

Issue Highlights

[Click here for an overview of this issue's contents.](#)

Features

Working in Acrobat in a Law Practice

Perform outstanding legal feats, Acrobatically. [More](#)

Virus Protection is Not Enough

Spyware, adware—beware. [More](#)

Columns

MacNotes

Microsoft Office 2004 features Entourage and a new Project Center. [More](#)

TechNotes

Internet Telephony—The Future Is Here

VoIP goes mainstream, but is it for you? [More](#)

ProductNotes

From WordPerfect Office 12 to the latest from IOGEAR. [More](#)

SectionNotes

Save the dates for the next four GPSSF Section meetings. [More](#)

Contacts/Legal Stuff

Who is responsible for all this? [More](#)

Printable Version

Click [here](#) to open a PDF version of this issue, suitable for printing.



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Issue Highlights

Welcome to the August 2004 issue of *GPSolo Technology eReport*.

Are you using Adobe® Acrobat® to its fullest extent? See what Ann Steele has to say about how to use Acrobat® in your practice.

Worried about spyware? If not, you should be! See Dan Coolidge's "Virus Protection Is Not Enough" for insight into your risks and exposures and how to avoid them.

Tony Vittal tells you about the evolving use of voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) in **TechNotes**. And Jeffrey Allen talks about Microsoft's new Office 2004 for Mac and discusses the use of its Project Center as a litigation management tool in **MacNotes**.

Check out **ProductNews** for these new hot products: WordPerfect Office 12, IOGEAR Video Switch, IOGEAR 4-Port Wireless Router/Print Server, and IOGEAR USB Wireless Adapter.

 [back to home](#)



Working with Acrobat® in a Law Practice

By Anne Steele

In contemporary legal practice, most documents aren't produced in paper form until all revisions and comments have been resolved. This means that we have to store, secure, transmit, revise, and mark up documents in an electronic format before we send them to the printer to produce paper, which then can be signed with a pen and filed in the appropriate location. Many practitioners still produce paper at every step, probably due to inertia if nothing else, even though they realize that there is a real inefficiency in such practice. To emphasize that feeling, even that final paper step soon may be going away for many practitioners, with the development of electronic signatures, electronic notarizations, and electronic filing.

In this new world of electronic documents, lawyers have many concerns. We worry about attorney-client confidentiality, accuracy, filing deadlines and statutes of limitations, locating a specific document when it is needed, file retention, and the effective implementation of the new media (sound, video, Internet, etc.). These are real concerns, with real implications for our practices.

Into this developing environment comes a program that most people are already using, at least passively: Adobe Acrobat. An Acrobat Reader is included in virtually all operating systems. The latest version is freely downloadable from numerous websites. Many people use it without even knowing what program is being utilized. More and more websites are using .pdf documents for download. For example, cases, briefs, and calendar information from the U.S. Supreme Court website come out in .pdf format.

Acrobat is the default image format in Mac OS X. The former competitors to Acrobat have all but disappeared. The basic format is becoming, and may even now be, ubiquitous. However,

the Acrobat program is so much more than a passive “reader” that its use on a much more extensive scale should be seriously investigated by all lawyers.

Now available in version 6.02, Acrobat® is sold in both Standard and Professional versions. Both versions allow you to do the following (italicized items especially important for lawyers):

1. *One-button Adobe PDF file creation from Microsoft® Office applications*
2. *128-bit encryption and password protection for increased document security*
3. *Review management and commenting tools*
4. *Ability to combine document types from various applications into one Adobe PDF file*

The Professional version allows the following additional functions:

1. One-button Adobe PDF file creation from AutoCAD®, Microsoft Visio, and Microsoft Project (Windows® only)
2. *Electronic forms creation*
3. Support for document layers in technical drawings
4. Enhanced tools for printing, viewing, and navigating of large-format documents
5. Built-in preflighting tools for print production

In addition, you can output documents from a scanner directly into Acrobat format, to appear exactly (or as close to exact as your scanner will allow) as the original, without changing the document’s appearance.

Because our practices can vary in how we use documents, I’ll give some examples of how Acrobat can be used. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but only uses that I have personally explored and utilized.

In one example, a lawyer drafts a document in Microsoft Word. He then wants to send it to another lawyer or a client for review and comment. Instead of sending the Word document, he creates and transmits an Acrobat version. The recipient cannot change the basic document, but he can insert comments, which can consist of notes, text selections, crossed out text, even voice comments, and then he can return it to the sender. In fact, this Acrobat document could go to several people, with each person’s comments individually identified. When everyone is finished, the original document remains with everyone’s comments now included. The lawyer can then use these comments to create the final version. At this stage it could be printed out. However, today this document could be sent out for electronic signatures, and Acrobat versions of the final signed document could then be stored on the appropriate computers.

In litigation, an attorney receiving a large number of documents as a result of discovery offers

a good example. Formerly, they would be stamped or otherwise coded for purposes of retrieval. After that, someone in the office would have to create some sort of index to find specific documents. With Acrobat, the documents would all be scanned into Acrobat files. They would then be processed to create ASCII. If there is time or the personnel, Acrobat allows manual “bookmarking” of text or pages and linking of appropriate text, picture, audio, or video for quicker retrieval. In trial preparation, the lawyer could “comment” in any way that might be helpful. Acrobat can even create a comment report, which could be used as a guide to locating specific documents for specific issues.

At deposition or trial, the lawyer can search all documents for a specific word or phrase. Unfortunately, Acrobat doesn’t allow Boolean searches as yet. The search function in Acrobat allows the location of Acrobat documents within personally defined limits. The search could be in just one file, or it could be anywhere on any hard drive connected to the computer, though this will take longer. The search is limited to Acrobat files, but it will find ASCII within those documents if they have been processed to create the ASCII.

