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Disaster Communication: Develop a Plan and Know How to Execute It

By Edward Poll

There are two types of law firms: those that have experienced a disaster, and those that will. Not every disruptive event is a disaster. Professional liability, malpractice claims, client relations problems, and poor business judgment are all problems for the firm, but they are also part everyday business. A true disaster is an event or circumstance that can drive the firm out of business. Five broad categories fit this description:

- Natural disaster (hurricane, tornado, flood, fire)
- Technology disaster: building failure (roof collapse, water pipes burst) or computer failure (data or hardware lost or in jeopardy)
- Health disaster (epidemics, environmental catastrophe)
- Crime disaster: violent crime (workplace assault, hostage situation, bomb detonation, robbery) and cybercrime (hacking, identity theft/phishing, employee sabotage)

- Personal disaster (sudden death or disability, succession crisis due to retirement or illness)

Communication

Whatever the disastrous event, your normal communications infrastructure is disrupted just at the time when you need it most. This is especially true in natural or technology disasters. Even a simple power outage can take down email, phones, and pagers. You cannot print memos to distribute. The lights are out, and at least some people are anxious or even frightened—they need to hear and understand what is happening.

The goal of disaster planning is making a recovery that ensures the survival of the firm. Central to disaster recovery is communication with firm members, clients, vendors, courts, and others who make your practice work. Disaster recovery begins when communication is re-established, and that means a good communication plan must be in place before disaster occurs. Such a plan requires both careful preparation and effective execution.

Preparation

It takes time and effort to gather all possible information on potential communication points. These are the major items to assemble. Keeping the information updated is challenging, given how rapidly people change phone numbers, email addresses, and employers. Review and revise your information at least every six months. Otherwise, it may be useless when you need it most.

- *Firm personnel directory with all information.* This should include pager numbers, cell phone numbers, office, and home telephone numbers, vacation home numbers, office and home email addresses, with alternate emergency contacts whenever possible.
- *Personnel tracking procedure.* Whether you use database software or a bulletin board, use some method to track the whereabouts of all lawyers and staff during normal business hours.
- *Pocket/wallet card information.* Prepare laminated, wallet-sized cards with emergency instructions for contacts, including telephone and cell numbers for designated emergency team members as well as an emergency contact phone number (preferably an 800 number, since long distance lines generally remain functional) to call for updates.
- *Telephone tree.* Set up an internal communications network in which firm members have preassigned responsibilities to contact each other and establish their condition and whereabouts. Include backups if primary callers are not available. Arrange alternate contact numbers, besides the 800 number, for employees to call for information (another office location, for example).
- *Client list.* Maintain offsite an updated list of current clients, matters, contact information, including telephone, cell phone, home phone, and email addresses. Assign several people to contact clients, tell them what has happened, and explain the status of pending matters. Convey that the firm will do its best to take care of needs and concerns.
- *Building information.* Names, office and home phone numbers, cell phone numbers, office and home email addresses for critical building personnel including building manager, operations officer, chief engineer. Provide these people with the same information for key people on your emergency team. Plan in advance to set up temporary space, including furnishings, computers, and phones.
- *Court/docketing information.* Court telephone numbers and a current docket calendar must be available at an offsite location. Establish a referral contact with another firm that can handle such practice matters as requesting a continuance or rescheduling a deposition

- *Vendor list.* Have hard copy and electronic lists of service provider contacts (with office, cell, and home numbers) who can help re-establish your practice: bankers, insurance carriers, bar associations, utilities, data security and Internet services, legal specialists like Lexis/Nexis and WestCompany. Include your account or customer number.
- *External help sources.* This should be as comprehensive as possible, with both local emergency personnel (police, fire, EMT) and national contact numbers (local offices may be affected by the same disaster that hits you) for organizations such as the American Red Cross and FEMA.

Execution
Execution of your communication plan should utilize the time and talents of your full disaster recovery team. The makeup of this team is central to your preparation. Choosing people who will keep their heads and actually perform the tasks is crucial, and there should be a backup for each in case of absence, illness, or panic on the part of the primary designee.

Adapt the team structure to different aspects of your facility and organization. Involve building management, and assign tasks like contacting vendors to staffers (such as in accounting). Department managers should have input regarding who will be responsible for what and set up a departmental plan for contacting those employees after the event to put the things in motion. Break down tasks and assign one person (with backup person) for each. Tasks and contacts could include:

- Building management: Contact executive director and office administrator
- Executive director: Contact senior firm management (managing partner, executive committee)
- Office administrator: Notify emergency team members and managers
- HR and technology directors: Collaborate on lawyer and staff contact through call-in and electronic messages (the latter on the firm website and intranet).

