



## Jeff Geiger Counters

### The Wild Side of Lawyers: Line Spacing

By: Jeffrey Hamilton Geiger. *Wednesday, May 9th, 2012*

Do you remember when you were in elementary school and the teacher told you to write a 250 word essay? Or when you were supposed to write a two-page story about your summer vacation? Of course, for many of us, this was before the days of computer-assisted word counts and line spacing. As an aside (and as the child of two teachers), I cannot believe that any teacher ever bothered to count the words but I was bound and determined to meet and surpass that number.

Fast forward thirty (or more) years. I read a story in the **Wall Street Journal** that reported a lawyer feud in a trademark case in which one side was complaining that the other side was using inappropriate line spacing so as to allow them to add more sentences to their brief. Apparently, the judge only allowed double spacing and, allegedly, one of the lawyers was using 1.75 spacing. Tricky, yes. Childish, yes. Professional?

Of course, courts routinely place limits on how long briefs and motions can be and for good reason. As one of my partners says jokingly, "I would have written a shorter brief, but I didn't have time." Legal writing—like any writing—is a craft. And the audience, in this case the other side and the court, is better served by well stated and supported arguments. More is not necessarily better.

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