

Technology eReport



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Features

- **You Can Take a Long Vacation**

How to free yourself from the chain connecting you to your desk.

You Can Take a Long Vacation

By Andy Simpson

Many lawyers, especially small and solo firm practitioners, are afraid to take vacations that last more than a day or two. The reasons for this include fear that an opposing counsel will file motions or notice a motion for a hearing during the vacation; concern that things at the office will fall apart while the attorney is absent; and either inability to catch up in advance of the vacation or paralysis over the amount of work that will build up during the vacation.

You can harness technology to take a long vacation and free you from the chain running from your ankle to your desk. The key is to plan your vacation so that a brief period each day is set aside for work. Being on vacation with your family doesn't necessarily mean that you have to be with them 24/7. Before going on vacation, announce that you will set aside up to two hours a day for work. By announcing this in advance, you ensure that your family has no unrealistic expectations. You use this time to check in with the office and deal with the things that truly must be dealt with. In many cases, you won't need more than a few minutes to take care of things, and then the extra time is a bonus for you and your family.

Here's how you do it:

1. If you are not already paperless, you really need to go paperless. My laptop automatically synchronizes with my server every day when I turn it off. That means when I leave the office in the evening, I'm bringing my office with me. When I travel, I've got every single piece of paper associated with a file (up to the date of departure) with me.



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2. While you are gone, hire someone to scan everything that comes in via fax or mail and email it to you. This person can also answer the phones. You can look at your email during the time you've set aside and determine if there is an emergency that needs further attention.
3. Have a dedicated email address for work-related email only, so that you can check that email quickly without wading through mountains of garbage. Set up that email account to also forward to a Gmail or similar free, web-based account that allows you to receive email with large attachments. You can use this account if you are in a place with limited email access, or where you can't respond from your laptop because of the infamous "550 Relay Error" message. You can email from the web-based account (set it up so that it appears to be responding from your work email account). Instruct your secretary/temp to CC: all email with attachments to the web-based account. (This protects against your main email account exceeding the size limitations. To protect against mailbox overload, make sure that your email account is set to delete the email from the ISP after it is downloaded to your laptop.)
4. If something requires immediate attention, either devote some time to it, or get on the phone to opposing counsel or the client to ask for an extension. If opposing counsel refuses, call the judge's law clerk, explain that you are in Timbuktu on vacation, and ask for time to respond after you return. (Or, if you really think there will be a negative response from the court, have your temp call and explain that you are in Timbuktu and hard to reach and get the extension for you.) In almost every instance, you will get the time you need. If not, then you set aside a few more hours/days to get the work out that you need to get out. You might also ask the law clerk for permission to email your response directly. Once your response is done, email it to your secretary/temp [unless you can electronically file], who will then take out a rubber stamp with your signature on it and stamp your signature and file it for you. Since you have your entire file with you, you can use Adobe Acrobat to extract the pages from documents you need for exhibits, add a footer with the exhibit number on it, and include it in your email package to the secretary/temp. This ensures that the right documents are attached and avoids any worries on that part.
5. Get a cell phone that allows you to have access to your email at almost any time you need it. This also allows your secretary/temp to reach you if needed via email or phone.
6. If you are really fond of overkill, have your phones forwarded to your cell phone. But the ideal thing would be to have the secretary/temp take messages and once or twice a day send you an email with a listing of the phone messages.
7. Get a wireless network card ("air card") for your laptop (internal or PCMCIA) and buy a subscription from one of the cellular providers that offers over-the-air access to the Internet. This will ensure you have access to the Internet more often than simply relying upon your hotel Internet or looking for a hot spot. (It will also allow you to stay at hotels that don't have Internet or charge for it.) (In addition to being good for vacations, an air card is good for depositions and court time, too, as you can stay

connected while in court or in a deposition.)

8. Have a means to access your office computers remotely. If you don't already have that available, you can subscribe to GoToMyPC.com or similar services that allow you to access your computers via the Internet from anywhere in the world.

