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Technology eReport

**SEPTEMBER 2010
VOL. 9, NO. 3**

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Doing Law on the Web: eLawyering for Competitive Advantage

By Richard Granat

eLawyering, also known as "virtual lawyering," is becoming an important strategy that enables solos and small law firms to acquire new clients, serve existing clients more effectively, and increase law firm productivity. Delivering legal services online, sometimes called virtual lawyering or elawyering, is a new way to offer legal services using the Internet as platform for delivery.

What Is a Virtual Law Firm?
A virtual law firm can be defined as a law firm that provides a secure web space for its client's and that is accessible only with a user name and secure password. This "client portal" is the defining characteristic of a virtual law firm. Unlike a traditional law firm website that is just a description of a law firm's practice, biographical information about the partners and employees of the firm, and some legal information, a virtual law firm is one that incorporates as part of the law firm's website a secure client portal. The secure client web space provides the platform that enables the law firm to comply with the rules of professional conduct that deal with unauthorized practice, client confidentiality, establishing the lawyer/client relationship, and conflict of interest issues. A true virtual law firm should be distinguished from a law firm that doesn't have a physical office, but in which the lawyer still provides legal services through traditional methods such as telephone and personal meetings. Using email doesn't make you a virtual lawyer. Moreover, online services that provide practice management functions such as timekeeping, case management, document storage, which are traditional law firm back-office functions, can't be considered an example of elawyering unless they are combined with the client portal concept as a vehicle for lawyer/client communication, collaboration, and direct legal service delivery.

Why the Current Interest in eLawyering?

The eLawyering Task Force of the Law Practice Management Section of the ABA was first organized in 2000 to help lawyers learn how to deliver legal services online. The Task Force has been operating quietly for almost a decade, issuing guidelines, offering CLE seminars, and supporting active discussions among the 120 lawyers who have joined the Task Force list serve. (Any ABA Member can join the list serve). However, it is only in the last two years that interest in elawyering has begun to accelerate. I believe that the new attention to an online approach to delivering legal services is caused by:

- Competition from nonlawyer providers such as LegalZoom, which is demonstrating that consumers, by the thousands, will turn to an online legal solution that is "good enough" in order to save on legal fees.

- A brutal recession that is forcing law firms to rethink their cost structures and pricing models to respond to a new reality of a smaller legal profession serving less clients who are very price sensitive.

- The emergence of a "connected generation" of clients, for whom Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and texting have been their sandbox, with the consequence that they will expect to deal with their lawyers online in the same way they purchase music, travel, books, clothes, socialize, and play online.

- Widespread access to broadband Internet and a dramatic increase in the number of consumers who search for legal information online. Google reports that searches for legal information is one of the fastest growing categories and has increased by almost 200 percent in 36 months.

A recent survey of more than 2,000 online users revealed that a majority of consumers expect good law firms to offer their services online in the next couple of years. The online poll revealed that nearly half (47%) of consumers would be more likely to choose a law firm that offered the convenience of online access to legal services and documents over one that had no online service capability. Some 56 percent said they expected good law firms to give customers the ability to use their services online in the next couple of years. Over two-fifths (43%) agreed that they would change law firms if an alternative firm offered a reduced fee in return for the consumer providing initial details about their matter online.

What Can You Do With a "Client Portal" to Serve Clients More Effectively?

One can think of a personalized web space for each client of the law firm, as an online platform for offering a wide range of functions that ordinarily would be provided by telephone, fax, snail mail, or in-person meetings. Virtual law firms are using the client portal concept to:

- Sell or offer legal advice online;

- Enable clients to upload documents for legal review;

- Create extended secure discussions about a particular legal topic;

Offer legal documents bundled with legal advice for a fixed price;

- Pay legal bills online, either for a discrete service or as part of a normal full-service representation;

- Provide a convenient client focused calendar to remind a client of important dates and documents that they need to bring to a hearing or to court;

- Provide instructions to a client on how to execute a document;

- Educate a client on how a case will proceed and unfold;

- Reduce telephone tag by providing online notifications and information;

- Provide legal information about a subject area can be provided for the client's benefit, as well as other digital applications such as a child support calculator, an alimony calculator, or a chapter 7 bankruptcy eligibility calculator, to name only a few digital applications that a client could interact with directly.

An Example of a Killer Internet Application: Web-Enabled Document Automation

An application often offered through a virtual law firm platform is web-enabled document automation. Automated document assembly as a desktop software application has been used by some law firms for years to increase productivity. Client-facing document assembly over the Internet is a new iteration of this process, which increases the power of the application. By enabling clients to insert their own information into a questionnaire, an entire internal law firm work process step is eliminated—the step of a paralegal or a secretary inputting the client's information into a desktop document assembly solution. A web-enabled document assembly application generates an online questionnaire that enables the client to insert their facts into the questionnaire that after completion instantly generates a first draft of the document, ready for the lawyers further review, analysis, and revision. The client doesn't realize that they are creating their own first draft of a document when they push the submit button, instantly creating the document. The speed and efficiency of this process can enable the law firm to often reduce its fee to a fixed price, while maintaining its profit margin for the document service. This is the same technology process that nonlaw firm providers have been using for years to compete against solos and small law firms, to the disadvantage of solos and small law firms, and without the benefit of legal advice and law firm accountability.

To be sure, a client interaction with an online questionnaire does not have the same richness as a face-to-face conversation, but the gains in productivity, speed, and convenience are preferable for some clients, particularly when the gains in productivity are translated into lower pricing. Moreover, consumer behavior is changing; and law firm behavior needs to change with it to remain responsive and relevant.

The choices for incorporating web-enabled document automation into a virtual law firm platform are increasing as the major document automation vendors such as HotDocs, Exari, Wizilegal, Business Integrity, and Rapidocs respond to this opportunity.

How Much Does It Cost to Set Up a Virtual Law Firm?

Creating a virtual presence for your law firm as part of your website requires that you incorporate Internet-based software applications that are accessible from your website through a secure user and password-protected client portal. Large law firms have had the capacity to offer this kind of a "client extranet" to their clients for some time, but only recently has the technology become affordable to solos and small law firms.

Within the last 2–3 years a new segment of the legal software industry has emerged to provide a "packaged" virtual law firm suite of software applications that are provided as a software as a service. Software as a service (SaaS) means that both the software applications and client data are stored on the vendor's server. This configuration enables the creation of a client portal for a law firm at a relatively low monthly subscription rate. The offerings of these vendors vary as well as the pricing, often depending on the range of software applications that are offered.

The cost of these packaged virtual law firm offerings ranges from a one-time setup fee of $99, and no monthly subscription fee for a basic service, to $300–$400.00 a month that includes fully automated and state-specific legal documents ready to go from day one. Thus, the cost of creating a platform for the delivery of legal services is now affordable for even the smallest of law firms, so if a firm wants to take advantage of this approach, cost is no longer a barrier.

Learning More About eLawyering

A good starting place for additional information on this subject is the website of the eLawyering Task Force of the Law Practice Management Section, ABA, which has developed a set of minimum requirements to help lawyers make sure that their virtual practices comply with applicable rules of professional conduct. The guidelines discuss such topics, among others, as: website architecture; ethics issues; the need for limited services retainer agreement; protecting client data, law firm privacy policies, and client confidences; and compliance with state marketing rules. The draft requirements provide a framework for further discussion. (See Guidelines here.)

Endpoint

It is not inconceivable that at some point in the future almost every law firm, both large and small, will have a secure portion of their website where clients can work with their lawyers and legal services will be delivered. Not every kind of law practice lends itself entirely to offering a complete virtual experience, but every kind of law practice can often find some aspect of its portfolio of services that can be offered online. We can't predict when the tipping point will occur, but it is coming.

