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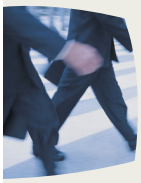

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TIME AND BILLING TOOLBOX FOR THE LEGAL PROFESSION BY TIMEBILLERS®

Summer 2007

The Legal Connection

KEEPING LEGAL PROFESSIONALS CONNECTED

I Hate Waste!

Time, money, technology, food ….

I can't help it. Don't know if it is genetic or what – but I simply cannot tolerate waste. My children serve themselves, knowing full well what they put on their plate must be consumed or they will be getting dirty looks from Mom -- my husband knows that if he throws something out, it better not have another use – or he'll get the same!

It's not just with the home life that I can't stand waste – in the office each piece of equipment and software application is used to its fullest; my time is scheduled in 15 increments and I have a process or system for almost everything. Even though I am aware of certain time wasters, there are also many time wasters you have no control over. Things such as that call you got from a colleague you haven't spoken to in years; or the "someday I'll do pile" like that stack of magazines and article clippings calling to you from the corner of the room. Time wasters abound in every office. Click here to see my comments in ***Wasting Time At Work, You're Not Alone (http://www.legaltypist.com/newsday.htm)*** recently published in **New York Newsday.**

In my world, there's even more distractions to eat up productivity – working from home means that cleaning, laundry, gardening, errands … all the responsibilities of being a "mother" – scheduling, family and children birthdays, doctor's appointments - call to me every day. There is very little delineation between work and home when your office is three steps away!

The point is – identify the time wasters and figure out a way to remove them. That stack of articles isn't going to get read in one sitting, so why not make from 8:30 am to 9:00 am on Wednesdays "Reading" time? Tell your co-workers not to disturb you, grab a hot or cold cup of something, close your door and start week one of reducing the time you waste collecting the dang things in the first place!

Until next time……..

LegalTypist

SMARTER TECHNOLOGY Experience Counts

TIME SAVING TIP

If you use a full version of Outlook (not Outlook Express) you can "schedule" time to respond to e-mails simply by dragging the e-mail over to the "calendar" navigational button and letting go.

Outlook will automatically open a new calendar entry with the subject line of the e-mail. Select a date, time and label (if you're a color user); hit Save and voila! I find this much more productive than simply listing to dos as I don't just have a list – I've got the time scheduled to ta done!

The Ins & Outs of:

Web 2.0

Everyone throws around the term Web 2.0. They know about MySpace.com and Wikipedia.com because of the publicity surrounding them, but I'm convinced most of them don't have a clear grasp on the range of technologies covered by this term.

Let's review the web services, peer-to-peer networking, blogs, podcasts and social networks that constitute Web 2.0.

Blogs – Also known as Web logs, these sites are online journals that allow the host or blogger to post comments, text, photos, graphics and links on a regular basis. Visitors to the site often can respond by posting their own comments. There are a number of blog types: photoblogs, videoblogs, podcasts, and even online portfolios called sketchblogs.

Collaborative Tools – Many Web 2.0 tools are services that will replace desktop applications. Google has rolled out a number of them, such a Google Docs & Spreadsheets. This service allows you to store documents and spreadsheets online and to allow others access for collaborative purposes.

Collective intelligence – These are system designed to tap the collective rather than the individual for decision-making. The popular del.icio.us and flickr.com are examples of the use of collective intelligence.

Mash-ups – These combine data or content from multiple sources into an integrated experience. HousingMaps.com is an excellent example or a mashup. It takes craigslist data and plots it on Google maps to show where real estate is available for rent or to buy.

Peer-to-peer networking - Sometimes called P2P, peer-to-peer networking is a technique for efficiently sharing files either over the Internet or within a closed set of users. Files are stored on many machines, not just on one server. This speeds access to the files. An example of a peer-to-peer network is Napster, the original music-sharing system.

Podcasts – These are multimedia blogs using audio or video content instead of just text and images. Podcasts often are distributed through aggregators like iPodder, Doppler and iTunes.

RSS – Often referred to as Really Simple Syndication, RSS allows people to subscribe to online feeds of information such as news, blogs, and podcasts. Feedster.com is an aggregator that distributes a wide variety of feeds.

Social networking – This refers to systems where members may share information about their hobbies, talents or knowledge. LinkedIn.com is an example of a business-oriented social network. Gather.com is an example of a more personal one.

Wiki – Wiki is the Hawaiian word for "fast." A wiki, such as Wikipedia, is a collaborative publishing system that allows visitors to add, remove, edit and change content.

***

Harry Hoover is a partner in My Creative Team. He has 30 years of experience in crafting and delivering bottom line messages that ensure success for serious businesses like Bank of Commerce, The Bray Law Firm, CruisingTheICW.com, Duke Energy, Focus Four, Levolor, North Carolina Tourism, Rubbermaid, TeamHeidi, Ty Boyd Executive Learning Systems, VELUX, and Verbatim.

