

BLF

BIGGER LAW FIRM

A magazine for attorneys



**BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT**
Crafting a client feedback
program for your firm

**VIRTUAL
IMPRESSION**
Online video advertising
is emerging as a powerful
marketing tool

THE SWITCH

HOW DO MAC AND LINUX STACK UP FOR ATTORNEYS?

MESSAGING

Creative content ideas
that deliver traffic and
leads for your firm

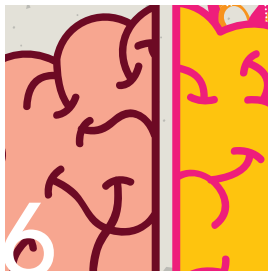




The Switch: Mac & Linux for Attorneys

Windows is the most widely used computer operating system (OS) in the world. But many users would argue that status is held despite shortcomings in performance and ease of use. What are attorneys and other business professional to do if they, like many, find Windows troublesome and unpleasant to use?

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MESSAGING

Content Ideas that Deliver

Any law firm engaging in online marketing will have to create content. Webpages, press releases, blog posts, FAQs, videos and social media content may all be part of the plan. But producing content blindly, just for the sake of having it, is not enough.



VIRTUAL IMPRESSION

The Power of Video Advertising

Video ads on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other online channels form a key part of the advertising landscape in 2015. Search engines are now indexing video ads as part of their search results, giving rise to the potential for increased traffic.

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Bigger Law Firm™ was founded to introduce lawyers to new marketing and firm management ideas. Advancing technology is helping law firms cover more territory, expand with less overhead and advertise with smaller budgets. So many tools exist, but if attorneys are not aware of these resources, they cannot integrate them into their practice. The *Bigger Law Firm* magazine is written by experienced legal marketing professionals who work with lawyers every day. This publication is just one more way SEO | Law Firm™ is helping attorneys Build a Bigger Law Firm™.

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MARKETING BY THE NUMBERS

What is happening in search? Here is the scoop on recent SEO, blogging and mobile statistics.

SEO



2000
WORDS

1. Page length

Words matter. The average content length for pages in the top 10 results for any keyword on Google is 1,300 or more words.

- Searchmetrics

401-1000 PAGES/
SITE

2. Number of pages

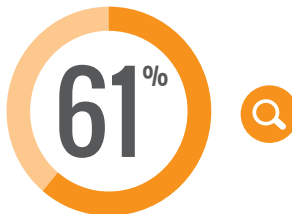
Websites consisting of 401-1000 pages receive six times more leads than those with 51-100 pages.

- Hubspot

3. Online research

61% of global Internet users use search to research products online.

- Shopping and Personal Finance



300%
MORE TRAFFIC

4. Search vs. social

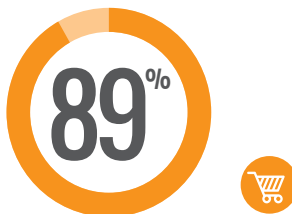
Websites receive 300% more traffic from search engines than from social media.

- Outbrain

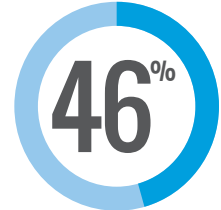
5. Purchase decisions

89% of consumers use search engines to help make purchase decisions.

- Outbrain



Blogging



6. Blog popularity

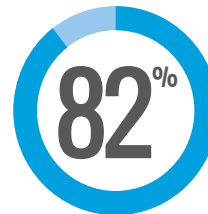
46% of people read blogs more than once a day.

- Hubspot

7. Posting frequency

82% of marketers who blog daily acquired a customer using their blog.

- Hubspot



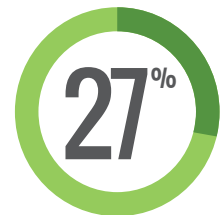
Mobile & email



8. Keep visitors on your pages

27% of consumers say they will leave a site if it is not mobile-friendly.

- ExactTarget



3X
HIGHER

9. Close more leads

Conversion rates for email marketing are three times higher than for social media.

- McKinsey & Company





THE POWER OF VIDEO ADVERTISING

Videos have become an integral part of our digital culture not just as a communication medium but also as an advertising tool.

Video ads on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other online channels form a key part of the advertising landscape in 2015. According to the Content Marketing Institute, 74 percent of marketers in North America are using videos as part of their content marketing strategies.



Facebook and Twitter have experienced success with autoplay ads within their respective newsfeed streams and user timelines. In its fourth-quarter earnings report last year, Facebook announced that three billion videos are viewed on its site each day. Video ads have been evolving ever since the social media giant introduced them in 2014. An *Advertising Age* report from earlier this year indicates that nine percent of U.S. marketing professionals are already running autoplay ads on Facebook, while 54 percent expressed a likelihood of using them this year.



Search engines are now indexing video ads as part of their search results, giving rise to the potential for increased traffic to the websites of businesses that use them. Google began testing the addition of promoted video ads to search results in August in an effort to broaden its ad capabilities by incorporating multimedia rather than just text links, according to industry sources. Bing and Yahoo are already showing sponsored video ads directly within search results and requiring viewer-initiated action to play them.



Not much has been revealed yet about the direction Google plans to take. However despite its late start, it is projected to surpass competitors because it owns YouTube, on which more than 6 billion hours of video are viewed each month. Google has a pre-roll ad platform on YouTube that requires viewers to watch an ad before their desired video.

Online video advertising is emerging as a powerful marketing tool that provides opportunities to connect with thousands of potential clients at a fraction of the cost of traditional television advertising. Many leading brands and marketers, however, are still struggling to understand how they can maximize the video ad platform.

There are many ways in which attorneys can leverage video ads to grow their firms, attract more clients and distinguish themselves from competitors. As part of a broader marketing strategy, video ads can help build trust and authority in your practice area, as well as inform potential clients about your brand and the legal services you offer. Attorneys can use video ads to persuade potential clients to recognize that you have the solution to their legal problems. Just like with any other form of advertising, planning a strategy with goals and objectives is essential to creating an effective video ad. Determine what the purpose of your video ad will be and what message you would like it to deliver.

Understanding that law firms are social is another critical piece of marketing success. Attorneys form professional relationships with their clients and other legal professionals in the community. The inherently social nature of law firms fits in well with online video, a medium that is regularly viewed, shared and

commented on across social networks. Many law firms already use videos on their websites. However, video ads differ from the typical format of attorney ads in several key ways, such as cost, length and objective. Ads distributed through platforms such as Facebook can cost more than conventional lawyer videos, which are shared for free across the firm's website, YouTube and other platforms. Such videos average around two to five minutes in length. They are created to highlight the attorney and provide an opportunity to demonstrate expertise. In contrast,

The video ads that resonate most are the ones that prioritize storytelling and user engagement. Rather than sharing your law firm's history, consider answering the frequently asked questions of your clients.

video ads are much shorter, often lasting only a few seconds. The goal of these ads is to capture the viewer's attention quickly.

When it comes to video advertising, it is important to customize your content for the channel from which it will be disseminated, whether it is on social media or a search engine results page. For example, if you are going to insert your brand into a user's Facebook feed, consider how your video ad can blend with their overall social media experience. Pre-roll, in-text and in-banner video ad placements can all contribute to achieving the goal of an ad campaign, but different placements are likely to perform optimally depending on the length of the ad.

