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TECHNOLOGY e REPORT

The Online Supplement to GPSolo Technology & Practice Guide

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Notice

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TECHNOLOGY e REPORT

Issue Highlights

Welcome to the December 2005 issue of the *GPSolo Technology eReport.*

Are you still trying to figure out how to properly back up your computer? Anna Yen has some answers for you. See her "Goals for a Modern Backup System" for guidance.

Tony Vittal tells you about the evolution of Wi-Max in **TechNotes.**

Jeffrey Allen talks about Apple's answer to the age old question of law students: "What the &#!% is a 'widget'?" in **MacNotes**.

Find all about Eudora in jennifer rose's column **SurvivingEmail**.

Check out **ProductNotes** for reports on the Meeting Pad, Meeting Board, Nikon Coolpix S4 Camera, and three hot HP DLP projectors.

Finally, don't miss **DivisionNotes** for information about the Division's upcoming meetings and activities.

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TECHNOLOGY*e*REPORT

Backing Up in Cyberspace

By Anna Yen

Regulatory requirements, increased awareness about the value of off-site data backup, and this century's man-made and natural disasters have highlighted the need for companies to store copies of their data in cyberspace. Law practices and other small and medium-sized businesses have embraced online backup technologies because they solve the numerous challenges presented by traditional backup media.

Protecting a law practice's most critical asset—its data—can be a painstaking process for small firms and solos. The backup process is often cumbersome and highly dependent on manual intervention. Backup tapes need to be replaced, manually transported, and stored off-site. Unfortunately, the directives for off-site storage often are not followed, and the tapes are left on-site—which eliminates any possibility of their recovery from local disasters. Many solos or small law firms also tend to perform backup processes only periodically, if at all, leaving large amounts of data at risk for loss and damage. For remote offices of larger firms, data backup responsibilities are often left to non-IT professionals whose priorities are not the integrity and security of the firm's data but, rather, keeping up with their own job responsibilities.

The ability to back up online and store data off-site was introduced around 2000, and the benefits that some services could provide became particularly clear for small and solo practices: ease of use, rapid deployment, consistent backup, 24×7 monitoring, and user-initiated online data restoration. By outsourcing to an online backup vendor, small and solo practices can save time and money—there's no need to hire extra IT staff or purchase disparate point-products such as software, servers, tape cartridges, and tape drives, which typically are pieced together to make up a backup system.

Online backup by itself, however, is not a good definition for a data backup plan. When choosing an off-site backup vendor, be sure the company offers an on-site backup option as well. Recovering data from an off-site location over an Internet connection can take a long time, depending on the amount of data needing restoration. On-site backups allow you to recover data instantly and to view previous versions of a file. On-site backup also gives additional insurance in the event that the remote storage location itself suffers some natural or man-made disaster. And because online backups are commonly scheduled after business hours (to prevent a marked slowdown of other online activities), you will probably want on-site backup because it allows you to backup throughout the day.

Below are some additional factors to keep in mind when choosing a backup vendor.

Security

The biggest problem with online backup is security. Moving confidential data beyond a company's firewall is nerve-racking for any business—particularly a law practice. A reliable backup provider should address security and confidentiality concerns with advanced encryption technologies, ideally AES 256-bit encryption, and should offer dual-level data protection at both the law firm site and the off-site storage location, plus firewalls and digital certificates.

User-Level Backup

Many providers back up only at the server level, but a firm's most critical data files are often stored on laptops and desktop PCs, so protecting those machines is essential.

Backup Methodology

Most vendors offer a variety of schedules for making automatic backups; these may be based on individual schedule, preset time increments (hourly, weekly, etc.), or even real-time "continuous data protection," or CDP, where any new or changed entry is instantly backed up. CDP offers the greatest protection but is not recommended for online purposes because it negatively affects computer and network speeds. Look for a vendor that compresses data and, ideally, stores only the new or changed data; that way, you'll be able to use your contracted storage space more efficiently and keep backup costs low.

Connection Speed

Confirm that the backup vendor you're considering can support your practice's Internet connection speed. Some require a broadband connection such as DSL or cable, whereas others can support dial-up. Dial-up users planning to implement an online backup plan should *seriously* consider switching to broadband, however.

Network Throttling

One of the biggest complaints about online backup is that network service slows to a snail's pace while data is being sent off-site. A vendor that utilizes network throttling technology can prevent this. Throttling processes recognize usage and Internet traffic patterns and schedules backup sessions so they do not disrupt the company's productivity. If the backup vendor does not have this capability, the next best option is a service that backs up data on a predetermined schedule, preferably after working hours. Of course, scheduled backup sessions leave large amounts of unprotected data at risk; this is where on-site data backup can help bridge the gaps between scheduled sessions.

Data Recovery

Many online backup providers tout "instant" data recovery, but they're not always telling the truth. For example, if the backup service does not include browsing capabilities so you can easily find the information you want to recover, locating specific data could take a long time. Be wary of providers that set limits on the number of data restores a business can initiate, and ask for a demonstration of a file recovery to ensure you and your employees are comfortable with the process. Some online backup vendors can recover data only to the original server that was being backed up. If the original server is flooded, destroyed by fire, or wiped out by a virus, so is your data.

