

Book Review

By Peter Roberts

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Title: The 2020 Solo and Small Firm Legal Technology Guide

Besides reciting specifications, statistics and acronyms, the authors often refer to their experiences assisting solo and small firms with their technology challenges while sharing their casual observations. I feel like I am sitting in a room with the authors chatting about law office technology. When they described human blood as cheaper than inkjet cartridges, I sensed their honest caring for your law firm's budget. As for the accuracy of Dragon Naturally Speaking, it is described as "astonishing." Must reading is the description of Microsoft Office with its several cloud and desktop iterations.

I agree with their recommendation to query your lawyer colleagues about their own choices of technologies and subsequent experiences. The authors mention "practice management advisors" twice. Seek this person out at your state bar for local guidance with law office technology, particularly case management software. An example profiled is MyCase. Its terms of service cite the laws of California for dispute resolution. A U.S. jurisdiction is not always the venue with cloud vendors, so be sure to read the terms of service.

You may be aware of the website www.capterra.com. It offers a listing of software and says, "...you can access the full universe of possible options available to you to find your match." Perhaps, but the operative word is "universe." Which lawyer has the time? This book focuses on your "solar system", not universe, of options that benefit from the wide knowledge of the authors and thereby saving you a huge investment of time and likely frustration. The self-imposed limits on the scope of the content to only known and reliable resources reflect the authors' many years of both sitting on the 50-yard line and visiting the locker room of law office technology.

The book deals with front office, back office, infrastructure and the future: "Tomorrow in Legal Tech." This last topic is sobering to read. The words, "fake" and "deepfake" are used 40 times. Need I say more?

The wide-range, changing nature and emerging risks of using law office technology demand someone stand at the gates and determine what technology is worth knowing about and why. That "someone" for the legal profession are the authors of this 216-page valuable annual guide. Call this very accessible book a textbook or a reference work, but don't call it a disappointment.