When creating and marketing a video ad, make sure to:

Always provide value. Potential clients will take the time to watch your video if it contains the helpful information they are searching for rather than legal jargon that they do not understand. The key is to craft content that people are actually interested in watching. Today's prevalent social media mindset means abandoning everything that marketers know about the traditional broadcasting format. With television advertising, viewers are conditioned to be interrupted by commercials at regular intervals. However, if you create an online video ad that fails to focus on what your viewer cares about, they will easily scroll on to something else.

The video ads that resonate the most are the ones that prioritize storytelling and user engagement. The stronger the connection, the more successful your ad is likely to be. Rather than sharing your law firm's history, consider answering the frequently asked questions of your clients.

Be visually appealing. Videos deliver a story through the combination of eye-catching visuals and sound. However, it is essential for brands to ensure that their content is engaging even when it is silent or does not have a voiceover.

For example, Facebook's autoplay feature starts playing each video without sound as a person scrolls through their feed. Additionally, some devices may not be equipped to play audio. Therefore, it is the visuals that ultimately capture the viewer's attention.

Consider length. On the Facebook feed, each video ad starts autoplaying and stops as soon as people scroll past it.

With so much content competing for attention, a brand must catch a person's interest immediately — often in the first three seconds. For tracking purposes, Facebook considers video views to be those lasting three seconds or more. Your video ad needs to be concise. Tell your viewers quickly how your services can help them. The shorter the video, the more likely people are to watch it all the way through. According to an Interactive Advertising Bureau Research Council study, 15-second videos work best in the pre-roll position where the user does not have a choice to skip them, while 30-second spots are optimum for user-initiated ad placements that involve clicking or rolling over to play. The latter is likely to receive fewer views, but viewers of these ads are more likely to take action based on what they see.

Take note of production value.

Although you can shoot your own videos, quality and content will suffer unless you know how to leverage lighting, locations and audio to create content with a professional finish. If your video looks sloppy, people might assume the same about your firm and the services you offer. Common mistakes include unnatural delivery, poor lighting and lengthiness. Taking the time to plan a script and devoting a reasonable budget to your video ad will be worthwhile. Remember, the feel and look of the ad should be representative of your firm's values.

Target the right audience. Like any other content marketing campaign, a video ad has to reach the right audience to be successful. Being very specific with your targeting can help avoid reaching the wrong viewership altogether and ensure that your ads are only shown to people who are likely to use your legal services. A smaller law firm can compete with big players, despite a less robust marketing



budget, by using specific demographic information to create a cost-effective, targeted video that its prospective clients will stop to watch. Facebook even has tools that allow the targeting of specific segments of an audience to see what resonates the most and with which people.

Include a call to action. As a law firm, your goal through the video ad is to tell your potential client what to do next. The best calls to action are rarely aggressive. Instead, they use a soft approach, persuading a viewer to contact you for more information. If your video generates thousands of views but nobody calls or emails you, then the ad fails to accomplish its goal and is not a sufficient return on your investment.

There are some instances in which video ads might not be appropriate. If you are not careful, using memes and gimmicks can undermine your reputation and credibility. Although humor often serves to make companies more approachable and help build a relationship with the customer, making jokes can actually hurt law firms by leading potential clients to think that their concerns are not taken seriously.

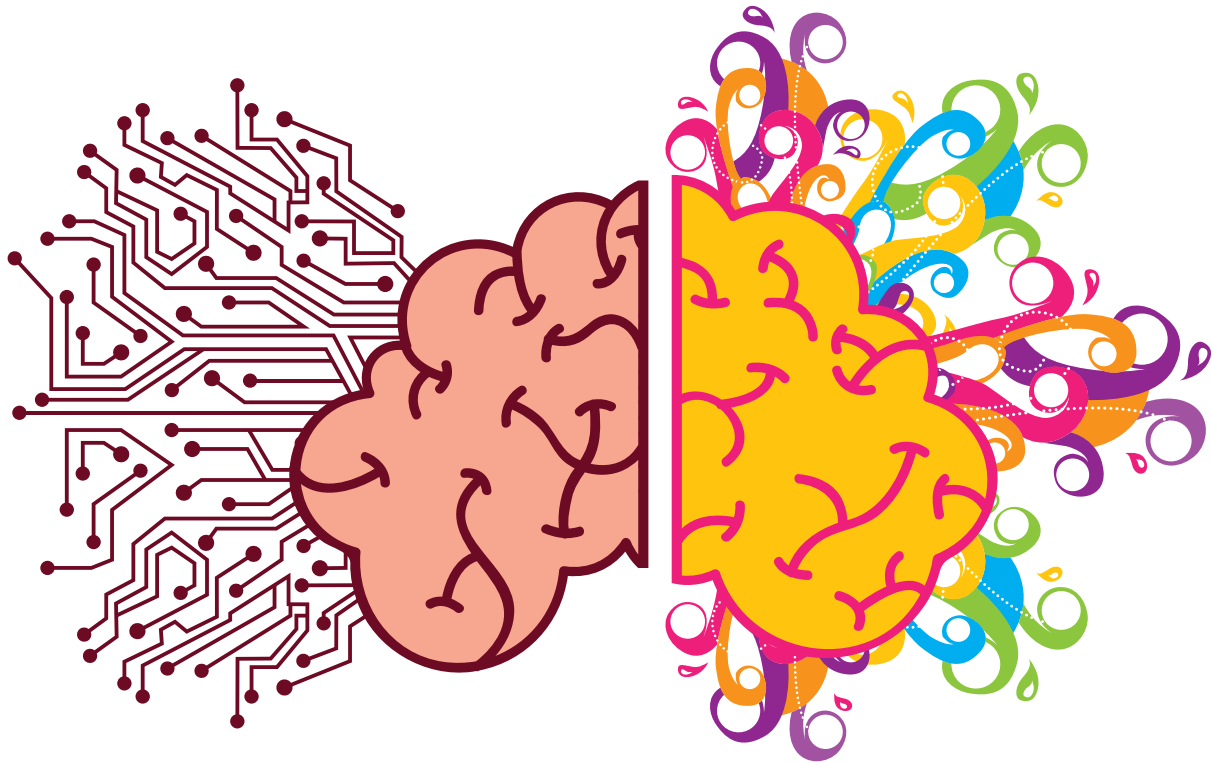
In many cases, the success of a video ad is measured by how viral it is. However, this is not necessarily the goal of legal video marketing. Your video advertising approach depends on your objectives and the characteristics of your visitors, among other factors. Going viral can

undermine your law firm's goal of professionalism and ethical obligations. Creating a video ad merely for the sake of gaining attention can do more harm than good, and a high number of video shares does not necessarily attract new clients.

Brands should be flexible when it comes to video ads, as the medium allows experimentation with different formats to find the combination and placement that works best for your law firm. There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach, but a sound ad strategy will seek to use more than one type of placement. The success of video ads can be evaluated to determine return on investment by examining the number of video views and shares, as well as new clients. Measuring such data against the firm's objectives can not only shed light on why a campaign did or did not succeed but also help companies enhance their understanding of video advertising.

