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TECHNOLOGY, UNCATEGORIZED Today's Tech: How An Adjunct Professor Teaches Law Students Trial Technology

By NICOLE BLACK 1 Comment / 85 Shares / Jan 15, 2015 at 11:06 AM

In my last column, I shared how one law school professor used technology to engage her students in the classroom and better prepare them to practice law in the 21st century.



Bonnie Kipp is just such a professor. Bonnie serves as Judge McKeague's judicial assistant in United States Court of Appeals and is an adjunct professor who teaches "Technology Enhanced Trial Advocacy" at Michigan State University College of Law's Trial Practice Institute.

"I began teaching law students how to use trial technology after watching attorneys struggle with the technology. Our courtroom was one of the first to be wired for technology presentation and when the judge began to require lawyers to use it, I realized how difficult it was for many of them.

According to Bonnie, using trial technology to present cases to juries is the future and it simply makes sense to teach law students the ins and outs of trial presentation technology: "Electronic evidence presentation is only going to grow from here. When I was the courtroom deputy for Judge McKeague back when he was a judge for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan, our courtroom was in it from the ground floor.

Her class focuses on learning how to use evidence presentation software, along with the pros and cons of each type of trial technology. "I teach students how to use Trial Director which is electronic evidence presentation software operated from a laptop, and which also includes a free corresponding iPad app.

Bonnie believes that obtaining technology know how provides her students with invaluable skills that allow them stand out in a competitive job market: "These skills absolutely give students an edge over students without this experience. For example, the resumes of many recent law graduates often look alike.

Her parting advice for law students and lawyers seeking to use evidence presentation technology at trial? "Certainly whenever you're working with technology, nothing is set in stone and things don't always go as planned. But the possibility that technology can fail doesn't outweigh the benefit of using it.

So that's how one adjunct professor uses technology in her classroom to help prepare her students to practice law in the 21st century. As always, if you or an attorney you know is using technology in a creative or unusual way in your law firm, drop me an email at niki.black@mycase.com.

Nicole Black is a Rochester, New York attorney and Director of Business and Community Relations at MyCase, web-based law practice management software. She's been blogging since 2005, has written a weekly column for the Daily Record since 2007, is the author of Cloud Computing for Lawyers, co-authors Social Media for Lawyers: the Next Frontier, and co-authors Criminal Law in New York.

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