



White Paper 2.0.1

Getting Social:

Web 2.0 and PR 2.0 The Way Jaffe Looks At The Present and the Future

Jaffe



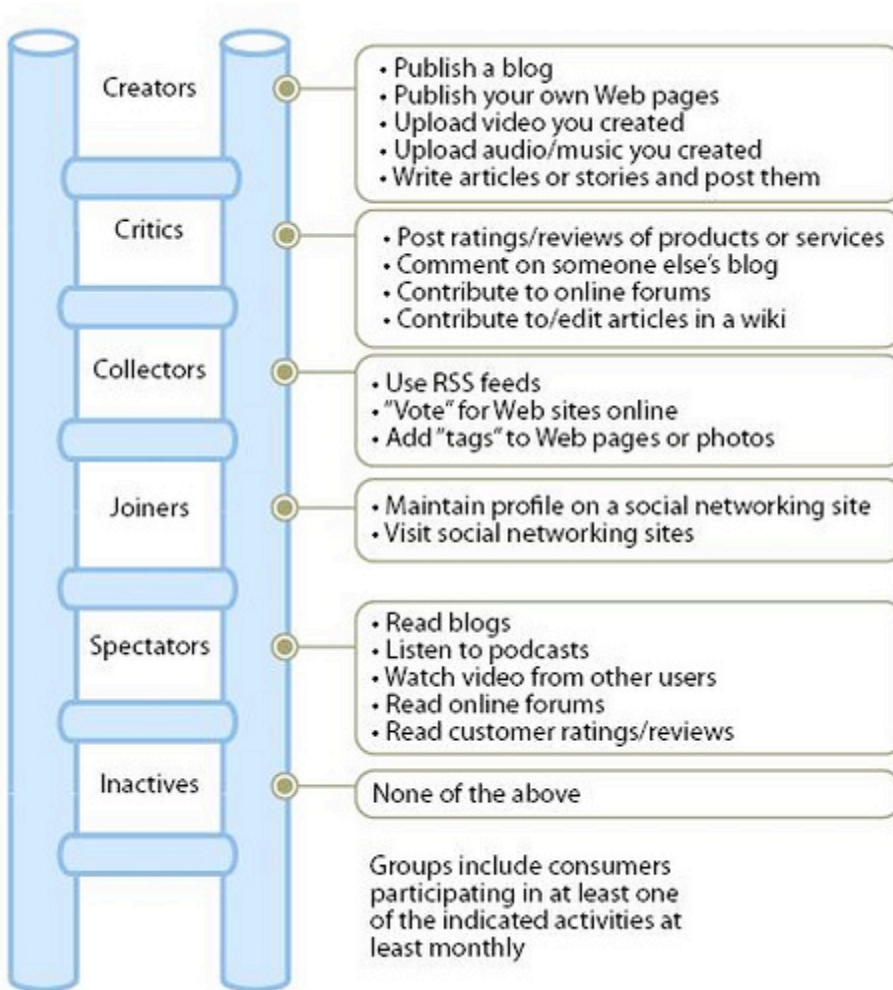
WHY YOU NEED TO BE MORE SOCIAL

Only three months ago, Jaffe published a white paper “ Web 2.0 and PR 2.0 -- The Way Jaffe Looks at the Present.” The original document remains intact here, but in the past 90 days there is even more evidence for acting on the information with greater velocity. We have distinguished the new material from the original version by presenting all new information in blue.

The Web world, and communication in general, is changing faster than we can possibly imagine. Almost everyone who is online is using the Web in ways they couldn't imagine even months ago. More than ever before, they're engaged in social media, technology considered a “teenage thing” not that long ago. Forrester Research just released a report, “The Growth Of Social Technology Adoption,” by *Groundswell* author Josh Bernoff, which shows that the use of social technology mushroomed over the past year. “Three in four US adults now use online social tools to connect with each other compared with just 56% in 2007.” Bernoff's conclusion? “Marketers have to get on board with social technology now — more advanced marketers will speed up customer-driven innovation, sharpen metrics, and improve customer experience. Those who wait to join in will find it increasingly hard to catch up.”



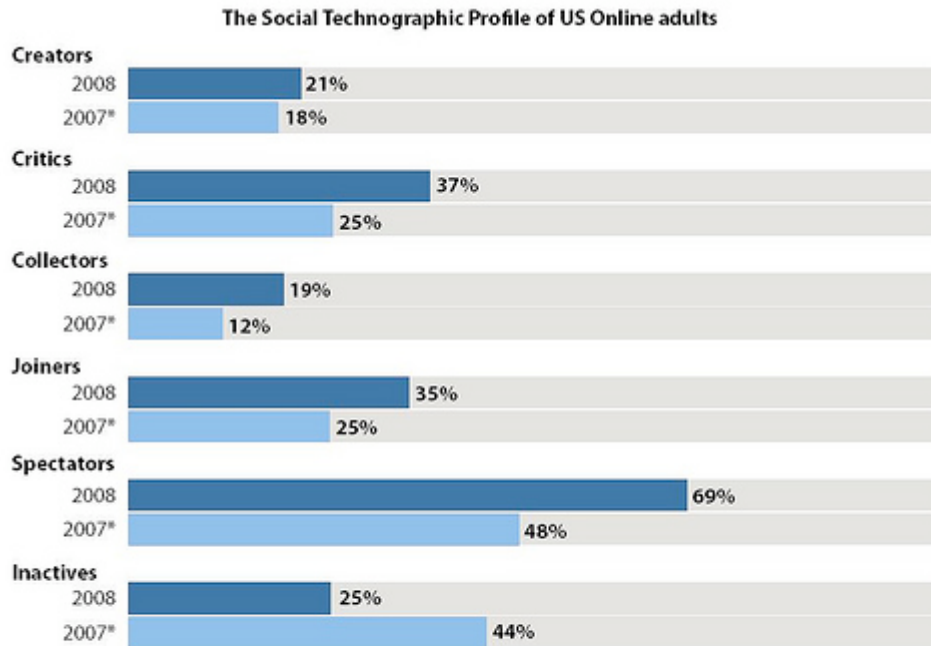
Here's how Forrester looks at how we engage online:



From the Forrester report, the number of people actually creating their own content isn't growing all that much; where the real activity has grown is with "Spectators," those who are jumping on social sites to get their information and be entertained.



