

Book Review for the 2020 Solo and Small Firm Legal Technology Guide

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After reading each year's edition since 2016, I have the great pleasure of reviewing the 2020 Solo and Small Firm Legal Technology Guide. Sharon, John and Michael's years of experience in the legal industry come to a sharpened point in this book to help cut a path through marketing and sales pitches to provide lawyers insights into what technology they actually need to run a law office. They do this with ease, laying out the material by in a straightforward "brass-tacks" easy-to-read format. I plan on using parts of this book as required reading in my *Technology in Law Practice* course at the University of Oklahoma College of Law as a potential roadmap for the next generation of law students in creating technology infrastructures in modern law offices.

The book contains suggestions on all aspects of law firm technology, broken down into chapters that deal with the variety of needs that a typical small law office would have. I fully appreciate how the chapters read: direct and brief, focusing on tried and true suggestions with pricing options. Starting first with hardware, the book lays the foundation for what lawyers need. I cannot stress this enough. While most law students, as well as attorneys, are accustomed to using consumer-based hardware sold through discounting and shiny, "prosumer" marketing pitches, the suggestions and recommendations in this book provide a practical, experienced framework for what lawyers really need – processing power, memory, and security to run a productive law office.

Additionally, the book provides a sobering wakeup call for the newer attorney (at least the ones I deal with). Technology needs of a law firm go well beyond a laptop and smartphone. Instead, a wholistic technology infrastructure is needed. The book handles this with ease, breaking down all technology components of a firm, including incredibly practical information about servers, networking, and security to make sure a firm is always working. The book goes further. It discusses all manner of software needed for a law firm, including the core component to a law firm – the case management system. While there are a host of vendors in this space, the recommendations provided are a great starting point and highlight the absolute necessity for these systems in a modern law office.

I do wish the book had covered more software options in other areas, especially when it comes to innovative solutions in the market that are leveraging the cloud, however, I understand why it does not. The major reason I will be using this book as required reading in my course, is that Sharon, John, and Michael provide a sobering reality woven through all parts of their recommendations. Technology must be secure, as much as possible. This is partly why there is not as many recommendations for cloud-based software. Lawyer's decisions on what to purchase, license, and leverage must keep their ethical duties to reasonably protect client data at the forefront of the requirements process, not as an added benefit. This is what makes this guide so valuable. Sharon, John, and Michael's experience and expertise in cybersecurity and

data security flow through every chapter, providing lawyers, my law students, and other legal professionals with realistic and practical options to run a secure, productive law firm.

The 2020 Solo and Small Firm Legal Technology Guide is a fundamental resource for all attorneys desiring to understand what technology they need for their small law office. I cannot wait to see what they come up with in 2021!