return Address

Postage Details

Mailpiece: Letters

Weight: 0 lbs. 1 oz. 0.00

Mail Class:

<input type="radio"/> First-Class Mail	2 days	\$0.39
<input type="radio"/> Priority Mail	2 days	\$4.05
<input type="radio"/> Express Mail	1-2 days	\$14.40
<input type="radio"/> Parcel Post	N/A	N/A
<input type="radio"/> Media Mail	N/A	N/A
<input type="radio"/> Bound Printed Matter	N/A	N/A

Characteristics: No special characteristics for this mailpiece

Mailing Date: 01/31/2006 Special Services... \$0.00

Instate for: \$ Using: <None>

Total Estimated Postage Cost: **N/A**

Reference: <None> \$0

Print ...
Buy Labels...
Print Sample...
Options...
Help

Current User: dancoolidge
Available Postage: \$30.37

My Trip to the Show (The International Consumer Electronics Show, That Is)

By Jeffrey Allen

Baseball players refer to the major leagues as “The Show.” It is the focal point of their efforts to be the best that they can at their sport. In the consumer electronics industry, the annual International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) is The Show. The show takes place in January of each year. Every January the consumer electronics industry gathers in Las Vegas to display its newest and best technology as well as some of the old standards. From the

manufacturer’s perspective, CES offers an opportunity to get the word about new products out to the press and to entice new orders from distributors. The show offers an opportunity to see what manufacturers now have available, what directions they are moving toward, and what they expect to offer in the near future.



CES 2006 hosted in excess of 150,000 visitors and presented thousands of products and innovations from more than 2,500 exhibitors.

Reviewing the award winners is among the most interesting parts of the show, as the awards highlight a number of new and interesting examples of technology. If you want to check out the innovations honored, go to the CES website awards page and follow the links that you find interesting: <http://www.cesweb.org/attendees/awards/innovations/default.asp>.

Exhibitors showed products and services in many areas designed to affect our private lives as well as our workplaces. Lest you think that you will be unaffected in transit between home and work, the automotive innovations took up a significant amount of floor space at the Los Vegas Convention Center. Displays included everything from home theater components to office equipment, to iPod accessories (lots of those), to digital electronic cameras and camcorders, to cases for computer and electronics gear, to furniture, and to car audio-visual systems. As usual, there was a lot to see and to make sense out of in terms of perceiving trends and directions.

Judging by the number of exhibitors showing new or improved versions of products, several technologies will continue to grow in the near future.

The type and nature of exhibits gives us some guidance in trying to ascertain the direction of the evolution in electronics technology. Wireless communications of all sorts continue to grow at tremendous rates. Places that we will likely see growth include wireless telephony, wireless Internet access (from telephones and other devices), wireless networking (home and office), and Bluetooth (short-range wireless connectivity) for devices such as earphones or speakerphones to telephones.

Vendors continue to offer more and better versions of mobile phones. Mobile phones have become multifunction devices that now include such things as personal information managers, cameras, GPS (global positioning system) capabilities, and, in some cases, full-functional PDF capabilities. Some of them also combine radio and MP3 player capabilities. Likely, the evolution of the smart mobile phones and converged devices will see the end of the dedicated PDA as a viable product. Why carry a PDA, a cell phone, a camera, and an iPod (or other MP3 player) when you can carry one device that handles all of their functions? That is particularly true given the fact that digital and electronics technology have allowed the combination of these functions smoothly and with little or no loss of quality. To be sure, the pixel rating of telephone cameras remains on the low side by comparison to dedicated cameras, but we now see more and more phones offering cameras of one megapixel or greater resolution. As time goes on, that resolution will increase.

Experienced photographers will undoubtedly continue to purchase the more and more sophisticated dedicated cameras, but for day-to-day use, the point-and-shoot cell phone cameras will grow in popularity as they will prove sufficient to satisfy most users. In dedicated cameras, eight megapixel resolutions have become available in very small packages for less than \$400.

Many of the phones now have Internet access capabilities. Manufacturers will make more Internet-ready phones available this year. All of the major mobile service providers have plans for using technology to take advantage of Internet capable phones. Expect such plans to increase along with the use of such plans. More and more services will come over the Internet through such plans, including shopping online, radio and television programming, and information services.

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) continues to grow in popularity. Several large VoIP providers

now offer Internet telephony for home and business. The quality of the service has proven good and the connections strong and clear. I have installed a VoIP telephone connection in my house as an experiment and have been quite pleased with it. VoIP does not even require special telephones. Once you install the electronics for the connectivity to your Internet connection and a telephone line (a simple enough task that you can easily do it yourself), a standard touch-tone telephone will work fine to complete calls. You can even use your wireless telephones with VoIP. Several providers now offer special phones to work with laptop computers as the use of VoIP has become more mobile through the ability of the laptop computers to connect to the Internet on the go.

The major cell phone providers all offer PCMCIA cards that allow a computer to connect directly to the Internet from almost anywhere using the signal from the provider's network. The cards require a mobile phone data account. As ISPs implement 3G (third generation) technology, the speed of such connections increases to the point of comparability to a DSL or cable connection. The areas in which providers make such connections available continue to increase. Expect connection speed to increase and cost to decrease over time. Computer manufacturers have started to build cellular connectivity into their laptops. Although this development promotes the use of such technology, it has some drawbacks as well. Those computers have dedicated technology tied to a particular provider. That means two accounts if you have two computers. I much prefer using a PCMCIA cellular card because: (1) that process allows me to choose my own provider; and (2) if I want to use it with more than one computer, I can simply move the card from one to the other without having to pay for multiple accounts.

Wireless networking at home and at work continues to attract more and more users. Look for implementations of "WiMax" to will allow broader area distribution of a signal and, potentially, the ability to have high speed wireless Internet access in more and more locations.

Satellite radio has grown stronger and more popular. For those of you not familiar with satellite radio, you can choose between one of two providers, Sirius and XM. Both have a modest subscription fee. Satellite radio offers a wide variety of programming ranging from specific genres and periods of music, to talk shows, to comedy, to news and sports. You must have a special receiver to get satellite radio, and the receivers all tie uniquely to one or the other provider. The ability to receive broadcasts almost anywhere that the antenna has an unobstructed view of the sky has contributed greatly to the steady growth in popularity. Many car manufacturers offer built-in satellite radio receivers as an option. A growing variety of receivers for home, work, car, and personal portable use at very reasonable prices will contribute to the increasing popularity of this medium.

Digital photography remains a popular area for new products. Every camera manufacturer at the show brought new offerings. Digital still cameras continue to offer more and more features and better resolution at lower prices. Digital movie cameras have shrunk in size and in price while increasing in features and quality as well. You can acquire very decent digital movie or still cameras for only a few hundred dollars these days. One of the newer and very promising innovations is the digital movie camera using flash memory instead of tape or disks. Several new

versions have come on the scene, and the quality of the images continues to improve. As the flash memory offerings improve (higher speed and larger capacity for lower costs), the utility and popularity of these cameras will likely increase. It is worth noting in terms of playback and editing of movies recorded on flash media that many computers (particularly laptops) now come with built-in flash memory card readers and that even if yours does not, inexpensive USB 2.0 card readers solve that problem quite well.

Speaking of flash memory, the capacity and speed of flash memory devices have increased substantially while the prices have dropped significantly. Flash memory drives have become the most popular means of backing up data, all but replacing such things as floppy disks and Zip disks. Flash memory devices holding two gigabytes have become commonplace and relatively reasonably priced. Four and eight gigabyte devices have come out, but are still fairly expensive. As larger capacities become available, expect the prices to drop on the four and eight gigabyte devices.

Jeffrey Allen (jallenlawtek@aol.com) has a general practice in Oakland, California. His firm, Graves & Allen, emphasizes real estate and business transactions and litigation. He is a frequent speaker and author on technology topics and the Editor-in-Chief of the GPSolo Technology & Practice Guide and the Technology eReport.

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TechNotes Trends in Technology

Musings on the Uncertainties of Technology

J. Anthony Vittal

Over the past several weeks, I have seen first-hand how the bright promise of technology can have a darker side. First, despite multiple layers of antivirus protection—on the ABA and Earthlink mail servers and on my own systems—an early (preinoculation) version of the KamaSutra (BlackMal) worm got onto my computer. Victimized by social engineering—known source, known (but ineffective) prophylaxis—I felt safe enough to examine the attachment. Unfortunately, in doing so, I inadvertently activated it. Oops! Small comfort that I was not alone, with other tech writers also among the victims of this worm, which infected hundreds of thousands of computers around the world.

Although Symantec and McAfee had definitions out the following day, it was too late for my notebook. Unlike later, more malicious versions of this worm, the one that hit me *only* disabled my software firewall and Norton AntiVirus protection, deleted the critical files for those applications, and rewrote my registry. Thus began my epic saga. In order to get my antivirus back up and running, I first had to uninstall the original installation. The uninstall, however, did not properly clean the registry, thus preventing reinstallation until I manually went into the registry and deleted every relevant reference to Symantec—not something for the faint of heart. Of course, everyone recommends that you back up your registry before undertaking such a massive edit, but the backup was as corrupt as the original. In any event, after hours of editing countless lines of Symantec-related instructions in my registry, I finally got it cleaned up to the point that I could successfully reinstall Norton AntiVirus. Yes! Then I went back online, downloaded and installed all relevant

updates, and I was back in business. All at the cost of a day and a night out of my life and several grey hairs.

I learned several lessons from this experience.

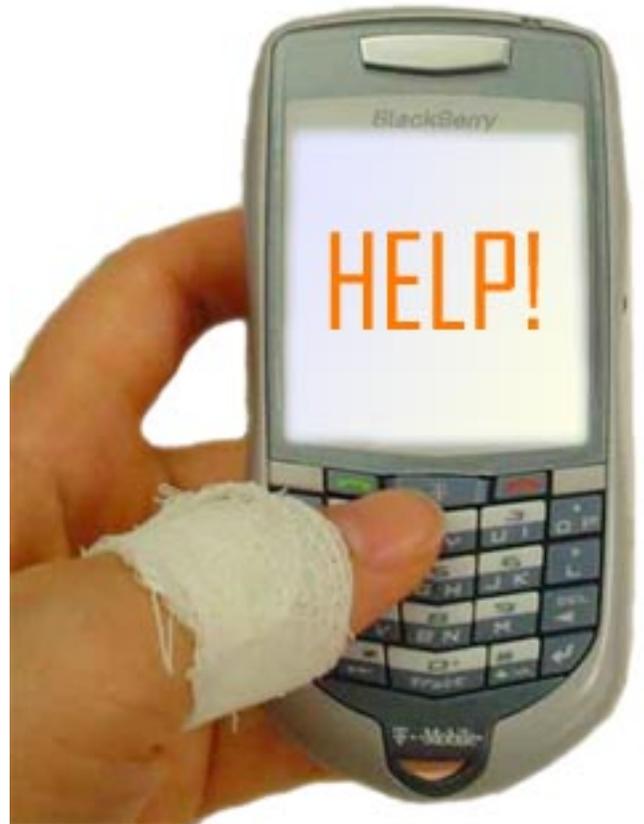
First, Murphy's Law always will bite you when you least expect it, when you can least afford the time to deal with it, and where it will really hurt.

Second, trust no one—not even yourself—when it comes to attachments to email messages. If you are not *expecting* the attachment, and if the attachment is executable (*.exe, *.dll, *.pif, etc.), don't go anywhere near it, even if it is from a trusted source, until you have contacted the source and verified that the attachment is safe and serves some legitimate purposes. If you can't contact the source and are reluctant to just delete it, leave the file alone for long enough to have your antivirus definitions updated, then scan it. Of course, this assumes that you have installed antivirus software on your computers, that you have updated it and have updated the definitions at least daily, and that it is always running.

Third, never rely on a third party (such as the entity hosting your mail server or the mail servers of the folks who send you email) to catch malware. Even though it may seem like “belt and suspenders,” you need your own protection. Even then, as I discovered, something can get by multiple layers of protection.

Finally, as I have said before in this column, regularly back up your *entire* system, including your “system state.” It is not enough to back up the “My Documents” folder, since that doesn't permit you to restore the prior configuration of your system including all applications. If you back up your *entire* system, including your “system state,” you can do a full system restore from a separate (theoretically “clean”) source. This, I learned, is important, because the malware also corrupted all of the files associated with the “restore points” on my computer, thereby effectively disabling the “system restore” function in Windows XP.

Are you an *oyayubizoku*¹ using a “CrackBerry” and threatened with withdrawal? Much has been written in the press lately about the long-running patent litigation between Research in Motion (the folks who manufacture the BlackBerry® PDAs and provide the related technology) and NTP, Inc., and the risk that an injunction will issue to shut down all BlackBerrys now that the Supreme Court has denied *cert* in the case. The district judge scheduled a hearing for February 24 to decide whether to issue an injunction. RIM claims to have a workaround and has filed patent applications for it, but NTP threatened to seek an injunction against use of that fix. At the same time, the NTP patents in question recently have been invalidated by the Patent & Trademark Office. Uncertainty reigns.



Although RIM has about 50 percent of the market for these devices, this situation underscores the need for all of us to practice *caveat emptor*. Although a change to a different device and server could be accomplished, the associated dislocation and costs are not insignificant. Some enterprises, such as Congress, the Justice Department, UPS, and any number of large law firms have an installed base of hundreds, if not thousands, of BlackBerry devices and related servers. With the benefit of hindsight, some due diligence before investing in these devices might have suggested using an alternative source.

One example of an enterprise alternative is Good Technology (www.good.com), which offers analogous secure server technology interfacing globally with both Microsoft Outlook and Lotus Notes. Unlike RIM, Good Technology holds a license from NTP. An advantage of Good’s GoodLink™ technology, however, is that it does not require RIM’s proprietary BlackBerry devices. Instead, it works with numerous popular devices running either the Palm operating system (such as the Treo 600 and 650) or Microsoft Windows Mobile 5.0 and 2003 (such as the Dell Axim X50, the HP iPAQ hw6515, and others). Later this year, GoodLink tm also will work with the Nokia E61 running the Symbian operating system.

All of this shows that, just because a particular device or technology is popular, it may not be worth the investment in hardware and training time. Only you will know what is best for your situation. Just beware.

Postscript: RIM announced on March 3 that it settled its long-running patent dispute, averting a

possible court-ordered shutdown of the BlackBerry system, by paying NTP \$612.5 million in a “full and final settlement of all claims,” including the \$450 million it had escrowed for settlement purposes. For more info, see <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory?id=1684919>.

Vittal is the general counsel of Credit.com, Inc., in San Francisco, California. He is a member of the editorial boards for the technology and practice guide issues of GPSolo and the Technology eReport and writes and lectures frequently on technology topics of interest to the legal profession. He can be reached by email at tony.vittal@abanet.org.

¹A Japanese colloquialism referring to those who spend the day typing with their thumbs on portable communicators.

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MacNotes

Macintel Lives: A Trip to Macworld

By Jeffrey Allen

During the second week of January the Mac faithful celebrate their version of Christmas. That is the time when the MacWorld event takes place in San Francisco. Those who can make a pilgrimage to San Francisco for the event do so. Those who cannot make the pilgrimage dutifully face toward San Francisco, excitedly waiting for the latest intelligence from Apple, traditionally delivered by Apple CEO Steve Jobs in his keynote address.

January 2006 saw the traditional pilgrimage. Steve Jobs ascended his pulpit and addressed the Mac faithful. To the surprise of many, he announced no new iPods (of course Apple has had two new iPod models in the last few months). He did announce new versions of iLife and iWork. He also announced the release of the first two models of Mac computers using Intel processors

Apple's iWork '06 offers new versions of its word processor (Pages) and its presentation program (Keynote). Apple has no upgrade program for iWork, but sells the suite at a retail price of \$79, less than most upgrades to other programs costs. You can spend an extra \$20 to get a family pack (5 user licenses). We have not had the opportunity to work with the new iterations of the programs yet, but the features touted by Apple include:

A. In both Keynote and Pages, the ability to perform basic spreadsheet-style calculations and formatting in tables; display data in three-dimensional charts; add stars, polygons, or draw freeform custom shapes with Bézier curves; mask photos and images; adjust photos similarly to the way you would adjust them in iPhoto; and add reviewer comments to any document or presentation.

B. In Pages 2, the ability to start with any one of 66 templates, including 25 new designs; import

documents created with AppleWorks or Microsoft Word (from both PC and Mac); export as a cross-platform PDF, Word, HTML, RTF, or text-only file; and build form letters with drag-and-drop simplicity using your Address Book.

C. In Keynote 3, the ability to choose from 27 themes, including new HD themes up to 1920 x 1080 pixels; add cinematic transitions, animations, and slide builds; import presentations created with AppleWorks or Microsoft PowerPoint from both PC and Mac; export your presentation to PowerPoint, or to iDVD or iPhoto; and see all your slides at a glance in Light Table View to facilitate reorganizing them.

Apple's iLife '06, the suite of programs that includes iPhoto 6, iLife 6, iDVD 6, iMovieHD 6, Garageband (but no longer iTunes) received a new addition this year, iWeb. All of the previously existing programs in the suite were tweaked and improved. Where appropriate, the programs also include integration with iWeb. The iWeb program represents the most significant addition to the iLife package this year. Apple designed iWeb to enable the easy creation of a website that you can post to your .Mac account. You start with a template and add your content. The included iLife media browser lets you drag and drop photographs, audio, and video. It also allows you to bring in podcasts (which could include music recorded through GarageBand 3 or imported from iTunes). The iWeb program also includes the ability to create blogs and podcasts. As with iWorks, Apple offers no upgrade path, but only costs \$79 for a single license or \$99 for a family license.

Apple's announcement of the release of two Intel processor-based Macs represents the biggest news in the Apple world. The entrance to the Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco set the stage for Job's announcement. A large banner bore the question: "What's an Intel chip doing inside a Mac?" and the answer: "A whole lot more than it ever did inside a PC." The announcement: Apple has created two Intel-based computers, the new MacBook Pro and a new iMac. The new computers use Intel Core Duo processors to generate significant theoretical speed jumps of 2x for the iMac by comparison to the current G-5 processors and 4x for the MacBook Pro by comparison to the current PowerBook using the G4 processor. Although Apple's earlier announcements indicated anticipated shipping dates around June 2006 for the first Intel-based Macs, they will start to ship in February 2006. The computers will cost approximately the same as their predecessors, with the price of the 15.4" MacBook Pro starting at \$1,999 and the 17" iMac starting at \$1,299.

The computers have some changes aside from the processor. Both the MacPro Book and the iMac will come with built-in iSight cameras, Bluetooth 2.0, AirPort Extreme, and a slot-load 8x double-layer Super Drive built into the computer. Neither computer comes with a built-in modem, but Apple offers a small 56KB USB modem for \$49.

The MacBook Pro comes in a choice of two models in identical cases. The \$1,999 1.67 GHz version comes with an 80 GB hard disk upgradeable to 100 GB at 7200 RPM or 120 GB at 5400 RPM (+\$200) and 512MB of RAM, upgradeable to 2GB (+\$500). The \$2,499 GHz version comes with 1 GB of RAM, upgradeable to 2 GB (+\$300) and a 100 GB hard disk at 5400 RPM, upgradeable to 120 GB at 5400 RPM or 100 GB at 7200 RPM (+\$100). The MacBook Pro also boasts a significantly brighter screen than its predecessor. The MacBook Pro does not have the PCMCIA slot that its predecessor had.

Instead, it comes with the newer Express Card/34 slot.