Here's where Forrester says US adults are now in terms of 2.0 activities:



Base: US online adults

*Source: North American Social Technographics® Online Survey, Q2 2007
Source: North American Technographics Media And Marketing Online Survey, Q2 2008

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

ANOTHER FACT TO CHEW ON: Your clients and audiences are spending a great deal of time online. According to a September 16, 2008 article in *e-marketer*, "[Affluent Spend the Most Time Online](#)," there is a "strong link between income and Web time." The study, conducted by Ipsos Mendelsohn, found that users in the top income tier went online an average of 25.9 times every week. The same group is online for longer, too. According to a study conducted in May by Illuminas for Cisco Systems, cited in the same *e-marketer* story, adult Internet users in the US spent an average of 21 hours per week online.

The reality is that, whether clients are looking for a lawyer right now or a year from now, the client base is already online, searching and actively engaging in social media activities.



Even though not everyone is blogging or uploading homemade videos, the majority are consuming social media, many through sites that demand less of their time, such as professional networking communities. Even more interesting, these Web consumers are as likely to be grandkids as they are grandmothers. To talk to them, and for them to find you, you need to be online and in the conversation.

Your colleagues are online, too, looking for information. But only a tiny percentage of lawyers are establishing a foothold online for thought leadership by actively contributing content to the discussion. According to a recent presentation given in New York City by the Legal Marketing Association on Social Networking, only eight percent of firms and only two percent of lawyers maintain a law blog. Only four percent of firms and fifteen percent of lawyers have joined social networks.

Lawyers have yet to take advantage of the efficiencies to be gained by using the Web to expand their networks. Being late to the game means missed opportunities to establish one's firm or practice as thought leaders, to recruit summer associates and to showcase expertise, notes Doug Cornelius, senior real estate and knowledge management attorney at Goodwin Procter. He says that firms and attorneys can also be using social networking sites to reach potential clients.

Why the need for the shift now? There's so much social media already out there, it's very likely that many people can't distinguish between Web sites that are still in Web 1.0 mode or Web 2.0. What they do understand, however, is that the Web 2.0 experience makes participation easy. At its core, Web 2.0 is much more interesting, exciting, engaging and energizing. It's the ideal medium to get work done efficiently with their clients, colleagues and communities--in other words, the people with whom lawyers need to interact every day in order to do their jobs successfully.

As such, we wanted to take this opportunity to enhance and update our original white paper before Web 3.0 takes hold (and it is not far, trust us!).

Here's what we said this summer (and if you've recently digested this, you can skip to pages 14, 17, and 21–27 for the newest information and conclusions, including some very specific recommendations for lawyers and law firms):



THE BASICS

Go ahead—right now, Google yourself, your firm or your practice area and see what shows up. Only the very first page of results represents your reputation in the robust world of Internet enterprise. If you're not there, you're nowhere!

The results of a lawyer's or a law firm's search can be positive, negative, or completely non-existent. When a client, potential client, researcher, recruit or a reporter performs the same search—and you know that it will be—the results will determine whether or not you get the call.

Content Is King – Some Things Never Change

Good content—textual as well as oral—has always been of utmost importance in the field of public relations for lawyers and law firms. It is what sets you apart from your competitors as a thought leader in your selected area of practice.

Content provides tangible proof of three important claims: that you know your area of the law, that you know how to apply the law in order to solve problems for your clients, and that you have mastered the legal and business issues of your clients' industries.

The value of content has not changed. What *has* changed dramatically, especially in the past five years, is the number of ways lawyers and law firms can effectively distribute their content—and the number of ways Internet users can find this content.

- ✚ **Originally, a lawyer's textual content was presented in print publications. Oral content was presented via radio and television and before live audiences.**
- ✚ **With the birth of the World Wide Web, a lawyer's textual and oral content received even wider distribution when it could be posted on a Web site—and sent in an electronic version via email to a select list of clients. These are still very important tools, and Jaffe offers these services to lawyers and law firms.**
- ✚ **In the current era of Web 2.0 and PR 2.0, a lawyer's thought-provoking text and informative oral content can now be disseminated via exciting new PR 2.0 tools to reach a virtually unlimited audience of viewers on the Web and to maximize results on search engines.**



Networking Is Critical – But Sometimes Things Do Change

Every successful lawyer knows the value of networking—the creation of trust-based relationships that are the foundation of successful business development.

- ✚ **Originally, a lawyer networked by meeting the right people in the right groups at the right “real world” events—and cultivating the relationships. Often, you had to “pay to play” in some of these groups. These are still very important tools, and Jaffe offers these networking services to lawyers and law firms.**
- ✚ **In the Web 2.0 environment, networking no longer operates under “real world” constraints like geography and time. Networks and influential interest groups are formed online, usually for free.**

The World Wide Web has completely changed the way that lawyer and law firm content can be distributed and networks cultivated—and the way new legal business will be developed.

Web 1.0 – You May Already Know This, But Here’s A Quick Refresher

Within the history of the Internet, Web 1.0 refers to the first generation of initiatives that took place between approximately 1994 and 2004. Lawyers and law firms launched Web sites on which they posted reputation enhancing content about the firm, its lawyers, and their work. To get to these sites, a user had to know the URL. As a result, a lot of PR during the early part of Web 1.0 involved letting people know your URL—“where to find you” online.

At the same time, lawyers and law firms, often reluctantly, started to use email to correspond with clients and to send electronic versions of their print content—including press releases, brochures, newsletters and alerts—to specific lists of people.

Just 10 years ago, search engines appeared—sparking a revolution in the way people use the Internet. Google was founded in 1998, went public in 2004, and was added to mainstream dictionaries as a verb in 2006. A Web user in search of information—a phone number, a map, a definition, a product or a service—could simply enter a name or keywords into a search engine and be taken to a list of reliable results.