Archiving

Be certain that the provider's data storage/archiving capabilities are in line with your business needs or any state or insurance requirements, rules, or regulations that relate to data management or storage. Some providers allow data storage for a maximum period of only two weeks, while others store data for up to seven years. If you're concerned about keeping data for extended periods of time, certain backup vendors can transfer data to tape or disk off-line.

Storage

Off-site backups should be stored in a secure data center located fairly far from your practice. In the event a local disaster closes or destroys your office or the city or state in which you do business, your data will remain unaffected. This is another reason to look for a vendor that provides both on-site and off-site capabilities. Should a disaster affect the storage facility, your on-site backup is still available.

Customer Support

Most online backup packages include round-the-clock service support. After all, these service

providers have information that is critical to your business, and you should be able to access it at any time, any day of the year.

Cost and Pricing

Pricing plans among online backup providers vary greatly. Vendors may charge based on the largest data "footprint" stored within a billing cycle, the average amount of data protected daily per month, or on a per-server basis or per gigabyte of data stored each month. Many users have no idea how much they spend on data protection because the fee includes software, hardware, employees, tapes or disks, communication costs, and sometimes off-site storage space. This makes it difficult to compare costs of outsourcing backups through different vendors. Off-site data vendor costs add up very quickly, so the projected growth rate of your company's data requirements will be an important factor in figuring long-term costs.

Financial Viability

Find out how long the vendor has been in business, the size of its customer base, long-term asset guarantees, and the existence of exit strategies to protect you if the company folds during your contract term. Be sure to check the vendor's references from businesses with backup and restoration requirements similar to your own.

Guarantee

Your business depends on your data, so being comfortable with the terms and types of guarantees the vendor offers is crucial. Review what provisions exist to cover you if backup fails for a certain time period, if the vendor cannot recover your data, or if its own servers crash.

Open File Backup

Most data recovery requests are the result of human error—a user accidentally overwrites a file, for example. Some vendors can initiate recoveries even if files (or databases) are open. Some vendors include open file backup in their basic package, and others charge an additional fee.

Business Applications

The capabilities of backup vendors vary greatly. When evaluating backup options, ask specific questions to confirm that the solution you're considering can back up the business applications your practice uses. Review case scenarios of documents you know were lost in your office. Some providers charge extra to support specialized applications such as TimeSlip.

Worst-Case Scenarios

On August 31, 2005, Hurricane Katrina unleashed a storm so powerful that it wiped out New Orleans and surrounding areas of Louisiana, along with areas of Mississippi and Alabama. Research of similar events in the past (not just similar events but also fire, theft, and system crashes/viruses) indicatesthat at least 82 percent of the businesses will never reopen—due to loss of critical data, not because of damage to physical structures. Businesses that backed up data in cyberspace are the lucky ones and will most likely recover their data; those that backed up data to tape or disk on-site most likely face a greater challenge. Thankfully, disasters like Hurricane Katrina are rare; keep your focus primarily on a data backup solution that provides you with the convenience, protection, and productivity your business demands on a day-to-day basis. An on-site, end-to-end data protection solution that provides automatic local *and* off-site backup, without user intervention, is ideal.

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TECHNOLOGY*e*REPORT

TechNotes

By J. Anthony Vittal

Universal WiFi: Coming to Your Town?

I have written before about the prospects for universal WiFi—wireless broadband connectivity—but the future is arriving more quickly than anticipated. In mid-November, the City of Mountain View, California, the Silicon Valley home of Google, granted Google a five-year lease to install about 300 wireless radios on the city's streetlight posts as the first step in offering city-wide wireless Internet service. Although it has yet to make a final decision, Google probably will be using WiFi technology. Google will make basic wireless broadband service available at no charge to anyone with the ability to connect to the network who registers for a free Google account, and it will offer enhanced service, with special features such as a higher bandwidth, for a fee. Google will provide all users with real-time local traffic condition information and will encourage users to secure their connections over a virtual private network. As a bonus for the city, all city employees will get a secure connection of their own. Google plans to start the build-out immediately, with construction expected to take about two months. Once the network is operating, it also will include wireless access to the Googlemobile, a mobile library the city is acquiring.

This may not seem like a big deal, but is an example of the kinds of public-private partnerships required for universal WiFi access. It also it provides a test bed for Google to iron out the wrinkles inherent in wide-area wireless networking. Google, which has admitted

its desire to develop its own Internet network, is challenging the stranglehold that existing broadband operators (local telephone companies and cable services) have on the ISP market. If Google is to succeed in that challenge, it needs to be able to assure that its service will be reliable and trouble-free. Where better to prove the concept than in its own home town?

In the meantime, Google (among many others) also has submitted a bid to the City of San Francisco, which plans to offer universal broadband wireless access throughout the city. Ideally, San Francisco wants to offer free access to those unable to pay for it, and low-cost access (no more than $20 per month) for everyone else. San Francisco is considering various models, including managing the network itself, and leasing portions of the network to private providers who will be responsible for operating and maintaining their portions of the network and billing customers. San Francisco already offers free WiFi access to the Internet in Union Square, and it's hard not to find a WiFi access point ("hot spot") around the city. For example, in addition to my own, there are at least three secured and four unsecured hot spots regularly within range of my San Francisco high-rise apartment.