Richard S. Granat is Co-Chair of the eLawyering Task Force of the Law Practice Management Section of the American Bar Association. He is also the president and founder of DirectLaw, Inc., a leading virtual law firm platform provider, and www.mylawyer.com, the Internet's only directory of virtual law firms providing "unbundled legal services" online. He is also the founder of mdfamilylawyer.com (the first virtual law firm in Maryland) and Maryland's Peoples Law Library—the first statewide legal information website. In 2009, Richard was named one of 50 "legal rebels" by the ABA

Journal and in 2010, he received the ABA's Louis M. Brown Lifetime Achievement Award for Innovation in the Delivery of Legal Services. He is also the author of the blog www.elawyeringredux.com. He can be reached at rich@granat.com.

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iPhoenix Rising

By Samantha Blake

Many of you shared with me the agony of parting with the dear old Palm (see "Cold and Dead, From My Hands," March 2010 *Technology eReport*), which, it seems, was the last PDA soldier standing. My little buddy went bye-bye shortly after the article was published, but it didn't go down quite the way I had anticipated.

Oh, I had seen the warning signs, but like anyone else in the denial stage of grief, I failed to take the steps to migrate my data that would have saved me hours and hours (days, actually) of work. My first clue was when I couldn't load the desktop application that came with my Palm onto my new Vista 64-bit OS laptop. My only option was a link from the Palm website to a download from a third-party provider that had originally written its software for Windows XP and hadn't updated it since. Suddenly, I could no longer sync between the Palm and the desktop using the USB cable. It took me a couple hours of tinkering to rig a Bluetooth sync workaround.

My second clue came a few months later, when I was printing out hard copies of my calendar in anticipation of the upgrade to Windows 7, and the desktop application crashed several times, requiring nothing short of full computer reboots to bring it back. After the upgrade, the desktop application worked for about two weeks. Then, one morning in April, nothing. I tried uninstalling and reinstalling it twice, but it was like performing CPR on a corpse already in rigor mortis. Adding insult to injury, in my euphoria over its initial successful operation, I had deleted all the .csv and .txt backup files I had created in preparation for the upgrade.

I can't remember much about the next few hours other than pacing, wringing my hands, and hyperventilating. Finally, I stumbled to my car and rolled numbly down the hill to my local AT&T store. The panicked expression in my

eyes must have delighted the salesman to whom the floor manager assigned me when I walked in. He circled like a California condor, figuring I'd be an easy sell. He didn't anticipate getting hung up on my multiple detailed, technical questions. For all the business-friendly features that were important to me, I knew that my decision would be from among the tried-and-true BlackBerry, the smart and dapper iPhone, and the sexy, mysterious Droid (which would also mean changing service providers). The AT&T rep was an expert in the BlackBerry only. I was leaning toward the iPhone 3GS, but was also Droid-curious. So I rolled another couple of blocks to the Apple Store, where the smart and dapper salesman was better able to explain the iPhone's ability to meet my needs and contrast its features with those of the Droid.

I was too burnt out from the day's excitement to go to a Verizon store and see the Droid in action, but already knew I wasn't ready to have my backup data 100% in the cloud with no desktop sync. I also knew from my research that a full-sized, portable keyboard (a requirement for me) was in development for the iPhone, and the buzz on user group postings also indicated a strong customer desire for one.

Taking pity on the condor, I returned to AT&T and gave him the sale. I brought home my new iPhone, then curled up into a ball to sleep off my post-Palm depression, knowing that the arduous task of freeing my data from its 3" x 4.5" cage lay ahead. The good news is that I managed to capture my entire 13 years of calendar data, notes, and contacts, which had multiplied like tribbles. The bad news is that I had to do multiple backflips to convert the various groups of data into usable form. First, I had to find a computer operating Windows XP, load the old Palm desktop software onto it, sync it with my Palm, then export the data files to .csv format. I had already given my XP laptop to my nephew, who was 1,200 miles away. Fortunately, my husband (the rocket scientist, remember?) still uses that platform on his computer.

The one file that couldn't be exported into a form readable by Outlook was my calendar, the very application I had to get up and running first! I tried importing it into Yahoo, then Google, both of which supposedly can read the Palm's .dba Calendar file and sync it with Outlook. Both found my .dba file to be unreadable. After an exhaustive internet search, I stumbled upon Neil Gerstenberg's tidy "Dba2Csv" conversion program (www.dba2csv.com). Neil is a programmer based in Scotland who wrote the program to convert his own Palm calendar files when nothing else would. For me, it was well worth the £30 investment ($47.29 U.S. on the day I bought it).

Dba2Csv allows you to convert your calendar from either the Version 6 Palm desktop application (the one I was running on my Windows 7 laptop before it crashed), which preserves the repeating dates, or the earlier Version 4, which duplicates the repeating dates as single events. For the latter, be aware that you should choose a cutoff date for repeaters when importing into Outlook. I didn't do that at first, and by the time I realized it was taking way too long and hit "Cancel," it was up to the year 2032 and still crunching. Although I redid the import, it took a good two days to find and set all of my repeating dates, then correct them when I discovered, after they didn't show up on my iPhone, that the "all day" entries in Outlook inexplicably started the day after they ended. (Later, when I upgraded to the iPhone iOS4 operating system, a

random few of the events in my calendar ran amok, further fueling my longstanding hatred for Outlook. Some events duplicated themselves and some all-day events became multiday events.)

Now that I had rescued my Calendar, I was ready to start playing with my new puppy, leaving the conversion of my other exported files for another day. I had never understood how people could become addicted to their smartphones until I took a hit of iCstasy, discovering the world of iTunes and the App Store. And I fear the iPhone is the gateway drug to the iPad.

There are numerous apps that have Windows desktop counterparts to sync with, like DataVault, which securely encrypts and stores my passwords and other sensitive information, and Documents to Go, which allows me to copy, read, and edit files created by the programs in the Microsoft Office suite. There is a document scanner app with OCR. All of the GPS apps are positively mind-Googling. I love the resident Google Maps app with optional traffic and Google Earth overlays, so I can see when I'm about to hit a traffic cluster while driving, or look at the surrounding topography while hiking. Then there's the TomTom app, for when I'm in a strange city and need to navigate to my meeting place while keeping my eyes on the road.

I realize this new tool really is a minicomputer in every sense of the word, much more so than any of my Palms ever were. If only my Palm had held out two more months, I could have had an iPhone 4G. Apple threw me a bone by offering an upgrade to my 3GS operating system, which I hungrily gobbled up, and which—lo and behold!—offered Bluetooth keyboard connectivity. With iOS4, I can multitask (like typing notes while on the phone). I found a portable Bluetooth keyboard by Menotek that is fun, functional, and affordable. With a flexible silicone housing, it is rugged and waterproof. It folds up neatly into the space in my handbag once occupied by the Palm and its keyboard, with room left over for my reading glasses. The iPhone fits into the pouch clipped to my handbag strap where my candy bar-style cell phone used to reside. No need to get a bigger handbag after all!

Once I finished my initial iCstasy jag, it was time to sober up and get my contacts converted. That also took days. Before importing the .csv file into Outlook, I exported the Outlook Contacts file so I could organize the Palm data using Outlook's own field names, only to have Outlook not recognize many of them—requiring manual mapping—when the time came to import the file back in. (Did I mention I hate Outlook?) But I do enjoy the smart, dapper, young iCandy hanging off my arm.