If you follow the above, you can take a two-week vacation without any problems. Worst case scenario, you lose a couple of hours/days of your vacation dealing with a problem. But if it doesn't happen, you have a great vacation. The strategy many lawyers follow presently assumes that they will lose those days so they "solve" the problem by not taking a [long] vacation at all. This assumption guarantees that you can't take a long vacation, whereas my strategy guarantees that you can take a longer vacation, but allows for the possibility that a portion of the vacation will be ruined. But even if that portion is ruined, you still have the other portion, and you still have a significant amount of quality time with your family. And if that portion is not ruined . . . a true vacation.

If you plan the vacation with everyone in your family understanding that a few hours each day will be spent on the job, the expectations are properly established going into it, and it will work out well. It's also a good idea to plan the vacations around times that are typically slack[er]. For example, when Christmas and New Years fall on weekdays, you can often fit in a 10 day vacation while only missing 3–5 business days.

I've restored server hard drives over the Internet from Bermuda; taken a telephonic deposition while in Guatemala; drafted briefs, memos, and letters all over the world; checked in with my office while atop a mountain in Colorado; and responded to critical email while vacationing in the Canadian Rockies and Dominica. It can be done.

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MacNotes

Keeping Safe from the Bad Guys

By Jeffrey Allen

I am flying home from Santa Fe, New Mexico, where I attended the GPSolo Division's Fall meeting and taught two classes in the National Solo and Small Firm Conference. I developed the idea for this column while presenting there at a session that focused on the question of whether one can successfully run a law office on a Mac. Of course, we all know the answer to that question: *Yes!*

You may not know that New Mexico considers itself the land of enchantment. I am not exactly sure why, but they do. (Maybe it is all the artists and galleries.) While I did not think the class was enchanting, I considered our program on the Mac law office the class of enlightenment, in recognition of the light bulb that



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goes off when attorneys finally realize that they can, indeed, run a law office quite handily on the Mac platform and, even better, that they can do so, in most cases, without the necessity of their own IT department, making it ideally suited for the small firm or sole practitioner. A brief survey revealed that about half the attendees at the class had already reached a level of enlightenment, as they used Macs in their practice. They attended to get some ideas about how they could utilize their Macs more effectively. The other half came to the class seeking enlightenment. I actually had several attendees come to me before the class and tell me that they were ready to be convinced to switch to the Mac and that they came for the purpose and with the intent of becoming convinced that they could run their office on a Mac. (I love an easy sell!) At the end of the class, several people told me that they intended to get Macs.

We held the event at the Hotel Santa Fe. The hotel has a free and unprotected Wi-Fi network for the convenience of its guests. I had a MacBook connected to a projector for the program. As I talked, I looked at my MacBook's screen and discovered that the "shared" section of the Finder Window listed a number of computers (Mac and PC) that shared the open network. I noticed that a MacBook Air belonging to a friend of mine appeared on the list (I knew it was his because he had named it after himself). I clicked on his computer, instantly opening it up. As it only showed other folders, I projected it on the screen at the front of the room, knowing I would not reveal any confidential information. I did that to make a point. I believed that most of the people on the network had simply opened their computer up to everyone else on the network, as my friend had, without thinking about it or, perhaps, even knowing that they had done so. I suspect that I reached the right conclusion as, when I started to talk about the exposure, I saw a look of concern on the faces of many in the audience (likely a number of which faces belonged to some of the other computers showing on the network as several people in the room had laptops open on their tables).

While much of the information on our computers may not have any confidentiality issues, because we are attorneys, undoubtedly some of it does. Some of the information may reflect our own personal matters, accounts, and activities that we would rather not share with others. Moreover, if we allow others open access to our computers, they have the ability of adding something to the computer that we likely do not want in our computer.

We spent several minutes addressing the security issue, and I thought it might prove a useful topic for this column. Now that you know how we got here, let's talk about how we protect against inadvertent disclosure of information or some bad agent adding something to or deleting something from our computer. Fortunately we have a number of solutions that can make things a bit safer for us. Unfortunately, virtually all of them introduce a level of inconvenience to our computing experience that, at times, will make us want to disengage all of them. No matter how tempting it may feel to do that, resist the temptation or run the risk of computer invasion.