Within this environment, any referral source, potential client or media reporter will enter your name into a search engine before deciding whether or not to make a referral or give you a call.



How do search engines find you? Via complex algorithms called “spiders” that ceaselessly sift through and rank every bit of content posted to public sites on the Internet.

Just like spiders in the real world, Internet spiders are attracted by anything new that falls into their “Inter-net.” Lawyers and law firms that want to maximize their Internet profile must feed the spiders with a steady diet of fresh content posted to the Internet.

Spiders also look for “keywords.” Lawyers and law firms should determine the best keywords—the actual words that people would use to search for them or their services—and include these in both the content itself and the coding behind the content. There is a science and an art to doing this well; copywriting has become content writing. Even articles originally written for print should anticipate an eventual home on the Internet.

Web 2.0 – This Is The Stuff You May Not Know Yet

Web 2.0 evolved from the widespread use and acceptance of Web 1.0. While still in its infancy, this next Web generation is growing with hyper-speed leaps and bounds. Web 2.0 is interactive, open to user-generated content and very inexpensive when compared with traditional media. Its tools and technologies are often referred to under the heading of “social media.” Simply put, a Web 2.0 site is launched and users are asked to contribute to (and often to rank) the site’s content.

Web 2.0 is all about sharing content—and lawyers and law firms generate a lot of useful content in the course of doing business. It is an ideal medium.

Some popular examples:

- ✚ The founders of Wikipedia built a site on wiki software, primed it with information that was already in the public domain, and then opened it up to the entire world.**
- ✚ The founders of LinkedIn, Facebook and MySpace put up social networking sites, and then opened them up to anyone who wants to post a profile and create a network.**
- ✚ YouTube did this for audio and video podcasts, and Flickr and Photobucket did it for photographs.**



The other component of Web 2.0 success is the RSS feed. Any content posted in a Web 2.0 tool includes a bit of code called an RSS feed—which is like a fat, juicy, wiggling fly to the hungry search engine spiders.

An RSS feed “syndicates” each item of lawyer or law firm content widely and attractively over the Internet—just like *The New York Times* traditionally syndicated its stories to other newspapers (it also now uses RSS feeds to syndicate its Web site content). This content can be text, audio or visual, or a combination.

Web sites launching in the Web 2.0 era are usually built on RSS-enhanced blog software and include a variety of text, audio and visual Web 2.0 tools.

Blogs are perhaps the best known of the Web 2.0 tools (see below). Blogs encourage the consistent posting by their hosts of new content. The “categories” feature emphasizes keywords. Each post automatically generates an RSS feed. As a result, search engines tend to rank blog content higher than most Web site content. Readers can join the conversation by commenting on and ranking the usefulness of what has been posted.

Many major news stories are now routinely being “broken” by bloggers and other citizen journalists. Recently, a military law blogger discovered and posted about an error in the U.S. Supreme Court decision dealing with the constitutionality of the death penalty for those who rape children. The next morning, the blogger’s story was the basis of an article that appeared on the front page above the fold of *The New York Times*.

Lawyers or law firms in search of reputation-enhancing publicity must continue to target reporters and their media—but also all of the bloggers who cover their target market. In addition, a robust online presence means that a reporter or a blogger doing a Web search for a story will find *you* to talk to—instead of your competitor.

WIIFY - What’s In It For You?

What does Web 2.0 mean for the PR and marketing functions for lawyers and law firms and those who work in the legal environment? PR and marketing continue to focus on the use of content to build reputation and the use of networks to find new business—but the opportunities for distributing that content and building those networks are now vastly expanded.



To promote good news, there are many more ways to get your message before the public. A lawyer or law firm should incorporate Web 2.0 tools into its own PR 2.0 and marketing strategies and online materials.

In addition, lawyers and law firms can contribute informative content to the user-generated content and social networking sites of others. As part of this process, the content will be RSS coded and syndicated across the Web. Just as you need to target which print, radio or TV audiences to target, you need to target the Web 2.0 sites that will best meet your needs. A consultant can often help with this process.

The control of negative news is a two-step process. First, you need to know what is being said about you. Lawyers and law firms can use Web 2.0 tools to monitor the Web for any hints of negative publicity—sort of like the traditional news clipping service—but supercharged. There are many free products that will do this—like Google Alerts. There are also more comprehensive subscription products like Andiamo.

Second, when negative items about you or your firm are showing up on the first page of a search, you need to know how to control them before they spread. News as well as rumors can be posted by any “citizen journalist” with a cell phone (Both text and photos). They can travel around the world in real time and spread virally via blog links.

The conventional wisdom about real world customer satisfaction applies to the Web as well: “A happy customer will tell four people. An unhappy customer will tell 21.” Substitute “post” for “tell” in this statement—and supercharge it with the viral nature of the Web—and you can see the potential need for damage control. Once negative content has been posted, it is difficult to get rid of, but countervailing positive content is usually enough to push it off the first page of search engine rankings.

The current Obama for President campaign, for example, benefited greatly from Web 2.0 tools when it came to its promotional, networking and fundraising efforts. Campaign managers recently saw the need to set up a separate Web site (www.fightthesmears.com) just to deal with the Internet rumors concerning the candidate and his wife. If you put “Obama rumors” into a search engine, the first page of results no longer yields the negative rumors—just positive news about the new Web site.

Law firms have come to fear the power of sites like blog www.abovethelaw.com and message board www.greedyassociates.com, which often feature gossip and conversation about law firms.



Above the Law attracts 100,000 site visitors daily. When Nixon Peabody recorded “Everyone’s a Winner at Nixon Peabody”—a firm anthem created to raise morale—someone immediately posted it to YouTube, where it was linked to by Above the Law—generating a tsunami of negative publicity for the firm.

The need to monitor for negative conversation is not limited to computers. In a modern-day version of whispering to your neighbor, audience members at events are using a micro-blog platform called Twitter, which works on cell phones as well as computers to comment to others in the audience about public speakers—while the speaker is making a presentation!

