

# Zen & The Art of Legal Networking

INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS NETWORK

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### [Social Media - Why It May Matter to Lawyers - A Re-cap from the ILN Annual Conference](#)



During our Annual Conference, I had the opportunity to present on the topic that's near and dear to my heart - [social media](#). An informal survey of the room revealed that about fifteen attorneys were regularly using social media (I defined "regularly" as logging in once a week and connecting with someone in their network in some way). That still left the majority uninvolved, so I endeavored to convince them why social media might matter to them.

I began with some statistics on social media usage from the [AmLaw 100](#) and [200 firms](#), adding the caveat that I understand that social media differs from region to region and that it isn't commonly used in business in many countries. However, I still felt the topic had broad applicability because many firms around the world have American clients and I believe that social media

will soon become important for businesses around the world.

I used the following statistics to illustrate what BigLaw is doing:

- 81 of the AmLaw 100 are using Twitter.
- 38 of the AmLaw 100 are blogging.

- 96 of the AmLaw 200 are blogging (which is up 147% from August of 2007 when only 39 were blogging).
- Among those 96, there are 297 blogs, with 245 of those being firm branded.

In terms of [LinkedIn usage and lawyers](#):

- Every AmLaw 200 firm has a company profile on LinkedIn by default.
- Of the 50 million LinkedIn users, almost 1.5 million are lawyers, up from 118,000 in April of 2008. In two years, the number of lawyers on LinkedIn has risen over **1000%**.
- Approximately 5,000 law firms have business profiles on LinkedIn.
- 4,000 groups included the word "law" on LinkedIn.

Although I know many lawyers are encouraged to move forward when they see what their colleagues at other firms are doing, I knew there would still be some in the audience who remained unconvinced. So I related some of the information revealed about corporate counsel social media usage in [American Lawyer Media](#), [Zeughauser Group](#) & [Greentarget's](#) recent survey, "[Corporate Counsel New Media Engagement Survey](#)." (I know naysayers may point out that the very small sample size used in this survey might negate some of the impact of the results it provides, but I do believe it reveals a growing trend of social media usage among corporate counsel and my intent in the presentation was to show our attorneys why they shouldn't dismiss it.)

The survey shows that in-house counsel **are** interested in blogs (primarily), Twitter, LinkedIn and other social media sites to get their business and industry information. As indicated by the survey, blogs are the preferred mechanism for obtaining business and legal industry information, with more general counsel getting this information online than from other traditional sources. General counsel are primarily (and always will) rely on referrals from trusted sources and credentialing activity to choose their outside counsel, but importantly, they are increasingly taking blog posts and tweets into consideration.

The statistics from the report that I felt were most relevant to my audience were the following:

- 43% of in-house counsel identify blogs as among their leading sources of news and information.
- 53% expect their consumption of industry news and information by these new media platforms to increase over the next six months to a year.
- Nearly half of in-house counsel aged 30-39 have used Facebook for professional reasons in the last week.

- 51% of in-house counsel said that they would receive content from their law firms via new media platforms if it were relevant to their business.

As you would expect, the report shows that there is higher adoption of social media among younger in-house counsel, who they classify as aged 30-39. But over the next ten years, this group will become the primary purchasers of legal services, so their interest in these tools is not to be ignored. Additionally, many smaller companies already have younger in-house counsel.

Not surprisingly, the survey revealed that the most popular social media tools are LinkedIn and blogs, with blogs finding consistent use among age groups and company size. However, interestingly, blogs are the most frequently used tool among in-house counsel at the largest companies (defined as those with revenues of US\$1.5 - \$9.9 billion). 35% of those in that group have visited a blog in the past 24 hours, with 54% visiting in the last week.

Larger legal departments (defined as those with 100+ lawyers) also rank blogs higher in terms of information sources. I see this as a real opportunity for mid-sized firms like those in the ILN, because social media levels the playing field.

But I cautioned them not to send a quick email back to their marketing departments or a junior associate saying "Get us involved in this social media thing." To me, social media is about **ENGAGEMENT**. A lawyer would never send someone else to impersonate them at a cocktail party, so why do it online?

To convince the remaining doubters, I shared some success stories from [Jayne Navarre's](#) upcoming book (being published in July by Thomson West), "social.lawyer: Transforming Business Development." Jayne's book goes into more detail about:

- [Robert Thomas](#), an appellate and eminent domain lawyer in Hawaii, [whose blog](#) has garnered him attention from ABA colleagues and national and international journalists, and has netted him two Fortune 100 clients.
- [Glenn Manishin](#), IP and technology lawyer with Duane Morris, who has landed six clients in the past twelve months from his social media activity.
- [Chrissie Lightfoot](#), as a trainee solicitor, brought in £562,000 of new client legal work enquiries and referrals, started a consultancy, and is now the blogger of record for the [Law Society Gazette](#).
- [Nils Montan](#), practicing lawyer in Brazil and [LinkedIn junkie](#), who brought in new clients and is now 100% responsible for marketing his practice and bringing in new business via the social web.

From these stories, it was easy for the audience to see that social networking **does** bring in new clients. I did pass along the cautions that the lawyers had shared with Jayne, that social networking **does** take work and require time and personality, just like any other business development activity. I suggested that the audience need not feel overwhelmed by the tools and

offered myself, their marketing departments and consultants as people who could aid them in getting started.

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