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The Legal Connection

KEEPING LEGAL PROFESSIONALS CONNECTED

It's Greener Over Here!

How Virtual Assistance is an inherently "green" profession.

I guess in response to the recent attention to global warming the new trend is for everyone and everything to emphasize how green it is.

As for my part, I don't think my company could get much greener. As a virtual professional, my office commute entails opening the door to my home's three season porch and stepping behind my desk – no fossil fuels used for that! I provide no paper or other tangibles to my clients – so no trees or plastic resources are consumed. I also work with other professionals and help them be virtual too – thereby multiplying the number of businesses not dependent on fossil fuels and paper.

In the reuse/recycle/repurpose category, I am literally Queen. I am frugal to the bone and always have been. For those of you who think that means cheap, let me correct your misperception. According to dictionary.com, frugal means to *be economical in use or expenditure; prudently saving or sparing; not wasteful*. Think about it.

In dedication to all of those who are frugal too, I invite you to submit your recommendations for consideration to editor@thelegalconnection.com. On page 4 of each edition of The Legal Connection, I will maintain a column **The Frugal VA**, which will contain resources, tips and tricks for all businesses. This month's very first frugal find is a site with a **FREE** education in the use and application of common software and technology.

Until next issue..... be happy!

LegalTypist



Get outside each day and breathe some fresh air! To make it practical - review your calendar for the next week/month or walk the kids home from school and get your exercise. Feel the sun and breeze. Wear an SPF/hat.

Specifically, on page 2 is how to clean your:

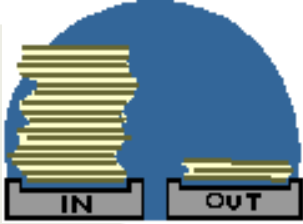
- PC's windows registry and temp/unnecessary files
- Physical equipment
- What to do if something spills on your keyboard

**SMARTER
 TECHNOLOGY**
 Experience
 Counts



CLEAN HOUSE BUT KEEP THESE ITEMS:

- The wrappings for equipment under warranty (like cell phones & PDAs). Some warranty documents state that you must return the item in its original packaging or you void the warranty
- Your wired keyboard and mouse. Yes, go wireless by all means, however, you may need the wired versions should your PC have issues with booting or powering up. Sometimes there is an issue which occurs *before* the wireless device drivers are detected by the PC.



The Ins & Outs of:

Keeping Your PC Clean

If there is one thing that being a Virtual Assistant has taught me – never underestimate the number of applications you may need to have open at once!

This means that when I upgraded my PC about two years ago, I looked for a computer with a large amount of RAM memory – or the memory that is used for running programs. I ultimately purchased an AMD PC from Tiger Direct (add link) which also came with 160 Gig hard drive for under \$600.

Aside from recognizing that a large amount of RAM would allow me to keep working no matter what I had open, I also understand that one must tend to the mechanics of a computer, or live to regret it.

Along with having up to date virus protection which is always running and scanning any connection to the internet, every business should have a complete off site back up of at least the “My Documents” folders, Outlook’s .pst file and QuickBooks/accounting back up files.

Each PC also needs to have all the bits of electronic data that gets deposited when surfing the net or downloading files, testing new programs, etc. removed.

To keep the insides of a PC healthy and clean, I recommend the following:

1. DISK CLEAN

At least once a week, close all open programs and perform a Disk Clean. This is like using the built in cleaning service to the Windows operating system.

Double click on the My Computer icon (or click on Start and locate My Computer). Highlight your PC’s main drive (usually C:) and right click once. At the bottom of the list that pops up is “Properties”, click on that.

You will now be presented with a snapshot of your hard drive as a graph with a grey button which says “Disk Clean”. Click on the button, wait for the process to figure out what is what, and when it prompts for an “OK”, go ahead and click OK. If you are techie or just curious – you can also review the files compiled; but it’s not necessary.

Disk Clean removes cookies, temporary internet files and other such unnecessary memory hogging electronic debris.

2. WINDOWS REGISTRY CLEAN

At least once per month, a PC should go through a bit more thorough an electronic cleaning with a registry clean.

While Windows may have an internal process to clean the registry – I am not aware of it as several years ago my brother in law (an IT tech for a large corporation with offices in NYC) recommended CCleaner to me and I’ve used it ever since.

Download CCleaner from www.ccleaner.com and select the Issues button (CCleaner also has a Disk Clean option so you can use one program to perform both Disk and Registry Cleaning).

3. EQUIPMENT CLEAN

Dust and heat are a computer’s worst physical threats. Make sure all vents are free from dust by using a cloth sprayed with my favorite all around cleaner - Fantastic. Do NOT directly spray any cleaner on the computer itself. Only spray on a paper towel or cloth and wipe the vents, keyboard and mouse. You can also wipe off the top of the monitor and PC tower.

