



Mixing it Up with Legal IT: New Uses & Applications, Part 1

In the rapidly expanding world of legal IT, development of new products and customized integration of two or more products are making your choices harder, but your life easier. In this 2-part series, I will explore a few vendor products and practices that continue to expand the possibilities of taking some, or all, of your practice online.

And your product does what?

[Greg Lelli](#) has a tough sell. When someone asks him what his SaaS product “does”, his response is usually something like “It can do whatever you want it to do. What are you looking for?”

The problem, of course, is that lawyers, shopping around in conference exhibit halls filled with IT products, have no idea what they’re looking for, because they don’t understand what’s there. Any of it. So they want to be told what a product does and categorize it somehow so it makes sense in this brave new world of legal IT.

So here’s Greg’s explanation: “[PBworks Legal Edition](#) offers SaaS based collaboration software that has many uses for a law firm including document management, project management, case management, knowledge management and client extranets. It includes unlimited data storage, free non attorney users, government sanctioned encryption, audit logs. Additional features include integrated conference calling and chat, multi user live editing of documents and inline video.” Oh, I feel much better now.

The truth is PBWorks is many things:

- It’s a collaboration site, with deal rooms for negotiating document terms and workspaces for managing a team project, in a project-management framework.
- It’s a fully-loaded law practice management system, including individual case management, secured client communication functionality and unlimited data or document storage.
- It includes integrate video and conference calling so that you and your conference participants can edit documents live, in real time.
- It enables you to create a fully-searchable knowledgebase by uploading document into workspaces specified by topic or area of law for across-firm use.
- It employs [the highest- level security mechanisms](#), including state-of-the-art encryption.

<http://lawpracticestrategy.com/>

- You can create intranets to share with your colleagues any information that you gained (i.e., experiences with judges or other attorneys) that can help them be better prepared to assist their clients.

It is, in a sense, IT's answer to planned community development, where commercial and residential mixed use enables you to go shopping without taking the car out of the garage. Want to know what this SaaS product does? Ask me: I dare you!

I really love my practice management system, but it doesn't provide for secure communications.

There are many lawyers who know and love their practice management systems, whether software or SaaS-based, and have no desire to migrate to a new system. But they get stumped by the lack of a secure email component and wind up using a less-than-desirable email system. If that is you, here is your answer.

Enter [Case Record](#), a secure communication system for professional people. This brand-new SaaS product operates much like an intranet. It hosts groups where the creator invites participants who can, in turn, create their own private sub-groups within the group structure. For example, you can create a group for each case you have, and invite all the players to be members. You can then also create a subgroup for you and your client to protect the confidentiality of any communications or documentation that passes between you, while still being able to include that information within the larger group structure.

The members of the group can then email each other through this system, and store documents to make them accessible to group members. Documents can either be uploaded or attached to an email sent through the group. All emails related to the group's matter are listed in reverse chronological order, fully segregated from emails that may be part of another group.

Case Record preserves a comprehensive and sequential account of facts, enabling anyone who later joins the group to quickly understand how a situation or project has progressed and in what order. It also has a unique 'View All' function allowing you to view correspondence in all the groups you belong to in one view, so you can see exactly how events and correspondence are unfolding.

Case Record eliminates e-mail chaos and disappearance and brings systematic order to your correspondence, providing a single, secure environment for all your e-mail and documents and preventing the need to segregate your email within an open system. It gives you greater control and clarity during the case's process.

For those lawyers who enjoy their current case or practice management system but are still emailing your clients or others with confidential information attached through an unsecured system, Case Record is the answer to your vulnerabilities.

As legal IT progresses through the various stages of growth in an extremely dynamic business environment, you will be sure to see more expanded functionality and cooperative integration of applications to meet the demands of our wired profession. Look for Part 2 of this story next week to read about more innovative alternatives to practicing law in the cloud!