
*Reviewed by Austin Martin Williams*

Jonathan D. McDowell wrote *From Law School to Lawyer: Tools, Procedures, and Steps to Grow Your Practice* hoping to provide aspiring attorneys with insights into developing their own law practices and navigating their first civil cases. In presenting his lessons and tips, McDowell focuses primarily on concepts and skills not covered in a typical law school curriculum.

McDowell organizes the book based on the path one would take from passing the bar exam to practicing law. The book begins with several chapters covering the nonlegal side of practicing law, such as the business aspects of starting a law firm, marketing the firm, and building a client base. The book follows these foundational chapters with several chapters on practice and procedure, covering topics such as pleadings, electronic filing, discovery, mediation, and appeals. McDowell then wraps up the book by discussing the personal toll practicing law can take on individuals, including frank discussions on alcoholism and depression. Constant themes throughout the book are the importance of having a desire to succeed, professionalism, and the fundamental skills of research and writing.

While the book is relatively short, McDowell maximizes every square inch of its 214 pages. He uses tables, figures, screenshots, and sample documents to help readers visualize and comprehend his strategies and techniques. He also effectively uses various bolded paragraphs to emphasize or provide examples of points addressed in the surrounding text. While the book is not heavily footnoted, McDowell does provide some references to additional books that elaborate on topics discussed in the text. He also does an excellent job of referring to the specific rules of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure when discussing pretrial matters.

As a legal research instructor, I was delighted to see McDowell discuss the research methods and tools he uses, as well as the importance he places on legal writing. On several occasions he is able to take concepts discussed in research and writing classes and provide readers with concrete examples of how these concepts fit into the practice of law. For instance, McDowell discusses how researching jury instructions and statutory law can assist an attorney with preparing a well-rounded complaint. He also advocates for using “form interrogatory” books from the law library to help with drafting interrogatory and deposition questions. In addition, he encourages attorneys to always look up the rules of procedure and court rules, no matter their level of experience or familiarity with these sources. Furthermore, he encourages attorneys to finish court filings early to allow time to properly review their arguments and fix grammatical errors. While not meant to be a legal research and writing textbook, *From Law School to Lawyer* does illustrate how to employ some of the research and writing skills taught in law school.

Although I am quite fond of this book, I believe it falls just short of being truly first class. *From Law School to Lawyer* is very limited in its target audience. Only recent or soon-to-be graduates who want to both start their own firms and

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work as litigators will get the most out of reading this book. In addition, while McDowell discusses pretrial matters at length, he does not provide his strategies for trial, such as opening statements and cross examinations. Considering the excellent insights the author provides on pretrial matters, it would have been useful to hear his trial methods. Moreover, I would have liked for the book to have included information on handling the day-to-day operations of running a law firm, such as managing overhead costs, time keeping, computer software, staff, and the other nuts-and-bolts items not included in most law school curriculums.

Despite the book’s limited audience and narrow scope, I recommend that academic law libraries add this book to their collections. The topics the author covers are well worth the price. While most beneficial for third-year students and recent graduates, I could also see clinical, trial practice, and advanced legal research and writing courses incorporating the chapters on pretrial matters into their course readings.


Reviewed by Edward T. Hart*

On October 6, 2015, the European Court of Justice handed down its decision in the case of Schrems v. Data Protection Commissioner. The court ruled that member states of the European Union could regulate the transfer of data about their citizens collected by Internet firms across national borders. The case was brought by Max Schrems, an Austrian graduate law student, who sought to have Facebook held accountable for the data that it not only retained about him but also moved from servers located in Austria to servers in the United States.

After growing concern about the relatively slack data protection offered under U.S. law, Schrems asked Facebook for a record of the data the company held about him. Schrems was sent a disc with 1200 pages of records about every transaction he carried out on his Facebook account since its establishment in 2008, including data he had deleted. He had deliberately deleted messages exchanged on Facebook with a friend about her illness, and those messages were no longer visible in his account. But they still existed in Facebook’s servers in the United States. Facebook argued that it was protecting the freedom of speech by requiring all parties to any exchange on the site to delete those exchanges before the data would be scrubbed. No data could be deleted by just one party. This case highlights a primary difference in the approaches America and Europe take in the ongoing conflict between freedom of speech and the right of privacy. That topic is at the center of Jon Mills’s book Privacy in the New Media Age.

Mills focuses his book on the inherent conflict between the rights of speech and privacy, and how this conflict is resolved depends much on the media in question and the jurisdiction. “[H]ow do these traditional issues apply with the advent

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