

## Q&A: Building a Trial Notebook on the iPad

by Rob Dean



The first time I prepared for trial, the boxes overwhelmed our office.

I was working as a paralegal. We represented the plaintiff in a [nursing home lawsuit](#). My boss assigned me “wrangling” responsibilities – to make sense of the exhibits. All I can remember is (1) the burnt smell of photocopied paper, (2) the monotony of three-hole punching, by hand, thousands of pages of records, and (3) the oppressive fluorescent light casting the file room in a dull pallor. Okay, it wasn’t that bad. But we spent an inordinate amount of time preparing. It’s all changed with the advent of electronic records.

In response to a reader question, here is a quick summary of how to prepare for trial on the iPad .

A Virginia lawyer asked:

*I have a case that I will be trying in two weeks. I came across your blog as I was searching for reviews on apps used for trial presentation. I am writing you to get your advice as I intend to take the leap and present at least part of my case using the iPad. What is the best app for presenting documents, annotations, and video depositions? What are the advantages and disadvantages of GoodReader that you find? What about TrialPad?*

Here’s my response:

*My trial setup is my iPad, .pdf copies of my exhibits in the [TrialPad](#) app, a connection cable (Digital AV adapter for HDMI or VGA adapter for VGA), and either a projector/screen or flat-panel TV. I don’t use AirPlay/Apple TV because (1) the floating animals on the screen saver on Apple TV look kind of silly during trial, and (2) there can be occasional WiFi connection issues. I have found that connecting your iPad with a cord to the projector or screen works fine.*

*Regarding apps, [my day-to-day practice is managed within Dropbox](#). I create a new case folder within Dropbox on my PC desktop and add subfolders for jury selection, opening statements, witnesses, exhibits, motions, and closing argument. I will save copies of various documents to the corresponding subfolder as I prepare for trial – argument outlines, key cases, transcripts, medical records, labeled exhibits, etc. Then, I sync my Dropbox folder to the [GoodReader](#) app – and voila, that’s my iPad trial notebook. Of course, I print out paper copies of my exhibits to give the court, and being the Type-A trial lawyer that I am, I make a paper backup copy of my trial notebook just in case.*

*That pretty much sums up how I use the iPad to get ready for trial. There are other apps that I love that do a variety of tasks – legal research with [Lexis Advance](#); slicing and dicing .pdf documents with [PDF Expert](#); staying connected to various legal publications via [Mr. Reader](#), [Instapaper](#), and [Twitter](#); and, making presentations with [Keynote](#).*

Having worked with paper in the past, and left it behind, I could not imagine preparing for trial without a tablet computer to replace my trial notebook.

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Roanoke, Virginia

May 9, 2013

Topic: "iPad Presentation at Trial: Presenting Your Case with TrialPad, Keynote, and Exhibit View"