In Philadelphia, the city has contracted with Earthlink to provide city-wide wireless broadband access. Other cities are doing so as well, some on their own, some using private vendors. San Francisco, however, highlights some of the difficulties in deploying a city-wide wireless network. The hills, valleys, and high-rise buildings all are obstacles to the relatively weak radio signals broadcast by computers and hot spots. That means deploying more hot spots—both horizontally and vertically—to assure universally accessible signal. The multitude of existing hot spots already owned by individuals and businesses, all sharing the same 2.4 Ghz frequency spectrum, cannot interfere with the new municipal network, which also will operate on the same frequency spectrum. The new municipal network also will have to handle "hand-offs" from one hot spot to the next as a user moves across the city on public or private transportation, just like the cellular networks do. Then there is the infrastructure needed to connect these hot spots to each other and to the Internet—which probably will be partly wired and partly wireless. Technology will solve these problems, but they do exist and have to be addressed. Doing so will take time, but I expect that they will be solved and the network will be completely deployed and operating before the turn of the decade.

In time, wireless broadband access to the Internet will replace wired access in much the same way that cellular telephony is replacing wireline phones. Although we can expect opposition, including lawsuits, from the incumbent carriers, that only will delay deployment. The transition is inevitable. It's even possible that Google will deploy its own Internet network, making wireless broadband access to the Internet universally available.

What's happening where you live and work? Drop me a line and let me know. In the meantime, if you still are restricted to copper wire access to the Internet, you at least can look forward to the freedom of wireless access in the course of your travels.

Happy surfing.

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TECHNOLOGY*e*REPORT

MacNotes

By Jeffrey Allen

Fun with Widgets

Every good law student knows about widgets. The Acme Manufacturing Company builds widgets for law professors to use in law school hypothetical discussions or in law school examinations. The simple truth of the matter is that while everyone knows about widgets, nobody could tell you what a widget looked like or what it did, largely because, like Puff the Magic Dragon, a widget is mythological.

A few years ago, the term "widget" took on a new meaning. A computer program called Konfabulator made use of smaller programs called "widgets" to provide additional and highly focused functionality to your computer. Widgets let you perform common tasks and provide you with quick and easy access to information.

More recently, Apple released System X version 10.4 (also known as Tiger). Tiger incorporated a new feature known as the Dashboard. The Dashboard provides a home for a number of small single purpose programs called—you guessed it—widgets. Apple built a nice starting collection of widgets into the system software, but you can easily add to the collection. Once you get started with widgets, you likely will want to continue to do so.

To access Tiger's Dashboard (unless you have changed your keyboard selections) you simply press f12 one time. When you do that, you get a semitransparent screen full of widgets, each designed to do its specific job. If you have collected too many widgets that the screen cannot show all of them at once, you will want to turn them off and restart them, as you need them. In that case, the Dashboard will set those not on the screen on a series of pages that you can access by moving your cursor to the "+" that appears in a circle in the lower left corner of the screen. When you click it, a strip of icons (the "widget bar") appears in the lower portion of your screen. The icons represent the other widgets in your collection that are not open and on the initial screen. Note that there may be more than one page of icons in the widget bar. If so, you can access the other pages by moving your cursor to one of the arrows appearing on either side of the widget bar. Holding your cursor over an arrow will cause it to display the

number of pages of icons in your collection. To close the widget bar, simply move the cursor back to the lower left corner, where you will discover that the "+" in a circle as morphed into an "x" in a circle. Click the "x" and the strip disappears. To close out of the widgets, press f12 again.

In a recent update to System 10.4, Apple added a new widget manager, making use of a larger widget collection even easier. It allows you to access all of your widgets in a single window and lets you enable or disable a particular widget by clicking in its box in the manager window.

Building your own widgets does not take a significant amount of effort, and is a skill capable of mastery by people who do not normally program computers. There is a rumor floating around that Apple will release a new program in the relatively near future that will provide a series of templates for the creation of widgets. Such a program will make widget creation even easier. At least one of the rumors has gone so far as to provide a name for the alleged program: "DashCode." Time will tell whether the rumors reflect fact or wishful thinking. In the mean time, most of us will build our widget collection by downloading the work of others.

With a little bit of effort, you can easily build a very substantial collection of ready-made widgets. You can get most of them free, but some require payment. Apple's own website offers more than 1,000 widgets to get your collection started (http://www.apple.com/downloads/dashboard). For another excellent source for widgets as well as information about things to come, take a look at Dashboard Widgets.com (www.dashboardwidgets.com). Both of those sites have classified available widgets into categories to make your search easier. Installation of downloaded widgets proves extremely easy. At the conclusion of the download process, most widgets self-install. They then open the Dashboard and give you a choice of keeping or deleting the new widget.

Some of the available widgets function as utilities (like the widget manager). Others will get you specific information about a service you use (like the widget that tracks Federal Express packages). You can find widgets that will make a dictionary and thesaurus available to you. Some widgets will search your computer for information collected in connection with a program on the computer, such as the address widget that searches your address book for information. Some widgets, like the "Ask Jeeves" widget, the "Yellow Pages" widget, "Map" widget or the "Weather" widget will search other databases or the Internet itself for information. Vendors have jumped into the act with widgets that let you do some shopping. Among the vendor widgets available: Amazon, E-Bay, Apple, CDW, dealmac, and Netflix (partial list). Look for more to come.