For the face of the monitor, use specialty cleaning cloths available at most office supply stores.

OOOPS! We’ve all done it ... now what?

If you spill coffee or another liquid on your keyboard, what should you do? To start, if it’s a wired connection, you should disconnect the keyboard from the PC. Then, whether wired or not, you should tip the keyboard over a sink or garbage pail to allow the liquid to drain.

When the dripping stops, turn back over and carefully use a paper towel or napkin (tissues are too flimsy and easily shred) to blot up any visible moisture. Gently allow the blotting material to slide behind the keys and mop up as much as you can.

When you can’t get any more liquid out, put the keyboard down and leave it to dry for at least 24 hours. Depending on the liquid, the keys may stiffen but usually become pliable again after all is dry and you exert a bit of force to “un-stick” them. When the keyboard is completely dry, reconnect it to the PC to see if there is any long term damage.

I’ve had my share of spills and by following the above, have been fortunate enough to not have to throw a keyboard away.



Spills do not always mean replacing your favorite keyboard.

Technology2Go...

because mobility is key



CONFERENCE, OFFICE AND RECEPTION BY THE HOUR, DAY OR WEEK

Going out on your own and opening your own practice is not only expensive but fraught with questions and a mind boggling array of options to set yourself up.

Most solo-prenuers opt for a home based office – a room or section of their home which becomes the command central of their business. This only makes sense as it is the least expensive and easiest way to start up.

Usually, the hurdles begin when you add another body to the mix – like a secretary or assistant. Let's face it, it is tough enough to be in business, harder still to manage and administrate along with develop clients and service the ones you have when you are all alone.

As a legal [Virtual Assistant](#), I help attorneys and law firm administrators set up processes to deal with much of the back end office duties of their practices. I consult and advise of the options firms of 1-100 have to get their work done virtually – whether with in house staff or other virtual professionals.

But it's not just the administrative end of things that single professionals need help with.

Barring construction, home based professionals are at a serious disadvantage when it comes to meeting space – whether that is with potential clients or for conducting meetings, depositions and conferences. When you work from a home based office, you

rarely have a conference room and meeting around the dining room table will certainly call your professionalism into question.

If you are tired of always meeting at your adversary's offices or in restaurants but don't want to convert your garage, one option is to set up an account with [The Intelligent Office](#) – with offices in most major cities throughout the United States.

The Intelligent Office rents office and conference space by the hour, day or month. Each office is professionally appointed and has access to telephone, internet and even a copy machine. Conference rooms are large and bright, with speaker phones and white board. Reception is included.

So, we've taken care of making your work flow virtual and now your meeting space virtual ... what else does the home based professional need?

How about telephone answering? Incoming communications is always an issue with single professionals – adding reception to the other 1,000 duties already on your plate, with the resulting interruptions and distractions, it's enough to throw one over the edge.

For my business, I chose virtual reception through a company called [Onebox](#). Onebox automates my company's incoming communications, routes callers to the appropriate person within my organization and keeps all my faxes and voicemails accessible in a secure web based account.

If you are certain that you want "live" phone answering and not an automated system to control your incoming calls, I have to once again recommend The Intelligent Office. For less than \$10 per day, your practice can have live phone answering, call forwarding and voicemail services.

In fact, for that same \$10 per day, The Intelligent Office will collect your mail and overnight packages from all courier services. You can pick up your mail 24/7 or you can schedule it to be forwarded to you each day, week or month via US post or overnight courier. Since most of The Intelligent Office locations are situated in prestigious buildings, you immediately receive a professional address to use on business cards, etc.

As a home based business owner, it is nice to know that you have options – from using a VA for your secretarial support, technology to organize your incoming communications and a professional and cost effective way to conduct meetings and have a prestigious office address – only when you need. It's all in the set up.

***For any business
The Intelligent Office
provides:***

- ***Prestigious address***
- ***Live reception***
- ***Meeting and office space***
- ***Copy, Internet and Fax***
- ***Mail forwarding***

LEARN FROM LEGALTYPIST **LIVE** EACH THURSDAY AT 4:00 PM ET

No need to sign up or even be near a phone to listen to the BYOB Lectures sponsored by LegalTypist, Inc. and conducted by Master Virtual Assistant, Andrea Cannavina. Simply navigate to www.legaltypist.com at 4pm ET any Thursday and click on the



icon (left margin). From the comfort of your own office or through a smartphone, you will hear Andrea speak geek in terms you understand. Andrea always provides practical, resourceful and valuable information for any virtual professional.

If you have an issue or question you would like Andrea to address, simply e-mail to question@legaltypist.com. Tune in to hear as Andrea speaks with callers and answers your questions **LIVE**.

Frugal Find



- **GFC Global Learning**

FREE tutorials on popular software applications, use of the internet and computer basics.

GFC Global Learning



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A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes.