Evernote as a Law Practice Tool
By Heidi Alexander
American Bar Association
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It seems too simplistic to just describe Evernote as a practice management tool; when you use it routinely, it’s just so much more. Once you get in the habit of referring to it and digging into all that it can do, it seems like your productivity soars. And for me, it helps keep everything organized.

How to describe it?

Evernote has been described by Phil Libin (co-founder and former CEO of Evernote) this way:

It’s your brain offloaded to a server. It’s Google for the Web of your life. It’s a spotlight on the dark matter of your universe. It’s a tool for converting your smartphone from a time killer to a time saver.

The author, Heidi Alexander, agrees with Libin’s description and succinctly describes Evernote as “a memory aid for just about everything we do.” She goes on to write:

Say goodbye to hours spent searching for those meeting notes you saved somewhere on your computer or mobile device, or that to-do list you think you put in your briefcase, and say hello to Evernote, the single program that lets you access important data with the click of a button and save important information wherever and whenever you need it.

Alexander goes on to detail that Evernote provides a way for you to readily offload, organize and access information that you don’t need right away but will certainly want to refer back to at a later time. In essence, you get it out of your way and put it where you can find it again in seconds when you need it. Once you understand the concept and how to use the software, Alexander shows you specifically how lawyers can use it.

And the great thing about Evernote is that you just need to go to www.evernote.com to sign up for a free account. This is all you need to decide if Evernote is something right for you. If
you find the program valuable, there are various service levels – Plus, Premium, and Evernote Business. The main reason to upgrade is often one of storage, as there is monthly a 60 MB limit on storage for a Basic (free) account. The Plus account is just $34.99 per year, and it gets you 1GB per month. There are other differences in addition to just storage capacity, and they are all laid out in a helpful Appendix and a referenced Evernote Help & Learning article.

After going over the core features and both explaining and showing how to effectively use Evernote, the book shows by description, power user tips, and screen shots how to use Evernote in specialized law practice uses – firm administration, case management, legal research, marketing and productivity and time management.

Evernote can be accessed through any web browser, and it can be downloaded to Android, Apple, Blackberry and Windows desktops and mobile devices. Evernote’s user interface is built to complement the respective operating systems, and Anderson does a good job of showing competing instructions with screenshots from both Windows PC and Mac desktops. There is a separate chapter dealing specifically with smartphones, tablets and even wearables.

There is also an entire chapter on Evernote security. Since this is a cloud based service, ethical and statutory obligations come to mind, and the author doesn’t shy away from these questions. With all the data breaches that routinely occur, including those at respected law firms, this is a must read chapter.

Finally, if that isn’t enough, there is a final chapter filled with real-life examples by nine lawyers on how they use Evernote in their law practices. These examples are helpful to see the wide variety of ways that Evernote enhances the law practices of seasoned legal professionals.

So if you’re looking for a way to be more productive by gaining instant access to all that information you come across and store every day, Evernote is for you and Evernote as a Law Practice Tool with help you learn how to best use this software for your law practice.

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