Several people on your emergency team should be trained to send broadcast voicemail to all mailboxes. If people can access the phone system, this is an efficient way to reach them. Designate persons to send broadcast email to everyone from and to both office and home email systems. Establish the capability to do this from home PCs and laptops if the network is down.

Key people should have three complete sets of all information (office, car, home). This does not mean the whole burden need fall on your "A Team." Some work may be delegated that will not require the person to have access to all information, much of which should be kept as confidential as possible.

Once the nature and severity of the event is evaluated and an assessment of damage is made, you can determine whether operations can continue (perhaps in a reduced capacity) or if relocation to an alternate facility is required. When decision makers have decided the course of action, the information should be given to your emergency team by the most feasible method available.

Recovery
Communication is the most important element of disaster planning because the human element is both the first concern, and the most difficult to deal with. Effective disaster communication planning can mitigate the impact on the lives of individuals within a firm by helping ensure the

firm's survival. Putting one's personal and professional lives back together is difficult at best, but having a plan on how to proceed can make it less stressful. Your energy on such effort is like insurance: useless and expensive when not needed, and priceless when needed.

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Virtual Private Networks over the Public Internet

By Sean La Roque-Doherty

Imagine that you have a private, secure road between your home and office, dedicated to your use. Now imagine that the road is over the Internet and your vehicle is a PC or laptop. In effect, the road is a virtual private network (VPN) that can save you time and money.

A VPN allows you to send data between two computers across a shared, public network like the Internet in a way that emulates the properties of a point-to-point private link. In effect, it's the next best thing to being physically on the remote network and plugging your computer into it or being close enough to allow wireless access.

VPNs sound a bit like remote control, right? A bit, but remote control is a software application that allows a remote computer to connect to a host computer to control the host's resources. A VPN, on the other hand, virtually puts a remote computer onto the same network as your law office where there may be a time and billing server and file, print, and fax servers to share.

A VPN saves you the time and expense of either traveling to the office or replicating office resources onto a PC or laptop. But if all you have in your law office is a computer with directly connected peripherals, such as a printer, then setting up a VPN is not worth your time. Look at a remote control program.

A remote control program like Symantec's pcAnywhere or MS-Windows Remote Desktop tool or a service like GoToMyPC (www.gotomypc.com) will get you from remote computers to your office computer and its resources. And if you need to traverse a firewall at the office, allow remote control packets to pass through the firewall directly to your office computer on the TCP (transmission control protocol) port used by the remote control program.

VPN for the Solo and Small Office Practitioner

There are different types of VPNs: Intranet, extranet, and remote access. Intranet and extranet VPNs interconnect central offices with branch offices and corporate sites with partners or customers, respectively. Remote access VPNs are VPNs for telecommuters and mobile or remote workers like the solo and small office practitioner when they are out of the office.

A basic premise for the remote access VPN is that the remote worker, you, must have access to the Internet via a dial-up or broadband (cable or DSL/ADSL modem) connection. Then, a secure communications channel can be established from the remote location to the office using VPN software installed on end points such as a PC, laptop, or home router and the office router.

The level of bandwidth available to the VPN will depend on the speed of the remote connection between your home and the Internet and your law office and the Internet. Other factors include the total volume of traffic over those links and the level of congestion experienced on the Internet. After all, the Internet is a shared medium with variable issues in access and congestion control as well as security concerns.

VPN Technology

In a VPN, the connection between a remote computer or remote SOHO and the law office has two parts. In one part, the private data is encapsulated. That's called the tunnel. In the other part, data is encrypted. That's known as the VPN connection (see Figure 1).

VPN connections and tunnels allow users working at home or other remote locations to connect to a remote device in a secure fashion using the routing infrastructure

FIGURE 1.

provided by the Internet. Hence, the same dial-up or broadband connection you use at home for work and entertainment will get you to the office. So there's no dedicated long-distance or toll-free phone number to call and no dedicated, physical connection to set up.

A VPN emulates a point-to-point link by encapsulating data. Data encapsulation puts data in a wrapper and labels the wrapper with routing information. When your computer transmits the wrapper, the routing information enables it to traverse the Internet to reach its endpoint, the remote office network. To add privacy, the data being sent is encrypted for confidentiality. That way, any packets that are intercepted on the public Internet are not readily decipherable without the encryption keys.