Images courtesy of Apple Computer, Inc.

With respect to the iMac, the basic \$1,999 1.83 GHz configuration comes with 512 MB of RAM, upgradeable to 2 GB (+\$300) and a 160 GB hard disk, upgradeable to 500 GB (+\$375). The same basic configuration and options come with the 20" version (except it gets a 250 GB hard drive (upgradeable to 500 GB [+ \$300] and a 2.0 GHz processor), for an additional \$400.

Apple demonstrated the new models at MacWorld. All of the Apple software that comes with the computers will be native to the Intel processors. The Apple software on the computers (iLife and iWorks) ran briskly and smoothly; the operating system also appeared to run without any problems. None of the computers at the show had any software other than Apple native software, accordingly, so there was no way to judge the speed effect of the Rosetta interface that allows the new processors to run programs written for the older architecture. Apple personnel at the show suggested that some programs would show a noticeable slow down from the conversion process, while others would show a negligible slow down. Apple has announced upgrades for some of its software to Intel processor versions and the creation of a new class of programs called "Universal" (meaning they will run on the G4, G5, and Intel architecture).

Apple personnel would not comment on whether any programs would not run on the new architecture.

Jeffrey Allen (jallenlawtek@aol.com) has a general practice in Oakland, California. His firm, Graves & Allen, emphasizes real estate and business transactions and litigation. He is a frequent speaker and author on technology topics and the Editor-in-Chief of the GPSolo Technology &

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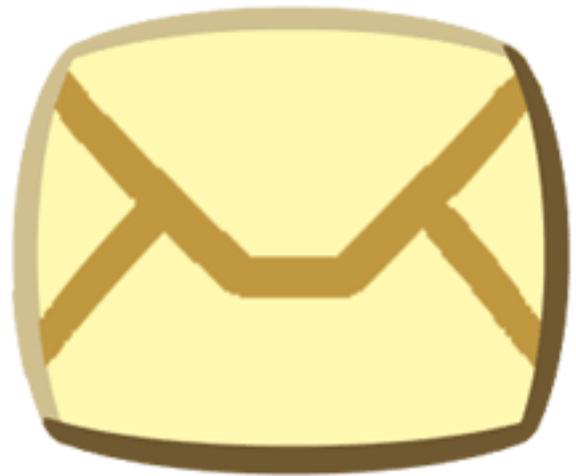
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SurvivingEmail

Let YouSendIt Send That Monster File

By jennifer rose

How many times have you wanted to send a large file, only to have it bounce back from the recipient, because the file's too large? Or sent the file by mistake to the wrong person? Or the recipient's using an email program that prohibits receipt of very large files? Perhaps you just can't get past the firewall. Or you didn't have access to an FTP server.



Maybe the recipient's on the road, and can't wait for long downloads, using that rusty dialup at the lake house. But you want to get that file off to the recipient in a hurry, because you're headed off to the rustic village of Brie where you'll be lucky to find a slow connection.

Or maybe you just want to share a large file with a mailing list that prohibits attachment.

YouSendIt, <http://www.yousendit.com/>, is the answer you've been looking for. Admittedly, the

first time I received something from YouSendIt, I almost tossed it into the trash, figuring it was just a piece of junk mail. A second look revealed that Jim Calloway, known to be to be the practice management advisor of the Oklahoma State Bar Association, had sent me something with the subject line "YouSendIt Delivery Notification." Had someone spoofed Jim's address? I opened the message and read on:

You have a file named "Really Important Stuff2005.pdf" (13477 KB) from jimc@okbar.org waiting for download.

jimc@okbar.org says:

Here's the 2005 materials file.

You can click on the following link to retrieve your file. The link will expire in 7 days and will be available for a limited number of downloads.

ReallyImportantStuff2005.pdf (13477 KB)

If you have any questions, please email support@yousendit.com.

The YouSendIt Team

Still not sure what this was all about, I went to YouSendIt's site and checked it out before clicking on the link. And sure enough, the link led me to a download of what Jim had promised to send me. It was amazingly simple. And I became a believer.

YouSendIt is capable of sending large files up to 1 GB in an encrypted HTTPS session (SSL/TLS), faster than the speed of light, and it's absolutely free. Files must be downloaded by the recipient within seven days before vaporizing, but the same file can be downloaded a thousand times. Files can be sent to up to fifty recipients. Opening a YouSendIt account, <http://www.beta.yousendit.com/signup.php>, requires nothing more than an email address and following a verification link.

And even if you've sent that file the old-fashioned way as an attachment to email, there's no guarantee that the recipient's received it. Like good old FedEx or UPS, YouSendIt has tracking and notification features.

Nothing irritates me more than well-meaning, albeit misguided, friends and family who insist upon sending me megabytes of some stupid home video they've just made, clogging up my inbox. Now, if I can just train them to send those files to YouSendIt instead.

jennifer j. rose is editor-in-chief of GPSolo. She lives in Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico.