It should come as no surprise that in addition to the work-related widgets, you can find widgets for entertainment as well. Some of the entertainment widgets provide Internet radio functionality, television functionality, web cam viewing, etc. It is also possible to find widgets

that provide information as to television programming, movies, etc.

To find out what widgets you already have, you can either use the widget bar or simply go to your Library folder and look inside for the Widgets folder. Note that you may find widgets stored in computer's main Library folder and/or in individual Users' Library folders or both. To make sure that you have identified all that you have, check all the Library folders. If you want to make your life easier, you can easily consolidate the widgets into a single folder by dragging and dropping from one Library folder to another. It then becomes easy to back up the widgets or to move them to another computer by simply copying the one folder and moving its contents to another computer's Library folder. Note, however, that widgets in an individual User's folder will only work for that User when logged into the computer; widgets stored in the main Library folder, however, will work for any and all Users.

In dealing with widgets, there are a few things you will find helpful. First, when you open the widget bar an "x" appears by each open widget. Clicking that "x" closes the widget and moves it to the widget bar. Choosing a widget from the bar and then clicking on it (double click) will open a widget up. When you click f12, all open widgets show on the screen. If you look at a widget and see a small "i" on it, clicking on the "i" flips the widget display to its back side and that usually allows you to make selections that will reflect in the front side when you switch back. For example, clicking on the "i" in the Weather widget allows you to select the city for which the widget will display weather information and choose between the option of a display of the temperature in Fahrenheit or Celsius.

While each of you will form your own list of favorite widgets, there are some that you probably will not want to be without. I have found the following widgets particularly useful: Phone Book, Address Book, Google, Google Maps, Ask Jeeves, Weather, Calendar, World Clock, Dictionary (includes a thesaurus), Calculator, Package Tracker, Widget Manager, World Clock, CNN, and Yahoo Traffic. I also have found the iTunes Widget, Video Poker, Asteroids, MacMan, Rabbit Radio (Internet Radio), TV Tracker, and World TV entertaining. You may also enjoy checking out some of the web cam widgets available for locations in major cities or other venues.

For those of you who remember when pundits delighted in describing each new iteration of Windows as having a more "Mac-like" appearance and who find entertainment in keeping track of such things, it appears that the next version of Windows will have "Gadgets." Gadgets, reportedly, will look and function very much like, you guessed it, widgets. Hmm.

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TECHNOLOGY *e* REPORT

Surviving Email

Why I Live with Eudora

By jennifer j. rose

PC World called Eudora 6.2 "a middle-aged man enduring a midlife crisis: smart and capable but no longer youthful looking and hip." Must everything be about youth and beauty? Do I really care whether my email client looks more like Wally Cox than Brad Pitt, just so long as it delivers the mail? My romance with the old guy started with Eudora 1.x Light, a free program handed out, along with Netscape, by ISPs. Slatternly, I strayed and dallied with other e-mail programs—Pegasus, Calypso, The Bat!, IE Mail, Netscape Mail, Outlook, Thunderbird—but I always came home to Eudora. What Eudora lacked in glitz, it made up for in a reliable, easy sort of way. And I was willing to pay for the program each time a better version came along.

What's even more interesting is that *PC World* would assign the male gender to the program named after Eudora Welty, a Southern author whose works included "Why I Live at the P. O.," a story about family conflict and sibling rivalry filled with symbols of communication—a letter, the post office, a radio. Welty, who was as dowdy as I am clumsy, had a certain appeal about her—a no-nonsense, organized independent, and sort of a plain sort.

This email program comes in three flavors—light, sponsored, and paid. The light version is feature-free and comes free of charge. The sponsored mode is just like the full-bodied paid version, except that it includes advertising. And the add-free, full-featured, tech-supported paid version only costs $49.95 ($39.95 for those who've purchased Eudora more than 12 months but less than 24 months ago).

Earlier upgrades to Eudora didn't shock and awe; some of them even crashed. One of the most useless features was MoodWatch, which designated whether a message might be offensive, probably was offensive, or was on fire by a series of chiles. I disabled that feature right off the bat. Statistics revealed by day, month, and year the number of messages received, read, replied to, forwarded, as well as what you did with Eudora. Even though it sounded

intriguing, it was a waste of time.

Eudora 7.0.0.15 was released last month in beta, and it's exciting and downloadable at http://www.eudora.com/betas/. Right now, only the Windows version is out, with the Mac version to come in four to six months. What's new?

- Offline IMAP. While Eudora is offline, certain actions can be performed locally, and Eudora will notify the server when you're back online.
- IMAP Improvements. Deleted IMAP messages can be hidden from view or viewed along with nondeleted messages. Eudora can be set to purge messages on a user-specified schedule.
- Index Search. The X1 search engine searches messages more quickly.
- Boss Watch. If you've ever sent a message to the wrong person, this feature was designed with you in mind. Eudora will warn you before sending mail to specified recipients.
- S/MIME Plug-in. Digital signing of messages is now supported.
- LDAP with SSL. Queries can now be performed using SSL on LDSP servers.