From the end user's perspective, the VPN connection is a point-to-point connection between the home or remote computer and a law office network. The nature of the Internet between the two
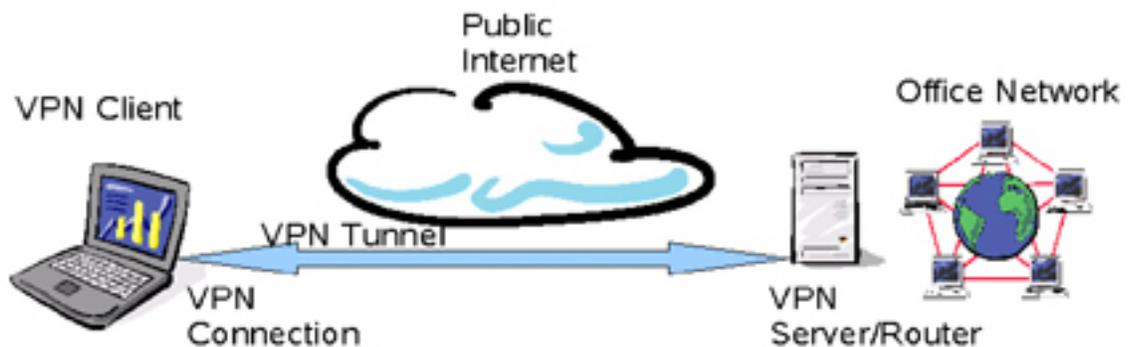
is irrelevant, because data is being sent over a virtual, dedicated private link. In effect, your remote computer will find all your office resources as if it was in the office.

How Do You Get a VPN?
Obtaining VPN software can be like obtaining other technology today. You may already own it and don't know it. That is, it may already be resident in your home or office router ready for use.

For example, some Linksys and Netgear routers have VPN client/server software resident on their devices. All you need to do is obtain the client software for your PC or laptop. Linksys uses Quick VPN (www.linksys.com) and Netgear uses Prosafe VPN client software (www.netgear. com). In addition, it is possible to set up a VPN between your home and office routers.

Setting up a VPN between home and office routers is easy if the routers are manufactured by the same vendor such as Cisco Systems, Inc. (Linksys) or Netgear and you happen to have a teenager resident on your network. Otherwise, the configuration issues may warrant help from a service provider. For example, you will want to make sure your home network is completely secure before connecting it to the office.

You can also purchase a turn-key (hardware and software) VPN solution from the likes of Juniper Networks (www.juniper.net). But that is a bit extravagant for the solo and small office practitioner. As an alternative, look into the VPN software built into Microsoft Windows and your office router.

See if your office router supports PPTP (Point-To-Point Protocol) or L2TP (Layer 2 Tunneling Protocol) tunneling protocols. PPTP was initially developed by Ascend and Microsoft Corp. and is embedded in Windows. It is a proprietary technique that encapsulates Point-to-Point Protocol (PPP) frames in IP packets. Packet filters provide access control from end-to-end.

L2TP is an open, standards-based tunneling protocol. It grew out of a combination of the Point-to-Point Tunneling Protocol (PPTP) and Cisco System's proprietary Layer 2 Forwarding (L2F) protocol.

If your office router supports either PPTP or L2TP, you can enable that software and set up users from the router's administrative interface. Then you can use Microsoft's New Connection wizard on the remote PC or laptop to set up a new network connection with your office. Again, resident teenagers work wonders in the setup process.

Conclusion
If you have set up a law office network with time/billing software and file, print, and fax servers, setting up VPN access to that network will save you the time and money of replicating those resources on other computers when you work from home or on the road. VPNs are easy to set up, and you may already own the software to get started.

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TechNotes

Relief for Sore Thumbs and Bruised Knees

J. Anthony Vittal

In my last column, I wrote about powerful computers in small packages. Many of you may have seen the Microsoft commercial for its new PDA. A business traveler leaves home with nothing but his PDA. Flying to another city, he arrives at his destination, enters a conference room, places his PDA on the conference table next to the projector, convenes the meeting, and starts his PowerPoint presentation. Yes, it also works as a phone.

While this is no surprise to those of us used to working with these sophisticated converged devices, their universal deficiency is their small keyboards and displays, which cause both sore thumbs and eyestrain. I wrote about this problem four years ago and discussed a potential—albeit less than ideal—solution for each deficiency. Although we have yet to reach the level of miniaturization that would permit us to carry everything, including the projector, in our pockets or purses, Israeli technology in the **I-Tech Virtual Laser Keyboard (VLK)** now offers a better solution than a folding mechanical keyboard. If you are a CSI buff, you even may have seen this solution on a *CSI-Miami* episode earlier this year—and it wasn't science fiction!

