

THE PRACTICE MANAGER

REPRESENTING HEARING IMPAIRED CLIENTS

WEBCAST — FEBRUARY 20, 2008- VISIT

<http://www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/AABuy1.asp?sProductType=EV&IID=7782>
to register

A NEWSLETTER PROVIDED BY THE LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS

THE TECHNOLOGY ROUNDUP

Gerry Morris, J.D.

Mac vs. PC – Another Viewpoint

From time to time in this column I've made comparisons between the PC and Mac platforms. I have always been a PC user. I've bought, built and used PC's since the mid 80's. I am admittedly ignorant of the pros and cons of Macs other than what I've learned through conversations with friends and colleagues who use them. Uniformly, they rave about them. This month I decided to turn this forum over to a dedicated Mac user. Dale Johnson practices law in Austin. His practice is comprised mostly of civil litigation.



Why I Switched to a MAC

by Dale Ossip Johnson

There is an old adage in the computer industry. Software developers and hardware engineers love the software and hardware which they know the best. The corollary is that the software developers and hardware engineers are the greatest critics of the software and hardware which were not developed or used by them. The same may be said about the end user. At the personal computer level, the hardware world, with some minor variances, is divided into two competing groups, PC and Apple. The PC computer since its inception in 1981 has always been built on the Intel processor and to a significantly lesser degree the Advance Micro Systems processor. Until recently, The Apple computer was based upon the Motorola PowerPC processor, developed by IBM and Motorola. In 2006 Apple moved to the Intel platform. Each platform has an operating system which is unique, both

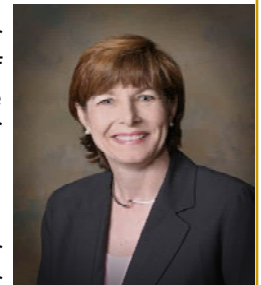
See *Technology Roundup* on page 2

THE COACH'S CORNER

Debra Bruce, J.D.

Set a Theme for the Year

By now the "new" on the New Year has begun to wear off. Some of your resolutions or goals may have already given way to inertia or outside forces.



Revive Your Determination

Would you like a way to revive your will and hang on to it? Consider setting a theme for the year. You should be able to capture the essence of the theme in three or fewer words. I prefer one word myself.

Julz on Fire

I have to give a nod to my coaching colleague Julie Ford for this concept. She wrote that she set the theme of "Julz on Fire" for this year. It inspired her to get her morning going and do with enthusiasm and vigor those daily chores she tended to drag through. It also inspired her to take on challenges she wasn't sure she was up to, like running a 10-K.

Uncover Your Theme

Perhaps, as you read this you are feeling like I did: unsure of what your theme should be. Here's an exercise to help you hone in on what matters most for you this year.

On a sheet of paper, create two columns by drawing a vertical line down the middle of the paper. Label the left column "Yes" and the right column "No." Set your Blackberry, your Outlook calendar or some other timer to beep in five minutes.

Rapid Writing

Now in the "Yes" column quickly list what you want to have or experience this year. You may want a new car, life balance, victory in a big case, recognition from your partners, appreciation from your spouse, fun, new clients, an organized law office, peace, prosperity, weight loss, time with your family, or any number of things. Just jot as

See *Coach's Corner* on page 3



Law Practice Management
State Bar of Texas
1414 Colorado, Suite 601
Austin, Texas 78701

The Practice Manager
is a newsletter published by
the
Law Practice Management
Program
of the State Bar of Texas.
Please direct any questions
or comments to
Orlando Lopez

Orlando Lopez
Director

800-204-2222,
ext. 1302

olopez@texasbar.com

Sandra Molina
Program Coordinator Assistant

800-204-2222,
ext. 1304

smolina@texasbar.com

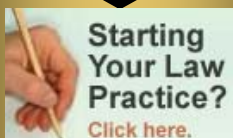
Tina Weitz

Program Coordinator

800-204-2222,
ext. 1303

tweitz@texasbar.com

click here for helpful
peer-related
resources available
to aid you in starting
your law practice