Eudora's tech support is ample. For paid users, there's live customer service. But anyone can access its Knowledge Base, http://www.eudora.com/techsupport/; and its fora, http://eudorabb.qualcomm.com/index.php, cover Windows Eudora, MacIntosh Eudora, and everything in between.

The Light version is perfect for an older person, a novice, or even a child—anyone in the market for a very basic, easy-to-use, and reliable e-mail client. Many have told me that they've developed the ability to simply ignore the advertising in the Sponsored Mode, but the full-bodied Paid Mode now offers even more features that make paying the cost worthwhile.

Why? SpamWatch, a trainable junk mail filter, can filter up to 98% of those offers for body part enlargement, incredibly low mortgage rates, and »ç¶û½°·± ÀÚ³àÀÇ ÀÌ»Û ±Í, ÀÌÁ¦ÀÂ ÀÚµ¿À¸Î Ã»°áÇÏ°Ô, °Ç°-ÇÏ. That alone is worth more than $49.95 to me.

ScamWatch is designed to warn the user of phishing schemes, warning of suspicious URLs. Content concentrator clumps related messages together, a godsend for those whose primary filing system often is their inbox.

There are those who might dismiss Eudora as looking just too much like Win 3.1, as stylish as orthopedic shoes. Those features, down to the calming light blue, strike me as retro and reassuring in the same way that Coca-Cola's trademark does. Paraphasing Eudora Welty's closing words in "Why I Live at the P.O.,"

But here I am, and here I'll stay. I want the world to know I'm happy. And if The Bat! or

Calypso or any other fancy-pants email client should come to me this minute, on bended knees, and attempt to explain to me why I should switch, I'd simply put my fingers in both my ears and refuse to listen.

jennifer j. rose is editor-in-chief of GPSolo. *She lives in Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico.*

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ProductNotes

Interwrite Software Meetingboard/Pad

Reviewed by Jeffrey Allen

The InterWrite MeetingBoard looks like a traditional whiteboard set up in a portable mode. A more careful investigation, however, establishes that it is far more than just a portable whiteboard. Certainly, you can use it as a portable white board, but if that is all you do with it, you spent good money that you shouldn't have and you give up a great deal of functionality. The MeetingBoard offers you considerable flexibility. In addition to working as a common white board, you can use it as a projection screen. If you use it as a projection screen, you can project an image onto it and then "physically" mark up the image using standard dry-erase markers. If you put the dry-erase markers inside the included holders, and connect the MeetingBoard to your computer, the built-in electronic sensors track movement of the marker on the board and the software allows you to save the marked up information to your computer where you can overlay it on top of the original image.

The MeetingBoard ranges in price based on size and the additional features you add to it. The most basic series is the 3000 series, which comes with the board, two electronic pens, power supply, wall mount brackets, pen tray, RS-232 and USB interface, and InterWrite Software (for both Windows and Mac). Pricing starts at $1,595.

The InterWrite MeetingPad is a Bluetooth wireless tablet allowing remote wireless mouse operation of a computer. It also provides a writing surface. Commonly used with computer and LCD/DLP projector, the MeetingPad's cordless pen acts as a wireless mouse with buttons for left and right clicking to control any software program from anywhere in the room. When you use it with InterWrite software, you can use it for highlighting, markup, and annotation over any screen image. The MeetingPad and software works with current versions of Windows and with Mac OS X software. There are two models: a Bluetooth and serial version. The Bluetooth version (Model 400) costs a bit more and provides the Bluetooth interface and rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, which allow approximately 40 hours of use between recharges. The Bluetooth-enabled version of the pad weighs less than two pounds and costs $585.

The MeetingPad contains an electronic grid that senses the location of its cordless pen on its surface. It transmits this information wirelessly using Bluetooth technology to the associated Bluetooth-enabled computer. Moving the pen over the MeetingPad's surface moves the computer's cursor, allowingwireless mouse control of the computer.

InterWrite software comes with each package. InterWrite is an easy-to-use annotation program that allows you to highlight, mark, or make notes over many applications, including PowerPoint, Word, and Excel documents, CAD drawing files, website pages, and any other files or documents. InterWrite allows you to create blank note pages for idea generation and note taking in up to 16 different colors. You can combine those pages with other annotated materials generated from the Web, spreadsheets, or other applications. The software allows you to annotate directly over an electronic document, picture, or other screen image. InterWrite treats the notes and annotated content as a sequence of images, then saves the information in a single file for easy distribution, archiving, and further use. The InterWrite software works on the Mac OS X, Linux, and Windows platforms.

A presenter using InterWrite software with the MeetingBoard or MeetingPad can focus the audience's attention by annotating or highlighting over a document or a slide in a PowerPoint presentation. The annotations can be saved and printed for further use by the court or the jury, if necessary.

InterWrite designed the MeetingBoard and the MeetingPad to work together in an educational environment and in an interactive mode. As a practical matter, the MeetingBoard can be a handy device to have around in the office for planning meetings, strategy sessions, depositions, arbitrations, or mediations. You can get it with a stand that has wheels to allow you to move it around the office fairly easily (although the one I had for testing was sufficiently high that when on the mobile stand, it would not fit through a standard door. Moving it from one room to another required partial disassembly). While the MeetingBoard

could certainly prove helpful in some trial situations, its size makes that level of portability somewhat inconvenient. On the other hand, the extremely portable MeetingPad, used wirelessly in conjunction with a projected image, can prove quite handy and convenient in a courtroom situation. The extended range of the newer Model 400 (nominally up to 300 feet) facilitates such usage.