The popularity of video ads is gaining momentum in the dynamic world of online advertising. Embracing video ads as part of your law firm's marketing strategy can pay dividends — when done correctly. Video marketing can help law firms achieve broad goals like establishing your brand, generating new leads or driving traffic to the website, but if you focus your objectives you can get even more value from this medium.

- Dipal Parmar



Creative content ideas that deliver

Any law firm engaging in online marketing will have to create content. Webpages, press releases, blog posts, FAQs, videos and social media content may all be part of the plan. But producing content blindly, just for the sake of having it, is not enough. Your firm's online content must be part of a larger plan, and for that you need a strategy.

To develop a good content strategy, your firm must ask a few key questions:

- 1** What is the target audience?
- 2** What types of content will be useful and relevant to the audience?
- 3** What is the measurable business goal the content is intended to support?

THE MANY FACES OF ONLINE CONTENT

Your editorial plan will include many different types of content, each with a different purpose.

WEBPAGES

Your law firm's website needs to be packed with individual subpages, each dedicated to a specific subject relevant to the legal issues your prospective clients face. One question your content team should constantly be asking themselves is, How are we distinguishing the firm's website from every other law firm out there?

FAQS

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) need not be lengthy. It is a much better strategy to target many different questions with concise answers than to address a few questions with long answers. Short answers to multiple questions allows you to target specific search terms, which are often in the form of a question.

BLOG POSTS

Your firm's website should contain an integrated blog dedicated to timely content, and it should be updated often. Updates make it clear to both search engines and prospective clients that your firm is on top of relevant news and can be viewed as an authority. A blog that has not been updated recently is the equivalent of darkened windows. Prospective clients may well wonder, Is this place still open?

TARGET AUDIENCE

The first step in developing a content strategy is to determine your target audience. Specifications should include, at minimum, demographic information such as age, gender and geographic location, and it should also include as many distinguishing characteristics as possible, including specific legal issues and questions prospective clients will have. The more narrowly you can define your target audience, the more effective your content strategy can be.

Depending on your firm's practice areas, you may be starting with a broad or narrow audience. However, one of the advantages of online marketing for law firms is that even a very broad practice area can include narrowly targeted content. Many prospective clients will use search engines such as Google to find information about their legal issue, and they will often use very specific search terms. Your firm can use this knowledge to your advantage by targeting these terms. Using the example of a personal injury firm, a person injured in a bus, bike or pedestrian accident may use search terms that relate to the specifics of that accident, typing "bus accident lawyer" into Google's search bar instead of "car accident lawyer." If your firm wants business from people looking for help with a range of specific issues, your definition of your target audience needs to include several such sub-categories for which you can develop appropriate content.

Another important consideration is the distinction that exists in some practice areas between the central person involved in the legal issue and the person making the hiring decision. Elder law attorneys are often seeking to earn business from the adult children of elderly individuals. When college students are in legal trouble, it will often be their parents who are searching for an attorney. Awareness of these types of demographic differences is crucial to developing effective content.

RELEVANT CONTENT

Once you have defined your firm's target audience, which should include several different sub-categories, you can develop an editorial plan that includes many different types of content relevant to those audiences. Your team should put itself in the shoes of the target audience and get to know their interests. This includes not only the specific aspects of their legal issues, but also other common areas of interest or concern. Some types of online content may be designed not to directly address legal issues but to simply draw readers in from among your target audience.

Your editorial plan will include many different types of online content. Each has a different purpose and requires a different tone and style.

Webpages

Your website needs to be packed with subpages, each dedicated to a specific subject relevant to the issues your prospective clients face. Continuing with the example of personal injury, a firm may provide similar services for an injured person who was struck by a bus and for an injured person struck by a car. However, the prospective client who found the firm's website by searching for "bus accident lawyer" or "Can I sue the city if I was hit by a bus?" should arrive at a subpage that presents the firm as the preeminent authority on bus accident lawsuits, answering specific questions that the client will have about that situation. The firm does not appear authoritative if the user sees only a one-size-fits-all webpage on legal services for accident victims and a line of text indicating that the firm handles car, truck and pedestrian accidents, too.

One question you should constantly be asking is, "How are we distinguishing the firm's website from every other law firm out there?" When there are dozens of law firm websites going

after the same target audience, how can your firm rise to the top? This is a question that needs to be addressed with regard to every type of content produced, and especially for subpages that address a specific legal problem. Your website is your chance to say, on one page, "Here's what we've got for you." If what you've got does not look any different from what anyone else is offering, that is a problem.

The answer to how your firm can distinguish itself is not surprising: provide better content. The way to make content better is often to provide more facts and more specific answers to client concerns.

The answer to how your firm can distinguish itself is not surprising: provide better content. In terms of subpages that address a specific legal problem, the way to make content better is often to provide more facts and more specific answers to client concerns. There is a system for doing this, known as the skyscraper technique. When you look at a city skyline, the tallest buildings are the ones that stand out. People remember the tallest skyscrapers, while the merely tall just blend in with all the others. To apply this perspective to webpages, look at the top results for a search term you are targeting and take note of what makes their content great. Use that information to direct your content team to do better. Take your content over the top in terms of quality and comprehensiveness. Google's algorithm does its job well: the website that provides the most comprehensive answers to people's questions will rise in the rankings.

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions are one of the most common types of search terms, and we are not talking about simply, "Where can I find a lawyer?" Often, prospective clients will have several intermediary

questions before they even decide whether they are looking for a lawyer. Can I sue my doctor? Do I need a power of attorney? What is the statute of limitations in my situation? If your firm is the one providing comprehensive answers to specific questions, then you accomplish several goals. You will drive traffic to the firm's website through search results, you have succeeded in presenting yourselves as experts, and

when people researching their legal issues decide it is time to hire an attorney, they are much more likely to hire a firm that has already assisted them with their research.

Answers to FAQs should be as specific as possible, providing the hard facts that people are looking for, not bland pronouncements. Some firms may purposely offer only vague answers on their website and recommend that the website user call for a consultation. The intention behind this choice is clear, but it can backfire. Clients who want a more specific answer will simply keep searching until they find one, and that means moving on to another firm's website.

Blog Posts

Blog posts should cover an array of topics. News about verdicts and settlements in your firm's practice area, active lawsuits and changes in the law are all fair game. Reporting on these items sends the message that your firm is well informed about the current state of the law. Blog posts can also include opinion articles from the point of view of the firm's attorneys, commenting on law and politics in a way that is relevant to clients' interests.

THE MANY FACES OF ONLINE CONTENT

Some types of online content may be designed to simply draw readers in from among your target audience.

MULTIMEDIA CONTENT

One way your firm can stand out is to develop multimedia content. Presenting information in a different medium will often distinguish your firm from the competition simply because you are the only ones doing it. Multimedia content can include podcasts, videos, infographics and interactive graphics.

PRESS RELEASES & OFF-SITE CONTENT

Not all content you produce should be published on your website. Press releases about your firm's achievements, or that feature attorneys commenting on the legal issues of the day, should be distributed for off-site publication. In addition, your attorneys may want to contribute guest blogs for publication on the websites of prominent organizations connected to your practice area.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Your firm should have a strong social media presence because that is where people are spending a huge percentage of their online time. Many prospective clients encounter law firms through social media, and you should have a conscious approach to developing your firm's social media presence.

