Allison C. Shields Legal Ease Consulting, Inc.
Allison@LegalEaseConsulting.com

Preventing "Lawyer Meltdown" and Creating Productive, Profitable and Enjoyable Law Practices

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7 Useful Tools to Boost Your Productivity in 2012

By Allison C. Shields, Esq.

At the start of a new year, it's always nice to think about what you would like to do differently, or how you can improve your practice. One way might be by trying out some cool new technology tools or applications - or finally finding out how to make the most of the ones you already have.

Here are 7 tools you might want to consider for 2012:

If you are on the road a lot and don't like to carry paper around, a portable scanner may be for you - you can scan documents on the go and ditch the paper. Check out the Doxie Go portable document scanner, reviewed by Lawyerist.

If you aren't already using it, take a look at Dropbox. It's one of those tools you may wonder how you lived without (although you want to be mindful of the security issues). Dropbox allows access to documents from anywhere and then syncs them across devices. So once you've scanned your document with Doxie Go, you can dump it into Dropbox and access it from anywhere.

Thanks to Jim Calloway, I learned about Stickies, a free app from Zhorn software. If you're addicted to sticky notes, this one may be for you. Essentially, it creates those sticky notes right on your computer, rather than on a piece of paper. I haven't tried it yet, but one of the features that intrigues me is that "Stickies can be attached to a web site, document or folder so they only show when it's on screen." That might be helpful! As far as I know, it is only a PC utility now (sorry Mac/Apple fans!).

On the subject of trying to remember everything, Evernote lets you create notes or capture web pages, add annotations and synch across multiple devices, with access while offline as well. I've come to rely on Evernote to keep track of all of those bits and pieces, interesting web pages or things I want to get to later. Tagging features make it easy to sort and find what I'm looking for.

Speaking of finding what you're looking for, if you're a Microsoft Office 2010 user like me (I just started using it a few weeks ago), you may have noticed that when you have multiple items of the same kind open at once (ex: two Excel spreadsheets or two Word documents), you can no longer see the titles - instead, if you hover over the Word or Excel icons at the bottom of the screen, previews of the documents pop up so you can see which to choose. This can become time consuming. Enter Office Tabs - a free program that creates a new tab within the Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint for each new item. (Hat tip to Jason McGrath who posted the link to his blog post about Office Tabs in LinkedIn).

Logmein Ignition is another option for the mobile lawyer (who uses Windows). It allows you to remotely access and control your computer through another device - even when you don't have a browser available. Manage, move and sync files from different computers.

Square Finally, everyone wants to make money, right? Taking credit cards is one way to ensure that you get paid - and you don't even need to make a trip to the bank! The [Square](#) app plus their free card reader allows attorneys to process credit card payments directly from their mobile device - no more waiting for clients to send checks or to come back to your office with their payment. Swipe the credit card on the spot, whether you're in your office or at the client's location.

About the Author

Allison C. Shields, Esq., President of Legal Ease Consulting, Inc., is a former practicing attorney and law firm manager who helps law firms create more productive, profitable and enjoyable law practices by providing practice management and business development coaching and consulting. Contact her at Allison@LegalEaseConsulting.com, visit her website at www.LawyerMeltdown.com or her blog, www.LegalEaseConsulting.com.