Staying off of public Wi-Fi networks and any unprotected network will reduce

your exposure. Now we deal with some inconvenience. If you need Internet access on the road and want to stay off of unsecure networks, you need to acquire a cellular modem of one or another style and an Internet access account. That requires the payment of a monthly fee. You will learn that presents a mixed blessing. Having the card means something else to carry and, depending on how and where you travel, may increase your expenses. On the other hand, having the cellular modem may decrease your expenses if you stay in hotels that charge \$10 or \$15 a night for Internet access. Additionally, the card gives you Internet access almost everywhere a cell phone works. Note that some cards will not work in foreign countries, and, with others, even though they do, you will pay a premium for bandwidth outside of the United States.

Sometimes you don't have a choice. If you want Internet access and you find yourself in a place where your cellular modem does not work, you have to use what you can find or do without, even if that means an unprotected public network.

Presumably, you have already set up a password to protect access to your computer. If not, please drop everything you are doing and set one up right now! You should use a "strong" password. A strong password consists of a mixture of at least six characters, not in an obvious order (such as your name or your birth date). Random collections provide the best protection and the least convenience, as they can prove difficult to remember. Mixtures of alphabetical and numeric characters provide better protection than just letters. If you want to make it even stronger, venture beyond a simple alphanumeric password and use a symbol or two. It strengthens the password.

You will probably want to write the password down some place so that you can access it if you forget it. Although a password gives you some privacy and protection, you do not want to lock yourself out of your own computer with it. Do not leave it electronically in your computer, as that will defeat the purpose of the backup. Do keep it separate from your computer. I have seen some people remove the battery and write it in the battery compartment or on some other part of the computer or computer accessory. I do not advocate that approach. I consider it comparable to using the rhythm method for birth control. If you are lucky it works. If not, oh well . . .

By the way, if you decide to get a cellular modem, think about getting one that connects through the USB port rather than one that resides on a PCMCIA or Express 34 card, even if your current laptop has a slot for such a card. I make that recommendation to you for several reasons. First, not all computers have such a slot. In fact, more and more laptops lack such connectivity. Your next computer may not have the slot, and virtually all computers made today have at least one USB port. Second, if you use more than one computer and one has a slot while the other doesn't, the USB connection lets you easily shift from one computer to another and share the access while paying only one monthly fee. Third, you can separate the USB connecting device from the computer by using a USB connection cable rather than plugging the device directly into the computer. As

the signal may work better with elevation or with the device on a windowsill than next to the computer, that can prove a significant advantage. Note that an increasing number of computers offer a built-in cellular card for Internet access as an available feature. These will restrict you more than any other approach if you have more than one laptop, as you cannot readily use the access account with other computers. You really don't want to have multiple accounts when one suffices.

On another note, if you have not yet heard, Apple has refreshed its entire laptop line as well as most of its iPod line. Stop by www.apple.com or your local Apple store and check out the new equipment. We will have more to say about it later.

Jeffrey Allen is the principal in the law firm of Graves & Allen with a general practice that, since 1973, has emphasized negotiation, structuring, and documentation of real estate acquisitions, loans and other business transactions, receiverships, related litigation, and bankruptcy. Graves & Allen is a small firm in Oakland, California. Mr. Allen also works extensively as an arbitrator and a mediator. He serves as the editor of the *Technology eReport* and the Technology & Practice Guide issues of *GPSOLO Magazine*. He regularly presents at substantive law and technology-oriented programs for lawyers and writes for several legal trade magazines. In addition to being licensed as an attorney in California, Jeffrey has been admitted as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of England and Wales. He holds faculty positions at California State University of the East Bay and the University of Phoenix. You can contact Jeffrey via email at jallenlawtek@aol.com. Mr. Allen blogs on technology and the law at www.jallenlawtekblog.com.

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SurvivingEmail

How to Look Like an Absolute Fool on Mailing Lists

By jennifer j. rose

More than a dozen years ago, *The New Yorker* ran the Peter Steiner cartoon featuring two dogs in front of a computer, one carefully instructing the other that "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog." While pseudonyms and cute handles might still work well for posts to Match.com, eBay.com, and hobby lists, mailing lists designed for lawyers generally require that participants disclose their real names. But revealed identity still doesn't stop many from looking like complete idiots on law-related mailing lists.