Lawyers and law firms must continuously monitor their online reputations—taking steps to enhance the positive and mitigate the negative. The opportunities for PR and marketing professionals to assist with this process are virtually untapped.

General Guidelines for PR 2.0 – And All Of These Might Change Tomorrow

You must give in order to get.

Lawyers and law firms are used to charging by the hour for everything that they do and keeping a close hold on their contacts. Web 2.0 is not built that way. Those who *give* (by generously sharing their content and their contacts) will get, in the form of an enhanced Internet profile and search engine results, leading to enhanced “brand” recognition and more and better business.

You can manage, but not control.

In the days of traditional media and the early days of the Web, a lawyer or law firm exercised complete control over most aspects of its content (unless it was dealing with a reporter). To take full advantage of the rich opportunities offered by Web and PR 2.0, lawyers and law firms will need to relax, to share and to use criticism not as an attack—but as an opportunity for conversation.

You can create a blog, for example, around a practice area. Thousands of lawyers and law firms have done so. You then have three options: you can disable the comments feature; you can censor comments on your content, only posting the positive comments; or you can allow all comments (eliminating only those that violate legal ethics rules). Lawyers will naturally



gravitate to the first two options; only the last one will be perceived as a true blog that gains you respect in the blogosphere.

As mentioned above, anything newsworthy that is posted to the Web will spread fast. This is a two-edged sword. When the news about you is positive, it is good. When the news is negative, it is not so good. There is virtually nothing that can be done to control the spread of content via PR 2.0. It can be managed and mitigated, however, by a steady stream of positive content.

Timing is everything.

In the days of traditional media, it might take weeks to get approval of the wording of something as simple as a single-page press release. PR 2.0 operates in real time. It is true that most bloggers post multiple stories every day and are eager to scoop the traditional media.

If someone puts the news out there before you do, with their spin on it instead of yours, that is the version that will control the story—without a lot of management and mitigation work on your part. If a blogger emails you or calls you—it is wise to treat this person just like you would a traditional journalist. Respond immediately.

Be completely authentic.

When it comes to spin, the PR 2.0 environment is even less forgiving than the traditional environment. Your version of the news will be dissected by readers, listeners or viewers and ruthlessly dissected in comments. Not even U.S. Supreme Court decisions are exempt from this process.

The social media are all about straightforward conversation. In the Web 2.0 world, this is called transparency. They provide wonderful opportunities for professional service providers like lawyers to start or join conversations on pertinent subjects and contribute valuable information.

A major caveat: do not solicit for business on a Web 2.0 site (unless you have bought advertising and it is clearly labeled as such—like the ads that appear on a page of Google results). If you solicit, you are in violation not only of the written rules of legal ethics in all states but also the unwritten laws of Web 2.0. *Never* use Web 2.0 tools to spam a blog, members of a social network, or members of the media. The response will be immediate and painful.



Think twice before you hit “submit.”

In a traditional environment, a flawed document, letter or tape could often be recalled and destroyed before it had a chance to do too much harm. Not so in the Web 2.0 environment. As soon as content is posted, those hungry spiders (and aggregators, which we will discuss later) get to work.

A nasty comment you make in the middle of the night on the blog of a competitor in Denver can be bookmarked, forwarded or printed out two minutes later by a blog subscriber in Taiwan. By the time you wake, it could be all over the Web and you could be answering phones calls from reporters. Because of the nature of links on the Internet, it is virtually impossible to completely recall a mistake. You can issue a corrective comment and/or hope to push it down with new content—but it will **never** go away.

PR 2.0 Content – Here Comes The Leverage

Social media allow lawyers and law firms to put existing content to work on the Internet, where it can be found and ranked by search engines. Content can consist of words, art, photographs or podcasts (audio or video), or any combination of these elements.

Content can also be another program inserted into a Web site in order to increase its interactivity—like a blog or a wiki or any of thousands of “plug-in” mini-programs known as “widgets.” The mini-program that inserts the current date and time on a Web page is a widget. A survey is a widget. Most Web 2.0 programs encourage users to create widgets that will work with the program.

In the course of doing business, law firms generate a significant amount of written content—including print bios, practice area descriptions, case studies, proposals, brochures, legal documents and books.

Traditionally, when dealing with clients, print or electronic versions of written content were distributed to a specific mailing list. When dealing with the media, print or electronic versions of press releases, articles or other content were distributed to publishers of newspapers, magazines or directories.



A written speech was delivered to a specific audience at an event, often using PowerPoint slides. It could be a one-time event, or it could be recorded as an audio or video podcast and posted on the firm's Web site—perhaps even put on a disk and sent to a mailing list.

In the world of PR 2.0, a lawyer's bio can appear not only in print and on the firm's Web site, but can also be posted for free on any number of content and social networking sites. It is not sent to a limited mailing list; it is posted to the Internet where it can be found by anyone, anywhere, anytime. The more content that is posted to the Internet with an RSS feed, the more you dominate and control your Google results.

- ✚ **In the Web 2.0 universe, a book can appear not only in print but as an e-book , where it can be kept current by the author(s) in real time as the law evolves, where each section is optimized for the search engines, and where readers can contribute content and comments.**
- ✚ **In the PR 2.0 universe, a press release can appear not only in print but also as an interactive online document—offering not only traditional content, but also links to background information, photos, graphics, audio and video resources, related Web and blog sites, and the email addresses of sources. The PR 2.0 press release comes with its own RSS feed and can be enhanced with tags and bookmarks (see below).**
- ✚ **In the PR 2.0 universe, a podcasted speech can be enhanced with an RSS feed on a firm's private site, including Web sites and blogs. It can also be submitted to a wide range of public sites like YouTube—where it can be accessed and circulated by others who are interested in the subject matter.**

When writing PR 2.0 content, it is important to understand the differences between writing copy and writing content. For example, it is extremely important to understand the keywords that users would use to search for your area of expertise and to intentionally use those words—liberally but not annoyingly—in the article, its headlines and subheads, and its coding. These “keywords” attract the search engines. In the case of audio and video—which have no written words—tags are essential.