Another use for Acrobat is as a substitute for Microsoft PowerPoint. It isn’t as complicated, and doesn’t have all of the features, but one can combine a variety of documents, order them, imbed audio or video files if needed, all in a very short time.

Another use I have found for Acrobat is to preserve “perfect” documents in my file. When I prepare a document, which will be printed exactly as created in the word processing program and won’t have any writing on it, I will save the page or pages in Acrobat format. This eliminates any “corruption” caused by paper, scanner, or copier, in short, in “perfect” condition, in case it needs to be printed out again in the future. This also eliminates the need to scan and create ASCII files from my work product.

For those who get interested in Acrobat, the current question is should it be Standard or Professional. For most lawyers, the deciding issue is whether they will need to create forms. You really don’t need either one to fill in already created forms, which are becoming more plentiful. However, if you have a form you create, or one, which you use, but no one else has developed, you will need to use Professional. The current version forms tools make forms creation quite efficient, and even allow some basic mathematical functions to be incorporated. Also, I have found errors in some already created Acrobat forms. With Acrobat Professional I am able to use the forms tool to recreate the forms so that they work properly.

Another interesting and useful feature in the current version is the ease with which Acrobat documents can be downloaded onto a Palm device. I personally use this to keep up on recent appellate cases. They come in through a web page. I print the web page to Acrobat. Then I push the “Send to Palm” button on the Acrobat toolbar. The next time I sync the Palm, the case is downloaded to the Palm so that I can read them whenever I have time.

I have been using Acrobat for about 10 years, and have seen it develop from one of several imaging options now to become the most used program in my computer. There is almost

nothing that doesn't call out for the use of Acrobat. It is just so much easier to transmit a document in Acrobat, than in any other format. In addition, I now keep all archival documents in Acrobat format, secure in the knowledge that they will be accessible for many years into the future.

Anne Steele is a practicing lawyer in the San Francisco Bay Area concentrating in the areas of estate planning, probate, and trust law.

 [back to top](#)  [back to home](#)



Virus Protection Is Not Enough

By Dan Coolidge

I fiddle with computers as much for fun as for profit. Consequently, I am a go-to guy when one of my friends' computers begins to act strangely. Lately, that has been an increasingly frequent event because of adware, spyware, and viruses.

Adware forces ads upon you, and uses up computer resources. Spyware surreptitiously sends information about you and your computer to some third party. It can be relatively benign, and just send out information about your buying habits, or it can search for credit card information (even that which you think is secure).

What? You say you use an antivirus product? Good for you. When was the last time you updated it, actually used it to scan your entire computer? I run Norton Antivirus 2004, update it regularly, and always am too busy to let it run a complete scan except when I first installed it. I just ran it last night on 80 gigabytes of files—and found three with lurking viruses. Hmm . . .

My next-door neighbor can whip a computer to do his bidding like no one else. A graphic artist, he has produced work for Pixar and Disney on various of his computers—and he barely knows where the On button is. He has little or no love or admiration for the complex internal

workings of the computer. He only wants it to do the work he wants to accomplish. He uses anti-virus software, and regularly runs an overnight scan. So why was his computer acting up?

The first thing I noticed was that every time I tried to open Internet Explorer, I was directed to a site called “Microsoft.Update” that asked if I wanted to install some piece of software. If I said “no” I was rudely asked again, and again, and again. If I said yes, I got a bunch of porn. Looking more closely at the URL (the address of the website) I noticed it was “www.microsoft.update.com.ch.” Interesting: the little .ch at the end meant I had traveled unwillingly to China.

His desktop wallpaper had been altered to some car advertisement. I ran a check for running process and instead of the normal list of some 45 processes I saw over 130 running, most of which were not familiar. Something was wrong. I also noticed a hefty amount of Internet traffic going across the DSL modem, even when I was not requesting anything. What gives?

Finally able to get into Internet Explorer, I was plagued by one popup ad after another. Some, as fast as I closed them, spawned one or more new popups. This was computer hell.

I have a few utilities I use to keep this nonsense at bay. I used them on my neighbor’s machine and discovered over 130 pieces of spyware, adware, Trojans, and viruses—and this on a machine whose owner was careful. I later in the week had a similar experience with my wife, who had over 180 of the little beasties (she allows our daughter to use her computer, thus explaining the vast quantity.)

I offer an unwitting public a few suggested programs to be obtained and run in the background, and to be kept up to date, so as to keep this explosion of computer trespass at bay.



Spybot —Search and Destroy

Freeware available at www.spybot.info (donations gladly accepted: please send them).

Weekly updates, sometimes more frequent.

Download it, install it, and let it find what’s on your computer. But be careful—you may find that your favorite “freeware” product won’t run after you eliminate the spyware—that’s where the “free” part comes in. Myself, I won’t run software that requires adware or spyware.

Spybot will scan your computer for known spyware, and identify each instance it has found, offering you the option of removing it. Spybot offers the opportunity to back up prior to removing spyware it has found. I have always taken the rough and ready approach of eliminating without the backup. If something ceases to work after removing spyware, then that

“something” is suspect.

Ad-Aware

Freeware available at www.lavasoftusa.com/software/adaware/

Pro version available for \$39.95. Frequent free updates.

Run Ad-Watch in background always; run Ad-Aware periodically. Lavasoft says it best: “Ad-Aware™ Professional Edition is designed to provide continuous protection from known Datamining, aggressive advertising, Parasites, Scumware, Keyloggers, selected traditional Trojans, Dialers, Malware, Browser hijackers, and tracking components...” The free version will scan and clean adware. The pro version includes a monitoring program that prevents adware from being installed. I suggest the pro version, if for no other reason than keeping this program alive and available.



Popup Ad Filter

Available for \$25 at www.meaya.com. No updates required, free updates as released.

This is the successor to my favorite freeware, Popup killer. Load it and popups are blocked. Period. But if you are at a site with popups you want, you merely hold down the control key to temporarily disable Popup Ad Filter. You can also give it a list of sites at which popups should be enabled (such as your online banking site, etc.).

Dan Coolidge is an intellectual property and patent attorney with Coolidge & Graves in Keene, New Hampshire. He also makes exotic wood buttons.

● [back to top](#) ● [back to home](#)

MacNotes

By Jeffrey Allen

The biggest news in the Mac world is the availability of the new version of Microsoft Office. Microsoft Office 2004 was just released and offers substantial improvements over earlier versions. In its earlier iteration as Office X, Office was the pre-eminent productivity suite on the Mac platform. The new version substantially improves on its predecessor. Significantly, some of the new features will greatly facilitate a lawyer's work. Accordingly, it seemed most appropriate to devote the MacNotes column in this issue to what is, essentially, a product review of Office 2004 with a focus on the improvements that will most significantly help lawyers.

The Standard version of the Suite includes Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Entourage (the Mac's answer to Outlook for those of you just coming over from the Windows' side). A Professional version, due out by the time you should receive this review, will add Virtual PC 7.0 to that mix. Pricing on the Standard Suite is \$399 for an initial acquisition or \$239 for an upgrade from an earlier version. Don't even think of buying the programs separately as (a) Entourage cannot be purchased separately and (b) the economics don't make sense: PowerPoint and Word sell for \$229 as a first purchase, while Excel lists for \$299. Each of the three sells for \$109 as an upgrade. Accordingly, if you plan to get any two of the programs, you will pay less than full price for the second and the rest come along at no additional charge if you get the full suite.

I have listed some of the key new/enhanced features of the component programs of the Standard version below (I have omitted a discussion of Virtual PC 7 as I have only seen a beta version of the program and features may change by the release date; additionally, I am under a confidentiality restriction as to features. All I can/will say at the present is that I have been testing Version 7 with Windows XP Professional; it installs easily and smoothly and appears to work better and faster than its predecessors.):

The most significant new feature is the introduction of the Project Center. Because it technically comes as a part of Entourage, I will discuss it in that section of this column. Note,

however, that you can access the Project Manager directly from every program in the Office Suite. Generally, this feature offers significant functionality to lawyers as it allows you to keep all critical information respecting a project connected for easy and immediate access.

Word

Notebook. The biggest change to the Word program is the addition of the Notebook view. Designed to appear as a spiral notebook with lined paper, this feature gives you a fast and efficient way to collect and rearrange information into a traditional tabbed notebook format. The notebook accepts both text and audio files. You will likely find it quite useful for trial notes, deposition notes, or for organizing research in preparation of a brief or other memorandum. Long ago I adopted the practice of using a Trial Book to organize my materials for trials and arbitration hearings. That book (which historically was a ring binder) contains pleadings, deposition transcripts, trial memoranda, witness lists, examination outlines, motions in limine, paper for my trial notes (and the notes themselves during the trial) and anything else I think may help in the trial, except for evidence, which I traditionally kept in a separate binder. More recently, I have taken to moving portions of that information to the computer. Deposition transcripts, trial notes, PowerPoint presentations, and the like have existed on my computer for the last few years. I am in the process of using Word's Notebook to create an entire trial book, tying everything together again in a single document.

Tracking Changes. Microsoft has substantially modified the tracking changes features in the new version. Changes include the ability to track changes by each of several reviewers and to easily accept or reject each of the changes in the original document. This enhancement will facilitate the review and collaboration process in document preparation.

Formatting Palette. Improved, more control, and easier to use. Additionally, the palette turns transparent when it is open and not currently being used, allowing you to see files/folders underneath the window on the desktop. The Add Objects panel allows easy incorporation of a variety of graphics, clip art, pictures and even movie clips. It makes all document creation work easier.



Formatting Options. Cutting and pasting in a Word document brings up a small book icon

