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Issue Highlights

Welcome to the June 2004 issue of *GPSolo Technology eReport*. In this issue we have many brief, helpful articles that will help you with the technological side of your practice.

Trying to decide whether to have a website or not? See “Why Does a Small Law Firm Need a Website?” by Erik Chan and David Wallace of bConnects LLP.

Want to know about how to get the most out of the technology you use in your practice? See David Berndt’s article on “Getting the Most Out of Technology.”

Jeffrey Allen talks about maintenance and emergency repairs to your operating system and software in **MacNotes**.

Check out **ProductNotes** for information on a collection of hot new products for the lawyer on the go.

Finally, don’t miss **SectionNotes** for information about the Section’s activities and future Section and ABA meetings.

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Why Does a Small Law Firm Need a Website?

By Erik Chan and David Wallace

No one can deny the effect of the Internet, and company websites in particular, on marketing and promoting professional service providers in recent years. It's no wonder that almost every large- and medium-sized law firm in America has built and launched a website. But how valuable is a website for a small law firm or solo practitioner? For a smaller law office with less financial resources, is a firm website worth the effort and expense?

First of all, consider that regardless of the much publicized "Internet Boom and Bust" of the late 1990s, Internet use continues to grow in America and internationally. Currently more than 50 percent of households in America have computers and web access. Moreover, a vast majority of businesses, whether they are a division of a Fortune 500 company or a small-town auto body shop, use e-mail and the Internet on a daily basis.

Business use of the Internet to promote products and services will continue to grow simply because websites have definite advantages over other communication and promotional mediums like Yellow Page listings, printed ads, and directories. On a practical level, websites can be accessed any time from any connected computer in the world. The 24/7 nature of websites means that they offer immediate gratification to potential clients seeking information and options on legal services. On legal sites, more practice information can be placed online than in any typical printed directory. Company history, practice area expertise, and attorney biographical information placed on a website can allow prospective clients to familiarize themselves with a law firm and its lawyers in an anonymous and noncommittal way.

Prospective clients who have no background knowledge of a law office may feel intimidated by the first call to a law firm. They may expect to be subjected to a hard sell by a lawyer whose background or expertise is not even the right fit for the problem or case. They may feel

that they will be wasting the valuable time of a lawyer with their generic questions about the firm (which may be very true).

Conversely, a potential client who has reviewed a firm's website feels knowledgeable and empowered. Armed with facts about the firm and its legal expertise, he or she can evaluate more seriously how a prospective firm can help with a case or a legal problem. If a call from such a person does result, there will already be a sense of a right fit—the prospective client will be primed for a serious discussion and ready to become a client. Websites can also promote first communication to the firm via an e-mail link.

Often, businesses or individuals in search of legal services will receive several leads or referrals from colleagues or friends. In a case where an individual has five leads but can review the qualifications of only two firms online, the firms without company websites have a competitive disadvantage. Moreover, the decision to hire a law firm often rests on a group decision. In both family and business law matters, the decision to hire a law firm may rely on the approval of several individuals within a company or family. Especially in the case where individuals within the deciding group are not all in the same region of the country, the ability for all parties to review a law firm's website may be key to obtaining agreement on choosing a firm.

Any lawyer who evaluates products or conducts legal research online can appreciate the power and convenience of Internet-based tools. So, it's not hard to understand how seekers of legal services might favor lawyers who provide firm information online.

In a 2002 American Bar Association Legal Technology Resource Center survey, 100 percent of firms with 50 or more lawyers and 85 percent of firms with 10–49 lawyers possessed websites. The percentage of solo and small law firms (fewer than 10 lawyers) with websites was significant but averaged less than 50 percent. As the use of Internet search and online professional service evaluation grows, law firms without websites will increasingly be at a disadvantage.

Aside from the practical advantages of having an online presence, a well-designed website can be an important branding and image tool. An attractive firm website that presents company information in an organized and competent manner leaves a much better first impression than that of a firm that can only provide a phone number or legal services listing. Moreover, unlike directory listings, websites can present in-depth information like firm philosophy, case histories, and lawyer profiles in a way that builds confidence and elicits a positive reaction. Internet use and promotion via the Internet is here to stay. Because websites are viewed as information resources rather than traditional advertising vehicles, large- and medium-sized law firms will continue to spend tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars to respectfully promote their firms online. The cost of custom-developed websites for small law firms usually runs between two and eight thousand dollars.

