

Chapter 7 - Managing Litigation Information Using Technology

Implementing Office IT

Paperless archives - Reno, Nev. Bankruptcy lawyer Geoff Giles

Initial Paperless Office Issues for the Solo Practitioner. The paper-free workplace has been one of the great-unfulfilled promises of the information age. It has been argued that it is a simple task and one just needs to buy some hardware and software and go paperless. Well, it is more difficult then that, but there have been law office successes in reducing the amount of paper and managing the paper for current and archived cases. The most successful conversions from paper have been internal, such as replacing memos with e-mail, while retaining papers for letters and essential outside communications.

There are several issues that must be addressed as you move to a paperless office system. One of the important issues is the workflow process in your office. Scanning documents into a computer instead of filing them in a folder will impact manual procedures and personnel job duties. Also, you need to define how imaging will be used in your firm. Will it be used for administrative matters, or case related matters or both? How many documents will there be initially? What is the document flow for the imaged documents? What image retrieval software will work best with your firm's hardware and case management software? Does your firm presently have imaging software? Are you running DOS or Windows? Will the selected software run on your system without upgrading the hardware and software? As you can see, there are many issues to address as you begin the transformation to a digital office.

The following are some initial hardware and software considerations for a sole practitioner considering a paperless office.

Sole Practitioner Hardware and Software Considerations

Hardware

Desktop	computer		
Hard	drive	Maximum	amount of storage - digital information rec
CD-Rom	Jukeboxes	To	access online legal libraries, and archived files

Flatbed	scanner	To	scan odd sized pieces of paper, photos, etc
Multi	sheet feeder scanner	To	scan multi page documents and OCR
Sound	system		
Video	camera and software	To	take still and video clips of case evidence
CD-R	drive or DVD Drive		
To	write CD-ROMs of up to 650 Megabyte of information from a hard		drive. DVD
Laser	printer		
Inkjet	color printer		

Software

Case	management	Case management considerations - must be designed to handle
Document	Management	If case management system does not have a document management
Office	Suite	Microsoft or WordPerfect
Windows	- latest version	
Library	- CD-Collection	Westlaw or Lexis-nexus

Remember, the conversion to a digital office is a process and will not occur overnight. However, be assured that it is only a matter of time that we will become a paperless society.