

Today's lawyer has a dizzying array of technological advancements to make his or her practice easier. Here are a few I have used, with my own commentary on their usefulness.

Mac vs. Windows. By now, every reader should be able to operate word processing computers in a networked environment. You should be connected to the Internet yet firewalled for privacy of your clients. You should be virus free and routinely backed up. Most readers have Windows-based networks.

However, Apple's innovations allow you to operate both separately from, and cooperatively within, a Windows network. I mention these because Apple has been the most innovative company on earth for the last five years!

Apple is more expensive, but the value is in the bundled productivity. I do not have to spend time trying to get my camera to work before I video-conference; my microphone and camera are both high quality and built-in. The Apple wireless network is easy to set up. And, yes, I carry a backup of the Windows-based office documents on my Mac. This assures an additional periodic backup and protection against viruses.

Portable organization. Get a laptop that serves as your central office. It must be high quality and hold all your data, word process, virtually print PDF (portable document format) files, send and receive *all* e-mail, store contacts, and connect wirelessly or via cat-5. Also, get a pocket computer that syncs with your laptop automatically. This keeps me constantly productive, and I need only have my laptop with me at all times.

My iPod with video and Mac Book Pro form a perfect business tool. My contacts, address book and calendar sync so effortlessly it is like magic in compari-

son to Palms or pocket PCs. iPods also can serve as portable disc drives.

However, it will take some effort to redo your calendar and contacts into iCal and Mac's address book if you are currently using Windows-based files such as v-cards and Outlook calendar files. There are various import/export solutions, but I found it easier just to re-enter the basics and let them grow over time. Many contacts I had 10 years ago are people I can barely recall today!

If you need to economize, try a Mac Book (starting at \$1,099 before tax); the Mac Book Pro is higher (currently \$1,999 before tax). Just remember that you will need the more expensive "Pro" to run a 30-inch cinema display. You also can pay \$100 a year to join "Dot Mac." With this, all your calendar, contact and other important files can be backed up seamlessly in case your laptop fails.

Easy on the eyes. A big advance you can truly "see" is the 30-inch Apple cinema display (currently \$1,799 before tax). It is the best and most useful peripheral I have ever had. (You need Mac Book Pro or Mac Pro to power it; the regular Mac Book will not suffice.) When you scan a document into PDF, it will be enlarged on the display. It is huge, with resolution beyond anything else I have ever seen. Nothing is better for helping you catch typos while drafting. When I hook the cinema to my Mac Book Pro, the laptop's built-in monitor serves as an additional monitor — in effect, a dual monitor system that works as one. iCal and e-mail can sit on the 17-inch until something pops up, while the actual document work is done on the 30-inch. It's just marvelous.

Innovations in the basics. A lawyer lives by his notes. Now you can take manual notes, have them stored in paper format to put in the client's file, but also

have an exact digital copy stored in your own computer's file. Your notes have become paperless and practically indestructible after proper backup.

I use a Logitech IO2 digital pen (currently \$126.52 on Amazon). In conjunction with a proprietary type of paper from Logitech (yes, the more you write, the more it costs), the pen (with an internal camera and CPU) records my notes and allows me to save the image of what I wrote in the client's file on the network, using the USB docking port that comes with the pen. This is not available on the Mac, so I download the pen's digital image into the appropriate file folders in my networked office computer that runs Windows XP.

Always adapt. No matter how advanced your technology, you should always use the type of file that is compatible with your client's equipment. I still find it cost-effective to run Windows at work, but I primarily draft documents on my Mac Book Pro. This runs Microsoft Office, including the ubiquitous MS Word. Having gadgets that are fun to use, and convenient for my clients, is the ultimate proof of their value to your practice.

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