But you can go further. An attorney who does a lot of public speaking may also want to do a lot of writing for the firm's blog. When a group is looking for a speaker or a reporter is looking for an attorney to comment on a legal story, having many examples of the attorney's writing available online will help interested parties find your firm.

Another way to make blog posts more creative is to focus on non-legal topics that are nevertheless of interest to your prospective clients. This is one way your detailed definition of the various groups within your target audience can be used to the firm's advantage. An elder law firm may be seeking the business of people who want to establish power of attorney or guardianship for their elderly parents. Blog posts can focus on this group's other relevant interests, such as Alzheimer's research, caretaker support groups, and safety for seniors in the home. In this way, your firm's blog may do more than just give an authoritative appearance — it may gain actual readers.

Multimedia Content

Some types of information naturally lend themselves to formats other than text. For example, it is often easier to learn a process when you can watch someone do it in a video. Legal information is not inherently visual in this way, but presenting information in video form can still be a good move for law firms.

First, there are internet users who simply prefer information in that format. Just as some will always prefer to read an article if given the choice, others will always prefer to click on a video. If yours is the only firm answering a specific question in video form, you will attract that prospective client.

The second reason to consider video is that it can have a positive impact with search engines. For

One of the great advantages of infographics is that people enjoy having useful information presented in an attractive, easily digestible form, and they will tend to spread such images far and wide.

some search terms, a relevant video will be featured prominently in the search results, even if the user is not searching specifically for videos.

Also, creating a YouTube channel for the firm provides one more platform for the firm's content. The firm's videos should be professionally produced, and might feature one of the firm's attorneys answering relevant legal questions. Rather than one long interview, a good strategy is to present short clips that answer questions prospective clients may have. The titles of the clips will then correspond to relevant search terms.

Infographics are another medium that can deliver great results for law firms. An infographic is an image, often in a long vertical format, that presents factual information in an eye-catching way, using powerful graphic design. Infographics should be produced by a professional graphic designer, using information provided by the firm. Check facts and cite sources with care. An infographic should feature the firm's name, logo and web address prominently, and it should make it clear that people are encouraged to share the graphic online and provide a link back to the firm's website.

Press Releases, Guest Blogs and Other Off-Site Content

Distributing press releases and writing guest blogs serve the dual purpose of establishing the firm's attorneys as experts and providing a valuable link from a highly-ranked website to the firm's site.

In terms of content, press releases can be prepared according to long-established standards, and guest blogs

can cover much the same types of material as blogs that are published on the firm's website. The important thing to remember with off-site content is that it should not be duplicated on the firm's website, as duplicate content will earn a penalty from Google and devalue both websites where the content is published. Online content must always be unique.

Social Media Content

One reason your firm should have a strong social media presence is simply because that is where people are spending a huge percentage of their online time. Many prospective clients encounter law firms through social media, and your firm should have a conscious approach to developing its social media presence. Much of that presence will consist of posting on Facebook and Twitter with links to recent additions to the firm's website, such as new blog posts. However, the firm may also choose to create content specifically for publication in social media.

There are also potential pitfalls to be aware of when designing a social media marketing strategy. Each social media platform has its own culture, and your firm should be careful to strike the right tone. Many businesses engaging in social media activity appear spammy, which could damage the firm's brand. Make sure that your content team is familiar with the network in which the firm intends to participate and knows how to post in the right way.

MEASURING RESULTS

Producing high-quality online content costs money, and your firm will need to be able to measure results to determine

the most cost-effective content strategy. That means identifying specific goals for which progress can be measured.

Of course, the ultimate goal is more business for the firm, but this can be broken down into specific objectives that different types of online content are intended to produce. One major advantage of online marketing is that user activity creates data, which makes measuring progress towards goals easy.

The goal of a subpage dealing with a specific legal topic may be to convert the reader into a lead, meaning that reader makes contact either through engagement with a chat function or by making a call. For an underperforming page, the goal may be simply to get visitors to spend more time on your page.

These goals are easily measurable through tools like Google Analytics,

and this allows for experiments with different ways of presenting content.

When a firm commits to developing a certain number of FAQ pages, the goal will usually be to increase traffic to the firm's website by a certain percentage. Using traffic analysis tools, it will be easy for your website development team to measure not only progress toward that goal, but also exactly which types of content are helping to achieve it.

Off-site content like blogs and press releases bring visitors to your site and the backlinks this material generates help make your page more visible in search results. Site visits, time on site and the firm's position in search engine results are highly trackable, and all are important measures of the success of the content strategy overall.

Social media activity can have its own objectives, and platforms like Facebook provide their own analytical tools to help you gain insight into whether the firm is achieving its goals.

STRENGTHENING THE STRATEGY

It is not uncommon for a law firm to start publishing content without an editorial plan, much less a comprehensive content strategy. Even if there once was a strategy, it may have been forgotten as the content team fell into a rhythm of producing the same type of content over and over, with a lessening regard for the target audience or measurable objectives. When you want to improve your firm's marketing performance, a top-down review of the firm's content strategy will help to focus the firm's resources on meeting specific goals.

- Brendan Conley

WE HAVE SOME EXPLAINING TO DO

YOUR LEGAL NEWS. OUR POWERFUL NETWORK.

Team up with the first news distribution service created specifically for attorneys. With Law Firm Newswire's network of websites, news outlets, blogs, journalists and subscribers, your firm can target potential clients and drastically increase exposure.

THE SWITCH

MAC & LINUX FOR ATTORNEYS

PROFESSIONALS TODAY ARE MORE ABLE THAN EVER BEFORE
TO SWITCH TO A MAC OR LINUX COMPUTER.

Windows is the most widely used computer operating system (OS) in the world. But many users would argue that status is held despite shortcomings in performance and ease of use. What are attorneys and other business professionals to do if they, like many, find Windows troublesome and unpleasant to use? Until recently, the answer was simply, “Deal with it.”

Professionals today are more able than ever before to switch to a Mac* or Linux computer. If you have ever thought of switching, but assumed that a lack of application support or compatibility rendered the idea a pipe dream, read on to learn why alternative operating systems are worth another look.

VIABILITY OF ALTERNATIVE OPERATING SYSTEMS

The primary obstacle to the viability of alternative operating systems has always been application support. Simply put, the overwhelming domination of Windows in market share means that many applications are available only for Windows. That is changing, however.



These days, any type of software considered a necessity for businesses in multiple industries is available for both Mac OS and Linux. For instance, LibreOffice is a 100 percent free, full-featured office software suite for all three major operating systems. It includes a word processor, spreadsheet and slideshow application, just like Microsoft Office, and it reads, edits and saves files in Office formats seamlessly. PDF creators, web browsers and media players are all available for Mac OS and Linux in several feature-packed and completely free versions.

However, virtually all software created specifically for attorneys runs on Windows. How, then, can alternative operating systems possibly be viable for attorneys? First, several solutions are available to run Windows software on Mac OS or Linux. These are detailed below. The second reason is cloud software.

Cloud software works in any web browser and is not installed on your computer at all. Examples include practice management software such as Rocket Matter and Clio, as well as widely used web-based email services such as Gmail. Users of cloud software never need to install updates because the software resides on the vendor's servers, as does user data. This also makes data loss or theft very unlikely because industry standards for security and backup are very robust.

