Book Review by Mike Polk, Esquire, BELSER & BELSER, Columbia, SC

In 1981 or 82, because of my first job as a waiter at Chi Chi's Mexican Restaurant, I found myself in need of my own transportation. My first car was a 1969 Chevy Imperial that my Uncle Eddie's vocational rehab class rebuilt as a school project (including installing a sweet 327 engine).  My Uncle Billy bought me a timing light, spark plug gap tool, and other assorted tools, and he spent some time showing me the finer points of tuning up an engine.  I am pretty sure that he gave me a Chilton's manual, but that may be something I have added with the passage of time.

Nowadays If I open the hood of my Honda Accord, I can barely find the windshield washing fluid, and if I was inclined to work on the engine (which I am not) I am sure that I would need a lift and this or that special tool.

I feel a similar way about computers. As a small firm attorney, I took an interest years ago in the technology that ran our office. I was nominally put in charge of office technology because my boss saw me looking at PC Novice Magazine, or Windows for Dummies, or something like that.  It was more like a hobby to me than something that required daily worrying.

However, just like many areas of the law, I have found that keeping up with legal technology is no longer just a hobby, and it is not something to be merely dabbled in occasionally. For better or for worse, technology permeates everything a lawyer touches. The need to stay on top of legal technology has intensified with the need to get everyone to a position to work remotely, pronto, as well as most states requiring some form of technological competence. Finding a laptop used to be as easy as seeing what was on sale at a big box near us or asking a friend what they use. However, a quick google search for best printer 2020 yields about 643,000,000 results.  Looking for a VPN? A search for VPN for lawyers yields about 2,360,000 results.

Attorneys need help, and there is no better place to get it than the Solo and Small Firm Legal Technology Guide.  The 2020 edition is no different. The content is presented in a straightforward manner that doesn't require hours to parse through. Of course it can be read from start to finish, but personally I have used it most before a major purchase, or when it becomes clear I don't understand some form of technology as much as I would like. The best part of the book is that the authors do not have a proverbial dog in the fight, so the advice is more unbiased than most sources out there.

The book is well worth the time and money, and it is an essential resource for any solo or small firm attorney.