Imagine a tiny projector—a little larger (90 x 34 x 24 mm) than a disposable lighter—that both displays a full-size QWERTY keyboard on any flat surface and interprets the movement of fingers onto the key images to translate that movement into keystrokes for your PDA. Input is wireless, using the Bluetooth connection of your PDA. How does it work, you ask? Rather elegantly, I would say. Using a red diode laser, the VLK projects a holographic keyboard template onto the adjacent surface. The VLK also projects an invisible infrared plane of light a few millimeters above, and parallel, to the surface on which they keyboard is projected. When you touch a key position on the interface projection, surface light is reflected from this plane in the vicinity of the key and directed toward the sensor module, where it is filtered and then imaged on a CMOS image sensor. The processor then makes a real-time determination of the key being touched. It even can track multiple keystrokes and overlapping cursor control inputs.

Best of all, the VLK includes an audible click feature, so you will know when you have keyed a character.

If you want to avoid battery drain, you can set the device to turn off the projector after a set time. The keyboard will instantly come back to life, however, if you touch or wave your hand across the surface where it was projected.

The VLK works with the Blackberry, various Palm devices (running OS 5), devices such as the Dell Axim and the HP iPAQ running either the Pocket PC 2003 Family (using Microsoft, Widcom/ Broadcom, and Extended Systems Bluetooth Stacks) Windows Mobile 5, and various Nokia, Sony-Ericsson, and other devices. Check the website for compatibility with your PDA. The VLK also will work with desktop and notebook computers using either Bluetooth or a serial port interface, if you need a keyboard that will not be contaminated by food, drink, and other detritus.

Developed by i.Tech Dynamic Limited, the technology division of Hutchison Harbour Ring Limited (HHR), a listed company in Hong Kong, the VLK uses virtual interface technology developed by Lumio, Inc., headquartered in Silicon Valley. HHR, a subsidiary of Hutchison Whampoa Limited—a multinational conglomerate operating in 42 countries with more than 170,000 employees worldwide, one of the largest companies listed on the main board of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange—manufactures the VLK. Product and customer support is provided by Power Positioning (2P) Ltd. in Petah Tikva, Israel.

The VLK can be purchased online for $179.99 plus shipping via FedEx from www.virtual-laser-keyboard.com. It comes with a 30-day unconditional money-back guarantee (exclusive of taxes and shipping), and you also can buy extra Li-ion batteries, a charger, and other accessories from the website.

Bruised Knees
On the subject of bruised knee relief—how many of us routinely have had to get on our hands and knees because we either can't see the USB port on the front of our desk-based computers, or we have to wrestle it out to find the USB port on the back of the box to insert a thumb drive or other USB device? Alternatively, we have an extension cable plugged into one of the USB hubs on the back of the computer and connected to a multiport hub on the desk—that more often than not drops off the desktop unless it is glued or taped down or fastened to something with a Velcro® strip—requiring another trip under or behind the desk. Industrial designers working for Belkin (the computer accessory manufacturer) and Ameriwood (the computer desk manufacturer) have developed a solution so elegant and attractive that it won one of the 2006 IDEAs (the Industrial Design Excellence Awards from the Industrial Designers Society of America).

This solution incorporates a four-port USB hub in the middle of a standard-sized cable grommet that will fit in the grommet hole on your work surface. The grommet hub is securely mounted to the desk for one-handed insertion and removal of USB devices. In addition, because the hub is suspended in the middle of the circular desk grommet, the user has a visual cue that cables and power cords still may be routed through the openings on either side of the hub.

By the time this column is published, you should be able to purchase the grommet hub for $39.95 on Belkin's website (www.belkin.com) or by phone at 800-223-5546. Consumers

reportedly are asking for the development of other connections to fit in a grommet, so I expect that consumer demand eventually will make various types of grommet hubs available at your local "toy" store.

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MacNotes

Can This Leopard Change Your OS?

By Jeffrey Allen

Big changes in the Apple line have garnered considerable attention, drawn speculation, and will continue to draw more attention in the near future. In the last several months, Apple upgraded many of its hardware offerings again. In one fell swoop it replaced its entire iPod line in September. Shortly before that it moved the iMac from the Intel Core Duo processor to the newly released Intel Core 2 Duo processor. The Mac Pro desktop units all use the even more powerful and faster Intel Dual-Core Xeon "Woodcrest" processors. The Mac Minis continue to use the Core Duo processor. Eventually they too will likely have Core2 Duo processors, but probably not until early next year (perhaps in conjunction with MacWorld in January). Apple's laptops all run on the Core Duo processors as well. Intel has now released the laptop version of the Core 2 Duo, and many computer manufacturers have already released Core2 Duo units. Apple will undoubtedly upgrade the MacBook Pro to the Core2 Duo processor within the next several months. The MacBooks will probably follow some time after that.