Enhancements to Web 2.0 Content – And Here's Even More Leverage

Content on a Web 2.0 site is meant to be shared and commented upon. There are a number of tools that make this possible.



RSS Feed

As mentioned above, an RSS feed is a bit of code that can be added to a piece of content. This code “feeds” or syndicates the piece of content across the Internet—where search engines and aggregators can pick it up. If a user likes the content, he or she can subscribe to the RSS feed in order to get more content like it in the future—by clicking on the orange RSS icon and following the simple instructions.

The major wire services all offer RSS-enabled news.

Aggregator

If an RSS feed “pitches” content, an aggregator (or feed reader) “catches” it. An aggregator, also known as an RSS Reader, is a user-created program that automatically searches the Internet for certain RSS feeds and collects (aggregates) them in one place. You no longer need to visit Web sites you like to see if anything has been added; any update to the site attracts the attention of the aggregator and is automatically brought to your desktop.

In addition to RSS feed subscriptions, you can also put keywords (or tags) into an aggregator—creating a customized search engine that is constantly scanning the Internet for terms of interest and delivering the results to your desktop. Among the best-known RSS aggregators are NewsGator, Bloglines, FeedDemon, Google Reader and Technorati. Quite specific to the legal profession, LexMonitor is a recently launched aggregator of law blogs and journals. Lastly, Mac users have built in RSS readers in the Safari and Apple Mail applications.

A TIP:

How to use an aggregator: Setting up an aggregator with keywords is simple and the value of using it, quantifiable. You will save time and stay informed about topics of interest to you and your practice. A reader presents the headlines from your favorite blogs, online periodicals, news topic alerts and other search strings that you set it up to “catch.”

Google Reader is a popular, easy-to-use aggregator. To set up a free account in [Google](#), if you don't already have one, click on Google Reader, follow the instructions to add your favorite blogs and online periodicals and search term strings, and you're ready to go. Then bookmark your Google reader page on your Web browser and you can jump right in and read any time you



want to. When you find a new blog you're interested in reading, click on the orange RSS button to add the new blog to your aggregator. And, if you have an iPhone, you can download the reader application on your phone and scan your feeds on the go.

Search Engine Optimization

This white paper focuses primarily on the distribution of quality content enhanced with RSS feeds in order to achieve search engine optimization (SEO). This is called “natural” SEO and is the main focus of PR 2.0. Clients can also buy advertisements on the search engines that are set apart from the “natural” results. This is called “paid” SEO and is how Google makes most of its money.

Tags

Tags are used like a file system to organize content on a blog. Also called categories, they are created by authors or viewers, depending on the system. A blog with no tags would just go on and on like a journal—organized by when posts were written, not by subject matter. It would be hard to locate what you were looking for.

A lawyer writing a blog on the subject of climate change law, for example, might include as tags/categories “coal,” “carbon markets,” and “Clean Air Act.” When adding content to a public site, posters can choose from a list of “official” tags so that the site knows under which subject to store it. Search engines and aggregators look for tags.

Tags are particularly useful when dealing with textless audio and visual content like podcasts, art or photos. Without tags, there is nothing for the search engines to read.

Social Media: Where to Post Your Content – Ask A 12-Year-Old How This Works

Deciding where to post depends on your goals: do you want to put a friendly face on your practice, contribute to a professional discussion, reach out to former colleagues and college friends, or pursue your hobby with like-minded individuals?



The tools are just that, tools to be used when and where you need them. You wouldn't use a Phillips head screwdriver to tap in a nail. Understand that content marketing through social media is all about getting to your audiences efficiently. Before staking your digital claim and contributing, analyze what type of social community fits the needs of your audience.

Social media are Web sites that accept user-contributed content and comments—providing a wealth of new opportunities for lawyers and law firms to enhance their reputations on the Internet.

Most of these tools can be accessed for free via a wide variety of public sites. Often, these sites offer enhanced and/or advertisement-free products for extra cost. In addition, the software behind social media can be purchased by lawyers and law firms and used to build proprietary sites over which you have more control—like your own blog or wiki.

More than one type of social media will often be “mashed up” on a single Web site.

Blog Sites

A blog is an inherently interactive Web site. All new content is automatically coded with an RSS feed. The first blogs looked and functioned pretty much like online journals. Today, they are starting to look and function like supercharged entity Web sites.

A lawyer or law firm can create a blog around a defined area of interest—like employment law for builders in Colorado. Since blog posts are generally short, posting content to a blog is much easier than writing an article. Since they appear immediately, blog posts are a perfect way to address breaking issues in the law.

Each blog post will be sent automatically in real time to those who have subscribed to your blog's RSS feed and to those who have the post's keywords in their aggregators: clients, potential clients, industry experts and media around the world.

Bloggers often use their own aggregators to keep current with breaking news and other bloggers in their fields. By including links to these posts in your blog, you enhance search engine optimization. By intelligently commenting on posts that appear on other sites and blogs, you enhance your reputation as an expert in your target market.



Lawyers and law firms can use blogs to enhance their profiles and search engine results on the Internet.

Recently, on the “Real Lawyers Have Blogs” blog, Kevin O’Keefe posted a checklist for best practices for legal bloggers, [“Law firm blog policy: LexBlog’s’ sample”](#) by Kevin McKeown, Lexblog’s VP of client development. McKeown is also a lawyer.

A quick summary of that list is below.

1. Decide who owns the blog. The firm or individual lawyer(s)?
2. Identify and approve all blog authors and blogs.
3. Define the blog’s purpose and niche – the narrower, the better.
4. Draft guidelines for blogging.
5. Draft a blog disclaimer and privacy policy that states that no attorney/client relationship is being formed and no legal advice is being dispensed. Consider making it a pop-up.
6. Decide whether or not to restrict blog content to be general and informational similar to email newsletters and alerts.
7. To be successful, link to and reference other blog posts.
8. Typically, don’t blog about existing clients and current firm matters.
9. Determine your firm’s comment policy. Allowing comments adds legitimacy to your blog.
10. Add blog content at least once a week. Keep posts short.
11. Connect with the firm’s marketing department to maximize the marketing potential of the blog. Decide who responds to media requests directed to blog authors.
12. Ensure quality control by training everyone who touches communications in best practices. Commit to updating the training consistently as the technology and issues change.

