

Lawyers Should Check E-Mail Hourly

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Amazingly, fewer people are using the phone anymore. I heard a general counsel at the recent [ALFA](#) conference say she was too impatient to listen through the voicemail message of the person she was calling. She would prefer send an email instead. **In fact, I myself have received many emails from people asking me to call them. Use of the phone is considered a habit of "old people."** It proves that the Baby Boomers are not the majority generation anymore. The majority are the Gen Xers who grew up with IM, text messaging and email.

Working on a rush project, a new associate at Quinn Emanuel Urquhart Oliver & Hedges made a mistake. He didn't check his e-mail.

As a result, he missed a senior partner's instruction that he should send out a draft document for client review before calling it a day. Partner A. William Urquhart noted the mistake in an e-mail he sent the next morning to firm attorneys, which is reprinted in [Above the Law](#):

"From: A William Urquhart.
To: Attorneys.
Time: 9:21 a.m.
Re: CHECK YOU [sic] EMAILS OFTEN



Now more than ever there are many talented lawyers and law firms competing for our business. Doing really good legal work is not enough. Clients expect that, and well they should given what we charge for our services. You must all realize that we are in a service business. In this day and age of faxes, emails, internet, etc. **clients expect you to be accessible 24\7.** Of course, that is something of an exaggeration—but not much.

LESSON NUMBER ONE: You should check your emails early and often. That not only means when you are in the office, it also means after you leave the office as well. Unless you have very good reason not to (for example when you are asleep, in court or in a tunnel), you should be checking your emails every hour. One of the last things you should do before you retire for the night is to check your email. **That is why we give you blackberries.** I can assure you that all of our clients expect you to be checking your emails often. I am not asking you to do something we do not do

ourselves. I can assure you that John Quinn, Peter Calamari, Mike Carlinsky, Faith Gay, Fred Lorig, etc. all check their emails often.

Yesterday I was working with a relatively new associate on a project which both he and I knew was a rush. It was for a relatively new client whom we were trying to impress. The associate did a nice job under pressure. Before I left the office at about 7:30 I sent an email to this associate asking him to perform a task—fax a draft letter for review and comment. I assumed the task was done. Turns out the associate left the office and did not check his emails until this morning. I assumed the task had been completed. It had not been. In this case it was no harm, no foul, but I think we can all imagine scenarios when this could be a disaster., and exhorts the troops to pick up the pace as far as electronic message review is concerned."