It is possible to conduct a law practice using only cloud software, in which case your choice of operating system would be a trivial matter. You could use any of a number of web-based email services and practice management solutions like those mentioned above, and an online word processor and office suite such as Google Docs or Microsoft Office Online.

**Throughout this article, "Mac OS" refers to the operating system on Apple's laptop and desktop products. The computers themselves are referred to as "Macs."*

Of course, most professionals use some combination of traditional and cloud-based software, and highly specialized software is unlikely to have a cloud-based version at this point. But as internet bandwidth, web browser standards and computer processing power increase and mature, the popularity and utility of cloud software is only going to increase. Therefore, when deciding what operating system to use, you can be confident that the trend is toward cloud software, which is OS-agnostic. Your OS must, of course, meet your needs today, but you need not worry that tomorrow the industry will consolidate around Windows, and all alternatives will fade into history.

MACS

Mac OS is a clear second place for market share of desktop and laptop computers. It is far behind Windows, but far ahead of Linux. Switching from Windows to Mac OS means buying a Mac. Most new Macs, laptop or desktop, will run well over \$1000, because all new Macs are highly capable machines. Unlike Windows PCs, the only option for smaller budgets is to buy used. The purchase of a new computer for each person at a business wishing to switch to Macs is probably the single biggest obstacle.



Ease of Use

In the early 2000s, the gap between Mac OS and Windows was significant, and it only widened over that decade. Since the release of Windows 7 in 2009, the difference has not been as significant. All Windows versions since then have been fairly well-regarded and capable products. Part of the perception that Macs “just work” better than Windows computers is a holdover from years past, but Macs do still hold an advantage.

For instance, a Mac application appears as a single icon, as opposed to the directory of folders and subfolders containing

PROBABLY THE MOST COMMON REASON FOR CHOOSING A MAC IS THE PERCEPTION THAT IT “JUST WORKS” – THAT IS, THE SOFTWARE IS EASY TO USE, IT BEHAVES AS EXPECTED AND PRODUCES FEWER ERRORS THAN WINDOWS.

cryptically-named files in Windows. Uninstalling the application consists of moving it to the trash, which removes virtually all traces of it from the computer. On Windows, some parts of an uninstalled program may remain, decreasing usable disk space and contributing to the familiar and inevitable slowdown that eventually plagues any installation of the OS.



Security and Privacy

Another common reason many cite for wanting to switch away from Windows is security. Threats to security come in many forms. Most unnerving are the many viruses and “malware” applications that are common on Windows. These threaten to hijack your computer, steal your data and even spy on you through your webcam. Imagine what a disaster it would be for a criminal to gain access to all of your client files. Mac OS is subject to far fewer of these threats. The basic architecture of the OS is less amenable to malicious software, and the much smaller user base of Macs compared with Windows makes the OS a less attractive target.

Another significant threat to privacy and security unfortunately comes directly from the creators of today’s operating systems. Vendors have an incentive to obtain information about what users do with their software. They can use it both to improve their software and to market new features and products, whether to the user base in aggregate or to the individual. Vendors can even sell user data to marketers, or turn it over to government investigators. Windows 10 has received significant

negative attention due to its habit of sharing data with Microsoft, and recent updates for Windows 7 and 8 implement the same data-sharing processes. Some data-sharing features on recent versions of Mac OS likewise have brought Apple under scrutiny.

There are valid reasons to see this trend as problematic, as well as valid reasons not to worry. These data-sharing components can be turned off, but it is troubling that they tend to be opt-out rather than opt-in. The data are generally anonymized, but anonymization schemes have been compromised in the past. It is unlikely that the security of Microsoft’s or Apple’s databases could be compromised by a third party, but many would consider sharing user data with Microsoft or Apple a privacy breach in and of itself.

The most important thing to remember is that any system, including Windows, can be made secure by a user who follows good security practices. Run anti-virus software, keep your OS updated and be careful to download and install only well-respected software.



Running Windows Software on Macs

Even the most satisfied OS switchers can sometimes find themselves wanting to run a particular Windows application for which they cannot find a satisfactory Mac-native replacement. There are three distinct solutions for when you simply must run a Windows program on a Mac. Two of them require the user to be able to install a licensed copy of Windows. This is sometimes easier said than done; users tend to misplace seldom-used DVDs or product verification keys.

The solution that does not require an actual copy of Windows is “compatibility layer” software. The premier product available is “CrossOver” by Codeweavers, available for both Mac OS and Linux. CrossOver will not run every Windows application; some will run flawlessly, some with the occasional bug and some will not run at all. Check out the “CrossOver compatibility center” where you can find out whether your indispensable Windows applications are supported. CrossOver costs \$60, which includes one year of email support and upgrades. Windows viruses and malware are less likely to be able to harm a computer when running within compatibility layer software. Because of its low cost and freedom from the hassle of installing Windows, CrossOver is the recommended solution as long as it can run the applications that are necessary for your practice.

The second option for running Windows programs on Macs is virtualization software. This software creates a “virtual machine” running a full installation of Windows within Mac OS. Like CrossOver, this allows you to run Windows and Mac programs side-by-side. The leading virtualization applications are Parallels Desktop and VMWare Fusion, each of which costs about \$80. Both require a licensed, installable copy of Windows, which is not included and will therefore drive up the cost for some users. These applications will run the vast majority of Windows applications without problems. The only exceptions are those that have advanced 3D graphics, such as games and 3D modeling programs.

Another minor disadvantage: because the virtualization process is CPU-intensive, Windows applications’ performance can suffer. However, the applications most used by attorneys will likely run at acceptable speeds. Virtualization software is the best option for users who want extensive software compatibility and have or are willing to purchase a copy of Windows.

The last option is to create a dual-boot configuration. This means that when you restart your Mac, you will have the option of booting into Mac OS or Windows. You must reboot the computer in order to switch operating systems, and you cannot run Windows and Mac applications side-by-side. The advantage is that the native Windows installation means no compromise whatsoever in compatibility and speed, allowing the user to run any Windows applications, including those with 3D graphics, without worry or hassle. Apple makes an official utility for setting up a dual-boot configuration called Boot Camp, and again, a full, installable copy of Windows is required.

LINUX

Linux is another alternative operating system that is popular among tech-savvy users. Several different distributions, or “distros,” of Linux are available online.

LINUX USED TO BE ACCESSIBLE ONLY TO EXPERTS, BUT THAT IS NO LONGER THE CASE. MANY VERSIONS OF LINUX TODAY LOOK AND OPERATE MUCH LIKE WINDOWS AND MAC OS IN MOST RESPECTS.

Most are completely free. A given distro might aim to serve a general user base or might target users with specific needs, for example a focus on security or a lightweight OS that will run well on an old computer.

The most popular is Ubuntu, and this has been true for quite some time. It is modern and advanced, and it has a well-funded development effort behind it. But a competitor called Mint (not to be confused with the personal finance software) is rapidly gaining popularity due to its more familiar, Windows-like interface and its somewhat faster operation. As detailed below, you can try one or both before switching, and you need not buy a new computer.



