



iPads for Lawyers 101:

THE BASICS

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Many of my colleagues have noticed that for the past year, my iPad and I have seemingly been inseparable. While it's true that I've been spending a lot of time with my iPad recently, the integration of the device into my day-to-day routine has developed over the course of several months. I am constantly exploring new ways to replace paper with cloud-based data files and otherwise make my practice more efficient with technology. At this point, I am able to use my iPad for about 70% of all my practice related tasks; and approximately 90% of tasks I need to do while mobile.

Some of my colleagues have asked for my recommendation on how to do the same for their practices. While there are no one size fits all answer for all attorneys, I believe these following suggestions will get the new iPad attorney well on their way.

Which iPad is right for my practice?

The best choice for most attorneys will be the 16gb Wi-Fi iPad; which happens to be the least expensive model. A 16gb iPad will have sufficient memory to accomplish all of your practice related work and personal usage. Plus, with cloud-based data storage services, the vast majority of the data you will access will not need to be stored locally on the device. With Wi-Fi readily available, 3G iPad is unnecessary and requires a fixed price service contract with your provider.

Native Apps

Once you have your iPad; your next step is to integrate the iPad's native mail, calendar and contacts with your own current systems. You will find that the native mail, calendar and contact applications are similar in function, yet superior in practice to that of an iPhone. The iPad is an extremely useful option for reading and composing brief responses to emails while you are mobile. While you wouldn't want to compose an email longer than 2 or 3 paragraphs on an iPad, the landscape keyboard provides a superior typing experience over that of your iPhone.

Likewise, the calendar app provides you with the option to view your appointments in a plethora of ways, all of which are helpful when scheduling appointments on the spot with clients and colleagues. The iPad contacts app looks and functions like a conventional address book and has convenient editing and sharing buttons.

Each firm's case management system is unique. However, all of these native apps should seamlessly synchronize with your firm's global email client, calendar and contacts. If your firm uses Microsoft Exchange Accounts, you should have no

issues whatsoever with the setup and implementation of your mail preferences. Your IT department should be able to help you with set-up.

Essential Third Party Apps

Once your mail, calendar and contacts apps are up and running, there is a few third party apps that I believe will significantly enhance your iPad experience.

Dropbox

If your firm embraces cloud-based data storage, I highly suggest Dropbox (www.dropbox.com) as a service provider. My firm chose Dropbox for our cloud-based data storage based in large part on its security credentials, web interface and mobile applications. With the Dropbox application, I found the true beauty of adding an iPad to my practice. The Dropbox app allows you to view any of the files stored on your firm's virtual server. I have personally used this app to access documents on the fly in several arbitrations, depositions and mediations.

The ability to organize and recall documents in Dropbox is limitless. For example, prior to a deposition my support staff saves all of the records for that days deponent- organized by date, issue and exhibit number- to our Dropbox. Rather than flipping through a cumbersome binder during the deposition to search for the documents I need, I simply scroll through the relevant file in Dropbox and continue my line of questioning. Consider this: assuming your local rules do not prevent you from using an iPad during trial; you can utilize the Dropbox app as your "digital" trial notebook. Conveniently, you could have thousands of documents organized precisely to your liking, right at your fingertips.

The Dropbox app also has an excellent sharing function that easily allows you to email a link to any particular file. Use this function to email discovery requests to your client or files to your expert witness for review. The link allows the recipient to view and print the file without the ability to edit it.

Fastcase

For legal research, Fastcase (www.fastcase.com) has developed an excellent iPad application. Fastcase has partnered with state bar associations in 17 states to provide free Fastcase subscriptions to their bar members. If you are a bar member in any of those states, I highly recommend setting up a Fastcase account, even if only to use Fastcase on your iPad. The Fastcase app provides Boolean or natural language-based search functions for both case law and statutes. Search results can be narrowed and displayed by jurisdiction,

date, search term relevance, decision date and various citation parameters. Use Fastcase to quickly pull an unfamiliar statute that comes up in a deposition or hearing.

Quickoffice

Admittedly, the field of iPad word processing applications is still in need of improvement. Nonetheless, I've come to learn that Quickoffice (www.quickoffice.com) is the best of its kind. Quickoffice has basic word processing options in terms of a variety of fonts, paragraph alignments and character color options. However, it lacks some of the more refined options necessary to create a highly refined legal document. That being said, for on the spot editing, form letters and pleadings, Quickoffice will suffice. Best of all, Quickoffice allows you to directly access your Dropbox files, edit them, and save back to the cloud without ever saving the file locally on the device. In practice, I have often asked my paralegal to draft a pleading for my review and save it to Dropbox. I then access the draft from Dropbox on my iPad, make revisions in Quickoffice, and email the final document link back to my paralegal for final preparations.

Integrating the iPad in your practice with utmost utility will surely be a work in progress. New apps are released daily and as the proliferation of iPads continue, more and more law practice related apps will be developed. However, don't forget to use your iPad to have a little fun from time to time. Try playing Angry Birds while waiting for a client meeting. Buy a new album or rent a movie from iTunes. Don't forget that attorneys are allowed to have fun, too.



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