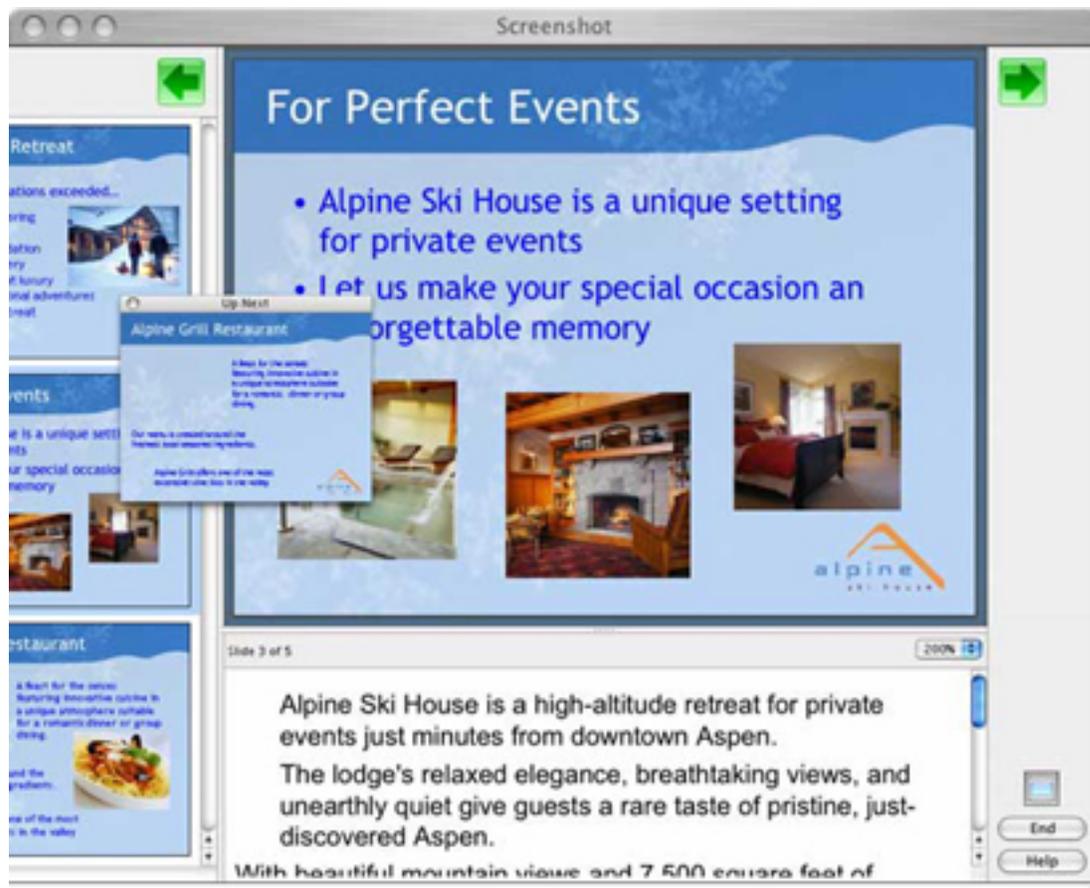
that allows you to choose formatting options for the pasted addition. You can retain the format of the format of the source, adopt the formation of the destination or insert text only and then format.

Navigation Pane. The new Navigation Pane opens up thumbnails of pages in the document that appear on the left side of the page and facilitate moving around the document.

Toolbox. Clicking the toolbox icon opens a panel that gives you the ability to check compatibility of the current file with other versions of the software, create and use a scrapbook, access Encarta for general research, or access the new Project Center, which is a feature of Entourage.

PowerPoint

Presenter Tools. The introduction of Presenter Tools marks the biggest advancement to this powerful presentation program. If you use PowerPoint and do any significant amount of presentations, this feature alone justifies the cost of the upgrade. Now your audience sees only the main slide while your screen shows you the main slide, a timer showing elapsed time and your notes below the main slide. On the left of your screen a moveable window shows all slides in the presentation. Also, when you move the cursor over the main slide on your screen, it appears to the audience as well so that you can get by without a separate pointer.



Enhanced Animations. Adding animation is easier with this version. The built-in options for animation have been expanded. Emphasis effects have been added to allow you to change display appearance of text and graphics. The Custom Animations dialog box also has been improved, making the process easier as well. These enhancements will help add some additional power to make your point. The additions include 3-D effects in transitions, making PowerPoint more competitive with some of Keynote's features.

Toolbox. (See Microsoft Word for discussion, but note the absence of the Encarta option).

Formatting Palette. (See Microsoft Word for discussion).

Excel

Charts. The most significant changes to Excel occur in connection with the creation of charts. New templates offer very powerful and impressive options, including 3-D to make your charts stand out when you incorporate them into the PowerPoint you plan to use in your closing argument.

Toolbox. (See Microsoft Word for discussion).

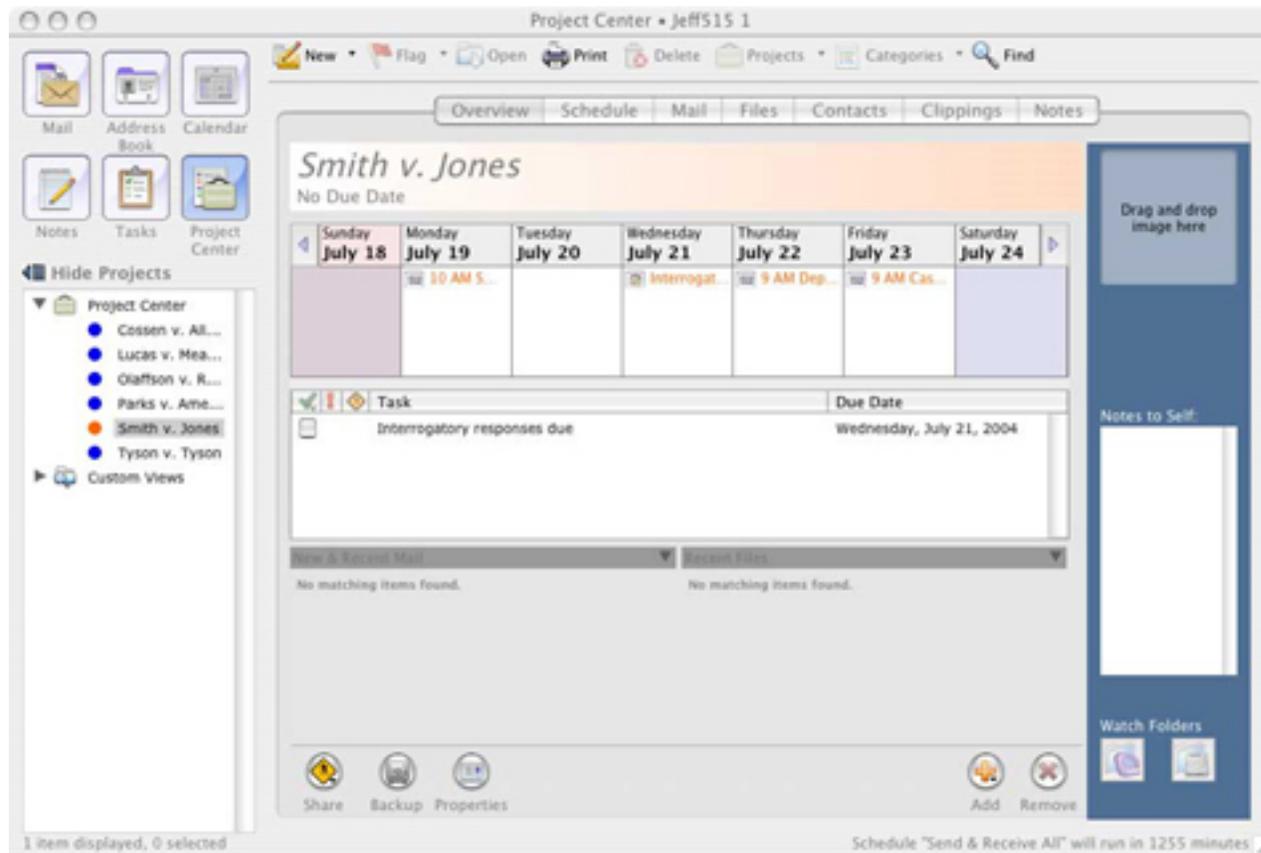
Formatting Palette. (See Microsoft Word for discussion).