Nikon Coolpix S4 Camera

Reviewed by Bruce L. Dorner

It has been several years since I felt the need to update my digital camera. After all, 2.1 megapixels is adequate for a 4" x 6" inch print. However, I always felt constrained by the 3x zoom lens. I had come from the 35mm world and simply slipped on a larger zoom lens to better frame my shots.

After much hemming, hawing, and trepidation about spending the limited funds of a solo attorney, I ventured into the current crop of digital cameras. Heck, it's hard to find a camera with only 2.1 megpixels unless it's part of a cell phone! Everything has at least 4 megapixels or more. However, mexapixels is vastly over rated as a measuring device in my view. More crucial is the quality of lens and the sensing devices within the camera.

I also knew that I really wanted a camera with at least a 5x optical zoom. I was tired of running out of lens length when I needed to zoom in just a bit more. However, my research also indicated that the greater the optical zoom, the more likely the camera was going to approach the size of my 35mm film camera, and break my piggy bank—not a compromise I was willing to make. I wanted small. It had to fit in a suit coat pocket.

I may have located the ideal device for my specifications. Nikon recently released their new Coolpix S4. Gee, was there any hope I could afford a Nikon? Yes, retail pricing on this device is $399 and street prices ran around $340 when I purchased mine online.

What's so special about this camera? For starters, it's a 6 megapixel device with a wonderful Nikor glass lens. The lens swivels from the upright position keeping the overall size down as you carry the camera with the lens in the closed position. It fits easily in a suit coat pocket. It features a 10x optical zoom (roughly equivalent to a 38-380mm lens in a 35 mm film camera). The whole package, with 2AA batteries and a SD card weighs about ten ounces. It's so small that it comes with a neck lanyard rather than a wrist strap!

Is that too small? As you might expect, the buttons to control the device shrink with the camera size. However, the designers at Nikon have done a great job of using a 5-way rocker switch to put most of the features in one location. Sure, you have to read the manual to get the most out of the camera, but the automatic mode is likely to handle 90 percent of your picture

taking needs.

The monitor is a whopping 2.5 inches. The screen is bright, clear and has adjustable intensity. If you want to control the picture there are no less than 16 modes for customizing your shots. They include everything from night lighting, fluorescent lighting, portrait, scenic, macro, and dusk and dawn settings. The Nikon folks have tools built into the camera so you can perform basic editing without a computer. In fact, there's a nifty utility they call D-Lighting. When you view your picture and can't decide if the lighting is right, you push a button and the camera produces a duplicate of your shot and automatically adjusts brightness and contrast to optimal settings. You have your original and an enhanced duplicate to compare.

In addition to the multiple specific modes mentioned, the camera also can take movies. They are limited only by the capacity of the SD card. It can also record sound to accompany any desired shot. Oh, for those who hate digital cameras because they don't go "click" when you press the shutter, this one has a setting to turn on or off the "click" sound so you know you're taking a shot. The flash should be adequate to handle illumination tasks out to about 10 feet. If lighting is inadequate, the monitor displays a warning. If you zoom out too far and start wobbling, the monitor will also produce a blur warning.

Two AA batteries power the camera. You don't have to worry about finding fancy button cells in a pinch. The camera has a battery meter that can be set to detect alkaline, lithium, or rechargeable cells. The meter warns you when the batteries are getting low.

The picture quality is solid, as would be expected from Nikon. As with any camera there has to be one negative. It has no optical view finder. I had hoped to find a camera with that feature, but soon realized that with a 2.5 inch monitor I could quickly adapt from my old habits to the current digital display world.

Overall, this is probably one of the best made devices I have handled in several years. Now, all I need are a few good cases where my digital pictures can be used to enhance the recovery of damages on behalf of my clients.

Projecting the Right Image

Review by Jeffrey Allen

Lawyers concern themselves with the image they project. No, this review does not look at PR services for attorneys. It looks at three new DLP (Digital Light Processing) portable projectors recently released by HP/Compaq. Years ago, none of us had such devices; as the technology advanced, more and more of us started using the projectors. As technology advanced more, the size and weight of the projectors shrunk and, surprisingly, the price also shrank. Even more impressively, the power of the projectors increased. To give you a

comparative frame of reference, less than five years ago you could not find a projector that weighed less than five pounds, cost less than $5,000, and projected more than 1000 lumens. All three of the projectors reviewed in this article cost less than $2,500, project at least 1,500 lumens, and two of them weigh less than five pounds. As this technology has become less costly, more and more attorneys have added digital projectors to the equipment that they have available in their practices.

In looking at digital projectors, we measure their brightness in a unit of measure called a lumen. As a general guideline, projectors that work well in a large well-lit room (such as many courtrooms) have 3,000 or more lumens to make their images easily seen. Projectors used in smaller rooms or rooms that allow for dimmed lighting can work quite well with 1,500-2,000 lumens. While they have come down in size and price, generally we would not consider a 3,000-lumen or greater projector highly portable, although you can move them from one location to another. When we talk about portable projectors, we tend to mean a unit weighing in at five pounds or less, although some would consider a unit portable if it weighed a bit more than five pounds.