Image courtesy of Apple Computer

Apple has not contentedly rested upon its laurels for some time. While making all the hardware upgrades, Apple had its programmers diligently working on the development of the newest cat on the block, Leopard. Apple has chosen the Leopard as the cat du jour for the next iteration of OS X. As regularly happens as we approach Apple's announced release time for a system upgrade, lots of people have started speculating about what it will contain and when Apple will release it. Typically, close-mouthed Apple has not updated its "spring 2007" release. But remember that Apple stunned everyone by coming out with the MacIntel versions of its computers much earlier than the time period it originally announced. Remember how Apple likes to contrast itself to the operations of other and bigger companies. We have all heard of the delays in the release of the next iteration of the Windows operating system (code named Vista). Also remember how Steve Jobs loves to take center stage at MacWorld and demonstrate the latest and greatest whiz-bang stuff from Apple and almost always introduces something striking. With that in mind, I would not find it at all surprising if when MacWorld comes to San Francisco in January 2007, Steve demonstrates the new features of the Leopard version of Mac OS X on a MacBook Pro running an Intel Core2 Duo processor. Nor would I find it surprising if he announced after the demonstration that Apple had both available immediately, thus beating its own announced release date and by so doing contrasting itself to other companies.

Image courtesy of Apple Computer

Although Apple does not like to give out much in the way of advance information about future product changes, it has released considerable information about Leopard and its new features. Months ago it announced the inclusion of Boot Camp in the Leopard version of the operating system; it even released a public Beta version of Boot Camp to ensure that users (like attorneys), who may have need to occasionally use a Windows-based program, could do so on the Intel-based Macs because Virtual PC does not run on the Intel processors.

Apple has now modified its website to provide a fairly detailed preview of what it considers the most significant (or at least the most appealing and exciting). Apple has created a tutorial showing off some of Leopard's bells and whistles: www.apple.com/macosx/leopard/index.html. Apple has also created Quicktime videos of many of its feature explanations.

In addition to the previously announced Boot Camp, Apple will introduce Time Machine, Spaces, and Core Animation in Leopard. It will also update and improve Mail, iChat, Dashboard, Spotlight, and iCal.

Leopard draws on the power of 64-bit computing.Leopard delivers 64-bit power in one universal OS. Cocoa and Carbon application frameworks, graphics, scripting, and the rest of the system are all 64-bit. Leopard delivers 64-bit power to both Intel- and PowerPC-based Macs, so you don't have to install separate applications for different machines.

- **Core Animation** takes advantage of the dual core processors capabilities to allow easy creation of impressive animations. Both the new Time Machine and the Spaces features of the system use the core animation technology.

- **Time Machine** incorporates back up capabilities into the operating system itself. It senses the addition of a second drive and immediately asks if you want to back up to that drive. After making the initial backup, the system keeps the backup current by backing up any changes you make to your files. Note that it does not replace what was in the previous backup, however. It merely takes the changed files and moves them into a backup location. Time Machine maintains the history of your computer and its files by date, allowing you to go back in time to see what you had on any given date. If you

mistakenly deleted a file or a folder, the software allows you to restore them. All you have to do is browse through the history, find it and restore it. Time Machine also lets you restore your entire system.

- **Mail** will have a handful of new features. Mail will have stationery templates allowing you to build your own stationery; you can even include pictures as a part of the letterhead by accessing iPhoto through the Mail media browser. The new Notes feature allows you to take notes about events, directions, or whatever information you wish to record and store it as email. You can even create To-Do's in Mail, manage them in Mail, and have them also appear in iCal.

- **iChat** improvements will allow picture-in-picture framing and the ability to create a virtual backdrop by subimposing a picture behind the image in the camera using the built-in cameras on most of the new computers. Just for fun, Apple has included the ability to distort the images on the screen, making them appear much as they might in a fun house mirror. Screen sharing may prove the most useful and significant innovation in iChat. It allows you to take over and operate a remote computer. This feature offers tremendous possibilities for collaborative work as well as for solving a problem on your secretary's computer, while you are several time zones away. iChat also includes a theater feature, which, in conjunction with iPhoto, lets you do a presentation online.

- **Spaces** will help you organize your desktop. It allows you to see windows for all open applications on one screen at one time or one at a time; clicking the dock icon for an open application takes you to its window. When you have the windows for all open applications on the screen, you can rearrange them using a simple drag and drop. You can drag applications into specific spaces, effectively creating multiple desktops for convenience and organization.