Tech Roundup continued from page 1

as to architecture as well as functionality. And, without intermediary software, which for the most part was complex to use and too often unreliable, there was no compatibility between the different operating systems and their associated applications software. Many of the adherents of each group were fanatical and vociferous about the superior quality of their chosen computer system and the inferior quality of the other. Notwithstanding that PC and Apple now share the Intel processor as a platform, the fundamental philosophical and technological differences in operating systems and OS specific applications continues unabated as does the debate between their strongest adherents. Correspondingly competition between the hardware manufacturers and the software developers for each system to convince the end user that their products and software are uniquely reliable, functional and useful has become a major battlefield.

The use of computers in the legal profession parallels other professions, businesses and trades. Indeed, because of the underlying intellectual and fact driven aspects of legal services, the computer has become an essential, if not mandatory, tool in the practice of the law. No attorney can effectively practice law and meet his or her professional obligations to the client without effectively employing computers, personally as well as at non-attorney staff level. Indeed, I suggest to do otherwise may very well be a basis for legal malpractice.

Most lawyers lack a technical background and expertise in computer science at any but the most basic of levels. The average lawyer wants to practice law and not practice computer. Regardless of the size of the law office, lawyers want their computer systems, which for purposes of this article I define to include, the computer, its operating system and application software, to satisfy six fundamental requirements: The system must be reliable, functional, stable, cost effective, flexible and user friendly. My experience with the PC hardware since 1981 has been that it was consistently cost effective and reliable. However, the

prevailing Microsoft developed and related system and application software have been more problematical. From the operating system standpoint It has taken Microsoft over twenty years to reach a state of reliability and stability. Even today, many third party software developers introduce into the marketplace software with stability defects which are often attributable to the peculiar centralized and controlled architecture of the Microsoft operating system. Moreover, the latest Microsoft operating system, VISTA, continues to have configuration issues both at the hardware level as well as the software level, particularly with regard to older hardware and software, and frequently requires ongoing technical support, whether in the form of onsite by knowledgeable employees or from third party vendors. Some configuration issues also appear to exist in Microsoft XP operating system, but not to the same degree as VISTA. In contrast the Apple Computer system has had a history of not only reliability of hardware, although at premium prices, but also stability of software, particularly its Mac OS X operating system. However, Apple also had a well deserved reputation for having limited availability of software, particularly at the business or enterprise level. The PC computer systems with Microsoft operating systems and Microsoft developed or related software have become pervasive and comprehensive resulting in Microsoft and its developers capturing over 90% of today's PC market place. With Apple's move to the Intel processor, the software gap between it and Microsoft is rapidly diminishing and, based on my personal usage, no longer meaningful to me.

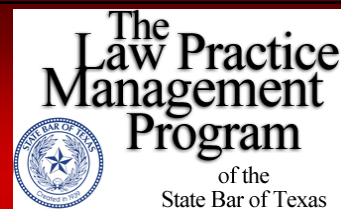
When Apple announced in 2005 that it was moving its hardware platform to the Intel processor, I began to give serious consideration to moving my law office to an Apple Computer system. After evaluating a number of different types of Apple computers, its Mac OS X operating system and available applications, in December of 2006 I decided to replace my existing PC system and associated Microsoft software with an Apple system in which the iMac is the core computer. Some of the material factors in my decision were:

See *Tech Roundup* on page 5

The Practice Manager 2



Online Learning for Legal Staff Professionals



<http://www.360training.com/texasbar/>

Coach's Corner continued from page 1

many of them down as you can in five minutes.

Sometimes as we're trying to think of what we want, we think "Well, what I don't want is to feel stressed out." Or maybe you don't want any more conflicts in the office, worries about your teenager, or late nights at work. If any "don't wants" come up for you, just write them under the "No" column and keep going.

Look for Patterns

When your five minutes is up, take a look at your lists. Notice if there are any patterns. When you look at that list, what do you notice you are longing for? Choose the three you long for most. If you see different variations of the same concept on your list, maybe that concept should be in your top three.