Entourage

Project Center. While technically a part of Entourage, the new Project Center ties to all programs in the Office suite; you can directly access the project center from any program in the Suite. In my opinion the Project Center represents the biggest single improvement to the Office Suite from the lawyer's perspective. It provides a means of doing reasonable management of litigation and other matters on the Mac. The Project Center offers a means of consolidating information about a single project so that you can find it all in one place and get a good overview and perspective. You can define a "Project" as a litigation matter, a transaction, an estate, a client (or for that matter just about any other type of activity that you find convenient in your personal or professional life.

You can tie contacts, calendar information, e-mail, Word documents, PDF files, and other documents to the Project, and the computer will display the information relating to the project separately from other calendar information. It will also include events and to-do notes in the master calendar. Note that for the calendaring to work properly you must either enter the event or to-do from the project center menu initially or enter it to the master calendar and then import it to the project center. Information added to the master calendar will not automatically appear in the project center. Another word of caution, if you settle a case, don't simply delete the project file thinking it will remove all calendar information from your master calendar—it won't. You must go to the project and delete each of the calendared items (events and to-do items) separately to get them off of the master calendar. Then you can delete the project.

You can share specific tasks in a project or the entire project with others in your firm by selecting the “sharing” feature and turning it on. Sharing does, however, require that you store the information on a file server, but if you do not have a file server in your network, you can set the program up so that your own computer functions as a server for this purpose. Note, however, that if you use a different computer as the server, Entourage will generate e-mail invitations to those sharing in the project, advising them of how to access it. If you use your own computer, it will not generate the email, but others who can access files on your computer can access the information. (Be sure to store it in a shared folder).



E-mail Filters. Entourage now includes a variable sensitivity spam filter that has proven reasonably effective in identifying and excluding spam.

E-mail Views. You can now modify the manner in which you see the e-mail screen. You have the choice of reading e-mail at the bottom or on the right side of the screen, depending on what works best for you.

E-mail Notification. If you install MSN Messenger, turn Entourage on, and minimize the Entourage window, a pop-up message informs you of the arrival of new email. The notification includes the sender’s email address and a hint as to content.

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 [back to top](#)  [back to home](#)

TechNotes

Internet Telephony— The Future is Here

By J. Anthony Vittal

VoIP goes mainstream, but is it for you?

Last year, I wrote twice about the future of Internet telephony—Voice-over-Internet-Protocol, or VoIP services. For those of you who missed the articles, VoIP technology enables the real-time transmission of voice signals as packetized data over IP networks that employ the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP), Real-Time Transport Protocol (RTP), User Datagram Protocol (UDP), and Internet Protocol (IP) suite. In VoIP systems, analog voice signals are digitized and transmitted as a stream of packets over a digital data network. Because VoIP is a way for carriers to reduce traffic costs on domestic and international long-distance calls, and as carriers convert to IP-based fiber-optic networks, VoIP eventually will replace the PSTN for voice communications.

According to a recent article in CNET News, about 11 percent of all voice traffic is classified as VoIP, although less than 1 percent of that traffic originates on a VoIP phone, demonstrating that legacy equipment from the days of POTS (Plain Old Telephone Service, conducted over the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN)) will be with us for a while. The surest indicators that VoIP technology has gone mainstream, however, are the recent introduction of VoIP consumer telephony services by major providers, the recent efforts by the federal government to impose a pre-emptive regulatory structure on VoIP services and to impose federal excise taxes on the charges for those services, and the softening of pricing for POTS to the point it is no longer profitable.