Recently, however, legal website packages have been introduced that provide smaller law

firms attractive and fully functional websites at substantially lower costs, making the package affordable for smaller offices. A quick Yahoo or Google search with keywords such as “websites for lawyers” or “attorney websites” will yield turnkey solutions for attorneys who want to get their law firms online. Companies like lawyersites.net and LegalWebDesigner.com can get a company online for a few hundred dollars. Lawconnects.com offers a package with no startup or development fees.

Erik Chan is president of bConnects LLC, a software company focused on developing reasonably priced website solutions for small law firms and other businesses (www.LawConnects.com). Erik can be reached at 925-837-8226 or erikc@bconnects.com.

David Wallace is a practicing attorney in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to running his solo/GP practice, he is a founding partner and general counsel of bConnects LLC. Previously, David was vice president and general counsel of rStar Corporation, a publicly traded Internet networking company.

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Getting the Most Out of Technology

By David Berndt

You may recall the parable of the ant and the grasshopper. The ant worked hard all summer long, building his house and laying up supplies for the winter. The grasshopper mocked the ant, while laughing and playing the summer away. When winter arrived, the ant was warm and well fed. The grasshopper, however, had no food or shelter, and so he died out in the cold.

What you may not have known is that both the ant and the grasshopper practiced law. Several years into their legal careers, they decided they wanted the opportunities and freedom that comes with hanging out their own shingles. Both had been exposed to and used various technologies to support their legal activities while employed by their former firms. The ant recognized that if she were going to succeed as a solo practitioner, she needed to use technology to enable her to work more efficiently than she did before. The grasshopper, however, felt that he didn't have the time to get up to speed on all the latest legal technologies. We all know, of course, how their stories ended.

It would be easy to take the grasshopper's approach, feel overwhelmed by available technology, and decide to simply ignore it. Perhaps there are those among us who have felt at one time (or more often) that if we can just work harder, we can compensate for our older or less-efficient technology. Allowing these feelings to go on too long, however, can result in our finding ourselves "out in the cold" when the winter comes.

How can we ensure that we don't find ourselves in this position? Ultimately, it boils down to one key principle:

Choose technology wisely and use the technology you employ in your practice daily, so that it

becomes integral to your operation.

Like the ant, we must take the time to wisely acquire technology and then use it on a daily basis in order to be prepared for whatever might come our way in the future. Whether we focus our practices on litigation or transactional law, civil or criminal, technology can help us succeed if we use it appropriately and efficiently.

As a relatively new solo practitioner myself, I've had to confront the myriad technology issues and choices recently. I hope that by sharing my experience with you I can help you make wise decisions as you integrate technology into your practice.

Starting Out: The Candy Store Conundrum

Before I left my prior position, I began my evaluation of the technologies and tools I should consider purchasing to assist me in launching my practice. I knew I had to purchase prudently because I wouldn't have that regular paycheck coming in anymore, and I am not independently wealthy. Walking into a nearby Staples, however, I felt like an eight-year-old kid walking into a candy store—so many things looked appealing! And, of course, every computer and software package explained why it was critical to my future success. So, which to choose?

As I lacked a sufficient background to easily make the determination myself, I looked for help. In a larger law firm, you may find an IT (Information Technology) person or even a whole IT department. In a small firm or solo practice, you are the IT person. If you do not have a background in technology, you can find help and guidance on technology from consultants, some of whom specialize in the legal industry, or from other and more technologically savvy practitioners. Solo practitioners sometimes form communities to share information about such things as the identity of a reliable consultant or ultimate technology decisions. The ABA's Solosez listserve is such a community.

For a variety of reasons, I recommend that you look into signing up for Solosez if you do not already belong. Contacts I made through Solosez generously helped me work through some of my technology decisions and problems. That assistance made me a much more intelligent technology consumer and user. The bottom line: if you don't know what you are doing, get some help. Figure out what you really need and can use before you invest your money and time. To sign up, please visit www.abanet.org/solo/solosez.html.

If you want to learn more about legal technology yourself, I can make some suggestions to you as well. First, you will also be well served by spending some time reading. For example, the December 2003 issue of *GPSolo/Technology & Practice Guide* (published by the General Practice, Solo & Small Firm Section of the ABA) contains numerous articles and suggestions providing excellent advice in making basic technology decisions. The issue is available online at www.abanet.org/genpractice/magazine/dec2003/toc.html. Other magazines that may be of interest to you are *Law Office Computing and Law Practice Management* (published by the Law Practice Management Section of the ABA). Second, attend legal technology shows or

CLE programs addressing technology subjects. The ABA annually presents TechShow in Chicago. That is one of the best places to go to obtain exposure to the technology itself as well as to attend classes presented by knowledgeable practitioners and consultants who explain how the technology can serve you best. You can locate other programs of a similar nature on a regional, state or sometimes even local basis.