Now find a word or phrase that captures the essence of what you want to have or be this year. As a lawyer and wordsmith, you know how to find the word(s) that resonate for you and stand for what you want to create this year.

My Theme

My theme for this year is "Ease." Last year I wanted lots of business and unintentionally created the "year of overload." This year I am setting the intention for just the right amount of business. I'll take several vacations and long weekends. Solutions will come with ease and I won't stress over deadlines and other things still in the future. I'll have some quiet time each day, and keep my body feeling limber and relaxed. When I start to worry or stress, I'll remember this is the "Year of Ease" and let it go. Answers will come.

I am already noticing that when I begin to feel stressed, if I remember my theme, I am able to consciously relax and release the worry. I have been surprised at the way things have sorted themselves out. Without my request, deadlines have gotten reset. Ideas and solutions have come to me. Someone even arrived to help me as soon as I stepped out of my car when a problem developed.

Other Examples

Some themes my coaching clients have chosen include "Balance", "Pride", and "Feeling Good". Some have reported a change in perspective brought on by choosing a theme. Some have become more intentional. You can use your theme to keep you on track, to remind you to make short term choices in alignment with your long-term goals, and to inspire you to create what you really want in your life and your law practice.

I hope some of you will choose to share with me the theme you

set for yourself this year.

Debra Bruce (www.lawyer-coach.com) practice law for 18 years, before becoming a professionally trained Executive Coach for lawyers. She is Vice Chair of the Law Practice Management Committee of the State Bar of Texas, and board member and past leader of Houston Coaches Network, the Houston Chapter of the International Coach Federation. She welcomes your questions and comments at debra@lawyer-coach.com.

Law Practice Management Special Offers

Books of the Month

Collecting Your Fee: Getting Paid From Intake to Invoice

Regular Price - \$79.95

Sale Price - \$55.95

This practical and user-friendly guide provides you with proven strategies and sound advice that will make the process of collecting your fees simpler, easier, and more effective! Also included is a CD-ROM with sample forms, letters, agreements, and more for you to customize to your own practice needs.

How to Draft Bills Clients Rush to Pay

Regular Price - \$67.95

Sale Price - \$47.55

Nothing has a more dramatic and immediate impact on successful client relations and your bottom line as your approach to drafting bills. Motivated clients will pay their bills with a higher degree of reliability. Satisfied clients will help you to grow your practice. A quick read of this book will give you a lifetime of increased profits, better cash flow, and improved client satisfaction. Over the years, generations of lawyers have looked to Harris Morgan and Jay Foonberg for their advice and counsel; now you, too can benefit from their wisdom - if rush to buy this important book today!

TO ORDER CALL (800) 204-2222 EXT. 1300

ABA TECHSHOW[®] 2008

PRESENTED BY THE **ABA** LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SECTION
MARKETING • MANAGEMENT • TECHNOLOGY • FINANCE

THE WORLD'S PREMIER LEGAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE & EXPO

2008 Highlights:

- More than 50 educational sessions
- Two-day expo featuring over 100 vendors
- Law firm discounts
- Free thumb drive
- Product information sessions
- Significant LPM book discounts

Register early and save up to \$300!

Registration opens October 1.

Conference: March 13–15, 2008

Expo: March 13–14, 2008

Hilton Chicago, Chicago, IL

www.techshow.com

**Promotional
Code:
PP839**

PP839

Join the ABA Law Practice Management Section at the Hilton Chicago from March 13-15, 2008, as it presents the 22nd annual ABA TECHSHOW! **As a member of the State Bar of Texas, you will receive \$100 off** the standard registration fee of \$895. Be sure to refer to the **promotional code - PP839** when registering to receive the discount. Register now!