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ProductNotes

Business in a Box Professional

By Jeffrey Allen

Business in a Box professional (www.Business-in-a-Box.com) provides an all-purpose collection of letters and basic forms designed to address a variety of business and personal matters. Lawyers who have been in practice for a substantial time likely have created their own collection from their practice and will find Business in a Box marginally useful. A new lawyer, however, will likely find significant utility in it. I am not suggesting that the lawyer would take the letters or forms and use them verbatim (although in some cases that might occur). But the letters and forms can serve as a base that the lawyer can modify to meet the needs of his or her particular situation.

Although certainly many of the letters and forms could stand some improvement, they serve as a decent starting point and at their cost of \$199.95 represent a reasonable investment, particularly for a lawyer just starting out in practice. The Pro version includes three user licenses. The documents address issues categorized under the following heads: Business Planning & Management, Contractors & Consultants, Credit & Collection, Finance & Accounting, Human Resources, Internet & Technology, Legal, Operations & Logistics, Real Estate, Sales & Marketing. The professional version includes 1,264 forms and letters. The company also offers a scaled down, single license, "Basic" version for \$99 as well. The basic version only includes 695 letters and forms and does not include any documents for the headings of Human Resources or Real Estate. For that reason, most general practitioners will find the Professional version more useful.

The program works with both Mac OS and Windows computers. The only difference between the two versions is that the Windows installation is fully automatic, whereas the Macintosh version requires some manual installation. The forms and letters come in MS Word format for easy use and modification.

To acquire the program, you purchase it online and download the installer.

RIM's New Phones/PDAs/email Devices

By Jeffrey Allen

Research In Motion, better known as RIM, makes the various devices that carry the common name Blackberry. I recently had the opportunity to test two of the newer Blackberry offerings from RIM, the 7100g and the 8700c, both of which operate on the Cingular system. To understand the names of the devices, you need to know that the four numbers represent the family of devices and the letters represent modifications made for individual carriers. In the 7100 series the phones actually look different for each provider. Both phones are available from several providers. As always, phones obtained from different providers may have different features; check the feature list before you buy to be sure.

All products of converged technology represent a compromise between the root sources it converges. These devices converge PDA and phone functions. The 7100g feel more "phone-like" than the 8700c. The 8700c feels more like a PDA than a phone. The 7100g felt more natural when held up to the ear like a phone, although the 8700c, with its concave sides, proved much more easily held than its predecessors. It actually felt comfortable held in that fashion. As a practical matter, however, most users will, I think, prefer to use a headset (I know that I do). As both phones have Bluetooth built-in, users can choose between wired and wireless earphones.



8700c (4.7 oz.; quad band world phone; 4.3" x 2.7" x 0.77"; Up to 4 hours talk time).

7100g (4.2 oz., quad band world phone; 4.7" x 2.3" x 0.8"; Up to 4 hours talk time).

The two phones represent very different approaches to form. The 8700 looks more like the last several generations of BlackBerry devices. Its form shows its PDA heritage, but has been modified to the point that it is a comfortable and useful telephone device. It has an excellent screen that provides a clear, crisp display with rich color performance. It also has a full thumb board keypad. The 7100 has a candy bar shape, establishing the telephone as its dominant form. It has a smaller screen that, while clear and crisp, does not display the same vividness of color as the 8700. The 7100 screen is 240 x 640 pixels while the screen on the 8700 is 340 x 620 pixels, because of its candy bar shape. The 7100 also has a 20-character keyboard with larger keys than the 8700c. The 7100 uses double character assignments to each key and employs a predictive text technology called "SureType" that allows the half-sized keyboard to function adequately. The 8700 has a 35-character QWERTY thumb board. I found that SureType somewhat disconcerting. It works through a process that allows it to guess at what word you are typing based on the letters you type. As you start to type, it starts to guess. The more you type, the more its guesses change, until it gets the right word. While I thought it was interesting to watch it work, I found its error rate too high for me to feel that it saved me any time.

Both phones have Bluetooth capabilities and can use both hard-wired and Bluetooth headsets. Note, however, that both phones use a mini-USB connection, so they require a special headset or a newly available adapter that will allow you to use a standard headset. They also have built-in speakerphones.

Both devices come with cabling and software to allow them to synch the calendar, contact, notes, and tasks functions with your computer. Both can charge through a USB connection to the computer as well as through the use of standard AC and DC chargers.

The devices function almost identically. They both include proprietary contact and calendar features, as well as the ability to record notes and tasks to be done. Additional programs have become available to make the devices more functional and allow them to better compete with the Palm and Windows Mobile devices. In fairness, however, when it comes to “add-on” programs, the Windows Mobile devices still have many more options than the RIM devices, and the Palm devices have much more software available than the Windows Mobile devices.

The RIM devices are commonly referred to as “Blackberries” (although some people who have observed the almost continual use that many users make of the devices have nicknamed them “Crackberries”). The strength of the Blackberry devices has always been the elegant and effective manner in which they handle email. While the Blackberry devices have had more challengers join the party in recent times, they generally still do one of the best, if not the best job in handling email. They use a push technology, which sends the email to your device. You can get the information directly from your own system, assuming it is properly configured. If you do not have an email system configured to take advantage of the Blackberry features, you can use the one set up by Cingular as an email client, have it check your email account(s), grab the mail, and push it out to your device. I have used the Cingular system and tied it to several email accounts. That has worked very satisfactorily for me.

