

Quiz: What Kind Of In-House Fixer Upper Are You?

TECHNOLOGY

Today's Tech: The Illinois Attorney Registration And Disciplinary Committee & iPads

By NICOLE BLACK

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In 2016, tablets are commonplace and often are used in coffee shops, airports, offices, and more. That's a pretty amazing fact, considering that the iPad was just launched in 2010. In a mere six years, tablets have become a regular part of our everyday lives, both at home and at work.



Even lawyers, who tend to be slower to adapt to change than the general public, are using tablets in their law practices. In fact, according to the 2015 ABA Legal Technology Survey, 42% of lawyers use tablets on a daily basis in their law firms.

One reason lawyers have acclimated so quickly to tablet use is because courts and other legal institutions have encouraged their use. For example, consider the use of iPads within the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Committee (ARDC), the agency charged with investigating and prosecuting allegations of misconduct against Illinois attorneys.

According to Wendy Muchman, the ARDC Chief of Litigation and Professional Education, embracing new technologies like iPads is an important part of practicing law in the 21st century. "The Rules of Professional Conduct and the comments thereto have been amended to require lawyers to use and understand technology developments and include the obligation to 'keep abreast of changes in the law and its practice, including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology,'" she explains. "Since part of what we do is to train lawyers, we try to lead by example by keeping up to date with technological developments."

Incorporating iPads into the daily routine of the lawyers employed by the ARDC is one way to accomplish the goal of setting a good example while simultaneously reaping the benefits of using iPads to move toward a paperless office. "As a government agency, we're concerned with efficient use of time, and reducing costs." She continues, "One way that we do this is by using iPads and thus eliminating paper and copying costs."

Wendy explains that iPads are used throughout the organization both in the courtroom and in the boardroom: "Our litigators use them for trial presentations, as do Hearing Board members. Our Commissioners (akin to our Board of Directors) also use them for the Board meeting materials. iPads are popular in many different contexts because they help to streamline presentations by making them more interesting and visual."

According to Mike Ko, an adjunct law professor and trial technology consultant whom I featured in my column a few weeks ago and who provides technology consulting services to the ADRC, the ADRC staff uses two main iPad apps to achieve its goals:

“ (1) **TrialPad** – an app specific to trial presentation. This app allows attorneys to publish exhibits, zoom in, and annotate.

(2) **PDF Expert** – this app is loaded onto the iPads that are provided to each of the three Hearing Panel members and the witnesses during a disciplinary hearing. The purpose of these iPads are to replace library carts full of binders of paper exhibits. The Hearing Panel members and witnessed can follow along with what an attorney is presenting on the projection screen (via TrialPad). However, if the Hearing Panel member or witness wants to view their own copy of the exhibit, or if they want to look at any other exhibit, they can do so via PDF Expert.

While many apps can read PDFs, we chose PDF Expert because of its ability to interface with a wide range of cloud services. To my knowledge, PDF Expert was one of the earliest PDF reader apps that could connect to cloud services beyond DropBox, such as Box, Google Drive, and WebDav.

The ARDC has found that the presentation capabilities of iPads are particularly useful in the courtroom. "In addition to our staff's use of iPads, we have made them available to opposing counsel. We assist them in loading their exhibits onto the iPads for use at trial. By doing this, we attempt to level the playing field so that our opponents are also able to use this enhanced presentation format," Wendy explains. "In spite of some initial resistance, everyone tends to get over the learning curve quickly and responds quite positively."

According to Wendy, the many benefits outweigh the slight learning curve when it comes to embracing new technology, including iPads, into your practice: "Don't be afraid to try it. You'll be glad you did."

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. I'm always looking for new attorneys, law professors, or judges to feature in this column.

Nicole Black is a Rochester, New York attorney and the Legal Technology Evangelist 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. She's easily distracted by the potential of bright and shiny tech gadgets, along with good food and wine. You can follow her on Twitter at @nikiblack and she can be reached at niki.black@mycase.com.



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