



TECH MOMENTS

EVERYTHING AT YOUR DIGITAL FINGERTIPS

When Less (Paper) is More (Information)

It is still practically impossible to eliminate paper from the practice of law. Electronic filing holds promise but meanwhile, you can start to streamline your own office and take advantage of the information you have stashed away.

- File as few paper copies as you can stand and keep all original documents in electronic format on your network.
- Scan in important documents - including pleadings, contracts, wills - and keep the electronic document with the other case information.
- Dump your depositions from diskette onto your network and incorporate them into your electronic case file. Then stash the diskette in an archive where it need only be found in emergencies.

Integrate, Don't Disintegrate!

Every law firm should own case management software. The power of a single program that integrates so many useful tools is enormous. The leading software programs provide tools that are almost mandatory for the modern practice of law. Pricing is aggressive for solos, and is easy to justify for any sized firm.

- These packages integrate all the tools that you use daily into one package. Whether you choose Amicus Attorney, Time Matters, Abacus Law, Gryphon, or another package, you will gain an instant leap in productivity potential.
- Don't skip the training - if you purchase new software, case management or otherwise, be sure that staff and lawyers get trained on how to use it effectively.
- Think about the challenges you face in running the business of law. Be aggressive in getting these programs to meet those challenges and help you focus on the law, not the business.

The Land of Gizmos

Sometimes it may seem as though the practice of law will eventually rely solely on a handheld computer or personal digital assistant (PDA) for all technology needs. That is unlikely in the near future. If a PDA is on your horizon, contemplate how it can do more for you than track your calendar and address book.

- Most case management programs, e-mail programs, and even some spreadsheet and document programs, will synchronize data with a PDA.
- Nearly all PDAs come in a model that has a wireless modem or wireless phone built in, allowing you to talk and surf the Internet as well as manage data.
- Make the PDA work for you. Purchase a portable keyboard, a word processor application, or a time keeping program.
- **The Future:** the new wireless phones with the PDA built in are on the large side, for a phone, but are the perfect integration of the PDA and phone functions that require many lawyers to carry two devices. Lighten your belt (or pockets) and get twice the power in one device.