



The Voice

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This Week's Feature

A Roundup of Technology Trends for Attorneys

by Michele Hale DeShazo, Kuchler Polk Schell Weiner & Richeson, LLC, New Orleans, LA

Attorneys and other legal professionals continue to prefer iPhones and Android phones over the once popular BlackBerry. According to the American Bar Association's 2012 Legal Technology Survey Report, the percentage of smartphone-using lawyers favoring iPhones grew to 49 percent this year—up from 35 percent in 2011. [ABA 2012 Legal Technology Survey Report 2012](#) (August 2012).

Unsurprisingly, this increase in the iPhone's popularity corresponds to the reduction in BlackBerry use by the legal community: those who said they used a BlackBerry decreased from 46 percent in 2011 to 31 percent in 2012 according to the ABA's report. The decline of the BlackBerry, once ubiquitous in law firms, has not gone unnoticed by the media.

The *New York Times* article, "The BlackBerry as Black Sheep," shined a spotlight on law firm Covington & Burling, which recently gave their employees the option to use iPhones at the request of associates. *Id.* Those who own BlackBerries, by choice or not, have felt others' disdain: "BlackBerry users are like Myspace users," says Craig Robert Smith, a Los Angeles musician, in the *New York Times* article. "They probably still chat on AOL Instant Messenger." *Id.* Nicole Perloth, "[The BlackBerry as Black Sheep.](#)" *New York Times* (published October 15, 2012; accessed October 17, 2012).

The increase in the use of iPhones is one of several key takeaways from the ABA's recent technology report. Tablet use by attorneys is also on the rise. Approximately 33 percent of lawyers indicated that they used a tablet computer in 2012 for legal tasks while away from work in contrast to 15 percent last year. Over 90 percent of tablet users are utilizing iPads.

Much has been written over the past few years about cloud computing. However, the raw data from the ABA survey suggests that cloud computing has not had a huge impact on the way that attorneys work today. According to the report, most law firms are not using cloud computing. Only 15 percent of large law firms, defined as having more than 500 attorneys, are currently engaged in cloud computing.

It seems like everyone has a Facebook page or a Twitter handle. That trend extends to the legal practice with growing numbers of firms



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turning to social media to market their services. The 2012 ABA Technology Survey included 22 percent respondents who said that their firm had a blog, up from 15 percent last year. Additionally, 88 percent of the respondents' firms have a LinkedIn account, 55 percent use Facebook, and 13 percent utilize Twitter. Stephanie Francis Ward, "[Lawyers Using Social Media More Says ABA Tech Survey](#)," *ABA Journal* (published August 16, 2012; accessed October 17, 2012)

Many law firms now have media specialists who manage social media presence—20 percent of law firms have a full-time social media specialist on staff, and approximately 40 percent of survey participants noted that blogging has assisted the firms in obtaining new work according to the [ALM Legal Intelligence](#) report released in February 2012.

New Jersey newspaper *The Record* recently spotlighted one such technology-focused firm in an article published on October 15, 2012. Mary Diduch, "[Lyndhurst-Based Law Firm turns to Blogs, Website to Boost Clientele](#)," *The Record*, (published October 15, 2012; accessed October 17, 2012). The New Jersey-based firm Scarcini Hollenbeck's rebranding campaign included a new website, five blogs, multiple Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn pages, YouTube videos, and podcasts. The article indicates that Scarcini Hollenbeck elected to use in-house staff to redesign the website after an estimated cost to use third parties was assessed at \$15,000. According to the firm's managing partner, the firm's lawyers and marketing department generate 20 pieces of content per week for the various sites and social media components. All of this has resulted in an increase in new business according to firm officials.

A recent *Washington Post* article addressed the increasing use of social media by law firms and touched on an important issue that confronts attorneys who are trying to enhance their marketing presence—firms are frequently barred from publicizing or discussing client matters. Catherine Ho, "[Law Firms Get into the Social Media Game](#)," the *Washington Post* (published March 11, 2012; accessed October 17, 2012). Particularly for civil defense attorneys, the target for a social media campaign is not an average person but, instead, the decision-making in-house counsel of a corporation. This has caused firms to use creative strategies to get their names out—blogging, podcasts, and the like.

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