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Helpful Smartphone Applications for Legal Professionals



By Emily Janoski-Haehlen

In today's technology driven world, legal professionals need the ability to access legal information and documents while away from the office. Applications, more commonly called "apps," are mini-programs that harness the power of your mobile device. Apps provide knowledge, access, management, fun and even help with productivity. If you have a smartphone, whether it's an iPhone, Blackberry, Palm or Droid, there are thousands of apps to help you stay connected.

Legal Apps

If you want a legal definition, case opinion, or the Federal Rules of Evidence, there are apps for that. For legal definitions on the go, *Black's Law Dictionary* is available on the iPhone for \$49.99, or NOLO has created a free app, *NOLO's Plain English Law Dictionary*. For quick access to case law, the iPhone offers free apps for Fastcase and Lexis. The Lexis app requires an established username and password to get case opinions or to Shepardize, but it also allows for the use of a client code while logged in. The downside is there are no hyperlinks available within the cases and you have to know the citation of the case to retrieve it. The Fastcase app offers a free, searchable library of cases and statutes. The free case law and statutes provided by this app might be worth the price of the iPhone or iTouch.

Have you ever wished you could access the text of the Federal Rules of Evidence in court without opening a book or your laptop? There's an app for that

too. The iPhone app, Lawstack, provides the text of the U.S. Constitution, Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, appellate procedure, evidence, bankruptcy procedure, and criminal procedure and it's all free. The Law Pod, available on Blackberry,

you to open, view, edit, sync and share Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents. It's available for the iPhone (\$14.99) and Blackberry (\$9.99).

Want to take a document with you, but don't have it available electronically?

If you have a smartphone, whether it's an iPhone, Blackberry, Palm or Droid, there are thousands of apps to help you stay connected.

provides court rules as well (each set is available for \$2.99).

There are also numerous apps for state specific legal resources. To locate an app for a particular state, simply perform a search in the app store for your provider. Finally, West LegalEdcenter has even created an app for CLE on the go called CLE Mobile – West.

Access to Documents on the Go

Sign up for a free Gmail account and you can have access to Google Docs. All three smartphone platforms offer the free Google Docs app. With Google Docs, you can create, edit, and save documents, spreadsheets, and presentations. There's also QuickOffice or eOffice which allows

Snap a photo of it and save the photo to your mobile device. Droid has an app that creates PDFs from images and most smartphones have the ability to snap a picture and email it.

Productivity

Dragon Dictation, currently available for free on the iPhone, allows users to speak text messages and e-mails without having to type in a key. One cautionary note, you will lose your work if you field a call or close the app before copying captured text to the clipboard or sending it via e-mail or text. Pasting text to another application isn't hard; it just requires an extra step or two. The Google Mobile app also has voice recognition software for

For more information on smartphone apps see:

Blackberry App World: <http://appworld.blackberry.com/webstore/>

iPhone Apps: <http://apple.com/iphone/apps-for-iphone>

Verizon apps: <http://mediastore.verizon.com/>


searching the internet. All you have to do is speak what you are searching for, and then Google translates the speech to text and performs the search. Evernote is another great app for saving clips of news articles, recording voice notes, or just taking notes. It's available for free on the Blackberry, Droid and iPhone and syncs with a PC or Mac.

News

Were you rushing out of the house today and didn't have time to read your favorite newspaper? There are free news apps to solve that problem. The Droid provides a free app for *USA Today*, Blackberry offers free apps for Bloomberg Mobile, *Time* Mobile, Thomson Reuters News Pro, and the iPhone has AP Mobile, Bloomberg Mobile, *The New York Times*, and ABC News all free of charge. There's even an *ABA Journal* app available on the iPhone.

Just for Fun

There are also apps for entertainment, games, surfing the web, and more. I polled law students and professors and asked "what's your favorite app?" and the number one response was The Weather Channel. Google Maps with turn by turn directions and Urbanspoon (the restaurant finder app on the iPhone and Blackberry) came in a close second and third. If you want to stay current with your favorite social networking site, there

are apps for that. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace all have mobile apps available free of charge, but always be careful what you post or tweet. Westlaw has even created a fun app called Westlaw Next Gavel that allows you to be the judge. 

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