

Technology

Consistently Connected

Essential Mobile Technology for Lawyers on the Move

BY DANIEL J. SIEGEL

The days in which a lawyer would leave her office and have minimal contact with staff and clients until she returned are long gone. With the advent of smartphones and other technology, lawyers are able to, and in many cases need to, stay in touch with clients, other attorneys and their offices at any time and from virtually anywhere. But in order to do so, they need the right technology.

There are a few points to consider generally. First, the goal is to utilize tools that make you most efficient. That means that another attorney's essential item may not be so important to you. Second, mobile technology takes up space, and may be heavy, so you have to decide what to carry in the limited room you have. Third, because we all have budgets, your purchases must balance the size and weight of the items against the power and cost for their size and weight. In other words, a giant laptop may be desirable, but it may be too heavy or bulky for your circumstances. With those caveats, let's take a look at essential technology for lawyers on the go.

SMARTPHONES

Mobile lawyers need to own a smartphone and, in fact, the American Bar Association says 91 percent of attorneys have abandoned traditional cell phones and now own a smartphone. These devices are essentially mini-



computers with Internet access, the ability to read and edit documents, cameras that can also serve as scanners, and other features that make them more powerful than laptops were just a few years ago. There are three different operating smartphone systems – iOS (for iPhones), Android and Windows – with each having benefits and weaknesses, although most attorneys use iPhones or Android-based phones. One of the most important things to consider is not the phone itself, but the wireless provider, because these devices are only as good as the networks they are on. So if you happen to live in an area where one company's coverage is weak, you should consider a competitor.

INTERNET ACCESS

You need Internet access to get the

most from your smartphones, laptops and tablets. While Wi-Fi (free or fee-based Internet access offered everywhere from law firms to hotels to Starbucks) is an option in many locations, it also means that you will often be accessing a public network and could be exposed to hackers and others who might view confidential client data or other personal information.

As a result, I recommend purchasing a hotspot, i.e., a portable device sold by most cell phone services, including Verizon and AT&T, which provides wireless Internet access to many devices (usually five to 10). Typically, providers charge a monthly fee for the devices based on the amount of data used. For example, you might pay \$25 per month for 3 GB of data, which means that you

For years, lawyers relied on laptop computers when they left the office. With the introduction of the iPad, the first successfully marketed tablet, a second alternative emerged. But there remain differences between the two devices.

can use the amount of data purchased for the flat fee, but will pay an additional charge if you use more data than you purchased.

While many smartphones also operate as hotspots, doing so generally uses up the device's battery power quickly. On the other hand, mobile hotspots have far better battery life; they commonly use mobile broadband service from cellular providers for 3G or 4G Internet access, and are often priced based upon the amount of data included per month.

While having a hotspot is an increased cost, it is generally worth the investment.

LAPTOPS OR TABLETS

For years, lawyers relied on laptop computers when they left the office. With the introduction of the iPad, the first successfully marketed tablet, a second alternative emerged. But there remain differences between the two devices.

Laptop computers have an attached keyboard, whereas most tablets either have only an on-screen virtual keyboard or permit users to link to a portable keyboard. In addition, laptops are generally heavier than tablets, but can run most common software programs, such as Microsoft Office. On the other hand, tablets are lighter and run apps (except for Windows-based tablets that run traditional software), which commonly have fewer features and less power than laptops. In addition, laptops often have more built-in storage space, which means that if you store a lot of files (or are using a tablet for trial) or photos or videos, you may need to have external, portable hard drive.

If you are primarily reading or reviewing information, then a tablet is a good solution. On the other hand, if you will need to use a keyboard extensively, such as for revising documents, you will probably be better served with a laptop.

PORTABLE STORAGE AND BACKUPS

Laptops and tablets tend to be fragile. In either case, you will be well served by having backup systems in place – to either carry your data, or as an emergency backup should the device break. These devices can be particularly helpful because many tablets, including iPads, have limited internal storage, and you may need to carry more data than they can hold. These drives, sold just about everywhere, can store more information than most of us will ever need for any given case.

Fortunately, portable external hard drives are relatively inexpensive, with a 1 terabyte drive (which will hold more data than most of us will ever need) costing under \$100. When you have one, you can back up your tablet or laptop, or have a separate device in your office can use when working on the case outside of the office.

SCANNERS

In recent years, lawyers have begun to use their laptops and tablets as scanners because of the devices' built-in cameras. While using the camera feature is practical for one- or two-page documents, it is slow and cumbersome to do so with larger documents. In that situation, you should consider acquiring a portable scanner that can either connect to your device through a wired or wireless service. A number of companies offer high-quality mobile scanners, many of which weigh only a few ounces and operate on batteries.