Ease of Use

Linux is not for those attorneys who view computers as a necessary evil. You do not have to be a hacker to get what you need out of Linux, but you should be someone who enjoys learning new things about computer software. Linux is much like Windows and Mac OS, but has some fundamental differences. An example of such a difference may be instructive as to whether you might want to consider Linux for your law firm.

Say you want to install the web browser Firefox. On a Windows or Mac computer, you would access the Firefox web site, download the program and install it. On Linux, you would simply type the following into a command prompt: “sudo apt-get install firefox.” The software resides in a repository maintained by the creators of your particular version of Linux. Downloading from the repository and installation on your computer are completely automated.

Consider the advantages Linux presents in this example. First, the application is vetted for inclusion in the repository, so you can be confident it does not represent a significant threat to privacy or security. Second, the process is clearly faster and simpler with Linux. It is completely automated. Third, it does not result in an executable installer sitting in your Downloads folder that you have to remember to throw away. The advantages of the process do not end with installation. Software removal is also accomplished by a single text command. You can even execute a command to update every application on your computer at once. This way of handling software allows Linux to remain fast and responsive even years after installation, unlike Windows.

This software management system is frequently cited by Linux users as a favorite feature. But it is so completely different from its Windows and Mac counterparts that it can scare away new users. Your own sense of whether you might enjoy learning a new and arguably superior process for a basic computer task can give you a sense of whether you should try Linux.

Finally, Linux has a major advantage in the ease with which users can try out the operating system without making permanent changes to their computers. Linux may be installed to and run from a USB flash drive. Your computer can boot Linux on the flash drive just as it boots Windows on its internal drive. You can check hardware compatibility, install software, create documents and other files and get a feel for how Linux works without affecting your existing Windows installation in any way. Software to create so-called “Live USBs” is available free of charge, the most popular being “LinuxLive USB Creator.” The OS and applications will not run quite as fast from the flash drive as they will from the internal drive. If you like what you see, you can fully install Linux from the same drive.



Security and Privacy

Whether Mac OS or Linux is the most secure operating system is up for debate. Both have smaller user bases than Windows and thus are less attractive to hackers, but this is changing, especially for Macs. Solid anti-virus software is generally regarded as an utter necessity on Windows, optional but recommended on Macs and harmless but mostly unnecessary on Linux.

The raw code that makes up Linux is open source, meaning that anyone can view it and look for security holes. This is both a negative and a positive, because those holes are easier to find in open source code, but most people searching for them have good intentions and publicly report them so that they can be patched.

THE ADVANTAGES OF MAC OS AND LINUX OVER WINDOWS CANNOT BE IGNORED. THEY OBJECTIVELY OFFER GREATER SECURITY AND PRIVACY, AND MANY FIND BOTH ALTERNATIVES EASIER TO USE.

Each Linux distribution has its own software repository where thousands of 100 percent compatible and tested applications are available for free (more on that later). This means that when you install software from the repository, you can be sure that application does not represent a security threat. The same cannot be said for software downloaded from the web, as with Mac OS and Windows. However, most Linux users will sometimes wish to install software that does not come from the official repository, such as extensions for their web browsers. Care must still be taken when choosing which of these to install.

Linux excels at privacy. Because there are so many different versions, and most are free, users would quickly abandon any distro that did not respect user privacy. Of course, you need to remain wary of any software you install, especially that which does not come from the official repository. While a fully malicious spying program would never make it into a repository, limited sharing of usage data with the vendor is not wholly unacceptable to most users, and is therefore widespread.



Running Windows Software on Linux

Just as with Macs, there are three primary solutions for running Windows applications in Linux: compatibility layer, virtualization and dual-boot. CrossOver is the best compatibility layer product for Linux just as for Macs. Virtualization options include VMWare Workstation Player, a user-friendly option that costs \$150, and Oracle VirtualBox, a free product that requires slightly more technical knowledge to set up.

The same recommendations for Macs apply to Linux. Go with CrossOver if it supports your favorite Windows software. Choose virtualization if you need general-purpose compatibility and can install Windows. And set up a dual-boot configuration for complete compatibility including advanced graphics.

Unlike switching from Windows to a Mac, switching from Windows to Linux does not require the purchase of a new computer. Linux will run just fine on most any Windows PC. (It can even be made to work on a Mac, though that sometimes requires trial and error.) In fact, you can even install Linux alongside your existing Windows installation if you opt for the dual-boot option. This leaves Windows applications and data intact and spares you the need to reinstall the OS.

CONCLUSION

The advantages of Mac OS and Linux over Windows cannot be ignored. They offer greater security and privacy, and many find both alternatives easier to use.

Application support remains the biggest obstacle, but the maturity of compatibility solutions and the rapid adoption of cloud-based software erode this obstacle more each day. Linux may even be tested without any purchase of software or alterations to the computer. If your Windows experience is less than satisfactory and you want to see what Mac OS or Linux is all about, there has never been a better time.

- Ryan Conley



NOBODY LIKES TO BE LEFT IN THE DARK

While many law firm marketing companies put up walls between you and your statistics, we decided to install a window. Follow trends, view your link portfolio, track rankings, follow competitors and more in the newly redesigned CLM Lounge.

CUSTOM
LEGAL MARKETING



client feedback

Developing a client feedback program lets you discover whether clients are satisfied with your work and the way you deliver legal services. This helps you determine what, if any, changes you need to implement to retain current clients and attract new ones.

Why is obtaining client feedback important?

According to a study conducted by the Florida Bar on the ways people find and select their attorneys, three out of four people found their attorney through a referral from a friend or family member. In the majority of cases, that friend or relative referred a lawyer with whom he or she had a favorable experience.

If your firm specializes in commercial law, it is likely that more than 85 percent of your business next year will be from current clients, and approximately half of your new clients next year will be referred by current clients. By implementing a client feedback program, you will be better able to raise their level of satisfaction with the firm and help them feel more comfortable voicing their concerns. If clients have a complaint they will not always communicate that to you and allow you to find a solution to their problem.

Dissatisfied clients may simply leave the firm without providing a reason. In order to prevent such a scenario from occurring, lawyers should consider establishing a client feedback program, which will indicate to clients that their thoughts and feelings matter to you. In this way, you have a chance to strengthen the satisfaction of your clients and retain their loyalty.

Furthermore, many studies have revealed that clients assess the quality of the legal services provided to them based on service-related criteria, including the ways by which attorneys and their staff connect and empathize with them. The quality of the service firms provide their clients takes precedence over work product. This is all the more reason that firms should endeavor to listen to their clients, ask for their feedback and respond accordingly.

What forms can client feedback programs take?

Client feedback programs can take a wide variety of forms. The type of program a firm chooses to establish is dependent on the firm's objectives, size, budget and resources. In order for a client feedback program to be effective, it must consist of more than a survey or an in-person interview. The firm should ingrain within its attorneys and staff a culture that encourages listening to clients, as well as implementing changes based on clients' comments even if the feedback is unpleasant to hear.

Structured client feedback programs communicate to clients that the law firm is genuinely interested in their opinion. Firms can mitigate costs by requesting that most clients complete an online survey, and reserving in-person interviews for more important clients. Attorneys are more likely to receive honest feedback if they do not conduct interviews of their own clients.

