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The 2017 Solo and Small Firm Legal Technology Guide  
Critical Decisions Made Simple  
By Sharon Nelson, Esq., John W. Simek, and Michael C. Maschke  
American Bar Association  
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In his introduction to this 10<sup>th</sup> edition, James A. Calloway, Esq., the director of the Oklahoma Bar Association's Management Assistance Program and frequent speaker and writer on legal technology issues, notes that many lawyers decided to attend law school because they didn't care for math, science or engineering. "Now they stare at computer or smartphone screens for most of their working days. Life truly is what happens when you are making other plans."

Mr. Calloway correctly notes that a lawyer's "tools of the trade" today and in the future are technology. He points out that this book provides objective reviews of products to help any lawyer become more efficient, responsive, profitable and successful. He is correct when he writes about the power of this book:

This guidebook can serve as a law firm's trusted source of basic information as well as in-depth information. It is a quick reference guide to understand where a new product of software release fits into a law firm's overall strategy. The authors of this guide bring their vast knowledge and expertise working with the legal profession to the pages of this volume. It is certainly the most cost-effective technology resource that any budget conscious law firm could hope to maintain.

I couldn't agree more. It's the scope of the topics that are covered in this book that surprises. I'm reminded of that old television commercial for Prego spaghetti sauce where the concern that a sauce from a jar can't have everything needed to be good is met with the repeated refrain: "it's in there."

Want to know what to choose for hardware: desktops (PC's and Macs), Laptops, Netbooks/Ultrabooks, and Tablets? It's in there. Hardware also includes recommendations on Monitors, Peripherals (Portable Mouse, Wireless Keyboards, External Storage Devices, External Hard Drives, Flash Drives, Speakers, and Headphone. Want to get advice about choosing

printers – stand-alone, networked, high and low volume and color printers, including multifunctional printers/copiers – it's in there.

There are also chapters on Scanners, Servers (all types) and server operating systems (including Microsoft Windows Server 2003 on up to X64 Operating Systems, Mac servers, and even Linux-Based Operating Systems. Networking hardware is also covered – you know, things like switches, routers, firewalls, racks, cabling and wireless network devices. Got questions about a fire safe, battery backup devices, or fax machines – it's in there.

And to say a topic is covered means that there are solid recommendations, often including prices. (This doesn't mean that every single vendor in a certain category is reviewed – just the “best of breed” selection of many possible choices.) Chapter 2, for example, deals with computer operating systems and says flat out that older version of Microsoft Windows operating systems should no longer be used:

Even today, we still come across law firms that are using computers running Microsoft Windows XP. Please note that this operating system is no longer supported by Microsoft and its use should be discontinued immediately. Continuing to use it is regarded by legal ethicists as an ethical violation since it is no longer receiving security updates and places confidential client data at risk. Computers running Microsoft Windows XP should be decommissioned and replaced, without hesitation!

Yes, there are chapters on smartphones, productivity software, security software, case management systems, time and billing software, litigation programs, document management and document assembly software. There are in-depth chapters on Apple hardware – like the iPad, iPod, Apple Watch, and every kind of Apple software available. For iPad litigators, there is an entire chapter on using the iPad in your practice with specific advice about numerous types of legal software and must have iPad legal and favorite Apps.

And don't be fooled by all the emphasis on hardware and software, there are also chapters on cloud computing, collaboration, remote access, mobile security, utilities and backup strategies. The final chapter also deals with various law firm data breaches.

What about social media, you ask? It's in there with a full chapter on social media for lawyers – including topics like social media advertising, networking, discovery of social media, communications. You say you want to take your firm paperless – it's in there.

Although this book is supposed to be a guide written exclusively for solo and small firms, I disagree with that limitation. There is plenty here for lawyers working by themselves or big-firm lawyers. It's refreshing that the recommendations are vendor-neutral and the authors even accept requests for the latest specs for any product if you drop them a line at [sensei@senseient.com](mailto:sensei@senseient.com).

You'd be hard-pressed to find any better source today of savvy, unbiased advice about legal technology. The depth and breadth of information for today's technology-dependent lawyer

is unsurpassed. Whatever you're looking for to help you find the best technology to help you be more successful as a lawyer – it's in there.

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Alan R. Nye is an attorney at Robinson, Kriger & McCallum in Portland and practices in the areas of business law, real estate and family matters. He has written and spoken on numerous legal topics. His book reviews and articles have been published in the Maine Bar Journal, the Portland Press Herald and other local and national publications. He can be reached at [anye@rkmlegal.com](mailto:anye@rkmlegal.com).

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**Legal Technology Guide**

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Introduction by James A. Calloway, Esq.



**ABALAW  
PRACTICE  
DIVISION**  
The Business of Practicing Law