Samantha Blake has been admitted to practice in California since 1993. She is a director of EXTTI, Incorporated, which provides consulting services in the employment area, including expert testimony, training on the avoidance of harassment and discrimination to managers and employees, workplace investigations, assistance with disability accommodations and the interactive process, and executive coaching.

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ProductNotes »
BlackBerry 9700 and 9800.

DivisionNotes »
ABA Annual Meeting and Free Tech Training.

MacNotes
What's an iPhone 4? So Very Much.
By Jeffrey Allen

The biggest news in AppleWorld relates to the release of the newest iteration of the iPhone. The iPhone 4 represents a real and substantial upgrade of the iPhone hardware. At the same time, it marks Apple's release of a significant software upgrade in the form of the iOS 4.

Apple's iOS4 first came out on the new iPhone 4 and almost immediately showed up in iTunes as a free system upgrade available for earlier models of the iPhone (3GS and 3G only) and recent iterations of the iPod Touch. One caveat, though: while the iOS 4 works on earlier models of the iPhone, to get the full benefit of all of its features, you need the iPhone 4 hardware (go figure). Some people have reported that they felt that upgrading to iOS 4 on 3G and 3GS iPhones resulted in sluggish behavior of the phone. I did not notice that when I ran it on my 3GS for a week prior to receiving my iPhone 4. Possibly the slowdown may have only represented their perception; possibly it related to an actual slowdown that I did not experience due to different use patterns.

I like the iOS4 on the 3GS and like it even better on the iPhone 4. In my

opinion, multitasking and folders represent the two newest and best features (that run on both the iPhone 4 and the 3GS). The folders feature allows you to create a folder by superimposing one App's icon over another icon. The system creates a folder with a suggested name based upon the function of the included App's. The phone will suggest names such as "Navigation," "News," "Sports," "Games," "Utilities," and so forth. You can accept the proposed name or give it your own custom name. Each folder will hold 12 app icons, allowing you to see and have easy access to a substantially larger number of apps than you could without folders. The existence of folders has made all of my apps available easily to me instead of leaving almost half of them hiding in invisible pages only available through the use of the search function. Folders also give you an easy way to organize your apps. I strongly prefer having my apps organized by subject or function to alphabetically by name. It saves me a great deal of time, particularly as I have collected so many apps that I could not possibly remember the correct name of each of them, making the search function one of limited utility in finding the hidden apps.

Multitasking represents my other favorite feature of iOS 4. As the name implies, this feature lets you run one app, leave it to run another, and then return to the first and pick up where you left off. It works well and saves the time of rebooting each app as you return to it.

I will talk about Face Time (another major feature) later as it requires a combination of iOS4 and the iPhone 4 hardware to work.

We don't have space in this column for me to detail all of the features and improvements included in iOS 4, but you can learn more about it directly from the source at http://www.apple.com/iphone/ios4/.

The upgrade to iOS4 costs you nothing and improves the functionality of your iPhone 3GS or 3G as well as your iPod Touch. If you have not upgraded your software yet, I strongly recommend that you do so. I had no problem with the upgrade and have had no issues with the reliability of the new OS on the iPhone 4 or on the 3GS. As a follow up on iOS4 and the iPhone 3GS, my wife, who now has the 3GS, has reported no problems with its performance since she started using it. I have also successfully installed it on my iPod and found no problems with its operation.

For those of you that already have your iPad, the iOS4 does not yet work on the iPad. Apple has represented that it intends to release a software update for the iPad in the fall to bring iOS4 to the iPad. I look forward to the upgrade as iOS4 works much better than iOS3, and I want that functionality on my iPad. I believe that it will make the iPad much more convenient and useful to me for business purposes.

Now, let's turn to the iPhone 4. Apple's latest and greatest upgrade to its iPhone platform substantially improves on its predecessor. It brings a better design, a better and faster processor, a bigger and longer-lasting battery, a better camera, a second camera, and full use of iOS4 to your palmtop. On the other hand, the iPhone 4 has a few issues to contend with as well. First and foremost, it remains available only on the AT&T network. For those of you who do not have access to the AT&T network or who do not want to deal with AT&T, you don't get to have an iPhone 4 unless you pay the full retail price for

it, jailbreak it, and find a service provider that has a mini SIM card that will fit into the iPhone 4. (It uses a currently unusual-sized SIM card that, so far as I know, is available only at AT&T in the United States.)

Images courtesy of Apple, Inc.

The iPhone 4 became the subject of some controversy as a result of reports that problems have resulted from the integration of the phone's antennae into the exterior edges of its case. As the phone uses multiple frequencies, it requires multiple antennas. The edges of the iPhone shell serve as those antennas. If you look at the edge of the case, you will see lines across the edges that represent breaks to separate the antennas. By holding the phone wrong, your finger can create an electrical bridge between two antenna segments. That bridge can interfere with your calls. This so-called problem became the proverbial tempest in a teapot and received a lot of ink and commentary. It did not, however seem to impede the iPhone 4's fantastic popularity as it outsold everything else. In fact, while the antenna situation is an inconvenience and may even rise to the level of a design defect, it has proven only a minor issue. Simply put, the insertion of any form of insulation between the phone and your hand solves the problem. As most people buy cases for their iPhones that cover the antenna breaks, most users did not experience any problem. Moreover, Apple now has agreed to give away the bumpers that it sold for the iPhone 4 from the beginning. These bumpers cover the edges of the case and solve the problem (see image above). One has to suspect that Apple knew about the problem and designed the bumpers to solve it, which, to me, means that Apple should have sold the phones with the bumpers in place from the beginning. Shame on Apple for not doing that and trying to make a few extra dollars. As they have now addressed that issue, we can move on and enjoy the iPhone 4.

You can obtain full information on the iPhone 4 from the Apple website at

http://www.apple.com/iphone/.

The iPhone 4's Vital Statistics

Height: 4.5 inches (115.2 mm)
Width: 2.31 inches (58.6 mm)
Depth: 0.37 inch (9.3 mm)
Weight: 4.8 ounces (137 grams)

Cellular and Wireless Connectivity

1. UMTS/HSDPA/HSUPA (850, 900, 1900, 2100 MHz)
2. GSM/EDGE (850, 900, 1800, 1900 MHz)
3. 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi (802.11n 2.4GHz only)
4. Bluetooth 2.1 + EDR wireless technology

Power and Battery

1. Built-in rechargeable lithium-ion battery
2. Charging via USB to computer system or power adapter
3. Talk time: Up to 7 hours on 3G; up to 14 hours on 2G
4. Standby time: Up to 300 hours
5. Internet use: Up to 6 hours on 3G; up to 10 hours on Wi-Fi
6. Video playback: Up to 10 hours
7. Audio playback: Up to 40 hours

The iPhone 4 comes in your choice of two sizes of memory: 16GB or 32 GB. As the iPhone 4 does not allow the use of SD cards or other memory add on devices, you cannot end up with more memory than you originally acquire. Accordingly, you should consider getting the 32GB to give you the greatest utility for your iPhone 4.

Although Apple's website says the iPhone comes in black or white, Apple has only brought one color to market. Accordingly, much like the old Model T Ford, you can have your iPhone 4 in any color you want . . . just so long as you want black.

The iPhone 4's most significant hardware features, in my opinion, include:

- **The Retina Display**. A high definition 960 x 640 resolution in a 3.5 inch display, using the same IPS (in plane switching) technology Apple employed in the iPad) results in incredibly sharp and clear images. The display easily qualifies as the best I have seen in a smartphone. The use of light sensor and backlighting enhances the displayed images.