In lieu of conducting an online survey, firms may wish to physically mass-mail a questionnaire to a group of clients. However, clients may consider this to be impersonal, and response rates from such mailings are usually low. You are more likely to receive a response if you mail a brief questionnaire along with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Still, your client pool will have to be of a significant size in order to acquire relevant data.

The response rate from email surveys is a little higher than that from direct mail surveys, but you may still have the problem of obtaining a sufficient amount of data for analysis. Online surveys produce a higher response rate among clients who are happy with the firm's services, and thus, you may not receive a reply from dissatisfied clients.

Telephone surveys yield the most objective responses; they reveal

qualitative data that one is less likely to secure from direct mail, email and online surveys. To ensure that your clients are providing honest responses, it would be best to have a third-party consultant conduct the telephone surveys rather than someone from the law firm.

Post-engagement questionnaires can be especially useful at the conclusion of a case because they are tailored to the client and the matter. They can be very helpful in obtaining feedback for consumer-oriented law firms. Brief questionnaires, with questions that are open-ended and that request a rating from one to 10, are most likely to have high response rates.

You can obtain feedback through informal interactions with clients anywhere, such as during lunch, at the end of a business meeting or while playing golf. Ask clients, "How are we doing?" or, "Is there anything we can do to make your life better?"

Another way to acquire client feedback is to visit clients at their place of business. This method is ideal for ongoing business clients, to whom the attorney should explain the reason for the visit. The purpose of the visit could be to become more knowledgeable about the client's business, express gratitude for prior work and demonstrate that you sincerely care about the client.

Be careful not to overlook interactions between staff and clients. It is often the case that staff such as paralegals and legal assistants have the most interactions with clients, and thus constantly receive informal feedback. Inquire as to whether they are sharing that feedback with the attorneys, and if not, take measures to ensure that they do.

A more modern approach to soliciting client feedback is the use of social media. You can interact with clients via LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter or other social media platforms, and if you read a client's praise of your firm's legal services, thank the client publicly. If they voice their complaints about your firm on social media, you should respond to their concerns, and communicate with them offline.

How can client feedback be used as a marketing tool?

A correctly developed and implemented client feedback program can be used as an effective marketing tool. Concentrate on what matters most to your clients, and ask structured and unstructured questions that are relevant to your clients' problems, needs and plans for the future.

Be purposeful and deliberate about the analytical methods you will use for the data you have compiled. Decide whether you would like the statistical data to represent either the firm or each practice area within the firm. Think about how you will present the results of the data analysis to your firm, and how you will use the data to improve your relationships with clients. It is imperative that you always follow through with clients or they may think that there was no purpose in providing feedback, and that thought process could harm relationships.

An efficiently executed client feedback program can help firms gain valuable insight into their clients' opinions on the quality of legal services provided. When firms follow through on the feedback and improve upon the level of service, they are likely to experience an increase in client retention, in the number of new clients and a rise in revenue.

- Roxanne Minott



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WHAT DO BING ADS BRING TO PAID SEARCH?

ay-per-click (PPC) advertising can be an effective and in some cases necessary addition to organic search marketing efforts. Only a certain amount of real estate exists on the first page of search results, and both Google and Bing have a vested interest in displaying paid listings prominently.

According to an Advanced Web Rankings study, paid listings can take a significant share of clicks away from the top organic search result. The study showed that the presence of ads decreased the click-through-rate (CTR) of the first organic page one result by up to 30 percent. Further down the page — past the third organic listing — the interaction between paid and organic results becomes negligible. These findings indicate that your firm's paid ad could take attention and clicks away from top-ranking competitors.

Why pay-per-click?

There is a certain simplicity to paid ads that makes them an attractive option. Your firm only has to pay when someone clicks on your ad, and you can set budget limits to ensure your expenses do not balloon out of control. You can control who sees your ads and when, and you can track results easily and quickly. Beneath the surface, however, PPC is

more complex. Firms must continuously adjust bids, ad language, timing, audience demographics and budget to try to reach searchers who are most likely to click on an ad and contact them.

Google AdWords has long been the leader in paid search. Google's market share makes participation in their AdWords platform a must for any firm incorporating PPC into its marketing.

Google, however, is not the only viable option. Bing and Yahoo are slowly chipping away at Google's market dominance. According to comScore's February 2015 U.S. Desktop Search Engine Rankings, Google commands 64.5 percent of search volume, Bing 12.8 percent and Microsoft/Yahoo sites 19.8 percent. Since Bing serves ads to its own network as well as Yahoo and Microsoft sites, it commands a 32.6 percent share of desktop search volume.

Microsoft has long accepted and worked with AdWords' PPC dominance. Bing allows users to import AdWords campaigns and continues to make the process easier. In May, Bing began adding support for Upgraded URLs and completed integration of Upgraded URLs in Bing Ads over the summer. Practically, this means advertisers

can now use existing AdWords tracking templates and URLs to seamlessly create Bing paid campaigns. You can import up to 1.5 million keywords and ads from AdWords into Bing, and you can import a whole AdWords account or an individual campaign. And once campaigns are in Bing, it offers several features AdWords does not.

BING ADS INTELLIGENCE: Ads Intelligence is an Excel extension. Like Google's Keyword Planner, Ads Intelligence assists with keyword research and offers keyword suggestions. It also allows you to track the performance of keywords and see bid suggestions based on existing keyword data.

With Ads Intelligence, Bing excels in the area of competitor research. The Auction Insights tab lets you see how your ads are performing relative to firms bidding on the same keywords. Auction Insights only shows data on competitors who have been in the same auctions as you. Performance comparisons are based entirely on how your ads measure up against others competing for the same impressions.

Bing allows you to compare impression share, average page position, the percentage of time a competitor's ad appeared on the same page as yours (overlap rate), the percentage of time a competitor's ad appeared above yours (position above rate) and your top of page rate. You can also see a list of display URLs for those bidding against you in the same auctions. The ability to see where you are succeeding and failing in specific auctions provides insight into how to optimize future campaigns.

GROUP-LEVEL CONTROL: Bing offers control at a group level that AdWords only allows at the campaign level. For example, in AdWords, you may set a location and schedule for a campaign. These settings are inherited by all groups within that campaign. Bing lets you make adjustments to the schedule for one or more groups within a campaign, eliminating the hassle of creating a new campaign.

Ad scheduling within Bing is also slightly more sophisticated. While AdWords bases display timing on the time zone of the ad purchaser,

Bing allows scheduling based on the time zone of the ad viewer. And different campaigns can be assigned different time zone settings. This feature may be more helpful to businesses with large, international reach, but it can also come in handy for firms that do business in two or more states that cross time zones.

COST: On average, cost-per-click (CPC) is 32 percent lower for Bing Ads than it is for AdWords. For some industries, the cost can vary even more substantially. According to AdGooroo, the average CPC on AdWords for the legal industry is \$5.82. On Bing, the average is \$1.76 per click — a 70 percent difference.

Both platforms let advertisers specify a daily budget. Bing also allows for a monthly budget.

DEVICE TARGETING: Bing also allows more control over device targeting than AdWords does. Bids for smartphones and tablets can be modified separately in Bing. You can decrease or increase your tablet bids from -20 percent to +300 percent and smartphone bids from -90 percent to +300 percent.