Content Sites

Content sites are sites external to a law firm that allow for the posting of many types of content. The basic service is usually free, with enhancements available at a charge. Because of the search engine strength of popular external sites, content posted on these sites is likely to rank higher in results than content posted on your own Web site.

Some content sites are more like directories, focusing on the posting of lawyer and law firm profiles (which also form the basis of social networking sites, see below). Potential clients can search these directories when looking for representation.



AVVO, for example, uses state bar association data to post the profiles of every lawyer in a state and then ranks them based on certain criteria. To improve rankings, lawyers and law firms must visit the site and edit the profiles—providing the level of detail that AVVO is looking for. AVVO is also a public rating site—allowing visitors to comment on their actual experience with a lawyer or law firm.

Other sites are more focused on content. There are online “e-zines” that focus on almost every legal and business topic under the sun. These sites are always interested in quality user-contributed content, which they will post along with your tagline and contact information. (In addition, you can always create and post your own e-zine.)

Another category of content site focuses on legal documents—which in a social media environment can be searched for free rather than by subscription. JDSupra, for example, accepts not only lawyer and law firm profiles, but also actual articles and legal documents which can be searched by potential clients looking for a work sample, by other lawyers looking for research on a legal topic, and by reporters (there is a special “Scoop” section) looking for background and sources for articles they are writing.

YouTube is an example of a content-contribution site that is focused on videos. Flickr is a content-contribution site that focuses on photos. CNN.com is a mainstream news outlet that has opened its pages to user-generated content. Through its iReports feature, CNN.com accepts user-contributed text, photos, audio and video from “citizen journalists.” It also solicits reader opinion via its daily “Quick Vote” survey.

Lawyers and law firms can contribute to content sites to enhance their profiles and search engine results on the Internet.

Entity Web Sites

Most successful business Web sites have been enhanced to maximize their effectiveness in a social media environment. Most lawyer and law firm Web sites, however, have not. At the very least, traditional sites should focus on adding a steady stream of new keyword-rich content. The sites should be retrofitted to allow RSS feeds. Any Web site being created or revised today should be built on a social media platform.

A Web 2.0 lawyer or law firm Web site can include traditional (although RSS-fed) Web site content along with various social media applications that encourage two-way interaction with



clients—like blogs, visitor surveys, social networks, and wikis. They can include a stream of real-time subject-specific headlines and news generated by an aggregator. They can include mini-sites, in which a practice area can focus on its unique keywords and RSS-enhancement efforts.

Lawyers and law firms should rebuild their entity Web sites in order to enhance their profiles and search engine results on the Internet.

Message Board Sites

Message board sites, forums and Listservs are the original social media Web sites. They are usually organized around groups or interest areas—much like the LMA Listserv provides a forum for members of the Legal Marketing Association. A user poses a question or comment, and other members provide answers or additional comments.

Because they have been around so long, message board conversations are more difficult to enhance with RSS feeds. Many social networks (see below) are adding the question/answer capability to their sites—and it's likely that the “message board” function eventually will be assumed into the social networking function.

If an organization you belong to has a message board, join it and use it. It is yet another low-cost way to demonstrate your expertise and get your name and contact information in front of a targeted audience. Do not use the medium to solicit. Monitoring the constant flow of questions and answers lets you know what is on the minds of potential clients.

When posting an answer on the message board, keep the text short enough so that your email signature appears on the first screen. To make it easier for users to follow up with you in person, include your tagline and links in your email signature. To keep your name and expertise top of mind among listserv members, try to post at least once a month.

Lawyers and law firms should join and participate in message boards in order to enhance their profiles and search engine results on the Internet.



Social Bookmarking Sites

Internet users can share their favorite items (including their own items) on a certain subject with others on the Internet by posting the links to social bookmarking sites like Del.icio.us or Digg. By subscribing to these services and using their existing tags, lawyers and law firms can add their icons at the end of each item of content.

By clicking on the icon, Internet users can weigh in on the value of the content they have just read, listened to or viewed. As a result, good and informative content on a subject rises to the top of results. Bad or self-promotional content sinks to the bottom. Social bookmarkers can also post comments about your content. You can also “share” a list of items you have bookmarked with visitors to your own Web site.

Lawyers and law firms should submit links to their content to social bookmarking sites in order to enhance their profiles and search engine results on the Internet.

Social Networking Sites

By now, everyone has heard of public online social networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook and MySpace. There is also a wide range of more specific public and private social networks like Legal OnRamp for the legal industry. Like other social media sites, social networks provide an opportunity for you to post your own content—in the form of an RSS-feed enhanced profile. Profiles can include links to Web sites and blogs.

Unlike other social media, social networks also use keywords and other data to track and reveal the (often hidden) relationships that exist among members of a social network.

Once you post a profile on a social network, you can have the program search your personal contact files for individuals who belong to the same network. You can use the program to invite them to be your friend or connection. Once they accept, you have access to all of their connections—as well as the connections of their connections.

LinkedIn, for example, which focuses on a more professional membership, tracks and reveals relationships within three degrees of separation. Depending upon the activity level of your connections, this list can grow exponentially. This author has just 34 carefully selected first-degree connections in the field of legal marketing—but 16,300 second-degree connections (approachable using a connection) and 1,876,100 third-degree connections (approachable using a connection of a connection).



Your list of connections can be searched using a wide range of criteria like employment skills and geographic location in order to come up with a list—like the network profiles of all forensic accountants in Omaha. As a result, social networks are very popular with headhunters—who pay extra for full access to the public lists. In addition to searching, most networks allow members to ask and answer questions (like a message board).

Most social networking sites allow users to form affinity groups of members—around an entity, like all lawyers, incoming summer associates or alumni of a particular law firm, or members of an organization—or around an idea, like all those interested in a conversation based on intellectual property law for medical devices in China.