Technology Building Blocks

After sorting through all the information, I was able to divide my technology requirements into three categories:

- a.** Should-Haves
- b.** Nice-to-Have's
- c.** Wait-to-Have's

Unless you have unlimited resources, learning to categorize and prioritize your technology needs and wants among these three classifications is critical to your successful acquisition, deployment, and utilization of technology. Though the items that fall into these categories will differ somewhat for everyone, below are some starting points.

Technology Should-Haves

This list includes technology you really have to have in order to function with reasonable efficiency.

- A computer (desktop vs. laptop depends on your office situation and work habits)
- Reliable printer (a laser if you will be printing a lot of documents in your practice)
- Copier
- Word processing software
- Spreadsheet software
- E-mail
- Domain name host
- Internet connectivity
- Accounting/bookkeeping software
- Data back-up technology (hardware and software)
- Cell phone
- Fax capabilities (physical machine or virtual, e.g., e-Fax)
- Time and billing software
- Access to legal research online
- Personal digital assistant (PDA, such as an iPAQ or Palm)
- Contact management software

- Calendar
- Antivirus software

Technology Nice-to-Haves

This list includes technologies that might be on some lawyers' Should-Have lists. For some areas of law such as litigation and real estate transactions, where paper volumes can be overwhelming, a self-feeding scanner should be on the Should-Have list. Similarly, without regard to the nature of your practice, if you seek to cut down on paper consumption and move towards a paperless office, a scanner moves up to your Should-Have list.

- Wireless local area network (Wireless LAN)
- Legal database software (e.g., CaseMap)
- Chronology-mapping software (e.g., TimeMap)
- Scanner (preferably with automatic document feed)
- Voice recognition-based typing package
- Digital camera

Recent improvements in technology make it easier to solve some of the problems by acquiring a reasonably good quality multifunction device that incorporates the features of a printer, copier, fax machine, and scanner in a single piece of equipment.

Wireless LANs either can be set up simply, or bury a lawyer in technical complications, especially if he or she has never set up a network before. Nevertheless, they can prove well worth the implementation pains in some situations. For example, if you are in an office where it is not possible or prohibitively expensive to hardwire a network, or when you are preparing a case for trial or meeting with a client, a wireless LAN can enable you to use a laptop and meet in various locations throughout your office as circumstances dictate while still accessing the Internet, legal research sites, and your network.

Technology Wait-to-Haves

This list consists of things that would be nice to have but are not essential for your practice. My practice is not heavily oriented toward litigation. For lawyers heavily involved with litigation, however, some of these items might make their Should-Have list, since technology can substantially enhance trial presentations.

- Wireless wide-area data/Internet service
- Color copier
- Projector
- Document camera

Now What? Organizing for the Effective Use of Technology

Once you have acquired the technology you will use in your practice, you will want to integrate it into your practice to maximize the benefits. Integration of technology into your practice requires some planning to achieve maximum effectiveness. No matter what decisions you make regarding the technology you employ, it does you no good until you get it out of the box and put it to work for you. To use it effectively, you must first learn how it works.

Take a little time to read the manual to learn the features of the software or hardware you purchased. It will save you time and frustration in the long run. You will find that the technology works much better for you when you know its features and how to operate it. Manufacturers spend a fair amount of money preparing user manuals. They do so for a reason. Simply put, very few pieces of hardware operate so intuitively that you can just turn them on and operate all the features efficiently. Fax machines require programming; copiers have special features to learn. All computers are similar, but each has its own peculiarities.

When it comes to software, don't just install it one day and expect it to be fully functional in your practice the next. Take the time to learn it and to make sure that your staff learns it before you try to run your practice on it. You can actually get training on many major programs. At least go through the tutorials that usually accompany significant software pieces to ensure that you understand the basics of how to use the software. Allow staff paid time to learn the programs. The efficiency you gain as a result of this will pay for itself many times over. Once you and your staff have learned the software operation, integrate it into your practice and use it regularly.

Keeping an Ear to the Ground: What's Beyond the Horizon?

Finally, where do we go from here? Now that you have set up your office and employ the technologies that work for you, you might feel the temptation to quit worrying about new and emerging technologies. Well, don't!