Let's explore some of the ways that you can convince the world that you should stay off mailing lists:

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- Asking the entire list to “unsubscribe me right this very minute” when the instructions for leaving the list are prominently displayed at the bottom of each message.
- Persistently engaging in off-topic, inflammatory, and controversial discussion, even after being asked to stop.
- Posting a client’s personal information to a mailing list.
- Using an autoresponder to advise everyone on the list over and over again that you’ll be out of the office until 6 July 2005. Using the wrong date will make you look even more negligent.
- Responding to every message with “I agree,” “Me, too,” or “I don’t know.”
- Not trimming an overly long message or a digest of messages.
- Using a ridiculously long signature file, including quotes, a favorite poem, a mission statement, a slogan, and ASCII art.
- Spewing diatribes, political infective, and venom at individual list members.
- Beating dead horses into the ground.
- Distributing to an entire mailing list messages that are better saved for offlist and private email.
- Crossposting from another list without permission.
- Using a mailing list as personal bully pulpit.
- Harvesting other list subscribers’ addresses for mass mailings.
- Harassing list subscribers, either on- or offlist.

Nearly every human on earth, lawyers included, has done something remarkably stupid in face-to-face interactions, but memories fade. Akin to the much-feared permanent record, mailing list archives outlast human memories, and the acts of a buffoon can come back to haunt and humiliate lawyers for a long time.

jennifer j. rose is Vice-Chair of the **GP|Solo Division** and receives her email at jjrose@jjrose.com in Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico.

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SitesForSoreEyes

Our Favorite Sites for Researching Hardware Purchases

By Jim Calloway and Courtney Kennaday

Due to our natural inclination to be a little geeky, it could reasonably be said that we spend more time reading about, thinking about, and talking about technology than the average lawyer. We become more animated when the conversation turns toward smart phones, software, and scanners. So sometimes we forget that other lawyers don't share our strange fascination with gadgets. Most lawyers are too busy doing what it takes to earn a living. They might not know where to turn when they need to purchase technology.

If you need to replace an old scanner or want to supplement your desktop PC

with a notebook, we are here to tell you that it actually makes sense to shop online. Most chain stores are geared toward home use, not professional offices. If you're on your own, without the assistance of a technology professional, your safest option is to make your purchase based on educated research online—not driving around to stores chasing the weekly special. (And we all know how hard it is to get someone to help you in a big box retail store, much less someone knowledgeable or objective.) Even if you're fortunate enough to have a technology consultant, you will still want to educate yourself about their suggestions and the prices they are offering.

So where do you begin? Consumer Reports [www.consumerreports.org] usually comes to mind when one thinks about product research. Unfortunately, most of their content is available only to subscribers. Where can you research products for free?

Your bar association's practice management advisor is one person to contact. Besides offering advice on how to research products for the law office, he or she may have product information, books, periodicals, or even suggestions for products based on personal research.

You can also take matters into your own hands and hit the Web. We think that it is helpful to break your search for new hardware into two parts: reviews and comparison shopping for the best price. Reviews by actual users and the editors of well-respected online and print journals can help you weigh all the pros and cons, plus alert you to issues you may not have considered. Here are a few of our favorite websites for technology shopping.

We give our top grades to CNet, ZDNet, *PC Magazine*, and *PC World Online*. These four sites have many similar features, and all are great for boning up on all kinds of tech products. CNet [<http://reviews.cnet.com/>] and ZDNet [<http://review.zdnet.com/>] (part of the CNet "family") are two of our favorite sites for technology product reviews. Both sites are easy to use—you can search by category or by inputting the product name or model number. We also like the fact that you can find reviews for the latest products as well as older models.

Before we hit a local store for a product we've seen advertised, we hit CNet and Zdnet for expert reviews from their editors and from other users. We can read the detailed manufacturer's specifications and compare features with other products side by side. Because both sites are now owned by the same corporation, they usually cross-reference each other's reviews.

For example, on ZDNet, we searched for information about the Flip Mino (Kennaday's favorite video camera). We got a slick page with reviews, specifications, photos, and comparison shopping information. We especially liked the "compare" feature, which led to a nice side-by-side comparison of the Flip to several similar competitor's products. Very handy!

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The two best-known technology magazines have helpful reviews and product information.