- **Dashboard** will let you create a widget from any web page. You can include multiple pages as well. By creating widgets for websites that you frequently visit, the widgets can function as a favorites listing of bookmarks to enable quick and easy access to your frequented websites. Dashboard now syncs through .mac to allow easy updating of all your computers. Leopard also includes Dashcode, a widget creation program allowing beginners to create workable widgets. Dashcode includes a number of widget templates. After selecting a template, you fill in the missing pieces and you have a working widget. Once you have created a widget, you can use it yourself and/or transfer it to other computers. If you create one that may have common interest, you can try submitting it to the Dashboard Widget download site at Apple.com.

- **Spotlight** in Leopard will not only search your computer, it will also search other computers on your network for you. The new version of Spotlight will include a feature called "Quick Look." Quick Look will let you preview a document, picture, or sideshow with a single click without opening an application. Leopard enhances Spotlight search syntax, allowing you to search for more specific sets of things and to include specific file attributes such as author, type, or keyword in the search. It will also support the use of Boolean logic so that you can use "and," "or," and "not" to narrow your search.

- **iCal** will allow participation of others in calendaring events through the calendar sharing features of Leopard. The new version of iCal will support the CalDAV standard. Auto

Schedule allows the comparison of several iCal calendars in scheduling an event so as to determine the best time for all attendees. In Leopard, iCal will have an event drop box that will allow anyone attending an event to share documents, contacts, presentations, pictures, etc. with other attendees by dragging them into the drop box. If you use an iCal server to schedule your event the attendees having access to the server can simply pick up the documents. If you do not have an iCal server, you can still drop files into an event's drop box and then distribute them to the attendees by sending invitations that contain the contents of the drop box. Of course, you can still keep your computers current by syncing your calendars through .mac. You can also set up an iCal server allowing the sharing of iCal calendars in workgroups, throughout a business organization, or among family members.

Apple sells Tiger for $129 for a single copy or $199 for a family pack. Apple has not announced a price for Leopard yet, but I would be surprised if it was much higher than that. Historically Apple users have reacted to new operating systems by acquiring them as soon as possible. I have no reason to think the release of Leopard will receive a different reaction. I look forward to the opportunity to get the new features myself. One thought, however—if you plan to purchase a new computer early next year, you might wait to see when Leopard comes out as, if Apple follows previous release patterns, you will get it at no additional cost with your new computer purchase, thus saving the price of a new operating system.

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Surviving Email

Raising the White Flag of Surrender

By jennifer j. rose

How many messages do you have in your inbox right now? More than hundred? More like 1,495? All right, is it 23,000? Tell the truth now. Are you using your inbox as a tickler system and filing cabinet, hoping against hope that you'll get around to answering that message you received back during the Clinton Administration?

Writing in the August 10, 2006, issue of the *Wall Street Journal*, Jeffrey Zaslow asked readers to explore what a full inbox spelled for them in his article, "[Hoarders vs. Deleters: What Your Inbox Says About You](#)"**.** Two years ago, copyright guru and *Wired* columnist Lawrence Lessig beat him to the draw, declaring email bankruptcy, wiping out his inbox with a single mass mailing to everyone who'd ever written him. He wrote them a polite note, excusing himself, promising to do better in the future, and asking them to resend anything of dire importance. You could do the same.

Admittedly, my inbox looks better than my desk, which could make an archaeologist's field day. Even though my inbox may not harbor cancelled $.29 stamps, expired AA batteries, and pizza crumbs, it still risks becoming a catch basin for odd email that I fully intend to answer, threads of conversations that resist filing in some appropriate place, and messages intended to remind me

that there will a conference call next Friday afternoon. There's absolutely no reason, save sloth, that keeps me from stashing the contents of my inbox into some other repository.

Last June, I lost the contents of my inbox and learned a valuable lesson. Shrouded in shame and ignominy, I had to beg those who'd sent mail to me to please resend important messages. It was a humbling, embarrassing, and time-consuming process, one which still remains unfinished. I swore to myself that I'd just have to do better. Sure, I still hoard email, saving it against the day and the possibility that just one archived message might prove highly valuable. And I'm perfectly aware that Sotheby's and future generations aren't going to place the same high premium upon a saved email that might be attached to a genuine signature from a Founding Father. Old email still has the same importance to me that the 1982 World Almanac sitting over on the shelf does, and it definitely takes up a lot less space.

