

## Book Review:

### **The 2019 LEGAL SOLO AND SMALL FIRM LEGAL TECHNOLOGY GUIDE By Sharon D. Nelson, John W. Simek and Michael C. Maschke**

I would like to preface my review to say that this is the fourth edition of the famous Legal Technology Guide that I have had the privilege of having in my library. As a solo attorney, I have found these guides indispensable in my practice. Legal technology seems to evolve at a much faster pace than any other area of law, and a current version of the *Guide* is a must.

It was extremely fun to read this year's edition and compare it to the first edition that I bought 10 years ago, the 2009 Legal Technology Guide. My how legal technology has changed. Ten years ago, Apple was just coming out with its second-generation iPhone. CRT monitors were phasing out, and LCD monitors were the new rage; the recommended monitor was a 17 – 22 inch monitor. Security issues centered on anti-virus software, and a trip to “the cloud” was still in its infant stage. My, how times have changed and how we have advanced in legal technology!

Being under the mistaken impression that I am somewhat tech savvy, it was startling to me to read the 2019 edition of the Solo Small Firm Legal Technology Guide to realize how much I need to educate myself on so many technology issues. Of course, like any solo or small firm attorney, financial constraints will force us to make some compromises in what we need versus what we can afford.

The biggest issue technology wise, and as set forth by the writers is security. Security in our laptops, security in our networks and security in our mobile devices, phones and other “smart” devices are all landmines for any law firm, but for solos and small firm lawyers, a data breach or an attack by ransomware could devastate a law office. For the security issues alone, an up to date copy of the legal technology guide should sit on your shelf, right next to the contact information of your IT professional.

Let's look at the major topics contained in the *2019 Solo and Small Firm Legal Technology Guide*. The Guide starts the reader with basic hardware requirements in searching for a computer. Both Mac and PC's are covered, as well as laptops and tablets. Comparative prices for all the above systems are also set forth, to give the reader a good idea of what to expect. The book's reliance on Dell as the brand of choice for PC's is helpful, but I would recommend shopping online for several brands with similar specifications.

Operating systems for the hardware are limited these days to Windows 10 and MacOS Mojave Version 10.4. So, your hardware and software choices will be determined by the hardware system you choose.

Computer peripherals such as speakers, keyboards, mice and storage devices are all given their due. Printers as well as multifunctional devices, and scanners each are addressed. I agree wholeheartedly with the authors that as far as personal scanners go, the ScanSnap iX500 is the only way to go as far as personal low volume scanners. I rarely use our high-volume scanner at the office except for extremely large files, such as medical records or voluminous discovery or trial exhibits.

The most interesting chapters in this year's edition for me was the quite thorough review of small office servers, server operating systems and Networking hardware. Sorry as it is to realize, your server has operating life of only 6-8 years, so you always must look ahead and anticipate the ultimate demise of your server, or the discontinuance of your server operating system. Be prepared for sticker shock when upgrading the wiring system in your office from Cat 5 to Cat 6, but as the authors point out, newer systems need to be upgraded from the ground up.

The authors do a good job of setting forth productivity software, case management systems, document management and document assembly – all vital to the best and fastest use of technology in a small office. Most of my colleagues (and I) have migrated to cloud-based systems for purely economic reasons. Clio started the trend about 10 years ago, but Clio is no longer the most affordable system on the market. As the book points out, there are many, many different systems and different price points for each.

Remote access to your computer has been around since the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Guide, but a review of newer technology, software and security is always helpful, and is contained in this years' edition.

If you only read a few chapters of the 2019 Solo and Small Firm Legal Technology Guide, it would be wise to include those dealing with security and mobile security. Many lawyers, especially solo or small firm lawyers do not realize how vulnerable they are, security wise using mobile devices. Although you may need a technology translator on the specifics, the book points out the vulnerability you face using non-encrypted email or logging in through open or public Wi-Fi. (Doesn't everyone use a VPN?)

Well, that's the 2019 Solo and Small Firm Legal Technology Guide in a nutshell. It's a quick read, easily finished in an evening or so, but a great resource for all your technology needs. Keep a current edition on your shelf at the office.

- Marc Matheny