A recent visit to *PC Magazine* [<http://www.pcmag.com/>] also resulted in our finding a user-friendly guide to smart phones, which referenced current models, simple explanations of the latest technology, and links to comprehensive reviews of each product. A nice feature of product reviews is the quick reference column, with pros and cons and the “bottom line.” In addition, you can watch hands-on videos of the products with further explanations from the editors. You can comparison shop at <http://shop.pcmag.com/>.

PC World [<http://www.pcworld.com/>] also contains reviews of numerous products. PC World’s Shop & Compare area is online at <http://www.pcworld.com/shopping/>.

In fact, both of these popular magazines place most all of their content online.

Three other sites are worth mentioning here:

- Law Technology News [<http://www.lawtechnews.com/>] for great articles and their well-known Resource Guide (free registration required for some parts of the site)
- Infoworld Test Center [<http://www.infoworld.com/testcenter/>]
- Solosez archives [<http://www.abanet.org/soloseznet/about.html#archives>]. As subscribers to Solosez, we can tell you that discussions of law office products are frequent. That is why we recommend searching the Solosez archives if you want to read what other lawyers are saying about their technology purchases.

Tip: In a huge hurry? Use Google or Yahoo search engine to search for the product’s name and model plus the word “review.” You may find an article from a periodical or blog directly on point.

The next step is comparison shopping. Admit it, nothing beats finding a bargain or getting the best possible price (for some of us, it might be the highlight of the day). Our favorite site? Price Grabber [<http://www.pricegrabber.com/>]. With categories from computers to baby clothes, a Product of the Day, quick links to popular searches—what’s not to like? Bottom line pricing is a great feature. Just plug in your zip code, and it will calculate your final price, including shipping and applicable state tax. Create a login name and account and save a list of products to be alerted to price changes. If you shop a lot, you might sign up for the weekly newsletter email, along with other promotions. What if you are already at the store, but you’re wondering if you’re looking at a good price? Use your smart phone to go to PriceGrabber’s mobile version (www.atpg.com) to make sure. Cool feature: if you find what you want elsewhere, use your smartphone to automatically dial the merchant you choose, and buy over the phone! Or you can

just wait and connect to the merchant online from home.

One we use more and more: Google Product Search [<http://www.google.com/products>] (formerly known as **Froogle**). According to Google, it's different from most other price comparison services in that it neither charges any fees for listings, nor accepts payment for products to show up first. Also, it makes no commission on sales. It includes product reviews from other sources, such as Epinions, PriceGrabber, and TigerDirect. Sellers upload their products using the Google content submission tool.

One of our colleagues is a big fan of www.buyerzone.com. While we're not really big fans of this approach because you have to complete a questionnaire and give the company your email address just to get a price quote, we pass it along due to the positive feedback we have heard.

Others to try:

- Shopper.com [<http://shopper.cnet.com/>]
- PriceSCAN [<http://www.pricescan.com/>], which claims to be a unbiased price comparison service

So what's our bottom line? Don't be intimidated by shopping online for technology. Most of the time, you can find the best prices and educate yourself while shopping for bargains.

Jim Calloway is the director of the Oklahoma Bar Association Management Assistance Program. He served as chair of the ABA TECHSHOW™ 2005. Calloway publishes the weblog, Jim Calloway's Law Practice Tips, at <http://jimcalloway.typepad.com>, and was coauthor of the book, *Winning Alternatives to the Billable Hour*. He serves on the **GP|Solo Division Technology Board**. Courtney Kennaday is the director of the Practice Management Assistance Program of the South Carolina Bar. She advises bar members on practice management and law office technology.

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Pinnacle TV for Mac HD Mini Stick

Reviewed by Jeffrey Allen

Pinnacle has created a nifty little USB plug-in that turns your computer into a television. Why would you want to do that? Maybe you want it because you find yourself waiting for a delayed flight at the airport. Maybe you want it because you find yourself in need of a break from whatever else you happen to be working on

at the time. Maybe you find yourself working on something and want to keep track your favorite sports team in the background. For whatever reason, Pinnacle's HD Mini Stick gives you the ability to do it on your computer. The hardware package comes with the USB connector, an antenna, and a connector for a cable connection. Pinnacle also includes a mini remote control. The whole package takes up very little space, allowing you to easily take it with you. To make it easier for you, the package comes with a small cloth bag to hold the hardware and keep it together in your brief case. The package lists for \$130 for the Mac. The Windows version costs \$120.