USER DEMOGRAPHICS: Bing's users lean toward a demographic many firms want to reach. People who search with Bing tend to be older; the average age of a Yahoo/Bing user is over 35. More Bing users are college graduates and graduate school students. And the average household income of a Bing user is over \$75,000.

This demographic may be influenced by sites like Yahoo Finance and MSN Money. Searches originating from those sources use Bing. Siri on the iPhone also utilizes Bing for search.

Bing has come a long way and is a viable PPC option. However, it still lacks Google's reach. While the average CPC for Bing campaigns is less, so is the number of impressions. A Bing ad may receive only 25 to 30 percent of the impressions a similarly targeted ad would receive on AdWords. Bing may serve as a helpful complement to AdWords, but cannot yet replace AdWords PPC for most industries. Firms must consider their budget and goals when deciding whether to use either — or both — networks.

- Kristen Friend



WEIGHING COST AND AD REACH

Because of its smaller audience, Bing cannot command the click rates AdWords does. While cost-per-click can vary greatly based on a firm's geographic location and the competitive nature of the bid auction for its keywords, Bing still offers a more budget-friendly range even when these variables are taken into consideration.

Get started with Bing Ads at help.bingads.microsoft.com



TIME FLIES

CATCH IT

Tracking billable time is critical for attorneys. Yet the practice of counting valuable time minute-by-minute is met with near universal condemnation. Capture.it can help.

Losing time, even a mere 15 minutes a day, whether on your smartphone or your desktop machine, has the potential to add up to significant losses over the fiscal year. Is there a workable, easy solution that does not involve manually tracking time? The ideal answer is a system that does this task automatically.

Meet Capture.it, an automatic time capturing app for both desktop and mobile devices. Capture.it claims it can help attorneys recover up to 84 billable hours — of mobile time alone — in a year. It boasts seamless integration with industry standard practice management systems and has Teflon-tough security and bank-grade encryption.

Capture.it was founded by attorney Michael Bluestein, who wanted to address lost time in a world full of smartphones and mobile offices. Bluestein noticed that lawyers were increasingly expected to be available at all times for clients, which creates many scenarios in which a lawyer may need to capture the

time used for a quick, on-the-go task, like sending an email from his or her phone, without stopping to manually enter details. Much of that time is lost — a problem Capture.it aims to solve.

According to Capture.it's statistics, 90 percent of time logged by the app comes from mobile interactions that are two minutes or shorter. And 47 percent of these interactions happen outside of regular business hours. This is time that typically goes unrecorded.

Setup

Capture.it is easy to set up if you have the right information. After you have downloaded the app, Capture.it walks you through the process of connecting your email account. You will need to know some technical details, including the type of email server (POP, IMAP or Exchange), and the server name, port, password and security type (SSL/TLS or STARTTLS). You will also need outgoing server settings: the smtp server name, port and security type. You can get these details from your IT department or host.

Automatic time capture

Capture.it works by tracking your activities and automatically making time entries for you. Once you have connected the app to an email account, perform any activity you want to track from within the app. A single tap to an icon at the bottom of your screen brings up your time capture options. If, for example, you are composing an email, you simply tap the pencil icon and write the email. After you send the email, Capture.it displays the time spent, asks if it is billable, lets you assign it to a client and gives you the option to send the time to an assistant. If you send it to an assistant, the time is not recorded until the assistant logs in and completes the entry. You may also tap a phone, travel or clock icon if you simply to track other types of billable hours.

Even if you only want to use the app on a mobile device, you will still need to log in to Capture.it's web portal to set up clients and matters. Capture.it supports automatic integration PCLaw, ProLaw and Clio practice management systems, and it may be used as a stand-alone application.

You do not have to use accounting or practice management software to use Capture.it. Attorneys can enter clients and matters individually or bulk upload a CSV client file. You will need to enter clients and matters before you start capturing time; you will not be able to assign the time correctly otherwise.

One-click capture

One tap allows you to grab enormous amounts of work performed via email, smartphone or computer as well as time spent on phone calls and time spent traveling. The app creates time entries and provides a complete trail of activity on every file so there is never any dispute about the work performed on behalf of a client. You can track time even if you are offline. The upper tier plan also allows you to track the cost of printing from your PC.

Capture.it was developed to offer a solution that works in and out of the office, syncing seamlessly. The lawyers responsible for creating the app wanted a tap-and-capture capability that grabs a complete email thread or multiple hours of time spent on a PC or other device without burdensome manual entry.

Manually tracking emails that correspond to each client and logging calls for each file is disruptive, and it also adds time to an already busy schedule. An attorney needs to track all time, billable or not, so that decisions can be made later

It is difficult to make good business decisions without solid, reliable data about the scope of one's work. With Capture.it, billing a client is no longer a matter of putting pieces of a puzzle together and trying to track down which parts are missing.

about which tasks should be logged and which can be ignored. Tracking everything provides a clear answer for attorneys who want to balance their working day, set realistic billable hours per day and increase their billed hours. It is only when all time is tracked that the true scope of the work performed on a case is known. Without having an accurate picture of expenses, firms can lose time and money.

Web portal access

While Capture.it has both desktop and mobile apps, its web portal provides several helpful features. You can log in to enter users, assign them to groups and specify billing rates. Incomplete entries, like those missing a contact name, are stored in the portal and can be completed on your schedule. You can

also edit or delete entries from within the web portal and review them before sending them to your billing system.

Adhering to rules

Accurately tracking time allows you to be in compliance with ABA Model Rules that state a responsibility to "keep the client reasonably informed and to keep accurate client activity records." If a law firm is seeking a time tracking solution that fits their needs, they have numerous choices, and Capture.it may be the best one.

If hours are not logged promptly and accurately, the lost yearly revenue can be astonishingly high. A recent study by Altman Weil found virtually one-tenth of an attorney's time is lost if it is not captured the same day and up to four hours vanish by the end of the week if not recorded. By the end of the month, the loss of time could add up to 15 hours. The study suggested the lost time could amount to about 170 to 200 man-hours per year for each lawyer. The financial impact of those lost hours is enormous.

Capture.it has some potential downsides. The app has access to email data, including sender and subject and call data, including the phone number of the person to whom you are speaking, which may raise security concerns. A privacy policy is posted online. The app uses 256-bit SSL secured connections and stores all information in 256-bit AES encrypted databases.

The Capture.it desktop app appears to only work with Outlook on PCs. This could make tracking all time difficult for firms that use Mac or Linux-based machines.

Conclusion: Capture.it appears to be easy to use and can log time that would normally be lost due to the hassle of entry. It is available for Surface Pro, iPhone, iPad, Android (Phone and Tablet) and Outlook. Plans start at \$16 per user per month, and a 30-day free trial is available. Learn more at <http://getcaptureit.com>.

- Kerrie Spencer

FLAGSHIP^(BETA) CHOOSE POWER

The old methods of search engine marketing are gone. CLM Flagship is a different approach, using internet tides to bring clients ashore. Rise above changing algorithms. Harness the power of creativity to advance your firm. Bring together every resource the internet has to offer. We launch marketing plans that get attention, links and media coverage. *Try Flagship and stop fighting change. Let it power your law firm.*

Jump onboard before your competitors do.



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