Logic would demand that each incoming—and outgoing—e-mail be promptly deposited into a mailbox specifically created for its needs. But who has time to make all of those logical decisions? Filters and rules neatly direct most mail where it properly belongs, but that's not the mail that ends up sitting in the inbox. My inbox—and likely yours, too—is filled with mail that's not neatly pigeon-holed into categories.

Here's my solution:

- Create additional mailboxes to pigeonhole the contents of your inbox.
- The mailboxes don't even have to have logical names. Something like "Get this stuff done," "Odd bits," "Save it for later," and "Really good stuff that I don't know what to do with" are just fine.
- Each night before shutting off your computer, spend 5 minutes shifting and shoveling the contents of your inbox someplace else.
- Wake up each morning to a clean, or mostly clean, inbox.

Cleaning out that inbox doesn't have to mean missing opportunities. Nor does it even mean having to confront your inner child to decide whether you're a hoarder or a deleter. All it means is that you've now developed the good sense to hide the demons out of plain sight.

jennifer j. rose, editor-in-chief of **GP|Solo***, receives her email at jjrose@jjrose.com and has 23 messages in her inbox.*

ProductNotes

HP nw8440 Mobile Work Station

Reviewed by Jeffrey Allen

Over the last several years, HP/Compaq has made a concerted effort to create hardware to enable mobile professionals. Like most computer manufacturers, HP jumped on the Intel Core Duo processor band wagon this year and has released several laptops using the Core Duo technology.

I had the opportunity to test drive one of the new HP computers recently, the nw8440. HP calls the nw8440 a "Mobile Work Station." That name fits because the computer really does work as a desktop replacement with the added feature of mobility. Weighing in at 6.2 pounds, you will not likely get a hernia moving it around, but it certainly does not qualify as a lightweight. Someone looking for pure mobility would probably choose a smaller lighter machine; but for someone looking for a computer that would mostly serve as a desktop replacement and occasionally move around, this makes a good choice from a performance perspective.

The unit provided to me for review came fully tricked out with a 7200 RPM 100 GB hard disk, 2 GB of RAM, and an Intel Core Due T2600 processor running at 2.16 GHz. The high-end specs

came with a high-end price tag of around $3600, almost twice the price of the base nw8440, which comes with 1 GB of RAM, a T2500 Core Duo processor running at 2 GHz, and an 80 GB 5400 RPM hard disk with a price tag of just under $2000. Both versions of the nw8440 included Windows XP Professional, a biometric fingerprint reader, Integrated Smart Card Reader and Embedded Security Chip (TPM 1.2), a DVD+/- RW drive, Integrated Intel® Pro Wireless 3945ABG (802.11a/b/g), 15.4-inch WSXGA+ WVA display, a full-sized keyboard; your choice of dual pointing devices (Touchpad and Pointstick, both with three pick buttons) or Touchpad only with two pick buttons; both with scroll zone and a three-year warranty.

To support mobile use, the computer includes an ambient light sensor that automatically adjusts display brightness and HP Fast Charge Technology, which charges the primary battery up to 90 percent in 90 minutes then charges a secondary battery up to 90 percent.

For connectivity and expandability, the computer comes with gigabit Ethernet built-in as well as a 56K V.92 modem. It also includes 1 Type I/II PC Card slot supports 32-bit CardBus and 16-bit cards, integrated Smart Card Reader, Secure Digital slot 3 USB 2.0, VGA, audio in/out, power connector, RJ-11, RJ-45, S-video TV out, 1394a, a docking connector, and an accessory battery connector.

Part of the cost of the system comes from the use of powerful ATI Mobility FireGL V5200 graphics. The computer designers at HP drew the nw8440 up as a high-end machine to fit the needs of those heavily into graphics. The graphics system is overkill for most law office uses. You can find other computers in the 8000 series that use less powerful graphics components at a reduced price.

The bottom line: As a desktop replacement, the nw8440 is a highly capable, although somewhat pricey choice. As a purely mobile unit it is a highly capable, but somewhat heavy and pricey choice. For most law office uses, I would opt for the base unit, upgrade the RAM to 2 GB and then consider upgrading the hard disk from a 5400 RPM to a 7200 RPM unit. I would avoid the price increase associated with going from the T2500 to the T2600 Core Duo processor.