On July 2, 2004, the IRS issued advance notice of proposed rulemaking (69 Fed.Reg. 40345), seeking public comment on its proposal to extend the 3 percent federal excise tax imposed on telecommunications services by 26 U.S.C. §§ 4251-4252 to “present technology”— i.e., to

VoIP services. (Four years ago, on the 100th anniversary of this excise tax, the House voted 420–2 to repeal it, but the Senate never acted.) In the meantime, last April, Sen. John Sununu (R-NH) and Rep. Chip Pickering (R-MS) each introduced legislation to foreclose state and local regulation and taxation of VoIP services. These bills also mandate law enforcement access to VoIP calls for wiretapping purposes and require the FCC to levy universal service fees on VoIP systems connected to the PSTN. On July 6, 2004, Reps. Rick Boucher (D-VA) and Cliff Stearns (R-FL) introduced HR 4757 to deem VoIP an interstate service completely subject to the jurisdiction of the FCC. Regrettably, HR 4757 also would impose a number of controversial taxes and regulations from the analog world on digital telephony.

The Marketplace

In the meantime, the “big boys” of the communications industry are wading into this market. VoIP services are available via either telephone-line or cable-TV **broadband** Internet connections, which you must provide. If you already have a broadband connection, adding VoIP to that connection is no different from adding another computer to the network you already have that uses that connection.

AT&T *CallVantage*

AT&T, which announced in the spring of this year that it no longer will market POTS to consumers, has announced its *CallVantage* service (www.usa.att.com/callvantage)—“unlimited” local and long-distance VoIP calling within the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands including voicemail with eFeatures permitting you download voicemail messages as .WAV files so you save them on your computer and forward them to anyone by e-mail. (International long-distance from 5–12¢ per minute to Western Europe; Israel and Japan at 6¢ per minute; China from 6–10¢ per minute; Russia from 6–12¢ per minute. Other areas can be higher—e.g., Afghanistan at 71¢ per minute.

Still, AT&T has some of the best direct-dial international toll rates. For discounted country-specific international prepaid calling cards, check www.nobelcom.com for various options.) The service also offers CallerID features; call waiting; domestic call forwarding; call logs; programmable “do not disturb” to route callers directly to voicemail during selected periods of time; personal teleconferencing of up to 10 participants; “locate me” services that will route calls to other numbers if you don’t answer; computerized speed-dialing; a 911 service; and online call management. All of these features are available from any telephone, anywhere, for \$34.99/month. (Note, however, that *CallVantage* does not support CallATT calling cards or AT&T *EasyReach* service, and that *CallVantage* suffers from the other limitations of VoIP service discussed below.) The rate of \$34.99 is down \$5/month from the time the service was introduced in May. Sign up for a one-year contract by August 31 and get the first six months at the introductory rate of \$19.99/month. Service can be cancelled without penalty any time during the first 30 days or after one year.

Note that “unlimited” calling has limits: auto-dialing, continuous or extensive call forwarding, telemarketing, fax broadcasting or fax blasting, or uses that result in excessive usage

(including usage in excess of 5,000 minutes [83.33 hours] per month) inconsistent with normal residential or home office usage patterns, are violations of the contract which may result in cancellation of the service. Excessive usage also may result in additional charges. Simply connect your cordless telephone base station to the Analog Telephone Adapter (ATA) provided at no charge, connect the ATA to your network, and you're in business! (If you have multiple wired land-line extensions in your existing installation, you will need a separate ATA for each of them to connect them to the VoIP system.)

Vonage

Vonage (www.vonage.com), which I discussed in an earlier article and which achieved "Best Buy" status from *PC World* in May 2004, offers similar services on one of three residential plans. For \$29.99/month you get unlimited local and long-distance calls to all 50 states and Canada. For \$24.99, you get unlimited local and regional calls, plus 500 minutes of long-distance calls to all 50 states and Canada. For \$19.99, Vonage offers 500 minutes of local and long-distance calls to all 50 states and Canada, with excess minutes billed at 3.9¢ per minute. Small business plans are \$49.99/month for unlimited local and long-distance calls to all 50 states and Canada; and \$39.99/month for 1,500 minutes of local and long-distance calls to all 50 states and Canada. International toll calls are billed at 5¢–\$5.92/minute, depending on destination. Like AT&T, Vonage offers free voicemail; CallerID; call waiting; domestic call forwarding; personal mini-teleconferencing (3-way calling); a 911 service; online account access; online voicemail access; and your choice of area codes. Vonage uses a Motorola VT-1000 ATA, provided at no charge.

VoicePulse

VoicePulse (www.voicepulse.com), which also achieved "Best Buy" status from *PC World* in May 2004, offers unlimited calls within the United States for \$24.99/month (residential—Special offer; requires a one-year contract) or \$45.99/month (business—no term commitment.). Other plans are available. International toll calls are billed at 3¢–\$5.08/minute, depending on destination.

Cable Services Providers

Cable TV and broadband operator ComCast, which took over AT&T Broadband in 2002, is the nation's largest cable operator. ComCast will be testing VoIP service in three markets this year, and plans to offer VoIP service to half of its cable customer households by the end of 2005, and to all 40 million of them by the end of 2006. Other cable companies, including Cablevision Systems, Cox Communications, and Time Warner Cable, also have begun to offer VoIP service. Pricing should be \$34.95–\$39.95/month for unlimited calls to the United States and Canada.

Drawbacks and Deficiencies

VoIP service as currently developed is not a perfect replacement for POTS. Unlike traditional POTS networks that provide their own power and therefore continue to operate during blackouts, VoIP telephones require an auxiliary power source, such as a UPS (uninterruptible

power supply), to run the ATA, the hub or switch, the modem, and (in some instances) even the telephone during a power outage. Even so, if your broadband service goes down, whether due to the same power outage or other factors, your VoIP telephone(s) won't work until broadband service is restored. You also may need to spend time troubleshooting your LAN, since VoIP systems do not yet have the "plug-and-call" operability of land-line phones.

