

NOLA attorneys lean on more gadgets, apps to ease workflow

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Ask New Orleans attorneys how they use their smartphone or tablet device in their practice and be prepared to listen for a while.

Their applications run the gamut from timekeeping and jury selection to editing documents and running audio-visual displays in the courtroom.



“Everywhere you turn, lawyers are using an iPad,” said **Jeff Richardson, a partner at Adams and Reese** and the founder of **iPhone J.D.**, a website for lawyers who use iPhones and iPads.

According to a November ABA Journal survey, 57 percent of the responding lawyers currently use iPads in their law offices. Of those who didn’t use them, 59 percent are considering buying them for their office within the next year. And the app industry has responded to the growing number of attorneys using smartphones and tablets for work. Popular apps include WestlawNext for researching cases, DropBox for storing and sharing files and GoodReader for viewing PDFs.

Here are some other apps New Orleans attorneys find helpful.

Kurt Blankenship, managing partner at Blue Williams, has practiced law for 36 years and started incorporating an iPhone into his workflow about five years ago. He added an iPad in 2011. “It’s worth the effort to learn to operate the many applications that increase efficiency for lawyers,” Blankenship said. “It’s a huge load saver. You used to go to an out-of-town deposition with two briefcases crammed with paper and then try to read them in an airplane seat. Now, you just pull out your iPad and it’s all right there.”

Blankenship’s go-to apps:

AudioNote – “It’s a note-taking app that lets you organize notes into different folders. You can record verbal notes, too. If I’m in a deposition or a meeting and I want to record, I can and then I can email the notes to a client or my secretary.”

PDF Expert – “It lets me annotate documents.”

TranscriptPad – “I probably have 200 depositions added to my iPad. If I’m at home or

on the road or out of the office, I can pull it up and see what they were talking about. I can do word searches. For example, if I want to see all references to 'contract,' I can search for that.”

TrialPad – “It organizes materials for an A/V presentation at trial, which is becoming more the standard. If there’s an important document I want the jury to see, I can show it, highlight works and circle words. I can quickly pull up a transcript to show.”

JuryPad – “It provides an organized way of keeping notes on the jury pool. I can plug all of the information into the jury number and then can move the jurors into their assigned chair. I can email the client the jury with all the biographical data. Clients love that.”

Michael O’Brien, a partner with Kean Miller, focuses on maritime defense and oil and gas incidents that require him hit the road for work. He chooses to travel with an iPhone and iPad because he doesn’t have to go through the extra security measures a laptop requires, but he also brings backup. “No matter how much I like my electronic toys, I’m still going to bring a pad of paper and a pen because that’s still the best way to record,” he said.

O’Brien’s go-to apps:

iDTE 2.0 - “If I’m on the go, that’s what I use to input time. Rather than handwriting a timesheet then giving it to my secretary, who then takes her time to enter it and then I have to check it to make sure it’s accurate, I can do it on my phone in the palm of my hand.”

PDF Expert – “I can upload all the documents on a case, sort them and review them.”

Dragon Dictation – “I use this app, but the dictation software built into the iPhone is getting better.”

Pages – “If you are going to be on the road with an iPad, you need to use a word processor. I use Pages, which is Mac’s version of Word. I use Keynote to open PowerPoints.

FedCtRecords – “If you have a PACER account, it allows you to access the documents. It pulls up the docket sheet and then I can pull up individual documents.”

The Weather Channel – “I always check what the weather’s going to be like before I fly to a case.”

Stu Richeson, an associate at Baldwin Haspel Burke & Mayer, is an avid user of his iPhone and iPad for work. His practice areas include business litigation and intellectual property.

Richeson’s go-to apps:

iTimeKeep – “I’m absolutely enamored with this app. It’s the best way I have ever had for entering time. And if you talk to any number of attorneys, you’ll learn that’s everyone’s least favorite part of the job.”

WorldDox – “It’s an app that lets me get in and access documents on the server. I can see documents from home or on the road.”

JotNot Scanner Pro – “It lets me take a picture of a document and turn it into a PDF.”

PuzzleJuice – “It gets me through the dull moments.”