Amicus Attorney Version 7

Reviewed by Alan Pearlman
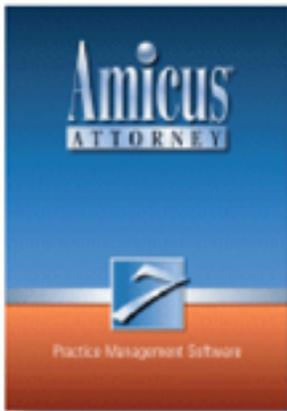
This new version of Amicus Attorney (www.amicusattorney.com) will allow you to move to new heights with office files. The program's new version affords several good reasons to upgrade. First there is the great new interface, with faster navigation, new views, and its ability to resize what you want and need the most. Multiple files and contacts all open at the same time on your desktop, and you have increased customizing capabilities. It also has a new favorite's module that helps you keep anything you use more frequently faster and easier to get to. The new e-mail management system allows you to harness 100 percent of the Outlook's power as it is right inside your Amicus Communications Center, affording access to all your outlook mailboxes. There is an area for more and faster note taking with a sort of "magical" legal pad that gives you the power to use it in an instant and then later transfer what you need to the file.

Version 7 links dynamically to all of the applications in the Microsoft Office Suite. Word will now recognize the names of all your files and contacts as you type them and make it a breeze to save your documents from Word into Amicus. Finally, the product will run on the Microsoft SQL Database that allows you greater power and the ability to be more flexible building on the Microsoft .NET architecture. The Amicus version 7 has so many new features that you have try them out to see what I mean. If you don't have case management in your office as yet, then this makes an excellent choice.

Amicus Attorney Standard costs $399 for the first copy and $299 for additional copies. The Premium Edition, which includes the Microsoft 2000 SQL edition and accommodates up to 15 users, costs $499 for the first copy and $399 for additional copies. The Standard and Premium versions do not include accounting software. You can acquire the Amicus accounting module for an additional $249 per copy. Amicus Accounting combines legal billing and accounting into a single program. You can use Amicus Accounting as a separate stand alone or integrated with Amicus Attorney 7.

Amicus Small Firm is designed specifically to meet the needs of the solo practitioner and small firm market. This easy-to-use practice management and legal accounting package ensures legal professionals stay on top of their practice and keep control of their day—effortlessly. Amicus Small Firm Edition provides the Amicus 7 software for normal daily tasks (calendar, to-do lists, contact list, communications, time entries, etc.), organizing and storing them in an integrated system. The package also includes Amicus Accounting, to provide a complete solution for you and your staff. The Small Firm Version costs $499 for the first copy and $349 for additional copies.

DivisionNotes

Fall Meeting Recap

We've just returned from the Division's 2006 Fall Meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at the Pfister Hotel, where we hosted numerous programs and events including the National Solo and Small Firm Conference and the Difference Maker Awards Dinner. A special thank you to our Division sponsors:

- Thomson West: A primary sponsor of the General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Division
- National Arbitration Forum
- Minnesota Lawyers Mutual
- Workshare

and our meeting sponsors:

- ABA Retirement Funds
- EPS, Inc.
- Strategic Settlements
- Green Point Legal Services
- Tabs3

Read about the highlights of our Fall Meeting.

2007 ABA Midyear Meeting

Miami, FL
February 7–13, 2007
GP|Solo's headquarters will be the Hyatt Regency Miami.
Visit the ABA Midyear Meeting site for more information, to register and book your lodging.

Solosez Threads

Solosez is an email discussion list for solo and small firm lawyers that has grown to be by far the ABA's busiest list.
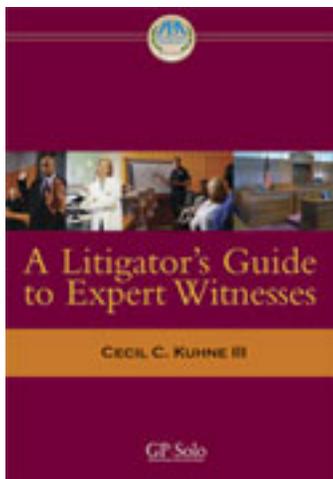
For a taste of what Solosez has to offer, check out the [popular threads](#) on Solosez's website. Last month's threads were:

- Timeliness—Give Me Some Advice!
- Third Party Acting as Gatekeeper for Potential Client
- Sticker Shock Over Yellow Page Ad Costs
- Mac Users Only
- How Long Must I Send Statements?
- Unauthorized Practice

New Books

[A Litigator's Guide to Expert Witnesses](#)

The admission of expert witness testimony remains one of the most contentious, critical, and interesting aspects of the modern-day litigation process. This book examines the role of the expert witness, focusing on taking depositions, expert qualifications, admissibility of testimony, attorney-client privilege, Daubert, rules of discovery and evidence, selecting and presenting experts, and direct examination of experts.

Price: $84.95

GP|Solo members: $68.95

Find out about other GP|Solo books at [our bookstore](#).

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