The Mac disk comes with El Gato's Eye TV Lite. The Windows disk comes with Pinnacle's own TV Center Pro. The software installs easily and immediately recognizes the hardware. The picture I received was quite decent (better with a cable connection than without) and, quite simply, my computer worked about as well as a television as a portable dedicated TV would work, with one exception. I found that if I had my laptop multitask, it occasionally slowed down and appeared to lose the signal for a fraction of a second, then recover it. A minor annoyance, but certainly acceptable as opposed to carrying a television around in addition to the computer. In addition to converting your laptop to a television, the software also converts your computer to a video recorder, so that you can record a show for later viewing if you don't have time to see it when it airs.

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Better Sleep for Better Living: The Chillow and Sound Oasis Sound Systems

Reviewed by Jeffrey Allen

Sound Oasis

The older I get, the more sleep I need and the less ability I have to function without good solid sleep. From time to time, I have found it hard to sleep because my mind continues working, even though my body wants a break. I have found that sound generation systems help me blank out my mind so that I can fall

asleep. Sound Oasis makes several models of sound generation machines. They all basically do the same thing: generate white noise to help you relax. The three models have different features to distinguish them, but all work well.



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S3000 Deluxe Sound Therapy System. The top of the line system lists for \$149.95 and includes a three-speaker system, AM-FM digital radio, backlit, dual 12.23-hour alarm clock with three alarm sounds and a digital calendar, voice memorandum recording, and a headphone jack/CD input jack. The S3000 generates 120 sounds (20 main sounds and 5 mix sounds create 120 sound environment possibilities).



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S850 Traveler. The S850 lists for \$89.95 and was designed with the traveler in mind. A small unit that easily packs in your overnight bag, the S850 combines high-performance digital sounds with a full-featured travel/alarm clock. The S850 generates 18 digitally recorded sounds, an exclusive jet-lag reduction sound, and has a voice memo feature. It runs on four AA batteries or with power from the included AC adapter. The built-in sounds include: ocean surf, north woods, thunderstorm, white noise, night train, spring rain, island surf, bonfire, stream, hidden cove, wind, asian garden, song birds, harbor swell, bamboo chimes, summer night, cooling fan, and rain forest.



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S650. The S650 uses a sound card system that allows the user to swap out sound cards and get additional sound themes. The sounds come 12 to a card. Currently, four cards are available. The first card, Sleep/Relaxation/Wellness, comes with the system as part of the package. The other three that you can add to the package (at a supplemental cost) are Ear Therapy, Spa Retreat, and Nature Journey. The S650 runs on four AA batteries or AC power. The S650 lists for \$99.95.

The good news for you is that one of the vendors has offered a discount. The Complete Sleeper (www.completesleeper.com) has offered a 10% discount on the S3000 through December 25, 2008. Use the coupon code "ereport" to get the discount.

The Chillow. The Chillow works off of the principal that water will absorb heat and in the process, cool you down. The Chillow consists of a vinyl bag with an airtight seal. When you get the Chillow, you activate it by filling it with water and swishing it around a bit and then letting it sit for a while. The extra air gets removed. Then you stick the pad into your pillowcase over your pillow so that it lies between you and the pillow. When you lie down on it, it feels somewhat cool to the touch, and it helps lower your body temperature, making you more comfortable. It offers welcome relief on a hot night.

The Chillow comes in two sizes and three models: the Original, Mini, and Plus. The Plus is a bit softer than the Original. The Original and the Plus measure 21" x 13.5" and about a half inch thick when filled with water. The Mini measures 14" x 10" and about a half inch thick when filled with water. The Mini lists for \$21.95, the Original \$29.95, and the Plus \$49.95. I have seen the Chillow Plus on sale for \$39 online at the Comfort Store (www.sitincomfort.com).



The War of the eReaders: A Comparative Review of Sony's eReader and Amazon's Kindle

Reviewed by Jeffrey Allen

For the last several years we have seen various manufacturers offer a variety of portable readers that allow us to carry a good-sized library in extremely little space. Imagine going on a trip with a full bookcase of classics, novels, and other reading materials in a small package that takes up less space than a single paperback book and doesn't weigh much more than a paperback book.