Just as you can tell a train is coming before you can see it by "listening" to the vibrations of the rails (this practice is not recommended if the train is actually visible), lawyers need to listen to technological vibrations. This is accomplished by being aware of the technology applications and uses around you. If the court system in which you practice often has implemented or is about to implement electronic filing as an option, understand that the technology that allows it will not go away. More likely it will become mandatory down the line. The sooner you learn and employ the technology, the sooner you will benefit from its efficiencies. As technology develops and new technology becomes available, consider whether you can gain a competitive advantage in your area of practice by adopting the new technology platform before other lawyers; then let your clients and prospective clients know you have this capability. Often you can turn the technology into a marketing asset.

A word of warning, however: being an "early adopter" has some potential risks. We sometimes refer to early adopters as being at the "bleeding edge" of technology. By that we

mean that they go through the hassle and trouble of sorting out the problems so that later adopters don't have to do it. For most lawyers, being an early adopter with respect to technology will not help your productivity or your bottom line. On the other hand, you don't want to be the only firm in town not using a particular technology. Most lawyers will find that getting into useful and beneficial technological advances will work best if they wait until the technology has proven itself before adopting it in their practices.

*David Berndt practices law in Norton, Massachusetts. **Note:** The author does not have any financial interest in any of the named brands or products. Nor does he intend by his reference to promote or recommend them.*

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MacNotes

By Jeffrey Allen

This month we will discuss maintaining your Mac files and recovering from apparent disaster. Like any other computer, over time your Mac will accumulate a number of files, some of which, for one reason or another, may become corrupt and interfere with the computer's operation. Sometimes that interference can be downright inconvenient; other times simply disastrous.

To minimize the likelihood of your Mac suffering such an affliction, spend a little time keeping the files and the filing system in good order and repair. You can acquire several utilities to facilitate this process. Some come without charge; others you must buy commercially.

Apple's Disk Utility

Every copy of the Mac OS comes with a copy of Apple's Disk Utility Program. Use Disk Utility as your first line of defense against problems with your Mac. During the installation process, the OS installer placed a copy of Disk Utility on your hard drive. As you will soon discover, Disk Utility (like most other disk repair utilities) has a very limited capacity to correct problems on the operating system drive (the boot drive). To use Disk Utility most effectively, however, you must boot to a drive other than the one you want to fix. You can make an external disk drive bootable by installing an operating system on it. Booting to that drive allows you to then use the copy of Disk Utility on that drive to repair the internal Drive. Disk Utility has two separate checks it can run for you. The first ("Disk First Aid") checks for consistency, overlapping programs, and minor structural problems. The second ("Repair Permissions" checks for problems with permissions. Disk Utility can do the latter on the boot drive; the former requires booting to a second drive.

For reasons that I have never understood, sometimes a problem disk is repairable only by booting to the OS install CD or DVD and then using its copy of Disk Utility. Logically, it should not be that way; but not everything about computers is logical, and it really is that way. [If you don't know how to boot the Mac OS Install CD/DVD, you have several choices: (1)

insert the CD/DVD into the computer when it is running, double click on the install icon, and it will restart booted to the CD/DVD; (2) restart the computer with the install CD/DVD in the optical drive and hold the “C” key down; (3) insert the CD/DVD in the computer when it is already up and running, open system preferences, and select the CD/DVD as the startup disk; or (4) insert the CD/DVD into the computer and hold the Option key down when it starts to boot/reboot. The computer will show all bootable disks connected to the computer. Pick the CD/DVD and tell it to continue with the boot process.

As a preventive maintenance matter, you should run Disk Utility prior to any system upgrade, and, depending on use, once every couple weeks. A light user might run it monthly; a very heavy user, weekly. Additionally, any time a problem appears, turn here first. Run the Disk Repair feature and then go back and run Repair Permissions. As you may know, Apple built Mac OS X on a UNIX base. In UNIX, permissions assume significant importance; that has carried over to the Mac OS X. Improperly set permissions can make it hard to get your Mac to behave properly. I run the repair permissions utility weekly, every time I install a system upgrade, and whenever the computer appears to have a problem.