- **The Cameras**. Apple upgraded the iPhone 4's main camera to allow 5 megapixel images. While still not the highest in the classification, a substantial improvement and as good as you will need for almost any use you would reasonably want to put your iPhone to in terms of picture-taking. The iPhone 4 introduces a secondary camera that can take your picture and transmit it to another user's iPhone 4.

- **Video Camera.** The iPhone 4 also records and plays HD videos at 720P and 30 frames per second. You can record and edit on your iPhone 4.

- **Face Time.** This is a feature of iOS 4, but it requires the secondary

camera of the iPhone 4 to work. It only works between two iPhone 4s. It allows users to transmit their picture to another user while you watch their picture on your iPhone 4. True videoconferencing on your iPhone 4.

I rate the iPhone 4 as king of the mountain when it comes to smartphones. I prefer it to all the other phones I have used and recommend it highly.

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 GP Solo Magazine. He also serves on the Board of Editors of the ABA Journal. Mr. Allen regularly presents at substantive law and technology-oriented programs for attorneys 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 is an associate professor at California State University of the East Bay and the University of Phoenix. Mr. Allen blogs on technology at www.jallenlawtekblog.com. You can contact Jeffrey via email jallenlawtek@aol.com.

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SurvivingEmail
SPAM: It's Not Just Lunch Meat!

By Aviva Cuyler

here is little doubt that email is simultaneously one of the best and worst components of the computer age. It is the quickest and easiest way to communicate today. And, perhaps best of all, you can send, and read, email when the time is right for you (as opposed to telephone calls which require both sides to be available at the same time.)

The worst part of email—spam. In fact, there are hundreds if not thousands of products and services designed to fight spam—and innumerable articles reviewing these products/services.

Here's a summary of one of the best overviews I've found (from www.consumersearch.com):

Differences Between Types of Spam Blockers

There are essentially two types of spam filter technology: (1) software filters that you install on your computer and (2) web-based filters that filter your email and only forward legitimate messages to your inbox.

Most programs start with a set of default rules that label incoming mail as definitely spam, not spam or undecided. You sort through initial batches of undecided mail and determine which are unwanted. The anti-spam software then learns to create new rules so that you don't get similar spam in the future. This method can work very well, but users do need to spend time training the software.

Some spam filters block based on content—but spammers often are able to outsmart these filters by misspelling red-flag words and using similar tricks. Another way to filter is with an approved-senders list, initially based on your address book—though you can add more contacts as approved anytime. The difficulty with this method is that often new contacts will be classified as junk until you add them to your whitelist. The converse option also exists: blacklist filters, which block specific email addresses based primarily on web-based databases that identify known spammers. This type of filter is unlikely to block legitimate email, but is also only as good as the database that identifies spammers.

Another type of filter called a "challenge/response filter" will automatically reply to an unknown sender with an email that requires the sender to enter a code or take other action that only a human being could take. The downside of this type of filter is that it can be annoying for senders who are emailing you legitimately to have to go through these steps to reach you. Nevertheless, one study at least has indicated that this type of filter produced the highest level of satisfaction for business customers.

Spam Tools in Outlook

If you use Outlook, you may not need to look any further—as this program includes an integrated spam filter. Outlook uses a community-based filter called SmartScreen and, according to Consumer Search, Outlook 2007 also has an improved ability to deal with phishing messages (spam that is designed to look like it is coming from a legitimate source), and also blocks images in suspicious messages from loading (to block image-based spam).

However, if you are not satisfied with Outlook's spam filtering, or you use a different email program, the other options below may be of interest.

Software Spam Filters

Internet Security Suites With a Spam-Blocking Component

Some Internet security software (e.g., Norton & McAfee) offer suites that include spam software.

Norton Internet Security 2010 (Est. $45) has received high reviews for both its antimalware detection and removal program and its spam component. A tester at PCMag.com concluded: "In my testing with over 8,000 current real-world email messages, Norton didn't block any valid personal messages or valid bulk messages, and it only let 12.3 percent of the undeniable spam into the inbox. . . . Only the community-based standalone spam filters are appreciably better."

Critics have also given McAfee Total Protection 2010 (Est. $70) high marks for

spam blocking.

> In PCMag.com's testing, it missed less than 3 percent of spam and blocked only 0.3 percent of valid messages, while not blocking any newsletters or bulk emails. It's also more flexible than most spam-blocking utilities: it integrates with both the full and Express versions of Outlook as well as Windows Live Mail, Eudora and Thunderbird.

One more suite of note: ZoneAlarm Security Suite 2010 (Est. $70). Zone Alarm uses blacklist, whitelist, challenge/response, and message content filtering technologies. The program also includes an adjustable slider to control how aggressively the program filters.

Standalone Spam Filters

Generally, standalone spam software receives higher marks than spam software available in a suite. One well-known program, Cloudmark Desktop (est. $40 per year) is available for Outlook, Windows Mail, or Mozilla Thunderbird. The program uses a community-based filter: "When a user clicks the Block Spam or Block Phish buttons, Cloudmark compares this feedback with feedback from other users. If other users in the network also consider the message to be spam or fraud, then similar messages are automatically blocked in the future, for all users in the network." According to PCMag.com, this program "virtually never blocks a valid mail in error," and though spam is still "guaranteed to get through, the percentage overall is far below that of most other products." For Outlook users, another option is iHateSpam (est. $30), which is reported by some to be as effective as Cloudmark. For web-based email users, MailWasherPro (est. $40) is available—which filters for spam using whitelist, blacklist, database, and Bayesian filters.

Web-Based Spam Filters

Unlike the software described above, web-based spam filters don't need to be installed on your hard drive. These web-based services filter email and then deliver the nonexcluded email to your inbox when you go online. One advantage of web-based filters is that they don't take up space on your computer, but both types of filters (web and software) do slow down email delivery a bit (which is one common complaint of antispam software). In my estimation, though, that's a small price to pay to avoid the time and risk of dealing with spam.

Two web-based services that received good reviews: ClearMyMail (est. $25/year) and SpamArrest (est. $50/year). ClearMyMail filters your email in 18 different ways before forwarding it on to you. PC Advisor gives ClearMyMail its Gold Award in the antispam category. Spam Arrest uses whitelist and challenge/response filtering, and will work with up to five existing email accounts.

Spam Filter Links

For more information about spam filters, ConsumerSearch recommends these sites:

Virus Bulletin runs an antispam testing program with published results.

Consumer Reports describes email scams that use the 2010 Census to lure you in.

Spam Stoppers has some lists of reviews, plus advice for avoiding spam.

Spamhaus.org is an anti-spam organization that "tracks the Internet's spammers, spam gangs and spam services, provides dependable real-time anti-spam protection for Internet networks, and works with law enforcement to identify and pursue spammers worldwide."

SearchSecurity.com has articles on Internet security, including many on spam detection and prevention.

Software manufacturers' websites:

BullGuard Spamfilter

CA Anti-Spam Plus CA Website Inspector

Cactus Spam Filter

ChoiceMail

ClearMyMail

Cloudmark Desktop

Ella for Spam Control

Expurgate

iHateSpam

MailWasher

Microsoft Outlook

OnlyMyEmail

POPFile

Sendio

SonicWall

SpamBayes

SpamBully
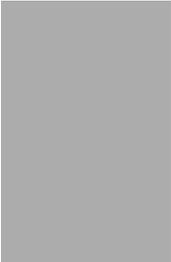
SpamSieve

SpamAssassin

SpamExperts Desktop

Spamihilator

Zone Alarm

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TechNotes
Cloud-Based File Storage and Synchronization Services: Access Your Files From Anywhere

By Nerino Petro

Lawyers tend to be some of the more mobile professionals who also want to
stay connected to their offices. Remote access to files and folders is no longer a
luxury but a necessity for many of us who are trying to maintain sanity in an
otherwise hectic world. Of course, we also want to travel as lightly as possible
and don't want to have to drag along anything more than absolutely necessary
while being aware of potential issues if we cross international borders and are
worried about data security. Luckily, there are a number of web-based services
that provide online storage and access to folders and files that you can access
from anywhere you have Internet access and that work with most popular web
browsers.