Upcoming Events

Technology Trends for Elder and Guardianship Law Practices, is scheduled in Dallas March 6, 2008. For more information or to register, call 800-204-2222, ext. 1574 or visit: <http://www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/AABuy1.asp?sProductType=EV&IID=7183>

SAVE THE DATE! 1st Annual Law Practice Management Program Course
"Nailing It: The Tools You Need for Today's Practice" May 15-16, 2008 More details soon!

- With the use of special software, the Apple system was two computers in one. It could run both Apple and Microsoft application software seamlessly and share files¹;
- All of my Microsoft data files were easily transferable to the Apple system and were totally useable by both Apple and Microsoft software;
- Mainstream Microsoft software had been ported to the Apple platform, including Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat and Quickbooks. Other lawyer specific software was in development;
- Apple computers easily could integrate into PC based systems and exchange and share files;
- Apple computers were reliable, stable and required little, if any, outside tech support;
- Mac OS X operating system was compatible with not only new peripheral hardware but also my existing peripheral computer hardware such as printers and was trouble free in configuration;
- Although the Apple computers were slightly more costly than many PC computers, the cost was more than offset by the lower requirement for technical support and corresponding increase in productivity;
- Installation of new software was quick, efficient and virtually trouble free. Moreover, moving software from one Apple computer to another was equally easy, efficient and trouble free.
- The license fees for a substantial part of Apple software, such as the Mac OS X operating system were significantly less expensive than Microsoft. This became particularly true when Microsoft released Vista;
- Exposure to viruses and third party computer attacks was almost non-existent.
- The apparent speed of business applications was significantly superior to that of PC. Even the startup in the morning took only about 10 seconds.
- For \$100.00 per year Apple provided telephone support which is readily accessible, comprehensive and effective.
- Synchronizing data, address books and calendars between Apple computers was quick and easy.
- For \$100.00 per year Mac services provided a plethora of utilities and services including online storage and online synchronizing of address books, calendars and other information between Apple Computers at different locations;

- Backing up of computers was seamless and trouble free;
- Mac OS X had unique features which were far superior to Microsoft XP. Ultimately the same was true regarding VISTA. An example is time machine which stores apple computer information and data in such a manner that you can go to any specific date and restore the computer to the condition that it was on that date.

With the limitation of space imposed upon me, it is impossible to adequately compare the Apple Computer system with the PC Microsoft based system. However, in summary, although Apple continues to market its systems as “consumer systems,” in fact they meet the needs of both the consumer and the business environment for not only the solo practitioner but also the multi-person law firm. Apple has recently released some enterprise level systems which should be able to handle the needs of even the largest law firms. In a like manner, the Apple Computer systems have access to all of the existing and future software, regardless of whether it is Apple or Microsoft developed.

There are many online articles written by lawyers and their experiences with Apple Computers. A few which I suggest are worth reviewing are Apple Briefs - Improving Your Law Practice with Macintosh, www.applebriefs.com?why-use-a-mac-in-your-law-firm/; www.law.com/jsp/legaltechnology/pubArticleLT.jsp?id=1184869659955; http://www.themaclawyer.com/the_mac_lawyer/2008/01/law-related-mac.html; and www.maclaw.org/.

I consider my switch to Apple Computers as being one of the best business decisions which I have made. It has allowed me to withdraw from the non-productive activity of providing technical support to my staff and colleagues for their PC computers and Microsoft operating system and applications and return to the full time practice of the law with a lot more enjoyment, indeed fun.

1 Parallels and VMware are inexpensive and allow the Apple user to create a virtual computer on the Apple computer in which the Apple user may run Microsoft programs. To the Apple user, there is no difference in running a Microsoft application, it appearing to operate with Apple applications without any discernible difference. For more information go to www.parallels.com/; and www.vmware.com/. Apple also has a similar free software called Boot Camp. However, Boot Camp does not function seamlessly and requires that the end user restart the computer for each operating system.

E. G. “Gerry” Morris is a small firm practitioner and has practiced law for over 29 years in Austin, Texas. He is certified as a Criminal Law Specialist by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. His firm web site is at www.egmlaw.com. Email your comments and questions to Gerry at tech@egmlaw.com.