

Issue 14, April 26, 2016

LSC, Pro Bono Net and Microsoft Partnering on Access to Justice Portal



Like us on
Facebook



Follow DBS
on Twitter

It's no secret that it takes partnerships, both within the legal profession and in other fields, such as technology, to help close the gaps in access to justice. Just last week, a major new partnership was announced – one that involves Microsoft, Legal Services Corp. and Pro Bono Net developing a prototype access to justice portal aimed at helping people more easily navigate the court system and legal aid resources, learn more about their legal rights, and prepare and file court documents. The portal will be accessible from any device, standards-compliant, and connected to legal aid organizations. In [a post at Pro Bono Net's blog](#), a deputy general counsel at Microsoft shares more details about the portal and why it makes sense for his company to join forces with Pro Bono Net and the LSC.

Should Law Firms Be Required to Pay Taxes on 'Phantom' Income? ABA Says No

Tax reform legislation currently being considered by Congress would require law firms and other personal services businesses over a certain level to pay taxes on "phantom" income that may never materialize, according to ABA President Paulette Brown. Currently, [the ABA Journal](#) explains, law firms are allowed to use the cash method of accounting, in which income isn't recognized until payment is received; the current proposal would require switching to the accrual method, which would mean law firms and others would have to calculate and pay taxes on income from work still in progress, other unbilled work, or work for which payment has been requested but not yet received. It may be obvious why many law firms think this is a bad idea – but could it have negative ramifications for clients, too?

Snapshot of a Growing Industry: Legal Startups Nearly Triple in Span of Two Years

If it seems like you hear about a new legal startup almost every week – including in this very publication – you might not be imagining things. In looking back at a post from a couple of years ago and then determining where things stand now, according to a website that tracks startups in a variety of industries, Robert Ambrogi discovered that the number of legal startups has nearly tripled in the past two years. What is driving this apparently large and rapid change in the legal marketplace? And does quantity necessarily mean quality? Ambrogi explores these and other questions at his [LawSites blog](#).

New Feature at State Bar of Michigan Allows Easy Online Scheduling for Lawyers, Clients

Sure, many bar associations have ditched paper and gone online-only...but other than that, when it comes to member directories, is there anything new under the sun? Well, yes – at the State Bar of Michigan, which recently added an appointment scheduling tool that allows clients and potential clients, in just a few clicks, to check a lawyer's availability and request an in-person or phone appointment. The appointment scheduler, via Zeekbeek, is available for free to those members who opt in to use it. A [news item on the SBM's website](#) notes that it's not the only state bar to offer this new feature. What one other bar has also added this scheduler, and which ones are on deck next?

[Learn more about the ABA Division for Bar Services](#)
[Read the latest issue of Bar Leader Magazine](#)

Your e-mail address will only be used within the ABA. We do not sell or rent e-mail addresses.

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#)

American Bar Association | 321 N Clark, Chicago, IL 60654-7598 | 800-285-2221 | 312-988-5356