Some of the factors to consider in selecting an online storage and
synchronization service include:

- Does the provider offer a free account?
- How much online storage space do you receive?

- Can you obtain wither through referrals or by purchase more storage space if needed?

- Is the link to your account encrypted or not?

- Is there a way to synchronize folders and files between online accounts and your computer if desired?

- Can you grant access to designated individual or to the public for sharing files?

- Will the service work on different operating systems such as Windows 7, Linux, and Mac OS X, or is it limited to only one?

- Can you use the service for backup?

What you will discover is that features and storage space vary between providers with some being free and others having only fee-based options, most of them offer cross-platform functionality allowing you to share files between Windows, Mac OS X, and even Linux. Some of the services are primarily designed for backup, while others focus on making access to folders and files and keeping them synchronized between computers and the online versions their primary mission.

If you do an Internet search for inline file storage, you will get pages and pages of results. Providers will vary from small companies you may have never heard of to global providers in the Internet marketplace. This article will focus on three of the most popular services and then provide information on some alternatives

Dropbox is one of the most popular file-sharing and synchronization services available today. In addition to providing 2 GB of free online storage that can be increased by referrals or by purchasing an upgraded account, Dropbox allows you to synchronize files placed in your Dropbox folder on your desktop not only to your online Dropbox account but to other computers as well. When you install the Dropbox desktop application, Dropbox automatically synchronizes new and changed files between your online account and each Dropbox you create. One of the unique features of Dropbox is the ability to perform a Delta sync, which transfers only the parts of the file that have changed. This increases synchronization speed and lowers bandwidth requirements. Because Dropbox places an exact copy of the file found in the online storage on your desktop, you can work on these files even if you're not connected to the Internet or you lose your connection. When you reconnect to the Internet, any changes will then synchronize to your Dropbox account and from there to any other Dropbox folders you've created on other computers. Dropbox can be accessed from mobile Android devices as well as from the iPhone and iPad, while BlackBerry users can access the service through a mobile-optimized version of their website.

Sharing files in Dropbox is easy and straightforward: once you've add a file to your Dropbox folder, right-click on "Copy Public Link" to copy the unique URL that you can then email to others to provide direct access to the files. You can also share folders and can create a new shared folder or share existing folders. Once you share a folder, it will be added to the other person's Dropbox, and any changes will be synchronized.

Dropbox doesn't restrict the file type you can add and works with Windows, Mac, Linux, iPhone, and other Internet-capable phones. According to the company, public folders and files are not able to be browsed by anyone on the Internet, but can only be accessed by the specified URL to reach them. Dropbox uses SSL to create an encrypted link between your web browser and their servers. AES 256 encryption is used to secure files. According to the company, files cannot be accessed by anyone without your account password including their employees. One potential downside to Dropbox is that if you do have limited hard disk space, you will want to avoid installing the Dropbox desktop feature because the synchronization process places the actual files on your computer, thereby taking up disk space. Basic Dropbox service with 2GB of storage is free, or you can select 50GB of storage for $9.99 a month and 100 GB for $19.99 a month.

MobileMe is the synchronization and file storage service from Apple. A MobileMe account provides 20GB of storage for $99 a year. In addition to file storage, MobileMe provides synchronization of email, contacts, calendars, and photos. However, for the purposes of this column, the feature that we want to consider is the MobileMe iDisk. iDisk places an icon on the Mac desktop that, when opened, shows you all of the files and folders contained in the iDisk online storage space. You can upload and download files from any computer that has a web browser or by using the iDisk application for Macs or the iPhone. You can share iDisk folders with friends and colleagues who can access them via the Internet using a web browser.

Another feature similar to services provided by **YouSendIt** or other similar file sending services, allows you to upload larger files and send others just a link to that file by email. Using that link, they can download the file and avoid any email attachment size restrictions imposed by many law firms or e-mail providers. A very nice adjunct to this linking feature is that you can set a password for accessing the file as well as setting the number of days the file will be available for download.

One thing that is missing from iDisk is the ability to synchronize files automatically between a desktop computer (or other device like an iPhone) with the files in the online storage folder. Although if storage space on you mobile device is limited, this avoids the issue created by Dropbox, if the desktop Dropbox desktop applications is installed, of not downloading unnecessary files to your device. In other words, you control when and where you transfer files between your device and your iDisk.

On non-Mac devices, you access your iDisk and other MobileMe records using the MobileMe control panel application; however, this requires installation of iTunes version 9 on the PC. Like Dropbox, MobileMe uses SSL to create an encrypted link between your web browser and MobileMe servers. Accessing your iDisk (actually, your MobileMe account) requires you to provide your username and password; however, I have been unable to locate any information regarding any encryption or other security information for files placed in your iDisk.

While Dropbox and MobileMe (with it's iDisk component) are two popular online file storage options, they are not the only ones available. Microsoft offers its **Live Mesh Beta**, which is similar in some ways to Dropbox,

allowing for online storage and its desktop synchronization service, Windows Live Sync, which synchronized data between multiple computers including Macs and smartphones with mobile web browsers. Microsoft is in the process of combining these services in its new Windows Live Sync, which combines both of these services under one interface that is currently in beta testing. Live Mesh is free and comes with 5GB of storage courtesy of the Microsoft Live Desktop, which is part of the Live Mesh sign-up. The new Live Sync is targeted at people who use multiple computers and want to keep information between them synchronized while also being able to have Internet access to the file they need most.

Microsoft SkyDrive is the 25GB free online storage and sharing service that can be accessed by most web browsers. Access and security is controlled by a Windows Live ID and a password, but SkyDrive does not use the SSL protocol when creating the link between your browser and its servers, and there is no encryption on the files. Skydrive includes the free MS Office Web Apps so you can work with others online You can share a single file or an entire folder over the Internet with others, and, if you are always sharing files with a number of people, you can also create a group to easily share files.

There are a number of other services that are available including **SugarSync,** which combines web-based storage with synchronization between multiple computers and mobile devices. You can share folders and files with others, and it includes file versioning, saving the last five previous versions of a file. The web link to SugarSync uses SSL encryption and data stored on their servers is encrypted with 128-bit AES. SugarSync works with both Windows and Mac computers as well as a wide range of mobile devices and phones. SugarSync provides a free 2GB account, or you can purchase more storage starting at 30GB for $4.99 per month, 60GB for $9.99 with additional accounts for 100GB or 250GB of data.

Other services include **Syncplicity**, **SpiderOak**, **Drive Headquarters, 4 Shared**, Google via its **GoogleDocs** service, and **Box.net,** to name just a few.

So go ahead, compare features and sign up for one of the free accounts. I think your mobile life will be much easier after you do.

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SitesForSoreEyes
Where to Go to Schedule Your Meeting
By Rodney S. Dowell

One of my greatest frustrations when I was still in active practice was the time
I wasted trying to schedule meetings, depositions, and telephone conferences.
The shared experience of attorneys, especially solo attorneys, is what appears
to be an endless game of email and telephone tag. As a result of my frustration,
I was especially glad to find and start using a web-based scheduling program.
Since I first started using a program, there have been a plethora of programs
that have appeared for use, and I find that different programs serve different
needs. I have found that I consistently use TimeBridge.com as my scheduling
tool of choice. It is simple, intuitive, and generally well received by other users.
I select 5 date and time choices, and then an email is sent to my selected
attendees. The attendees can respond without my having to speak with each
attendee, without a long exchange of telephone messages, and without the
frustration typically associated with scheduling by telephone. If I want to
make the scheduling even easier, then I can share my availability with anyone.
(I don't use the tool myself, but it can be useful internally.) Once a date and
time is selected, you can add a free telephone conference, and the dial-in
instructions will be sent out, or you can add, for a premium, web-conference

capability. It is also nice to have TimeBridge send out automated email and SMS reminders.

I also often use Doodle.com to help schedule events with larger groups where I don't necessarily need every person to attend, but I want to find the best date for the most people. With Doodle I can suggest more options then with TimeBridge. Again, an email is sent to the selected recipients who can then review the suggestions and indicate the dates and times that each is available. Based on the responses I can set a meeting time that works for the greatest number of people. Like TimeBridge, it has free and premium services. Doodle has a branded enterprise solution that is ad-free and promotes your message when scheduling meetings. It allows recipients of the invitation to quickly reply, track replies, and send out reminders. You can also use Doodle to poll the recipients on scheduling questions. If you don't know where folks want to meet for lunch, suggest two options and see which wins. MyDoodle polls can be displayed in iCal, Live, and Yahoo for further flexibility.

The fee-based program ScheduleOnline is aimed at providing solutions for enterprisewide planning and scheduling needs, but also markets itself as a tool for managing multiple calendars in one place. The monthly cost is set according to the number of users and increases incrementally. The program feels more complex to use and thus may cause more confusion for some users. The program allows you to suggest only one time and date, and if the potential attendees have synchronized their calendars, it has a simple tool that clearly defines conflicts in schedules, and it has a tool for checking availability to suggest the optimal meeting time, even taking time zone differences into account. The preference settings allow you to customize the calendar to improve its performance for you, including the ability to view multiple calendars. Its bonus features are the extranet tools to allow better interaction between you and your customers. These tools include ScheduleOnline's web-based email client, a social communication message board, a tool for IM chats, and the ability to share documents through its cloud-based file manager. Palm users will be happy to know that this program provides wireless synchronization with the Palm.

MeetingWizard.com is also a free Internet tool built to simplify scheduling by allowing you to suggest multiple meeting dates and times to potential attendees who receive email invitations. It is much more akin to TimeBridge and Doodle then ScheduleOnline. After suggesting alternative times for a meeting, the program sends a summary update of the responses. It will also send confirmations of meeting times to all attendees and it can be used to automatically send reminders to all attendees. This program also allows the organizer to send a personalized note, and will allow you to quickly send an email when a meeting has been cancelled. Like TimeBridge it also provides tools to create agendas to distribute before the meeting begins.

All of these tools will synchronize events with Outlook for powerful integration of calendaring tools. In addition, most programs will also integrate with Google Calendar and iCal. Doodle extends its integration to Lotus Notes while ScheduleOnline works with Palm products.

While I find these products incredibly helpful, I also find that I cannot always

get attorneys or their staff to respond to the scheduling emails for varying reasons. Thus, I have learned the necessity of introducing the concept of online scheduling to the individuals that I wish to participate with an offer to help them get started using the program of choice. However, whenever I get full participation, everyone agrees that the ease of scheduling meetings has greatly improved.

Rodney S. Dowell is director of the Massachusetts Law Practice Management Assistance Program, which works with attorneys to implement and institutionalize better business practices.

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» BlackBerry 9700

» BlackBerry 9800

The BlackBerry 9700 (aka "Bold 2")

Reviewed by Jeffrey Allen

I have spent some time using a 9700 BlackBerry (the Bold 2) provided to me for review and working on T-Mobile's network. I have used the original Bold (the 9000) for the last few years and have liked it quite a bit. By comparison, the 9700 has a smaller footprint and thinner profile than the 9000. It also weighs less, making it a nicer fit in a shirt pocket and more pleasant to carry than its predecessor. The 9700 looks like a more sophisticated version of the 9000, smaller and more svelte. If you have seen the current edition of the Curve, the 9700 has basically the same size, but feels more solid to me.

Image courtesy of BlackBerry

The 9700 weighs in at 4.3 ounces and measures 4.29 inches x 2.36 inches x 0.56 inches. RIM claims the following battery information for the 9700—standby time: GSM, up to 21 days/504 hours, UMTS, up to 17 days/408 hours; talk time: GSM, up to 6 hours, UMTS, up to 6 hours; music playback time: up to 38 hours. In my experience, the BlackBerry devices do seem to hold their charge longer provide more use per charge than any other smartphone device that I have used. The 9700 does not vary from that experience.

One trade off for the smaller size and lighter weight of the 9700 is that the device had to have a smaller thumbboard. The keyboard of the 9700, like that of the 9000, takes up about half of the front face of the phone. The screen takes up the top half of the front of the device. It took some time to accommodate to the smaller size of the 9700's keyboard; but eventually I did, and, after I got used to it, I found it quite satisfactory. Some time ago RIM started building its keys with ridges that make it easier to differentiate the keys and to depress them. RIM continued that practice with the 9700, making the smaller keyboard quite usable. In all fairness, if I had not bounced back and forth between the 9700 and the 9000, I probably would have felt comfortable with the 9700 keyboard sooner. I prefer carrying the 9700 to the 9000 and, having gotten past the smaller keyboard issue, I concluded that the tradeoff made sense.

One big change is that the 9700 also comes with a small trackpad instead of the traditional BlackBerry trackball. That took me about 20 seconds to acclimate to, and I strongly prefer the trackpad to the trackball. The interface works smoothly and efficiently. I expect that it will work better over time than the trackball as I have had some issues with BlackBerry trackballs sticking as they get older. I expect that replacing the trackball will solve that problem, but I have usually ended up replacing the device with a more modern version by that time.

The 9700 comes with the BlackBerry OS 5. Although the OS5 offers some upgrades to its predecessors, it does not present substantial differences. In my opinion, the BlackBerry OS lags far behind the Apple iOS4 and the Android 2 operating systems in terms of user interface and features. BlackBerry has now released a new OS (OS 6), but it does not yet offer it on the 9700. I have seen

the new OS as it comes on the Torch, which I also review in this issue of the *eReport*. See that review for my comments concerning the new BlackBerry OS.

BlackBerry made its reputation as an email device. That has proven and remained its strong suit for a number of years. For a time, BlackBerry was the system to beat in the email wars. In the last few years, other systems have caught up to the BlackBerry in email handling and also offer the push technology that made the BlackBerry OS preeminent. While BlackBerry still handles email very well, it no longer stands alone at the top of the mountain.

BlackBerry does, however, remain at the top of the mountain when it comes to larger firm and corporate IT department support. For a variety of reasons (some legitimate and some questionable), the BlackBerry remains the device of choice for those operations.

I like the clarity of the 9700's display; but it remains one of the smallest smartphone displays I have used in some time. I prefer the larger display RIM employed with its Storm device. The tradeoff there is the physical keyboard on the 9700 with the smaller display or the virtual keyboard with the Storm and the larger display.

As a telephone, the 9700 works fine. I prefer using it with a Bluetooth earphone, as I have with most BlackBerry phones I have used (and, in fact, with most smart phones). The 9700 worked well with all of the models I tried (BlackBerry, Motorola, Aliph (Jawbone), and Plantronics). The reception will always be a function of your location and the service provider, but I have not found any significant difference in reception between the 9700 and other phones using the same carrier.

The 9700 works on both 3G mode and WiFi. I had no problem connecting the 9700 to my home or my office wireless networks. The 3G capability brings the BlackBerry into more modern times and provides a nice enhancement to speed and responsiveness.

The 9700 has a 3.2 megapixel camera. The 3.2 megapixels camera does not put the 9700 anywhere near the top of the heap in smartphone cameras coming out at the present time, several of which have 5 megapixel cameras and at least one of which sports an 8 megapixel camera. Despite its relatively lower resolution, the camera gives you the ability to take grab shots when you do not have a better camera available and actually takes pretty decent pictures. It gives you a nice alternative to carrying a camera with you everywhere you go; but if you want good pictures, you will find that a high-quality dedicated camera will outperform any smartphone, including the 9700.

The 9700 comes with a built-in GPS capability as well as BlackBerry Maps. The GPS appears to work adequately to provide you with basic directions, but does not have the sophistication of some of the iPhone apps that essentially convert an iPhone into a full-featured GPS device. That said, I still prefer a dedicated GPS device to any smartphone that I have used. Nevertheless, I often use smartphone GPS functions, particularly when I am walking around an unfamiliar area.

I just received a review unit of the 9650 (Bold 2 for CDMA). I will take a look at that and expect to review it in the next issue of the *eReport*.

If you need to get a new phone, want a BlackBerry, and use a provider that offers the 9700, you can confidently get one and anticipate the type of reliability that has become a standard for RIM in its BlackBerry devices. I have no problem recommending it. However, if you want a BlackBerry and use or want to use ATT as the provider for your BlackBerry, you might want to check out the Torch (9800). See my review of the Torch in this issue of the *eReport*.

The BlackBerry 9800 (aka "Torch")

Reviewed by Jeffrey Allen

The RIM PR people provided me with a BlackBerry 9800 ("Torch") to review. For reasons I will explain in detail below, I liked it enough to upgrade my personal BlackBerry from the 9000 I carried for the last few years to the Torch. Put in its most simple terms, I consider the Torch the best offering RIM has made to date and a significant step up both in hardware and software for the BlackBerry devices. Due to its unique (for a BlackBerry) slide out keyboard, it provides the best of both worlds: the bigger display of a Storm and Storm 2, and the physical keyboard of the other BlackBerry devices.

Images courtesy of BlackBerry

The 9800 weighs in at 5.7 ounces and measures 5.83 x 2.44 x 0.58 inches. The 9800 works on GSM/GPRS/EDGE 850/900/1800/1900 MHz. It works with 3G and with the EDGE high-speed data network. It also works with WiFi. RIM

claims that the Torch will provide standby time of up to 14 days and talk time of up to 5.5 hours on a single charge.

The 9800 marks a new form for RIM, the slider phone. At first glance, the 9800 appears to have no physical keyboard, but only a touch screen with a virtual keyboard (as in the Storm and Storm 2). Upon further examination, however, the bottom of the unit slides down and offers you a physical keyboard (see illustrations above).

Like the 9700, the 9800 comes with a small trackpad instead of the traditional BlackBerry trackball. I strongly prefer the trackpad to the trackball. The interface works smoothly and efficiently. It appears quicker and more responsive to me than the trackball as well.

The 9800 offers a multifaceted physical interface. You can use the trackpad, the touch screen, the virtual keyboard, and the physical keyboard or any combination of them to enter data and interact with the device. The touch screen worked far better than the one I experienced with the Storm, although not quite as well as the touch screen on the iPhone.

The 9800 has the best display I have seen on a BlackBerry device. It is sharp and clear and almost twice the size of the Bold, but about the same size as the Storm and Storm 2. The display is 3.2 inches and has a 480 x 360 resolution.

I have no issues with the telephony features of the 9800, other than the fact that I have some coverage issues with ATT, and the Torch is only available on the AT&T network. The Torch has a very functional speakerphone, but I prefer using it with a Bluetooth earphone. The 9800 worked well with all of the models I tried (BlackBerry, Motorola, Aliph (Jawbone), and Plantronics). It also worked well with the Bluetooth speaker system built into my car. As always, reception is a function of your location and the service provider, but I have not found any significant difference in reception between the 9800 and other phones using the AT&T network.

The 9800 works on both 3G mode and WiFi. Connection to my home and my office wireless networks proved easy to set up and maintain. I found the 9800 speedy and responsive both on the 3G and the wireless networks.

The 9800 comes with a 5.0 megapixel camera and a 2.7 zoom feature. The 5.0 megapixels camera moves BlackBerry near the top of the heap with respect to camera functions in smart phones as 5.0 megapixels ties the 9800 for the second-highest resolution in contemporary smartphone cameras. The camera gives you the ability to take grab shots when you do not have a better camera available and actually takes pretty good pictures. It gives you a viable alternative to carrying a camera with you everywhere you go; but a high-quality dedicated camera will outperform any smartphone, including the 9800.

The 9800 comes with a built-in GPS capability as well as BlackBerry Maps. The GPS works well, but I still prefer a dedicated GPS device Nevertheless, it offers a convenient option for use when I am travelling in an unfamiliar area.

The 9800 comes with the BlackBerry OS 6. BlackBerry OS 6 represents a significant upgrade and a substantial enhancement to the feature set of the

BlackBerry OS. The setup of the device occurred easily and simply. I suspect that if you have a decent connection, the set up process is close to bulletproof. I easily downloaded and installed some apps to add to the device. I had no problem setting up connections to most of my email accounts, connecting automatically AOL, GMAIL, Yahoo, Microsoft, and one private email server. I had to manually insert information to make connections to another private server.

I liked the browsing experience with the Torch and OS 6 better than any previous BlackBerry Internet browsing experience I have had. When I had a good connection, pages loaded fairly quickly and the larger screen made them much more easily readable. I like the new browser interface as well. The search bar added by the new OS worked well and enhanced the experience.

The Torch and OS 6 lean toward social networking, as do many of the new smartphones and their operating systems. I am not the world's biggest fan of social networking sites, so that did not prove an exciting new capability for me; but for those of you who find social networking irresistible (or at least attractive), the Torch and BlackBerry OS 6 will give that to you.

I have not decided whether this results from the new OS or an improved touch screen or both, but the virtual keyboard on the Torch is significantly better than the one RIM introduced on the Storm. I have not had the opportunity to work with the Storm 2, so I cannot compare it to that device. The bottom line is that the touch screen on the 9800 works well as does the virtual keyboard.

My overall analysis of BlackBerry OS 6 is that, while it somewhat closes the gap between the BlackBerry OS and Apple's iOS 4 and Android 2.2, in my opinion the BlackBerry OS remains in third place behind both Apple and the Android OS.
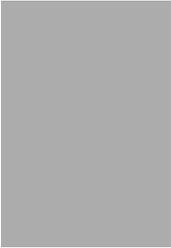
If you need to get a new phone, want a BlackBerry, and use or want to use ATT as the provider for your BlackBerry, I strongly recommend that you look at the Torch. For my money, RIM has never made a better or more functional device. There are other smartphones I would choose over the Torch (but surprisingly few), and certainly no other BlackBerry units. If you work in an environment that requires that you use a BlackBerry, I would choose the Torch over all other models (exclusive of carrier considerations).