Lawyers and law firms are even creating avatars (a computer user's representation of himself or herself) and participating in visual online social networking systems like Second Life. The avatars of Harvard Law School intellectual property law professors teach the avatars of online students (some with wings) in online classrooms in Second Life. Law officers operate and collect fees.

According to Bob Ambrogi, a Massachusetts lawyer, writer, media consultant and [blogger](#), attorneys are slowly recognizing that Social Networking sites have the potential to transform the way business is conducted. Social networking sites can be used to reach potential clients, reach new recruits, keep in touch with colleagues, show expertise and generally broaden lawyers' reach online.

For example, Facebook can be an effective tool for connecting with recruits. LinkedIn, as mentioned above, is best for business-to-business connections. And lawyers-only social networking sites can be powerful and valuable, says Goodwin Procter's Doug Cornelius. Legal OnRamp and Martindale Hubbell Connected (launching in January 2009 but Jaffe has seen the pre-launch site and its features) in particular give attorneys the opportunity to shine and show other attorneys what they know. There is thoughtful discussion on these sites as lawyers demonstrate expertise in their areas of expertise. Legal OnRamp can be a safe environment where lawyers are talking to other lawyers and the only price of admission is knowledge.

David Johnson, from Legal Onramp says that the site is building a central network for the legal world, where attorneys and legal professionals can network, learn and share. The site offers open and restricted areas making it easier to manage potential client conflicts and keep sensitive information private.



Lawyers and law firms should take advantage of social networks today—to post their profiles, to create, search and question networks, and to form groups—in order to enhance their profiles and search engine results on the Internet.

Twitter and Micro-Blogging

Twitter is a social media Web site that asks, “What are you doing?” and lets users post answers in 140 characters or less. In 2007, Twitter had 1,000 users. Today, Compete.com reports that there are 2.5 million visitors each month. Twitter is a relatively new phenomenon – and relatively unknown amongst the majority of regular Web users. But Twitter and Facebook have made a big enough impact on online behavior to warrant a feature story in *The New York Times Magazine*—“Brave New World of Digital Intimacy”—that examines the phenomenon of what the author, Clive Thompson, calls “co-presence.” And early adopters are calling Twitter no less than the next communication phenomenon. It’s worth paying attention to.

Basically, Twitter users (some of whom call themselves “Tweeple”) use Twitter to share interesting links with one another, to comment on business issues, but also to report on the comings and goings of their lives (Twitter messages are referred to as “Tweets”). Spend enough time on Twitter and you are likely to discover how your associates take their coffee. But, that’s the point. One thing that Twitter is about is showing personality quickly. It’s popular because it doesn’t take a lot of time to write 140 characters.

Twitter has spawned its own subset of applications to enable users to use it more strategically and efficiently. Some are for listening. A useful application that’s been developed for Twitter is called Summize or Twitter Search. This tool lets you search Twitter to listen to topics that are important to you. Another is Tweetbeep, which is the “Google Alerts” for Twitter, letting you monitor conversations on any topic you tell it to look for. Others let users find like-minded individuals. For example, if you want to find people who are interested in your legal specialty, twellow helps. Clicking the law category in twellow will turn up scores of pages of conversations related to legal issues on Twitter. Brian Solis, a leading thinker in Web 2.0 marketing, recently posted “Twitter Tools for Community and Communications Professionals” on his blog listing many more applications.

Lawyers are still relative neophytes on Twitter, but attorneys and marketing directors are starting to toss around ideas for how to make Twitter useful and applicable to the legal world. One recent posting by a West Coast marketing director on the Legal Marketing Association Listserv



discussed the successful use of Twitter to communicate brief but important messages with staff during the wildfires in the Los Angeles area.

At its most basic, here's how Twitter works:

You create a profile, as you would on a social networking site only shorter, then you write your 140-character post, which can include a URL, a photo, etc. Once you have a few posts, you will begin to build your network of "followers." Twitter is largely based on reciprocal relationships. You follow people who are of interest to you, and, in turn, they follow you. This is best accomplished by asking your friends and colleagues who are already on Twitter to follow you. Then, similarly to LinkedIn, you can scan their followers, begin to follow them, and pretty soon, they will be following you, too.

An example of a successful marketer that uses Twitter to personalize the brand is Zappos.com, a footwear and fashion retailer. The CEO, [Tony Hsieh](#), Tweets at least once every day. He has over 15,000 followers who read about the conferences he's attending, the cocktails he's consumed and, of course, when Zappos is being featured in the mainstream media such as on the Oprah Winfrey show. Hsieh's followers get a real sense for what it's like to run a fast-growing, high profile company. He puts a human face on a big brand, and, of course, he has a platform to discuss what the company is up to.

Wiki Sites

The best-known Web site built on wiki software is the user-generated Wikipedia—an encyclopedia in which users contribute all the content.

The founders of Wikipedia primed the site with information that was already in the public domain and then opened up to the entire world for addition, comment and correction. When Wikipedia first launched in 2003, the scholars scoffed. Today, it is among the top 10 Web sites in the world—home to 10 million articles in more than 250 languages.

What's more, research shows that the content on Wikipedia is just as accurate as and certainly more up-to-date than that content in mainstream encyclopedias (electronic as well as print). Scholars themselves now post to Wikipedia.



A lawyer or a law firm could create and post an issue-related site on wiki software— branding it with its own name and priming it with its own content categories and documents, but opening it up to the content and comments of others. What you give up in control by allowing others (including your competitors) to participate in the wiki, you gain in reputation as a confident thought-leader.

Lawyers and law firms should take advantage of wikis in order to enhance their profiles and search engine results on the Internet.

NOW THAT YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT THE TOOLS, WHAT NEXT?

There are well-defined methods for marketing success in social media, and they hold true whether they're for marketers of Legos or lawyers and law firms. Social media is a powerful way to build with efficiency a reputation for passions and expertise, to find like-minded individuals for even the most obscure topics, to personalize that which previously had been impervious to personalization, to build networks, spark lively conversation and debate and finally, to sell things—ideas and services both inside and outside the firm.

