



Legal Innovation at the 2010 Futures Conference

One of my favorite parts of my job is to go to big cities, attend professional conferences and meet today's law practice thought leaders. So I can hardly contain myself as I prepare for next week's trip to DC, where I will attend and/or participate in 3 conferences/meetings: the ABA's fall meeting of the [Law Practice Management Section](#); MyLegal's [The Case for Social Media](#); and [1, 2, 3 RESET! The 2010 Futures Conference](#) & Symposium hosted by the [College of Law Practice Management](#) and [American University's Washington School of Law](#). Yes, friends, this is my idea of a REALLY GOOD TIME!

Why? Because these conferences and meetings aren't boring anymore. No one's droning on about changes in civil procedure. They're discussing the revolution of the practice of law. Revolutions definitely make me sit up and pay attention.

No revolution, you say? A foolish notion born of social media addicts fed by IT developers? Out-of-work lawyers trying to reclaim some significance in their lives? You might think that unless you take notice that some of the most stalwart legal associations such as the ABA are discussing, writing opinions on and opening up forums for the concepts and realities of a legal future that doesn't look quite the same.

And so it is that the 2010 Futures Conference is not the makings of a social media darling with too much money and not enough to do. It is being hosted by both the College of Law Practice Management and Washington College of Law at American University. And since they are taking this seriously, you might want to give a listen, too.

[Here's the line-up](#):

- The Effect of the Growing Interdependence of the Capital Markets on the Legal Industry – Looking at how global capital markets are dispersing and emerging financial centers in Brazil, Russia, India and China are game-changers

<http://lawpracticestrategy.com/>

- Developing and Choosing Leaders for the New Generation and Beyond – Who are the leaders who will turn resistance into teamwork for law firms determined to do things differently
- A Sea of Change in London – How equity investments, alternative business structures and outcome-based regulation are rewriting the rules of the law business in England, Australia and soon. . . everywhere
- Law Firms with a Mission – Looking at why firms commit themselves to pro-bono activities, workplace diversity, sustainability initiatives and what are the outcomes?
- Social Media: The Ultimate Business Development Tool or a Huge Waste of Time? – Is there a legitimate commercial aspect to lawyers' participation in social media? The experts say "yes" and promise us an implement social media strategy that will change everything.
- Inside the New Law Firm – A look at outsourcing legal and support work, modifying fee-setting methods, replacing people and paper with technology and just basically upending the way we do our work.
- Hitting the Reset Button – Knowledge tools, elawyering, unbundling and more. . . technology lets lawyers work smarleter, find and serve new markets and expand access to justice for real people and organizations

- 60 Tips in 60 Minutes – A fast-paced session that will cover the best tips for doing things better in each of four core areas of law practice management

Does this look like the agenda of a mindset that anticipates the law practice will tip-toe into the future without stepping on a few landmines? The reality is that these issues are being discussed by professional, exclusive institutions and high-impact law schools.

The College of Law Practice Management's [By-Laws](#) describe the association as

The College is a professional, educational, and honorary association of law practice professionals, including lawyers; judges; law professors; administrators; consultants; officers of the government; and others who are dedicated to the improvement of the law practice management process and the enhancement of the professional quality of and public respect for the practice of law.

American University [defines its vision](#) as:

A global outlook, practical idealism, and a passion for public service define American University. Our academic strengths are grounded in social responsibility and a commitment to cultural and intellectual diversity.”

Technology, globalization and the recession have changed the landscape of law practice management forever, and serious minds want to inquire, anticipate and define the nature and extent of the transformation. These are not concepts that will disappear if and when our economy stabilizes. Technology had been making serious inroads into law practice design, and in-house counsel and consumers were grumbling in ever louder voices about the steady increase in the billable hour long before the recession put it all in high gear. No, we will never return to law practice as we knew it. And those who don't believe this and adapt will eventually fail.

I look forward not only to attending the conference, but also blogging about I have learned in the weeks after it. If you have any questions about any of the topics above you would like me to pose during the conference's sessions, I invite you to include them in the comments below and I will do my best!