When Disk Utility Doesn't Work: The Big Three



Some problems exceed Disk Utility's abilities. For that reason, the well-prepared Mac owner has acquired a few third-party disk repair utilities. I have three that I rely on extensively: Symantec's Norton System Works (particularly Disk Doctor), TechTool Pro 4.01 from Micromat, and Alsoft's DiskWarrior 3. While these three repair utilities do overlap some, each has some features and repair capabilities that the other lacks. I keep all of them available to me for handling disk maintenance and emergency repairs. In an emergency situation, I will run Disk First Aid and Repair Permissions first. If it doesn't solve the problem, I will

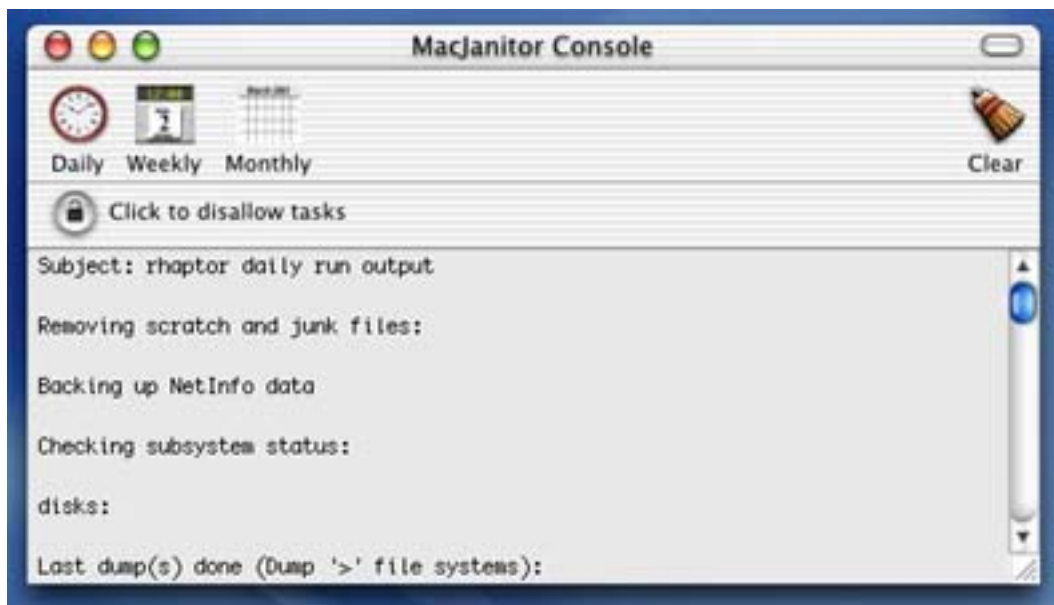
try Disk Warrior. If Disk Warrior runs into problems it cannot repair, I will try to repair them with Disk Doctor or Tech Tools, then try to run Disk Warrior again. If Disk Warrior still doesn't work, I will use the computer as best I can until I can reformat the drive and use my backup data to restore it to a working configuration.

DiskWarrior will make repairs to the disk structure and then rebuild and optimize the disk directory. Disk Warrior cannot rebuild the directory on the boot disk (the disk with the controlling operating system, so you must either boot to the Disk Warrior CD or install Disk Warrior on a bootable external disk drive. As was the case with Apple's Disk Utility, you will find times that the program cannot fix your disk when run from an external drive, but can when run from the Disk Warrior CD. Disk Warrior works technological miracles; I have seen Disk Warrior save drives that have become unbootable. It seems to fix more problems than

any other utility program I have tried. Additionally, after rebuilding the directory, you will likely find your computer running a bit faster. If you run Disk Warrior once every other month, you will avoid many potential problems.

Both Disk Doctor and Tech Tools Pro repair volume structure problems and file problems. They work differently and will each repair some problems the other doesn't. I run one or the other for maintenance purposes on a monthly basis.

Other Maintenance/Repair Techniques



Unix Maintenance Programs

OS X has a number of Unix repair programs built into its structure. The system normally runs those programs on its own when the computer is idle, often late at night or in the early morning. If you shut your computer off at the end of the day, the operating may not have the opportunity to run its maintenance programs. You can solve this problem by running them manually through the terminal program that comes with the OS, or you can get a third-party program such as MacJanitor (free, www.personalpages.tds.net/~brian_hill/macjanitor.html) or Cocktail (\$11.95, www.Mxoaxcocktail.com), which provide a front end to allow you to run Unix maintenance programs without entering terminal. To run the programs manually, you must open the terminal (it should be in the Utilities subfolder of your Applications folder). You will need an administrator password. You will want to run the following commands, one at a time:

```
sudo periodic daily
sudo period weekly
sudo periodic monthly
```

Proper and timely maintenance of the disk and its filing system and folders will often prevent minor problems from becoming more serious and save you considerable aggravation down the

line.