Projectors come in two types: LCD (liquid crystal display) and DLP. The LCD projectors came on the scene first, followed several years ago by the DLP projectors. When the DLP projectors initially came out and started appearing in reasonable variety, the major differences were that DLP projectors came in smaller, lighter, and less expensive packages while the LCD projectors tended to appear a bit brighter at the same lumen rating and display truer color by comparison to the DLP projectors. Although both versions have evolved toward each other (color and brightness on DLP improving while size, weight, and cost of LCD all came down), there are still some differences of this nature between the two. As a practical matter, the quality of the image and brightness of the DLP projectors has increased to the point that only the most critical eye will see a difference; and insofar as the uses that most attorneys will have for the projectors, the differences will not manifest themselves in any significant way. As DLP still remains a bit lighter, smaller, and less costly than LCD, many of us will opt for the DLP projector, especially for portable use.

I looked at three HP digital projectors for this review: the mp2210, mp3135, and the vp6310. Each one has its strengths and weaknesses, but the simple fact of the matter is that all three performed well and any of them would work very well for an attorney planning to use them in an office environment for presentations to clients, in arbitration hearings, or in mediation meetings. None of them bring enough power to make them good candidates for courtroom use, however.

All three of the projectors use DLP technology, have relatively small footprints, weigh little, and can easily move from one location to another without much effort. All three are convenient and easy to operate (plug and play). All three play nicely with both Mac and Windows computers. The mp2200 and mp3135 series both come with functional protective cases. HP also offers a case for the VP 6300; the 6300 has a built in handle, however, making

it easy to move it from one location to another. You will probably want the protective case if you plan to move the projector around a lot.

The vp6300 series has the lowest cost of the three; it is also the largest and heaviest. The vp6300 series contains two computers, the vp6310 and the vp6320. The vp6310 has an MSRP of $799.99, generates 1,600 ANSI lumens of brightness, has native SVGA resolution (800 x 600), and through compression will emulate lower and higher resolutions from VGA through SXGA. The vp6320 has an MSRP of $1,299.99, generates 2,000 ANSI lumens, has native XGA (1024 x 768) resolution, but handles the range of VGA through SXGA+ using compression. The vp6300 series projectors weigh in at 7.7 pounds and measure 11" x 10.1" x 4". Estimated lamp life: 4,000 hours.

While not the smallest of the three projectors, the mp3135 has the smallest footprint of the three as it operates from a vertical perspective rather than a horizontal perspective. The mp3135 has XGA (1024 x 768) native resolution (better than SVGA), but can handle everything from VGA through SXGA through compression. It also generates 1,800 lumens. The basic mp3135 costs $2,299, weighs in at only 4 pounds, and measures 2.9" x 9" x 7.9". You can add a wireless kit to the computer for $300, making it about 3" longer and a half pound heavier. The wireless system runs the traditional 802.11b standard (11.0 kbps). Estimated lamp life: 2,000 hours (4,000 hours in economy mode).

The mp2200 series represents the "mini-me" version of the three projectors. The mp2200 has an MSRP of $1,499 and weighs in at only 2.4 pounds. Although it has a larger footprint than the mp3135, that is a function of its horizontal perspective by comparison to the mp3135's vertical perspective. The mp2200 measures only 8.2" x 6.6" x 2.5", making it the smallest of the three units. The mp2200 has native XGA resolution, but can also handle the range of VGA through UXGA compression. The mp2200 generates 1,500 ANSI lumens of brightness and a contrast ratio of 2,200:1. It has an estimated lamp life of 4,000 hours in economy mode and an estimated average of 3,000 hours overall.

So, we have three projectors. All of them generate good, crisp images, and each represents a different collection of benefits. Which do you get? Here is how I see it. If you will not be moving the projector around a great deal and do not intend to travel with it, look at the vp6300 series. If you do not need the extra lumens and resolution and/or if cost presents a real issue, go to the SVGA 1,600 lumen vp6310. If you need the extra power of 2,000 lumens and the higher resolution, spend $500 more and get the vp6320.

Alternatively, if you do not need the extra 400 lumens and want some portability, the XGA 1,500 lumen mp2200 for $1,499 presents a very impressive package in terms of both value and function.

If you are afraid you may put the diminutive mp2200 down some place and not be able to find

it, or if you need a bit more power in a mobile unit, look at the XGA 1,800 lumen mp3135 for $2,299. The wireless functionality presents a nice supplementary feature, but I think HP did us a favor by making it an option. I say that because I do not think that many attorneys will make much use of that particular feature, and those who will use it can spend the extra $300 to get it, while the rest of us can save the money.

As for my bottom line, if I wanted a projector that would live in my office and not get carried around to various places, I would look to the vp6300 series. If I wanted a projector for mobility purposes, I would opt for the mp2200. Although I found the mp3135 very impressive, it takes up more space, is more cumbersome, and weighs almost twice as much as the mp2200 and only generates extra 300 lumens, yet it costs $700 more. The mp2200 fits easily into most of my wheeled computer bags along with necessary files, my laptop and its paraphernalia, and other technology I may choose to take with me (such as a PDA, cell phone, digital camera, digital camcorder, digital voice recorder, etc.). At a list price of only $1,499, I find that a hard package to beat.