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Penny for my thoughts?

Google is not a secure environment in which to store or collaborate. Better to get a $9/mo secure account with **www.backpackit.com** to invite your contacts to collaborate and store documents/files.

Peer to peer networks can cause harm to your computer or can take over and use all your computer's resources. Install and use with caution!

Check out my LinkedIn profile:

http://www.legaltypist.com/linkedin.htm

Technology2Go…

…because mobility is key

Capture Those Illusive Mobile Minutes with Client Call Manager™

OK, right after client generation and present client service – what's the next most important task attorneys need to be on top of? Did I hear a "time capture" from someone in the back of the room? Clap clap clap …. very good! ;)

We all know it's all about the billing (ok, it's really about collecting but that's another topic….) today I am discussing capturing time.

There are many different ways attorneys capture billable time – from the good ol' pad of paper/timesheet, digital punch clock programs (such as Spud City's TraxTime) and sophisticated time/billing applications such as QuickBooks, TimeSlips and Tabs3.

However, some of the most difficult to track and capture time are mobile minutes spent using devices such as BlackBerry® and Treo®. If you've ever been forced to cull through a cell service provider statement for billables, you know what I mean! Hence, my search for a solution – which lead me to Time Technologies, Inc., of PA. What they offer is Client Call Tracker for single practitioners and Client Call Manager for multiple user environments.

This simple to install, integrate and use program effortlessly captures minutes on calls and e-mails of mobile devices; wraps up the information in an easy to read report; and securely, wirelessly transmits the report to a secretary, administrator and/or billing department at a prescheduled time each day.

But that's not all! Those firms who use Equitrac or Tabs3 can have the information collected and stored on each mobile device transferred directly to the billing application itself – each day -- all automatically!

Ease of Use:

Let's face it – if the end users don't use a technology, it's not worth any cost! CCM is so simple, it can be explained in words - call/e-mail comes in; flashes on screen; is taken or reviewed; then concluded or responded to. CCM comes up with screen – is billable yes/no? If yes, next screen is pre-populated and includes a "Notes" section.

Ease of Integration:

Nothing is easier to integrate than an application on an existing piece of equipment. CCM is so intuitive, even the least techy attorney will take to it like a fish to water – especially when they realize how much time they can capture which they otherwise had been loosing!

Ease of Installation:

Either a link to a downloadable version is sent to the device, or a stand alone application in .zip format is all that is necessary to use CCT and CCM. No in house equipment, no maintenance of accounts. CCM doesn't use anyone else's storage or servers – so your firm's information stays on firm equipment under firm control.

Right now CCT and CCM are only available for BlackBerry® - but myself and others are actively beta testing the Treo® version which will hopefully debut in the near future.

For a demo of Client Call Manger: **http://www.legaltypist.com/timetechdemo.htm**

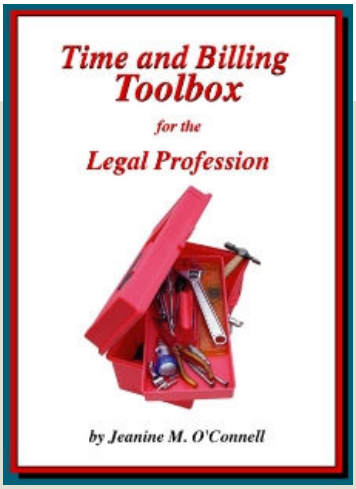
To find out more, visit: **http://www.legaltypist.com/timetech.htm** or shoot me an e-mail.

Are you a professional Time Biller®?

Looking for a comprehensive reference book for the entire legal billing processes not just an explanation of a particular software and it's functions?

Jeanine O'Connell, principal of **Time Billers®, Inc.**, has put together what will no doubt become the definitive educational tool for understanding proper billing practices with her *Time and Billing Toolbox for the Legal Profession*.

From how to organize and describe time to so your clients pay ~ how the billing process works in a professional services environment ~ all the way to what steps to take before sending a client to collection, this book has it all in easy to understand language. Truly, a must read for any service professional who struggles with the billing process or how to accurately and professionally describe or record their time.
To learn more or order your copy: http://www.timebillers.com/cgi-bin/ushop.pl?id=TB20LT850



Your time = $$$.
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* I do not recommend any technology, service or product which I have not personally researched, put through it's paces or which I actively use in my own professional services practice. In many instances and where possible, I am also an Authorized Reseller and may have a financial gain by referring others. Hey, I wouldn't be a good VA if I didn't! ;) Anyway, this only assures anyone who signs up for a recommended service that they will have me to ask should a technical or service issue be encountered.