The Right Tool for the Task - TrialPad™ or TrialDirector™

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The advent of the iPad has quickly broadened the choices for trial presentation software. iPad app developers recognized the need for intuitive, budget friendly apps that can be used to display electronic evidence in the courtroom. TrialPad is one of the most notable of the trial presentation apps. TrialPad brings courtroom presentation tools, albeit limited, into the hands of attorneys and paralegals. Though not nearly as feature-rich and robust as PC-based TrialDirector, TrialPad gives the user the ability to display documents and video in the courtroom. The software also has a small set of presentation tools that allow the user to annotate, zoom in, callout, and compare documents side-by-side.

TrialPad readily imports the most common file formats and allows organization of files into folders. Basic video clip editing is supported; however, the clumsy interface makes it nearly impossible to edit with any precision. Moreover, videos must be converted to a file format supported by the iPad such as Quicktime, rather than the standard MPEG 1. One feature, "Whiteboard", allows the user to create very simple line drawings on-the-fly and publish them to the jury. TrialPad can also be used in conjunction with Apple TV to present wirelessly to an HDMI-equipped display.

In summary, TrialPad's intuitive interface, simple presentation tools and $89 license fee makes it an attractive option for iPad-savvy attorneys who don't necessarily need the horsepower of TrialDirector.

While TrialPad is an option for small presentations or hearings, TrialDirector should be the software of choice for most document or video-heavy trial work. TrialDirector is considered by many to be the gold standard, and is arguably the best trial presentation software on the market today. TrialDirector has all of the features of a trial presentation program such as zooming, callouts, on-the-fly video editing and annotations, but TrialDirector is much more than a presentation tool. It is a complete case management software package that integrates with third party programs such as Concordance, LiveNote and CT Summation. The software also allows the user to manage and prepare case exhibits, issue code transcripts, synch and edit video depositions, brand image files, and create a coding database of all case documents. TrialDirector's proven stability and exceptional suite of presentation tools ensure a flawless and professional presentation. The downside for attorneys - the learning curve is such that it's best to have an experienced trial presentation specialist to build, manage and present the case in TrialDirector. This allows the attorney to focus on the day's proceedings and his argument, rather than fumbling with the technology.

Budget and the complexity of the case or hearing will be two of the factors guiding the decision about which trial presentation software to use. Trial presentation software, much like the trial team itself, must be robust and flexible to adapt to the changing dynamic of a trial. Regardless of whether one opts for TrialPad or TrialDirector, the ultimate goal of both is to deliver a strong and persuasive presentation. Choosing the right tool for the task is just the first step in communicating an effective and convincing argument to the jury.

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