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TECHNOLOGY *e*REPORT

Division**Notes**

Plan to Attend the 2006 Midyear Meeting— Free CLE!

American Bar Association

Midyear Meeting

Chicago, IL
February 8-13, 2006

Please plan to join us for the 2006 ABA Midyear
Meeting in Chicago. The Division will hold activities
Thursday, February 9 th, through Sunday, February 12th. Highlights include:

Friday —February 10th

- a mini Solo Day program with three hours of programming on "Protecting Your Practice and Being Proactive Against Natural Disasters" and "Promote Professionally: Technology to Propel Your Practice Forward"
- a Military Law Day with programming on "The Politicalization of Military Law" and an honorary luncheon
- a joint social activity with the Young Lawyers Division (TBA)

Saturday—February 11th

- additional CLE programs on "What Every Lawyer Needs to Know About Real Estate Leases" and a yet-to-be-titled Business, Bankruptcy, and Commercial Law Program

Sunday—February 12th

- the Solo and Small Firm Lawyers Breakfast Caucus to discuss current issues of importance to our constituency

There is no registration fee for the Midyear Meeting. The Hyatt Regency Chicago, the ABA Headquarters Hotel, is where the Division's activities will take place. You can register for the Midyear Meeting several different ways: online at www.abanet.org/midyear/2006, by fax, by mail, or onsite at the Hyatt. **The advance registration deadline is January 6, 2006.**

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

Solosez to Celebrate Its 10th Birthday

Solosez, one of the ABA's most active and successful listserves, celebrates its 10th birthday this bar year. The listserv, now funded by the GP|Solo Division, is currently more than 1,800 members strong with an average of 150 posts daily. The Division already has plans in the works to celebrate this monumental accomplishment at the Division's 2006 Spring Meeting in Kansas City. Read more about Solosez listserv in the recent *ABA Journal* article "A Birthday to Celebrate: Solosez Is More Than a Place to Get Tips—It's Also a Community" by visiting: http://www.abanet.org/journal/redesign/11solo.html.

Announcing the 2005/2006 GP | Solo Law Student Mentoring Program

Although most mentoring programs are based on occasional meetings between seasoned practitioners and young lawyers, GP|Solo's Law Student Mentoring Certificate Program does more. The program, aimed to fill some of the gaps of traditional law school education, focuses on introducing law students to the practical aspects of being a lawyer through real world activities and the mentor's insight and guidance. Further, the program is flexible, enabling law students to pick their own mentors and tailor the program's criteria to their own interests.

In completing the nation's only law student mentoring certificate program, students will have established a strong relationship with their mentors, witnessed several legal proceedings of their choosing, and gained valuable insight to the things law school doesn't teach. Each student who successfully completes the program earns a certificate as a token of his or her accomplishment.

All GP|Solo Law Students are eligible to participate in the program. Law students are free to choose any licensed attorney practicing any legal area in any legal setting to serve as a mentor, regardless of the attorney's membership status with the ABA or GP|Solo. Students complete the program at their own pace, so long as all certificate materials are submitted by the April 19, 2006, deadline.

To learn more about the certificate requirements and to register for the program, please visit www.abanet.org/genpractice/lawstudents/mentoringcertificate.html.

Are You Fully Taking Advantage of Your Division Member Benefits? Join Three Free Committees Today!

Do you know that GP|Solo Division members can join up to three committees free of charge? Committees are a great way for members to get active in the Division, including speaking and authoring opportunities. To find out more about our committees, visit www.abanet.org/genpractice/cmtees.

ABA Presidential Appointments

ABA President-Elect Karen J. Mathis will soon be seeking applications or nominations for appointed positions throughout the ABA. President-Elect Mathis, a past Chair our of Division, will be filling vacancies on the ABA Standing and Special Committees, Commissions, Working Groups, Task Forces, and other ABA entities for the 2006-2007 Association year.

As soon as more information is available, we will post more information on the Division's website at www.abanet.org/genpractice.

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  Look to *GPSolo* magazine for the latest trends and legal developments. Special issues include the *Technology & Practice Guides*, loaded with essential software and technology reviews, and *Best of ABA Sections*, featuring articles selected for you from other top ABA publications.

  Our quick-read newsletter, *Solo*, provides practical answers to your practice questions.

  Up-to-date e-publications to supplement *GPSolo* and *Solo*:

  - *Law Trends & Practice e-newsletter* — Compliments the Sections' substantive practice areas.
  - *GPSolo New Lawyer* — Offers career and practice tips.
  - *GPSolo Technology eReport* — Gives answers to your technology questions.

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- **Corporate sponsor discounts**

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  GP|Solo gives its members the opportunity to participate in the governance of the Section. Committee participation allows members to pursue their specific areas of interest, and also provides valuable opportunities to meet and work with colleagues from across the country and abroad. We welcome the participation of lawyer, associate, and law student members, including special opportunities through our Diversity Fellows Program.

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