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 GP Solo Magazine. He also serves on the Board of Editors of the ABA Journal. Mr. Allen regularly presents at substantive law and technology-oriented programs for attorneys 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 is an associate professor at California State University of the East Bay and the University of Phoenix. Mr.

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Technology eReport

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HOME

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Sites for Sore Eyes »
Where to Go to Schedule Your Meeting.

ProductNotes »
BlackBerry 9700 and 9800.

DivisionNotes »
ABA Annual Meeting and Free Tech Training.

DivisionNotes

Have You Accessed the ABA Smart Soloing Center?

The American Bar Association has launched the Smart Soloing Center—an online resource that is the latest in the Association's growing portfolio of products and services designed for sole practitioners. The center aggregates content from across the ABA's website and a host of Internet sources. It includes:

- The Solo Blog Network, featuring posts from some of the most insightful lawyers who are writing about the joys and challenges of solo practice.
- Articles drawn from the ABA's dozens of substantive law magazines.
- The most popular discussions from SoloSez, the ABA's free email discussion list for solo practitioners.
- The latest news about solos and small firms from the daily feed of the *ABA Journal*.
- Links to a wide variety of websites for solos.

Solo and Small Firm Project Award Winners: State Bar of Wisconsin and Milwaukee Bar Association (Joint Project) Solo and Small Firm Conference

The Project Award was accepted by Nerino Petro (State Bar of Wisconsin) and Britt Wegner (Milwaukee Bar Association)

The 2009 Wisconsin Solo and Small Firm Conference (WSSFC) arose from a partnership between the State Bar of Wisconsin and the Milwaukee Bar Association. The Conference had several goals: delivering top quality educational information at an affordable cost, providing hands-on resources and materials, and doing so in a relaxed resort setting that maximized the opportunity to benefit from 32 program sessions spread over 2½ days (October 20–22, 2009)! The programs tracked each day in four areas: substantive law, practice management, technology, and ethics.

At all times throughout the planning process, the coordinators recognized the effect the struggling national and state economy was having on the target audience: solo and small firm practitioners. The coordinators successfully juggled seemingly conflicting principles: quality at a low cost. Financial aid was offered with graduated rates, subsidies, and sponsorship contribution. More than 98 percent of attendees want to return in 2010 and/or would recommend the conference to colleagues. What better measure of success in delivery?

Call for 2010 Difference Makers Awards Nominations

The ABA General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Division is pleased to announce a call for nominations for its annual Difference Makers Awards Program to recognize extraordinary lawyers who "make a difference" by breaking down barriers for women, people of color, people with disabilities and regardless of sexual orientation.

These awards have been expanded to honor local attorneys whose dedication has made a difference to the profession or the community where the Division's fall conference is held. However, the winners are not limited to only those in the local community. Rather than only recognizing solo/small firm lawyers or those working in the solo/small firm sections of local and state bars, these awards are intended for any size firm lawyers, educators, judges, and so forth who fulfill one of the award categories. Recognition is given in the areas of Breaking Barriers, Community Service, Service to the Profession, and Pro Bono Service.

Winners will be honored at the Division's 2010 Fall Meeting and National Solo & Small Firm Conference Awards Ceremony in Austin, TX, on Friday, October 22, 2010.

Applications must be submitted by email to genpractice@abanet.org, faxed to (312) 988-5711 or postmarked no later than **August 31, 2010**.

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The ABA General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Division's awards program is underwritten by the generous support of West, a Thomson Reuters business.

Service to Others Recognition

At the GPSolo Council meeting in San Francisco on August 7, outgoing Division Chair James Durant presented Service to Others recognition certificates to:

Jeffrey Allen of Oakland, CA

Marvin Dang of Honolulu, HI
David Lefton of Cincinnati, OH
David Levesque of Damariscotta, ME
James Schwartz of Chicago, IL
Bryan Spencer of Austin, TX
SoloSez, the Internet discussion forum for solos and small firm lawyers

Call for Nomination for Officers and Council Member-at-Large— 2011/2012

Joseph A. DeWoskin has appointed N. Kay Bridger-Riley to serve as chair of the Division's Nominating Committee for the 2010–2011 bar year. The committee members are Chauntis Jenkins, Stephen Rosales, Patricia Sexton, and Alan Olson.

The Nominating Committee will meet during the 2010 Fall Meeting in Austin, TX, October
21–23, at the Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol to nominate members for the positions of Division Vice Chair, Secretary, and Members-At-Large of the Council. In accordance with § 4.4 of the bylaws, the Committee will nominate five Council Members-At-Large to serve four-year terms. Minority applicants are encouraged. The duties, terms of office, and eligibility requirements for each of the positions to be filled are outlined in the Division bylaws.

Please return your completed questionnaire to the Division Office via email at genpractice@abanet.org or via fax at (312) 988-5711 or mail directly to ABA, General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Division, 321 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60654 postmarked by Friday, **October 8, 2010.** Click here to download a copy of the nominating application or visit the website at www.abanet.org/genpractice.

During the Fall Meeting, each interested individual will have an opportunity to appear in person before the Nominating Committee to discuss his or her qualifications and aspirations. Please note that a personal appearance is not necessary for an individual to be considered by the Committee. Further, an appearance before the Committee will not entitle one to reimbursement for attendance at the meeting.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact N. Kay Bridger-Riley at (918) 933-9047 or by email at Kay@bridger-riley.com

2010 Fall Meeting & National Solo and Small Firm Conference

October 22–23, 2010
Sheraton Austin at the Capitol
Austin, TX

The General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Division invites you and your family to join us for the ABA GPSolo Division Fall Meeting at the Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol in Austin, TX, from October 21–23, 2010.

This year's meeting, the 5th Annual National Solo and Small Firm Conference, is chaired by Vicki Levy Eskin and features tracks dedicated to Smart Substantive Law, Smart Soloing, and Smart Practice, with speakers hailing from Waukesha and Guadalajara and points in between.

After the GPSolo Council holds its meeting on Thursday afternoon, we'll enjoy a Welcome Reception at Threadgill's World Headquarters (adjacent to Armadillo World Headquarters). On Friday, we'll have a lunch and our awards ceremony to help kick off the National Solo and Small Firm Conference, and follow up with a reception for conferees on Friday evening. We will finish the conference on

Saturday afternoon with a closing plenary session—60 Tips in 60 Minutes.

You may now register for the Fall Meeting & National Solo and Small Firm Conference. Please click here to take you to the registration page.

The Fall Meeting & National Solo and Small Firm Conference website is now available. Please click here to take you to the website. Please be sure to check the schedule because we will be having committee meetings on Thursday morning.

We will also be joined by the ABA Standing Committee on Group & Prepaid Legal Services/API Board.

We're really looking forward to seeing all of you in the capital of the Lone Star State.

And, as my wife and kids would say, "Hook 'em, Horns!"

Joseph A. DeWoskin
Chair, General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Division

GPSolo has reserved a limited number of rooms at a discounted rate, which are available on a first-come, first-served basis until Wednesday, September 29, 2010, at 5:00 p.m. (CST). To confirm a reservation, visit American Bar Association - GP Solo Fall Meeting 2010 or call the hotel directly at (512) 478-1111 or (888) 627-8349 and mention the ABA General Practice 2010 Fall Meeting to receive the special low rate of $149 single/double. The discounted rates are available three days prior to and three days after the official meeting dates on a space-available basis.

All reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or deposit check. Individuals with guaranteed reservations must cancel their reservations 72 hours prior to the scheduled day of arrival to avoid a one-night cancellation charge. For more information visit our website.