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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ProductNotes

By the eReport Editorial Staff (Edited by Jeffrey Allen)

Hot Products for Lawyers on the Go



iPod Mini

Not satisfied with its gigantic market share in the MP3 Player market earned through the dominance of its iPod, Apple Computer recently released iPod's reduced-size sibling, the iPod Mini. The Mini is smaller in every measurement than the iPod. It measures 3.6" x 2.0" x 0.5" and weighs only 3.6 ounces. The Mini comes in an anodized aluminum case, and you get to choose among 5 colors: silver, gold, pink, blue, or green. Apple reorganized the controls for the Mini, but they are similar in structure to the iPod and easy enough to use. The Mini comes with 25 minutes of skip protection and claims a battery life of up to 8 hours per charge (if you figure in normal use, you are good for 5–6). The Mini includes a charger, cable, belt clip, and Apple's regulation issue earphones. You can acquire an upgraded set of earphones, an armband carrier, and a mini dock as well as the iPod remote unit at extra cost from Apple. Third parties have already released a variety of cases and other accessories. The Mini works with both Mac OS X (10.1.5 or higher) and with Windows 2000 (SP4) or XP and requires built in FireWire or a USB 2.0 port or Windows certified USB 2.0 Card. The Mini costs \$249. It comes in one capacity, a 4-gigabyte hard drive. If you use it only for MP3 music, it should hold about 1,000 songs. (Note: If you are contemplating upgrading headphones, consider getting noise attenuating headphones such as those made by Bose or Sony). www.apple.com.



CrossFire Hard Drive

For some time, SmartDisk has been one of our favorite external hard disk drives. We have used the FireLite for daily back up, travel, and as an emergency disk for some time. Built in a similar style to the FireLite, SmartDisk's CrossFire hard drives provide an excellent and dependable large capacity drive for desktop use either as a supplemental working drive or as a backup device. The

CrossFire drives come with a combination interface (you can also get smaller drives with a USB interface only) so that they work with FireWire or USB 2.0 (or 1.1) ports and are compatible with both the Mac OS (8.6, 9.x and X (10.1)) or higher and the Windows platforms (98 SE, ME, 2000, and XP). The 8.7" x 5.0" x 1.5" Crossfire comes in 120, 160, 200, and 250 Gigabyte capacities; SmartDisk builds the CrossFire with a 7200 RPM hard drive. Price range is from \$169 for a USB-only interface, 120 GB drive to \$349 for a combination FireWire/USB-interface, 250 GB drive. Smart Disk sells all sizes in Windows format, and only the 160 GB combination interface in a Mac OS format. Not to worry, Mac people—Mac OS X reads and writes to the Windows format without a problem. If you happen to have both Windows and Mac OS computers, you could use the same drive with both types. Alternatively, you can simply reformat the drive.

www.smartdisk.com.



On the Go Hard Drive

Other World Computing, another one of our favorite external hard disk providers has upgraded its On the Go Pro external hard disk line to include a 5400 RPM 2.5" hard disk drive manufactured by Hitachi. The On the Go line has been comprised of 4200-RPM units; and the new faster drive adds speed to the performance and a small increase to the price over its equivalent sized 4200-RPM units. All the On the Go units sport a 3.5" x 5.5" x 1" clear plastic housing allowing you to see the components. The unit weighs in at a

svelte 11 ounces. The 5400-RPM unit only comes in an 80 GB size. The cost is \$329.99 as compared to \$299.99 for the 4200RPM unit. Both units include both USB and FireWire connections and cables, as well as an AC adapter and a lightweight case useful only for keeping everything together as it contains virtually no padding. The disk drive weighs approximately 11 ounces and can be easily fit into most laptop computer bags. The On the Go Drives have proven stable, reliable, and relatively rugged. A good choice for Road Warriors or for use as a daily back up drive. www.otherworldcomputing.com.



Fujitsu Lifebook S2020 Laptop

A well-made lightweight reliable performer for the lawyer on the go. The test box came with 512MB RAM, 60 GB hard drive, modular DVD/CD-RW combo drive, integrated 802.11b/g wireless LAN, integrated multinational 56K v.90 modem, 10/100 Base-Tx Ethernet, and Windows XP Professional. Fujitsu drives the computer with a low-voltage mobile AMD Athlon XP-M 2100+ processor