VoIP service does not yet offer local (411) or long distance (555-1212) directory assistance, x11 calling, TDD service for the deaf, or service billing on 900- or 976- numbers. In addition, some VoIP service providers do not permit faxing, and VoIP service does not yet interoperate with satellite TV decoders or security systems. If you require any of this functionality, you will need to keep at least one POTS land line, even if you otherwise move to VoIP service. Finally, if you do extensive international calling, compare rate schedules before selecting a provider, because each VoIP service has a different rate schedule for international calls.

WiFi Telephony

If you have a wireless (802.11a/b/g WiFi) network and 2.4 GHz or 5.8 GHz cordless telephones in the same environment, you probably have noticed interference (often apparent as an irritating clacking on the line) that degrades both the WiFi signal and the telephone connection between handset and base. That interference can be eliminated by using WiFi cordless telephone handsets. WiFi handsets offered by Cisco and Symbol Technologies already are on the market, but at \$350–\$500/each are rather costly. Vonage, however, has announced it expects to start shipping WiFi handsets by the fourth quarter of this year, which will be offered to Vonage subscribers at no charge.

Peer-to-Peer VoIP

Nimcat Networks (www.nimcatnetworks.com), based in Ottawa, has developed a VoIP technology that works on a peer-to-peer basis with other P2P-enabled instruments. Nimcat has taken the centralized call processing model and distributed the intelligence into the telephone sets, so that the telephone set becomes the call processing engine. Known as a Peer Telephony Exchange or PTX, Nimcat's patented Peer-to-Peer (P2P) call processing solution is possible today due to the availability of VoIP telephone sets with significant processing power and the widespread availability of high speed LANs in the business office providing a ready to use distributed architecture. All features such as call set up, call teardown, conferencing, voicemail, and call forwarding are handled directly by the terminals, using the processing power available in the VoIP terminal. Simply plug the P2P-enabled instruments into your LAN, and they will self-discover each other on your VPN and will establish your organization's internal telephone network, even if the devices are in different geographic locations. You need only one link to the PSTN at one of the locations, which will give your organization a single central telephone number, an automated attendant, and the rest of the regular VoIP features.

Scotty, Beam Me Up!



For those of us, Trekkies or not, who thought the com badges worn by StarFleet personnel were really cool, they are here! They don't work over anything even close to orbital range, but do work quite nicely in a single facility or campus like an office building, a hospital, or a university, with a distributed WiFi network. Vocera Communications (www.vocera.com) of Cupertino, California, has introduced two-ounce wearable com badges, 4.2" long x 1.4" wide, using VoIP/WiFi convergence and voice recognition at the server. (The Vocera Communications Badge has just won the 2004 Industrial Design Excellence Award from the Industrial Designers Society of America and BusinessWeek.) Think of the advantage of instantaneous two-way communication within your organization. Touch the badge, speak the name of

the person you wish to contact, and the server will match the name to a badge, will locate the badge on the network, and will establish a two-way voice link between the badges, which will be managed in much the same way as the cellular network manages calls between moving parties. The system even permits conferences among more than two users.

Convergence

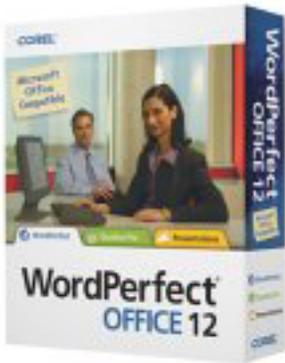
Convergence modems that support both WiFi and cellular and switch seamlessly between them already are on the market. Vendors currently are working on telephones that will support both WiFi VoIP and CDMA/GPRS cellular technologies. When implemented, users will have a single phone that will hand off on-the-fly between cells and wireless access points as users move among them. In the short term, this has the advantage of improving coverage inside structures that disrupt cellular service. Longer term, but still in the lifetime of most of us, we actually may see the Star Trek com badge become a fact of life, replacing our existing telephones with wireless communicators reduced to the size of decorative badges. Then all we will need is soundproofing (or communications implant) technology to insulate each of us from the ubiquitous conversations of others. I look forward to that day

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● [back to top](#) ● [back to home](#)

ProductNotes

Hot Products for Lawyers on the Go



WordPerfect Office 12

The latest incarnation of the word processor that won the hearts and minds of the legal profession has hit the streets. Acknowledging the market inroads made by the other Windows word processor, Corel has made compatibility with other word processors the single most touted feature. And if you want to take a nostalgic trip back in time to when there was a real variety of word processors from which to choose, just look at all the formats WordPerfect supports! Wordstar, anyone?

For those who have made the transition to Word, WordPerfect offers a workplace that looks and feels the same as Word, but with the advantage of offering reveal codes. Anyone who has been lost in a formatting problem in Word and its styles-based structure can appreciate this. Indeed, I even tried fixing a troublesome Word document by opening it in WordPerfect 12, turning on reveal codes, and fixing the formatting problem, then saving it as a Word document. Simple PDF files can be directly saved, but without the advanced features available in the full Adobe Acrobat package.

That being said, importing heavily formatted Word documents was not always successful, despite claims of Corel's marketing folks. Complex autonumbered paragraphs did not

always translate perfectly. However, I never discovered a translation problem that was difficult in the least to fix.