A number of eBook versions have come and gone, and new ones have recently been introduced. The two that stand out at the present time, the Sony eReader and the Amazon Kindle, square off against each other in what I have chosen to label the War of the eReaders. The good news for you is that I like both of them for different reasons, and I think you will see reasons to prefer one or the other, just as I have.

The Sony eReader

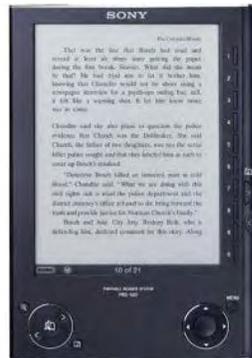
In the patriotic blue, red, or silver (well, it's sort of "whiteish") metal case, we have the recently updated and improved Sony eReader. The Sony Digital Book (model PRS-505/RC) lists for \$299.99. You will not likely find it discounted by Sony (but if you have the original eReader (PRS-500), you can get a \$100 credit for it against the cost of buying the new version). You may find some small discounts online. The new version offers substantial improvements over the older version, including a redone library management program that works very smoothly. The Sony currently comes with 100 free eBook Classics titles. You get to choose the 100 titles from the Sony electronic book library available online. The free books consist of classics that have no current copyright issues, such as *The Time Machine* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. If you want any contemporary writings, novels, etcetera, you have to purchase them at the Sony eBook Store. The Reader requires an account at the eBook Store to load free or purchased material, and you must connect through a Windows-based computer—Sony has made its eBook Store off-limits to the Mac OS for downloads. You can, however, use a Mac to check out the fairly comprehensive list of available titles at <http://ebookstore.sony.com/specials/sonyclassics/index.html>.

Sony's eReader will store about 160 books in its internal memory, but it accepts media cards, allowing for additional storage. It comes with two slots: one for memory sticks and the other for SD cards. You can add substantial memory by using both slots. With both slots filled and the internal memory, you could easily store several hundred books on the eReader. You can also store additional books on memory cards and swap the cards in and out to increase the effective volume of your library.

You can also put your own PDF materials on the cards as well as pictures and MP3 music. Note that the eReader only displays in shades of gray and black, so pictures will not show in color. The Sony eReader runs off electrical current from its built-in battery, a USB port, or an electrical power outlet. It weighs about 9 ounces without the protective soft-cover and is a shade smaller than 7" x 5" x 0.3".

The eReader has a navigation pad that allows you to move around the screen and a series of buttons that you push to make your selection. All in all, I found navigation quite easy. I also like the substantial feel of the case. The eReader also lets you adjust the size of the print to make it easier to read as you age. I found it easy to read text on the eReader, both in terms of size and contrast.

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Sony Reader



Amazon Kindle

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The Amazon Kindle

Wearing the white plastic case, we have Amazon's (www.amazon.com) Kindle electronic reader. The Kindle is slightly larger and a little heavier than the Sony Reader (7.5" x 5.3" x 0.7" and 10.3 ounces).

Amazon sells the Kindle for \$359. Expect no discounts and you will not find disappointment in your search. Amazon does not provide you with a significant library as part of its purchase price. Amazon has set up a special "Kindle" store as part of its massive website structure. Contemporary books go for about \$9.98 in electronic format at Amazon's Kindle Store. You can also subscribe to magazines, newspapers, and blogs or buy single issues of magazines and newspapers and have them added to your Kindle. You can and add your own documents and pictures to the Kindle as well. While you can connect the Kindle to a computer to add content, the Kindle requires no computer connection to purchase or receive books or periodical/blog subscription deliveries. Amazon has set up a cellular structure it calls the Whisper network. The Whisper network allows you to access the Kindle store and purchase new materials and then download them directly to your Kindle without using a computer. While Amazon has not set up a free Kindle library, with relatively little effort, you can find a number of Kindle compatible books available for download at no cost.

The Kindle runs off of a built-in rechargeable battery or power from an electrical outlet.