(translate that into better battery life) and delivers it with a 13.3" XGA TFT display that is quite clear and readable. The laptop comes with 2 USB 2.0 ports and one FireWire port. The computer comes with an integrated track pad. The S2020 weighs 4.3 pounds configured as the test unit. Removing the optical drive and replacing it with a weight saver (plastic frame) reduces the weight to only 3.85 pounds. List price for that configuration is \$1,599. Two comments about the keyboard, though. (1) Because it is compressed, some of the keys have been cut in size so that all keys are not uniformly sized. For example, the ?/ key and the >. key are each about 2/3 the size of the other keys. Initially this feels unusual, but it is a relatively easy adjustment. (2) The keyboard feels a little bit spongy. You will not likely notice it if you have a light touch, but will feel it if you hammer the keys. Bottom line: The computer worked quite satisfactorily. It installed and ran software competently and without any noticeable problems. It is lightweight and portable and comes at a reasonable price and with a decent warranty and support program. It offers a good value to the lawyer who needs a computer for travel or courtroom use.

www.fujitsu.com.

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.

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SectionNotes

ABA Annual Meeting in Atlanta



ABA 2004 Annual Meeting August 5–8, 2004

Omni Hotel at CNN Center, Atlanta, Georgia

The GPSSF Section will have its headquarters at the Omni Hotel at CNN Center when the ABA holds its Annual Meeting on August 5–8, 2004 in Atlanta, Georgia. Join us for a weekend of Section and ABA activities, including important committee meetings, outstanding CLE opportunities, and myriad social activities and networking opportunities. If you have not been to an ABA Annual Meeting, this would be a great time to see what one is like. All sections will have programs and activities. And the ABA itself will have a series of CLE programs, administrative activities, and social events to occupy your time.

Future GPSSF Section Meetings

2004 ABA Annual Meeting: August 5–8, 2004

Omni Hotel at CNN Center,
Atlanta, Georgia

2004 Fall Meeting: October 13–17, 2004

Beverly Hilton Hotel, Beverly Hills, California

2005 ABA Midyear Meeting: February 9–15, 2005

Hotel to be announced, Salt Lake City, Utah

2005 Spring Meeting: May 18–25, 2005

Fontainebleau Hilton, Miami, Florida

Section Leadership

Chair: William Hogan, Boston, Massachusetts

Chair-Elect: Lee Kolczun, Lorain, Ohio

Vice Chair: Dwight Smith, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Secretary: John Macy, Waukesha, Wisconsin

Another Successful ABA TechShow



For those of you who missed the [ABA Techshow](#) in Chicago last March, cheer up, you can go next year. The show was excellent. Attendees had the opportunity to learn from numerous outstanding presentations by knowledgeable speakers on technology about important developments respecting the practice of law. If you missed this one, plan on making the show next year. Those who went will undoubtedly want to return. GPSSF co-sponsors TechShow.

Another Successful Annual Dispute Resolution Conference

In April the ADR Section presented its annual Dispute Resolution Conference. As usual it was highly successful, bringing together speakers and topics of interest to dispute resolvers and to lawyers representing clients in disputed matters. Look for calendaring information for next year's program. GPSSF co-sponsors the annual Dispute Resolution Conference

Outstanding GPSSF Spring Meeting in Phoenix



The GPSSF Section held its Spring Meeting at the Gold Canyon Golf Resort in Phoenix, Arizona, in April. During the meeting the Section presented its first Lifetime Difference Maker Award to General Earl Anderson (Ret.), in recognition of his outstanding contributions to his country and its military services and to his profession. General Anderson received his award at a dinner held in his honor. Dinner was well attended by GPSSF leaders and section members and by representatives of the leadership of the ABA. Congratulations to General Anderson for many jobs well done. General Anderson is true American hero, a genuinely nice guy, and a model for all of us to follow.

Visit Our Website

The GPSSF Section has a website at www.abanet.org/genpractice. It is part of the ABA website. The GPSSF website offers information about: **(1)** the time, date, and location of Section meetings; **(2)** Section activities; **(3)** membership; **(4)** publications, including books available for sale and electronic copies of the Section's magazines and newsletters.

Membership

Feel left out because you are not yet a member of the General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Section of the ABA? Tired of getting GPSSF Section publications secondhand from friends?

Concerned about missing some of our Section's vital new publications? We can fix it for you: all you have to do is join the section. For information about joining the Section, please call 1-800-285-2221 or check out the Section's website at www.abanet.org/genpractice.

Contact Information

ABA General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Section

321 N. Clark Street

Chicago, IL, 60610

Phone: 312.988.5648

Fax: 312.988.5711

genpractice@abanet.org

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ABAConnection

July 21: ABA Connection: Legal Issues for Gay Couples

On July 21, at 1:00 pm Eastern, the ABA Connection is presenting a one-hour CLE teleconference titled “Legal Issues for Gay Couples.” As the issue of gay marriage plays out on a policy level, it is causing practicing lawyers to grapple with practical questions in representing gay clients. In particular, practitioners must figure out how to balance the legal implications of formal recognition of gay marriages with precautionary steps that should be taken to protect the rights of the partners in the even that those marriages eventually might not be upheld.

