Top 5 Technology Pitfalls for Attorneys to Avoid
These tips can help lawyers optimize results and minimize risks when utilizing some of today's
most popular technological innovations

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Attorneys understandably want to make the best use of available technology to jumpstart their
marketing and increase productivity. But the websites, apps and software that can provide a
multitude of benefits to one's practice can also cause great harm if used improperly. The
suggestions below are intended to help lawyers optimize results and minimize risks when
utilizing some of today's most popular technological innovations.

Cloud technology offers great convenience, but caution must be exercised

Cloud technology has become pervasive. It has been widely embraced because it offers
virtually unlimited space to store files, and it allows users to access this stored data anywhere
there is an internet connection. Storing documents in the cloud also allows for colleagues to
easily collaborate on creating documents, presentations and other projects. Free cloud storage
is provided by Dropbox, Box, Google Drive and OneDrive, just to name a few.

Yet when it comes to storing a client's confidential information, attorneys should likely stay
away from the free versions of cloud storage products. Attorneys should exercise the utmost
care and caution when choosing a cloud-based file sharing provider to ensure security.
Anything less than premium quality storage services may not offer sufficient encryption and
other protective measures. When utilizing such technology, attorneys should receive the
client's prior written consent and seek assurances from the provider that client confidentiality
will be maintained.

Increase your Twitter following, but be careful not to get banned.

According to KISSmetrics, 64 percent of Twitter users say they are more likely to buy from
brands they follow. If this is accurate, law firms would be wise to make efforts to increase the
number of their followers on Twitter.   Research conducted by Beevolve reveals that the
number of followers one has on Twitter largely corresponds to the number of tweets one posts.
According to this study, it may take thousands of tweets to get just 100-200 followers.
Fortunately, there are shortcuts: 1) import contacts directly from your e-mail by following
these instructions, 2) automatically turn Facebook updates into tweets by using IFTTT and, 3)
find new followers by attending – or hosting – Twitter chats.

However, it is important to avoid focusing too heavily on quantity over quality. To get the most
out of one's Twitter account, one should post useful and interesting information that others will
naturally want to share. Being overly aggressive, or using unethical means to attract followers,

may result in being penalized or banned by Twitter. Take time to read and understand The Twitter Rules which forbid spamming, impersonating people or businesses, or sharing others' private information.

Stronger passwords are more secure, but consider using a password management program

Recently, the Heartbleed Bug and high-profile cases of hacking have shown the importance of using passwords that are more secure.   These cases also show the danger of using the same password for different sites. Experts suggest using passwords that are more difficult to guess by making them longer, more random, and by changing them regularly. Unfortunately, a password that is harder to guess is also easier to forget, and this can be disastrous! Some secure websites do not store users' passwords, so they cannot be retrieved if they are lost.

There are, of course, different ways to keep track of usernames and passwords. Some people store their login information on their smartphone or laptop, while others write them on sticky notes and paste them all over their workspace.   Clearly, neither of these methods is very secure. Mobile devices can be lost or stolen, and notes pasted on a monitor or desk can be seen by anyone. A safer idea may be to use a password manager, such as LastPass or KeePass. Such programs allow for one to import all of one's various passwords and store them in a single database. Take care to select a master password that is secure, and keep a hard copy of it in a safe place.

Voice-to-text software can be useful, but such programs are not designed to be used while driving

There are times when using a dictation program may be more convenient than typing, such as when one needs to move about a room or handle evidence. One of the most popular products available for such occasions is Dragon NaturallySpeaking, but this software is not cheap. More conveniently, most smartphones come with a free dictation app built in. Another largely unknown alternative is the free speech recognition program that comes pre-installed on any Windows PC. Simply locate "Speech Recognition" by using the search box, and then click to enable it. After completing the quick setup procedures, one can begin dictating text and give a variety of other commands. Other free speech recognition software includes Dragon Dictation (a free mobile app) or TalkTyper (browser-based dictation software).

However, such programs should not be used while operating a motor vehicle. Even if one is technically obeying the law by using a hands-free device, the mental distraction from using the voice program can cause one to get a speeding ticket, get lost, or get into an accident. Voice-to-text programs can be quite frustrating, requiring that one frequently check the screen for errors. This is not only dangerous to do when driving, it is actually considered to be a violation of the vehicle code in most jurisdictions. It is therefore highly recommended that one does NOT attempt to use dictation software while driving.

Online meeting services are very convenient, but choose a provider that is within your budget

Having an online meeting is an incredibly accommodating, modern alternative to a phone call when a client or colleague is too distant to meet face-to-face. An internet conference or consultation can save considerable time and expense that would have been spent on traveling. However, it is important to use a reliable service that is less likely to have any glitches. Two of the most popular programs for online meetings are Cisco WebEx and GoToMeeting. But these services charge a fee that some attorneys may not be able to afford.

A free alternative is Google+ Hangouts. In addition to free group video chats, this program allows for collaboration on Google Docs or SketchUp. These tools can be hugely beneficial for a group of attorneys collaborating on a case. Other free online meeting programs include Skype, join.me and TeamViewer. TeamViewer is unique in that it also allows for one to remotely control another computer. This can be very useful if one needs to access software or documents that are located on one's pc at home, but that are not loaded on one's laptop.

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