Ruth Ward, the head of knowledge systems and development at Allen and Overy, LLP, provided compelling insight into how her law firm and others are using various social media tools to increase efficiencies, in [an article](#) published in *Managing Partner* in June 2008: “Know-how to network.” Here is her take on how firms are using Web 2.0 across the enterprise:

Recruiting: The firm uses both employee blogs and Facebook and MySpace pages to put a personality on the firm to interact with potential recruits.

Improving Staff Engagement: A few firms are using internal, private “Facebooks” to be more efficient in identifying employees’ skill sets and experience, to keep track of recent work, or to foster the development of communities, be they amongst working moms in the firm, trainees, or the firm’s softball league.

Working Smarter and Faster: Micro-communities (smaller sites within a firm's larger shell) can help foster collaboration and communication across practice areas and offices. These sites are member-specific and can include a group blog, news tied to an RSS feed, shared bookmarks and a wiki for sharing information. Ward argues that these sites, in use by her firm in over 50 sites, are more effective than e-mail and Document Management.



For example, group blogs are a better way to get answers to the “does anyone know?” questions, rather than e-mail blasts.

Wiki-Efficiency: Sharing information on an internal wiki, particularly FAQ resources on particular topics such as new legislation, gives all attorneys who need insight instant access a means to share their knowledge broadly. As new questions are answered, they are added to the wiki, expanding the knowledge base.

Client Communications: Currently, Web 2.0 is not widely used for client-facing work. But, points out Ward, Legal OnRamp and other business networks are opening up opportunities to “create and participate in, open and closed groups within third-party networks.”

Where to begin? Part of making interaction work is a willingness to share and to be open. But perhaps more importantly, the key to success is to be very clear about your goals before jumping in.

According to an ebook, “The Essential Guide to Social Media,” by Brian Solis, the rules of engagement are to:

1. Start by listening. Once you know what you want to achieve, find out where other experts in your field are congregating online and observe how they’re interacting. Legal OnRamp might be the place. Or LinkedIn, or through an interconnected Web of bloggers. There are so many ways that your stakeholders are online (using any of the tools listed above). Chart your journey visually so you can see where you need to go.
2. Identify the most valuable, active and viable conversations to determine with whom to engage. Keep in mind that online engagement should be part of an ongoing, consistent strategy in order for it to be effective. That requires resources.
3. Make your approach. Web 2.0 is about being personal (remember our Zappo’s.com CEO example on Twitter). Don’t start “selling” right away. Share insight, information, and original thoughts.
4. Understand that you may not be speaking the same way to different audiences. You would likely adopt a different tone to find recruits on Facebook than you would on Legal OnRamp to find an expert on nursing home regulations in New Jersey.
5. Establish policies and guidelines for everyone in your firm, even if they are not actively participating in firm-“sponsored” social media activities. Train them.



What Is Most Important For You To Know Right Now?

Maybe the most important thing for you to know and recognize is that we are all going through a period of major change in the way we communicate. And, as soon as you learn everything we have talked about in this white paper, it will probably be obsolete.

Is there a lot to learn? Of course there is, and that is the hard part, but on the other side of the coin are opportunities for communication that we can only just now begin to imagine. We will be able to communicate with our chosen audiences better, faster and with feedback that we were never able to get before. It is a challenge today and not something that can or should be left only for the “young” to figure out at some point in the future.

Web 2.0 and PR 2.0 is about all of us and must now become an integral part of our professional skill set. While some might equate the current change as moving from a quill to a ballpoint pen, we see this change as moving from crawling to rocket launching in only a few years. And, don’t blink now, for you are sure to miss something. Stay tuned for **more**. ...

Listen to this. The “More” mentioned above is a doozy. In October, *Wired* magazine, the mouthpiece for trends in the entire tech industry, declared that blogging is dead. There’s been a low buzz about this for some time. However, as aptly noted in the social media blog [socialtnt](#), *Wired* reported its observation in a blog post! Clearly, the report of the demise of the blog is greatly exaggerated.

But, what has become obvious is that communicating online is something that more people are doing more often and in more places, like with their mobile devices. And there are tools available that make communicating easier to achieve, without the need to build and maintain a full-blown blog. If you like to speak your thoughts rather than write them, [Utterz](#) lets you micro-podcast. If talking into a camera on your computer is your thing, [Seismic](#) makes it easy to post and build a community around conversations. [Qik](#) is an application that lets users stream live video from their cell phones. For now, these tools are being used mainly for social purposes and by very early adopters, but it’s only a matter of time before professional networks and marketers migrate to using them, or to using newer tools being developed for professional audiences. The Flip digital video camera, which lets users automatically upload video content to YouTube and other video sites, was one of Oprah’s favorite things in 2007. Today, many marketing and PR professionals regard a simple-to-use tool as important as a press release. There’s no reason why lawyers, who are preternaturally well-spoken, cannot take advantage of simple technology to provide rich, compelling content to relevant communities online.



Clearly, experts in Legal 2.0 agree that Web 2.0 has enormous potential for lawyers. And, if you didn't need another reason, consider this from Paul Lippe, founder and CEO of Legal OnRamp. Here are ten reasons why he thinks an online community is suited for the law:

1. Law is a social profession.
2. Legal content and expertise are developed and shared socially.
3. A social platform is the easiest way to go global.
4. A social platform can address clients' demand for greater efficiency.
5. A social platform can be used to manage privileged work.
6. A social platform gets lawyers closer to clients.
7. Social platforms will change the competitive dynamics of the law.
8. Participating in the broader community is the best way to energize your own community.
9. An online community could prevent future shock.
10. Social platforms are not about technology, they are about people.

Finally, Web 2.0 is about communicating and sharing interests and expertise. Getting started always seems like the hard part. Start by listening. Listening to conversations is the best way to find out where potential colleagues and clients are spending their time and to learn what they're interested in talking about. Then, dive in.

For further information contact Jay Jaffe, jaffej@jaffeassociates.com or , magoskys@jaffeassociates.com or visit www.jaffeassociates.com and visit our P.R. 2.0 Resource Center located under Tools and Information.



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