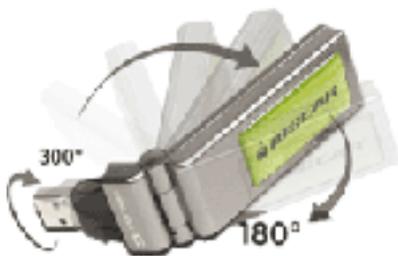
The cost remains substantially less than comparable competitive products: \$149 for the upgrade, \$299 standard full product. Street prices may vary. *Reviewed by Dan Coolidge*

● **Wireless Networking, The Easy Way:
IOGEAR Wireless-G Broadband Gateway**

IOGEAR's 802.11g Wireless Broadband Gateway serves as a wireless access point and router for small and home office uses. The router also serves as a print server to facilitate wireless sharing of a USB-connected printer.



Installation and setup proved simple, employing a Web-based setup wizard; the built-in firewall supports WPA and WEP. The router provides 4 hard wire Ethernet connections as well as wireless access, facilitating sharing of a broadband Internet connection (such as cable or DSL). The router works with computers on the Windows platform (Windows 98 or higher and a wireless card for wireless connectivity) and on both the Mac OS 9.2 or higher and OS X operating systems (requires a G3 or G4 computer with an Airport or Airport Extreme card for wireless connectivity). The router operates on the 802.11g standard, but provides backwards compatibility to 802.11b devices. The router lists for \$130. www.iomega.com.



If your Windows-based computer does not have a wireless card built-in and you have not yet acquired an 802.11g compliant card, IOMEGA has a very competent 802.11g compliant PC card available. On the other hand, if you use your PC slot for something else (or have no card slots available in your desktop computer) and also want to have a wireless connection, you can look at IOGEAR's Wireless-G USB Adapter. The cleverly designed Wireless USB Adapter bends to serve as an antenna. It conforms to the 802.11g standard and uses a USB 2.0

connection. The USB adapter lists for \$ 89.95. *Reviewed by Jeffrey Allen*



VGA Video Switch
8 Port VGA Video Switch for use with analog displays



8 Port Video Switch

IOGEAR recently introduced a \$149 list price 8-port video switch (GVS881). The video switch allows up to eight different computers to share a single VGA display. The switch has the shape and the approximate size and weight of a large portable CD player. It comes with an IR remote control, allowing instant electronic switching among users. The switch supports VGA, SVGA, XGA, and multisync monitors.

Designed for use in conference settings, the switch also works for multiple-speaker presentations as well as any other situation in which you need to use more than one computer to make your presentation. IOGEAR's video switch also acts as a signal booster. The switch requires no drivers or other software installation; it is literally "plug and play" for both the Windows and Macintosh OS platforms. You should not experience any problem in mixing computers on different platforms (Mac OS X, Mac OS 9.x, Windows XP, Windows 2000, etc.) www.iogear.com. The Switch comes with a three-year guarantee. This is a very handy piece of equipment to have around at a very reasonable price. *Reviewed by Jeffrey Allen*

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.

[● back to top](#) [● back to home](#)

SectionNotes

IN THIS ISSUE'S SECTION NEWS

- Upcoming Meetings
 - Live News Feed from Lawyers Weekly USA
 - NEW BOOK: *A Lawyer's Guide to Estate Planning*
-

Upcoming Section Meetings

The General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Section will be traveling to some exciting places this year for our upcoming meetings. Hope you will be able to join us!

Fall 2004:

October 13–17, 2004
Beverly Hills, CA

Winter 2005:

February 9–15, 2005
ABA Midyear Meeting
Salt Lake City, Utah
Grand American

Spring 2005:

May 18–25, 2005
(Joint Mtg. with the ABA Young Lawyers Division)
Miami, Florida
Fontainebleau Hilton

Summer 2005:

August 4–10, 2005
ABA Annual Meeting

Chicago, IL
Sheraton Chicago

For more information on upcoming meetings and events, please visit
<http://www.abanet.org/genpractice/events/index.html>.

Section Leadership

Chair: Lee Kolczun, Sheffield Village, Ohio

Chair-Elect: Dwight Smith, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Vice Chair: John Macy, Waukesha, Wisconsin

Secretary: Keith McLennan, Collegeville, Pennsylvania

LAWYERS WEEKLY USA

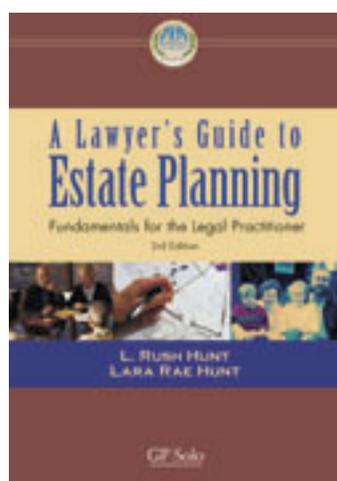
THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER FOR SMALL FIRMS

Live News Feed for Section Members

The General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Section is pleased to announce the addition of a live news feed on the Section's website, courtesy of the Lawyers Weekly USA!

To view the live news feed, please visit

<http://www.abanet.org/genpractice/news/index.html>.



Hot New Publication!

A Lawyer's Guide to Estate Planning: Fundamentals for the Legal Practitioner, Third Edition

Price: \$99.95

GP|Solo members: \$89.95

This new book is intended to provide a helpful introduction to the basics of estate planning. It is written with an eye toward the needs of general practitioners and those who are seeking to develop a specialty in the estate-planning field. For this reason, the text is written in a user-friendly manner that provides basic text treatment of the subject along with cautions, examples, and planning pointers clearly denoted throughout the book

To purchase the book, please visit

<http://www.abanet.org/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?storeId=10251&productId=18734&categoryId=-3666>

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.

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● [back to top](#) ● [back to home](#)

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 [back to top](#)  [back to home](#)