The Kindle has a built-in keyboard to facilitate making notes. It also has a click-wheel to facilitate both navigation and menu selections. You turn pages on the Kindle by pressing a panel on either the right or left side of the screen. The right side has a long panel button for the next page and a very short one for turning back to the previous page. On your left hand side of the book, you will find a

medium-sized panel for the next page and a longer panel for the previous page. The Kindle has a book cover style case to protect the device and its screen. I found the case somewhat annoying when reading the book, so I often remove it when I am reading my Kindle. Holding the Kindle without inadvertently turning pages takes some practice, but the skill can be mastered. I found it easier to read the book if I placed it on a table and only touch it when I wanted to turn a page or make a menu choice.

And the Winner Is:

The Kindle's plastic case feels somewhat flimsy to me by comparison to the solidity of the Sony eReader. I prefer the navigational features of the Sony as well. I enjoy the classics and liked the fact that it came with a fairly serious collection. All things being otherwise equal, I would pick the Sony eReader over the Kindle. All things, however, are not equal. Amazon's creation of the Whisper network and its ability to allow the Kindle to access and load new material as well as the breadth of the materials Amazon offers for the Kindle move it ahead of Sony's eReader in my book. Simply put, Sony wins on form and Amazon wins on function.

A Lawyer Should Always Have a Good Case!

I have written about the Waterfield (aka SF Bags) [www.sfbags.com] products several times, as they are among my favorite bag-makers. Aside from computer cases, general carrying cases, and iPhone cases, the Waterfield people have come up with a collection of special cases for the Kindle and for the Sony Reader. All of the cases provide padding and protection for the readers. Some afford more space than others to accommodate accessories. Waterfield has designed three cases, a sleeve (\$39), a slip case (\$27), and a travel case (\$49) for each of the devices. The travel case has the most room and will accommodate the reader as well as its AC adapter.

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Sony Reader Travel Case



Kindle™ SleeveCase

Jeffrey Allen is the principal in the law firm of Graves & Allen with a general practice that, since 1973, has emphasized negotiation, structuring, and documentation of real estate acquisitions, loans and other business transactions, receiverships, related litigation, and bankruptcy. Graves & Allen is a small firm in

Oakland, California. Mr. Allen also works extensively as an arbitrator and a mediator. He serves as the editor of the [Technology eReport](#) and the Technology & Practice Guide issues of *GPSOLO Magazine*. He regularly presents at substantive law and technology-oriented programs for lawyers and writes for several legal trade magazines. In addition to being licensed as an attorney in California, Jeffrey has been admitted as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of England and Wales. He holds faculty positions at California State University of the East Bay and the University of Phoenix. You can contact Jeffrey via email at jallenlawtek@aol.com. Mr. Allen blogs on technology and the law at www.jallenlawtekblog.com.

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Cost Recovery, Call for 2009 Solo and Small Firm Program Awards Nominations.

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Cost Recovery »

Per the October/November 2008 issue of *GPSolo*, Joan Burda discusses the question of whether lawyers may bill clients for online research (OLR) fees. The GPSolo Division in April 2008 conducted a survey of their membership to learn more about their cost recovery practices. Approximately 50% of respondents recover costs for OLR. To learn more about this survey and information on how you can determine if you can recover costs, please go to the GPSolo Resources page at <http://www.abanet>.

Upcoming Events

- **26th Annual National CLE Conference** »
January 3 - 7, 2009
Vail, Colorado

Upcoming CLE

- Teleconference
Top Tips for Avoiding Malpractice Claims »
December 17, 2008 • 1:00 p.m. CST

org/genpractice/resources/costrecovery/index.html.

More »

Call for Nominations! »

Nominations are open until February 2, 2009

The ABA General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Division is pleased to announce a call for nominations for its annual 2009 Solo and Small Firm awards. The annual awards program recognizes dedication to the practice of law as general practitioners or solo or small firm lawyers. Each year the Division honors outstanding solo and small firm practitioners, as well as bar leaders and bar associations at the Division's Awards Ceremony held at the Spring Meeting. Recognition is given for **Solo and Small Firm Lifetime Achievement, Solo and Small Firm Project Award and Solo and Small Firm Trainer Award.**

[Program Summaries & Application Instructions](#) for the 2009 Solo and Small Firm Awards Program are now available.

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