The Blackberry devices have traditionally worked only on the Windows platform, but they no longer have that limitation. The availability of third-party software from PocketMac makes the device compatible with the Mac OS X platform (v. 10.3 and later). Among the calendar programs that will work for synchronization on the Mac side are: Entourage, Address Book/iCal, Now Contact/Now Up-To-Date, Daylite, and Sticky Notes. I tried PocketMac on both devices, synching to Entourage. I found that it worked flawlessly with the 8700c, but that it would occasionally hiccup with the 7100g and hang up after synching contacts. As the program allows you to synch Contacts, Calendar, Notes and Tasks independently as well as collectively, I was able to resolve that problem successfully by synching the Calendar, Notes, and Tasks separately. PocketMac and RIM worked out an arrangement so that the software costs nothing. I have been told that it will come packaged with new RIM devices. Note that the PocketMac website reports that the software works with older RIM devices as well, going back as far as the 957. You can obtain full details as well as download a fee copy from the PocketMac site: www.pocketmac.com.

The cost of the device will vary according to your provider. Discounts exist in many cases associated with the opening of a new account or the upgrading of a phone in conjunction with extending the term of an existing account. The Cingular website shows the 7100g with a list price of \$249.99 and the 8700c with a list price of \$349.99. At the present time, both phones automatically come with a \$50 mail-in rebate.

Both devices worked competently as PDAs and handled email extremely well. Both devices can be used with or without headsets. A user can comfortably hold either to his/her ear during a call; however, I suspect that most users will find it preferable to use earphones (I have a strong preference for the wireless variety). Both devices functioned quite satisfactorily as telephones as well and handled the email and PDA functions. Because of the screen and the keyboard, I prefer the 8700c to the 7100g, but both worked quite well.

Microsoft's OneNote 2003

By Lindsay Thompson

I don't forget things in the daily rush like I used to. I don't have to carry so much around in my head, either. That's because I don't have to as Microsoft's OneNote 2003 has eliminated the dozens of indistinguishable legal pads that used to cover the desktops and fill up file folders in the offices of my general practice firm.

OneNote essentially turns your computer into a legal pad, Post-It note, organizer, timekeeper, research file, and tickler file all wrapped into one—only better, because you can find whatever you need in seconds flat.

With OneNote, you don't have to know where anything is; its extremely fast search feature finds whatever you need. That's because OneNote aggregates information in a different way—as long as I've entered something, I can find it. I use OneNote in a dozen essential ways for transactional work, litigation, and then some.

I begin by opening a side-note for the day. Side notes are like throw-away sheets. Whatever passes through my mind during course of the day goes on that page—from client matters to errands. As the day progresses, I jot down the notes of my phone conversations, internal discussions, and thoughts on various issues as they occur to me, then I can organize and shift them around. The time stamp is particularly useful for telephone conversations—that's one less, albeit important, element that I have to think about. And it doesn't go away unless I want it to. OneNote sits open in the corner of my screen while I'm working in other programs and keeps my mind free to focus on the matter at hand.

At the end of the day, I drag the notes I've taken into their relevant files, so there is no need to recopy or type them as I (or someone I pay) would have to do if they were running on one or even a few legal pads. If I am working on one case, and it triggers thoughts on another matter, I record

those in OneNote and I don't have to worry about not being able to find or reorganize the information later. The same holds true for the constant interruptions caused by other pressing issues; any notes I take on the matter are in OneNote, and the information is always there.

When I need to find a phone number, OneNote promptly finds any number I've recorded there. If I do web research and find something interesting, I simply drag the info into my OneNote pad. It saves text, graphics, and links. To share research or the contents of a transaction or client call with another member of my firm, I simply click on the email icon, and off it goes; no need to spend time composing something new, attaching documents, or worrying that it will get buried in the recipient's inbox—the information shows right up in their OneNote folder.

OneNote is also very adaptable in terms of how it presents the information for you. If you are searching for a name and it is one of five entries, OneNote will present you with a list view of each of the five entries. Simply click on the one you are looking for.

Lawyers wedded to the look of the legal pad needn't despair. OneNote has a host of stationery choices—including the classic yellow legal pad, choice of pen color and thickness for writing in OneNote by hand. OneNote then translates handwriting into text that can be used in more formal documents.

For sheer volume, OneNote is especially handy. As I head into my 31st deposition on a pending case, my only regret is that I held out on purchasing a tablet PC. Using OneNote on a laptop or tablet PC, one can record entire depositions in both audio and video. At trial, OneNote can pull up a name or specific piece of testimony, and it would be at my fingertips in moments—highly preferable to and significantly more economical than sifting through thousands of pages of deposition testimony. It is also extremely useful for deals that go on endlessly and through myriad iterations. On the more mundane side, I use OneNote to track office supplies.