Other considerations may include how to provide for the possibility of “divorces” between gay couples, as well as current issues over such matters as benefits for partners, adoption, and child custody. While few, if any, of these issues are settled, this ABA Journal article and teleconference will help to identify current thinking and point to some new directions for practitioners in the domestic relations field. It will also look at how changes in the law regarding gay couples could affect domestic relations law on a wider level.

The program is sponsored by the *ABA Journal*, Membership and Marketing, and the Center for Continuing Legal Education. CLE credit has been applied for in states that accept the teleconference format. To register, call the ABA at 800/285-2221 from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Eastern weekdays, beginning Monday, June 21st, or register online by Friday, July 16th at www.abanet.org/CLE/connection.html. There is a nonrefundable \$9.75 fee for the teleconference. If you are unable to participate in the live teleconference, the program is available, at no cost, for one month, on the ABA CLE web site at www.abanet.org/cle/connection.html. Tapes of the program are available to ABA members for \$50.00 two weeks after the program. To order a tape, call the ABA Service Center at 1-800-285-2221.

August 18: Issues for Corporation Counsel

On August 18 at 1:00 pm Eastern, the ABA Connection is presenting a one-hour CLE teleconference titled “Issues for Corporation Counsel.” One of the most challenging tasks for corporation counsel is working with outside lawyers who represent the company on various matters, such as litigation. The issues can be just as delicate for the outside counsel. Above all, keeping costs down in a tight economy while making sure client companies get the most for their money is a major issue.

Efficient and effective delivery of legal services is the watchword. Other major concerns include meshing of firm and corporate cultures. The firm likely to get corporate clients these days needs to understand both the company’s business and the bottom-line pressure in-house counsel face. Creative—and cheap—solutions through technology also are big, as is pressure on outside counsel to ensure diversity in lawyers and support staff assigned to corporate clients.

The program is sponsored by the *ABA Journal*, Membership and Marketing, and the Center for Continuing Legal Education. CLE credit has been applied for in states that accept the teleconference format. To register, call the ABA at 800/285-2221 from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Eastern weekdays, beginning Monday, July 26th, or register online by Friday, August 13th, at www.abanet.org/CLE/connection.html. There is a nonrefundable \$9.75 fee for the teleconference. If you are unable to participate in the live teleconference, the program is available, at no cost, for one month, on the ABA CLE web site at www.abanet.org/cle/connection.html. Tapes of the program are available to ABA members for \$50.00 two weeks after the program. To order a tape, call the ABA Service Center at 1-800-285-2221.

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General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Section

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General Information: genpractice@abanet.org

William T. Hogan III

GPSolo Section Chair

66 Long Wharf, Boston, MA 02110-3605

617-367-0330

whogan@hrmlaw.com

Jeffrey Allen

***Technology eReport* Editor**

Graves & Allen

436 14th St.

Oakland, CA 94612-2716

510-839-8777

jallenlawtek@aol.com

Sheryl Cramer

***Technology eReport* Editorial Board**

Cramer Law Firm

2109 NW Cache Rd.

Lawton, OK 73505-5213

580-248-3099

sheryl@cramer.cc

Bruce Dorner

***Technology eReport* Editorial Board**

Dorner Law Office

80 Nashua Rd.

Londonderry, NH 03053-3426

603-434-2230

callmylawyer@attGLOBAL.NET

Douglas Gierhart

***Technology eReport* Editorial Board**

Ross Kodner

***Technology eReport* Editorial Board**

Microlaw Inc.

825 S. 60th St.

Milwaukee, WI 53214-3365

414-476-8433

rkodner@ix.netcom.com

jennifer j. rose

Editor-in-Chief, *GPSolo*

JR de Alarcon 28

Col. Santa Maria de Guido

58090 Morelia

MEXICO

52-443-323-5283

jenniferrose@abanet.org

Alexa Giacomini

Section Director

321 N. Clark St.

Chicago, IL 60610

312-988-5636

giacomia@staff.abanet.org

ABA Publishing

321 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60610

Director

Bryan Kay

Editorial Director

Susan Yessne

Design Director

Russell A. Glidden

Editor

Tom Campbell

Art Director

Sonya Taylor

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