PRINTERS

If you need to print multipage documents, it may be economical to travel with a portable printer, many of which can connect to your devices wirelessly. However, these devices are often heavy, and you have to balance the convenience of portability against

Amazon Echo Takes Requests, Questions

Echo is Amazon's latest foray into the home electronics market, a voice-controlled hands-free device that provides news, weather, music as well as answers to questions courtesy of Wikipedia.

As soon as Echo hears the "wake" word (either Amazon or Alexa), it's ready to use.

You can ask Echo questions about tomorrow's weather, how many ounces are in a quart or any other question and get a response. You can also use Echo to create a to-do list or shopping list, as well as use it as an alarm clock or timer.

Echo also serves as a speaker that fills a room with 360 degree omnidirectional audio. Echo gives you hands-free voice control for Amazon Music, Prime Music, iHeartRadio, and TuneIn. Echo is Bluetooth-enabled, so you can stream other popular music services like Spotify, iTunes, and Pandora from your phone or tablet.

Echo automatically updates itself through the cloud, so new features and services become available as soon as the update is complete.

The device uses seven microphones to hear requests from anywhere in the room in which it is located. When Echo detects the wake word, audio is streamed to the cloud, where Amazon Web Services recognizes and responds to your request.

The 9.25-inch high cylindrical Echo is currently available by invitation only. It's \$99 for Amazon Prime members and \$199 for everyone else. More information is available at amazon.com/echo. ■



Laptops and tablets tend to be fragile. In either case, you will be well served by having backup systems in place – to either carry your data, or as an emergency backup should the device break.

the cost of visiting a hotel business center and paying the per-page cost for printing. In general, using a portable printer makes sense if you anticipate printing one or more large documents.

PROJECTORS

The size and price of portable projectors has dropped dramatically in recent years. But if you are making a presentation, or going to trial, having your own projector can be invaluable, especially when you consider the consequences that could arise if the court's equipment either doesn't work or in the rare situation when is not compatible with your device.

OTHER STUFF

Don't forget all of the other things

that are essential, like extension cords, chargers, dongles (that's the name of the connector that connects a tablet like an iPad to a projector or other device), charging stations (to allow you to charge one or more devices in one place), and plenty of extra batteries (most of these devices use AA or AAA batteries). You may also want to bring along a remote control to use with your presentation so that you aren't tethered to a keyboard or stuck with a remote that's difficult to use.

In addition, you may want to travel with a spare smartphone battery because losing phone access could be a major problem. Having a backup battery or one of the mini-charges now flooding

the market can keep your phone alive until you arrive at a location where you can plug in the device's charger. The size and price of portable projectors has dropped dramatically in recent years.

Lawyers have become road warriors. In doing so, they need to be sure that they have all the right tools to accomplish their needs. After all, if you are about to make a presentation, you don't want to discover that the batteries in the remote control for your PowerPoint are dead and that you are stuck on the first slide. ■

Daniel J. Siegel, (dan@danieljsiegel.com), the principal of the Law Offices of Daniel J. Siegel, is a member of the Editorial Board of The Philadelphia Lawyer.

**PARTNERS,
SENIOR ATTORNEYS,
PRACTICE GROUPS**



THE PHILADELPHIA AREA'S
PREMIER PROFESSIONAL
LEGAL RECRUITING GROUP

Puzzling Your Next Career Move?

Contact Patricia Mosesso

With her vast experience, knowledge and contacts in the legal arena, Patricia is uniquely qualified to assist you.

Contact Patricia today to discuss your career goals and aspirations. It will be one of the most important calls you've ever made!



PatMosesso@MorganWentworthLLC.com

**Morgan
Wentworth LLC**
WHEN THE BEST IS WORTH IT

800 Penllyn Pike
Blue Bell, PA 19422
Tel: 610-783-0900
Fax: 610-783-7940
www.MorganWentworthLLC.com



Doxie Go Wi-Fi



Visioneer Mobility

THE MOBILE OFFICE HAS BECOME EVEN MORE PORTABLE. Now you can scan documents without being tethered to your desktop computer. The Doxie Go Wi-Fi is small, cordless and offers Wi-Fi connectivity. Visioneer's Mobility scanner lets users scan to smartphones (except for iPhones), SD cards or USB flash drives with no need for a computer.

FEATURES	DOXIE GO WI-FI	VISIONEER MOBILITY
MAXIMUM OPTICAL RESOLUTION	600 DPI	300 DPI
MAXIMUM SCAN AREA	8.5" X 15"	8.5" X 14"
FILE FORMAT SUPPORT	JPG, PDF, PNG	JPG, PDF
SCANS PER BATTERY CHARGE	300 PAGES	300 PAGES
SCAN SPEED	10 SECONDS PER PAGE	10 SECONDS PER PAGE
DIMENSIONS	10.5" X 1.7" X 2.2"	11.5" X 2.75" X 2"
WEIGHT	15.3 OUNCES	22.5 OUNCES
PRICE	\$229	\$69.99