OneNote serves me beyond my practice as well. I used it in my role as secretary for a nonprofit organization. And, as an amateur chef, I keep an extensive recipe section in OneNote. I capture recipes from email subscriptions and links to research on food-related items. When I want to recall the information, OneNote pulls it right up on my computer at home. I do the same with travel articles as well.

OneNote is highly flexible. From color-coding to calendaring, you can organize and flag your information in OneNote with as little or as much input as suits you. Accessible and intuitive, Microsoft really knows its legal audience.

My OneNote and I are off to a running start in 2006.

Lindsay Thompson is a shareholder in Thompson Gipe, P.C., in Seattle and a past member of the OneNote Attorney Advisory Panel.

Neither the ABA nor ABA Sections endorse non-ABA products or services, and the product reviews in the Technology eReport should not be so construed.

GP | Solo

ABA General Practice, Solo & Small Firm Division

Technology eReport 

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DivisionNotes

Diversity Fellowship Applications Now Being Accepted

The Division's Diversity Committee and Membership Board identifies and nominates four lawyers of color who will be appointed by the Chair-Elect to funded fellowship positions within the Division, effective during the following bar year.

Deadline April 28, 2006.

[Find out more and apply to the Diversity Fellows program.](#)

Register Now for the Kansas City Spring Meeting

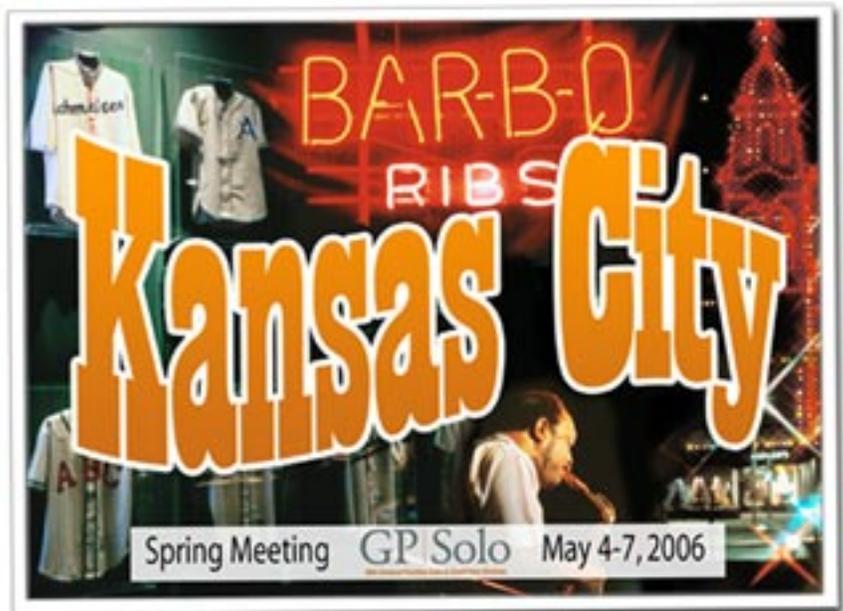
May 4–7, 2006

Kansas City , Missouri

The InterContinental Kansas City at the Plaza

Some highlights of this meeting include:

- Thursday: The Opening Reception will include a private tour of the Negro League Baseball Museum with the legendary Buck O’Neil, the best of KC-style BBQ, and live jazz at the American Jazz Museum.
- Friday: ABA President-Elect Karen Mathis will lead a plenary session in the morning on her initiative for the 2006–07 bar year. The topic will be " Mainstreet Lawyers—The Glue that Holds Society Together." The evening will feature a dinner at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art honoring military lawyers and a swearing-in ceremony to the Bar of the Supreme Court of the United States.



The negotiated room rate is \$159 per night for a single or double. Please call 1-888-424-6835 to reserve your room, and don't forget to mention that this is for ABA GP|Solo Spring Meeting.

[Find out more about the Spring Meeting.](#)

Division Sponsored Bankruptcy Resolution Passed by the ABA HOD

The GP|Solo Division was the primary sponsor of Resolution #103, a proposed bankruptcy rule to the House of Delegates that would put solo and small firm practitioners on equal footing with attorneys in large multistate firms in obtaining access to the bankruptcy courts to file papers electronically on behalf of clients.

The Recommendation and Report were written by GP|Solo leaders Larry Feinstien and Chris Kaup, several members of the Business Law Section, a law professor, and a bankruptcy judge—all members of the ABA Working Group on Local Rules for Electronic Case Filing in the Bankruptcy Courts.

We are pleased to report that the ABA House of Delegates passed Recommendation #103 at the Midyear Meeting in Chicago on February 13, 2006. The Recommendation will now be forwarded

to the Advisory Committee on Bankruptcy Rules of the Judicial Conference of the United States.

[Download the approved rule in PDF.](#)

Save the Date

[ABA TECHSHOW](#)

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Register by March 18 and save another \$200!**

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ABA General Practice, Solo & Small Firm Division

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