Apple’s new iPad Air (from $499) is substantially lighter and thinner than its precursor, the iPad 4. The tablet includes a 64-bit A7 processor, front- and back-facing cameras, and options for cellular data.

**TECHGEAR**

**WEBLINKS**

**WALTER M. REAVES JR.** has been a solo practitioner since 1980 and currently maintains an office in Waco. As a criminal defense attorney, he handles both trials and appeals and has managed high-profile cases that have been covered by Newsweek, Time, the Texas Observer, and other media organizations. He has served on the board and executive committee of the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, and he currently serves on the board and executive committee of the Innocence Project of Texas.

gritsforbreakfast.blogspot.com
This is a great blog that covers primarily criminal justice issues. Scott Henson, the author, spends a lot of time at the Texas Legislature and has the inside story on topics he covers on the blog.

sentencing.typepad.com/sentencing_law_and_policy
This blog is written by Professor Doug Berman. He analyzes cases from across the country that have an impact on sentencing.

blog.simplejustice.us
This is the grandfather of all legal blogs, written by New York lawyer Scott Greenfield. He’s a prolific writer and usually has three or more posts every day.

legalease.blogs.com
Written by lawyer coach Allison Shields, this blog has good thoughts on productivity and how to run your law office.

**Stress Relief**

Why a solo attorney should buy law practice management software.

BY DEBRA L. BRUCE

When a client calls unexpectedly, do you fumble to find the information you need while the client wonders why you can’t answer the question quickly? Do you have trouble sorting through all the appointments and deadlines on your calendar to identify the ones that relate to a particular case? Do you rely on your increasingly overloaded memory for conflict checks? Do you lose money because you can’t remember how much time you spent on a dozen different phone calls during the day? Have you lost hope of ever getting organized?

**BENEFITS OF LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**

If you struggle with problems like these, law practice management software could rescue you. With a couple of mouse clicks, you can have:

1. A list of all email and other correspondence.
2. The dates of all scheduled meetings, depositions, hearings, deadlines, etc.
3. A list of all documents relating to each matter.
4. Links to saved cases and research on the matter.
5. Copies of phone messages and your notes from phone calls.
6. A list of outstanding tasks associated with a particular matter.
7. The name and contact information for all parties related to a matter.
8. A list of all other matters you have handled for the same client or with the same opposing counsel.
9. A conflicts report showing all the matters associated with a name, as a client or otherwise.

Law practice management software can help you be more organized, efficient, and productive. It can produce a billing report for your various daily activities. It may have invoicing capabilities and the option to coordinate with your accounting software, ultimately reducing administrative steps, time, and errors. It can give you remote access to information and documents that previously were available only at your desk.

**CHALLENGES OF LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**

Law practice management software really can make your life as a lawyer easier. Like most technology, however, it will make life worse before it makes it better. To enjoy the previously described benefits, you may have to:

1. Research the various products available or engage with consultants who will likely recommend a product they sell.
2. Spend time exploring and experimenting with a product or two to determine which is most likely to meet your needs.
3. Shell out a significant chunk of change to purchase or subscribe to the product.
4. Shell out more to install the product and make it play nice with your computer, printer, scanner, smartphone, and other software—although you might skip some of this by using a cloud solution.
5. Shell out more for help configuring it to your needs.
6. Take time to help the consultant understand your needs and your systems.
7. Abandon your computer while the consultant works on the installation, configuration, and data migration process (again, perhaps not when using a cloud product).
IS IT WORTH IT?

Is it really worth all that effort? For most lawyers—even already-swamped solos—I think it is. Here’s why:

1. Your competition increasingly uses technology to provide faster and more cost-effective service to clients. If you don’t get in the game, eventually you will price yourself out of the market, or will work harder to earn less.
2. The longer you wait to become familiar with technology, the farther you fall behind—and the more difficult it gets to catch up.
3. Most malpractice results from disorganization, not from failing to know the law.
4. Inefficiency and disorganization increase stress, and the practice of law is already stressful enough. (Caveat: at first, learning new software may increase, rather than decrease, your stress.)
5. Consistent use of practice management software will enable another lawyer to step in for you, should you suddenly become disabled by illness or injury.
6. With all of your data organized electronically, you can work remotely and reduce your overhead for physical space.
7. You can improve your bottom line, even with all the increased costs described above.

A REAL-LIFE ILLUSTRATION

One of my coaching clients is a solo with a flat-rate billing practice. When he is more efficient, he makes more money. (When hourly lawyers stop leaking time hunting for things, doing redundant administrative tasks, and forgetting to record smaller increments of time, they make more money, too.) By integrating document scanning and practice management software into his practice, my solo client accomplished what used to take 117 hours in 96 hours per month. If his time were calculated as being worth the modest rate of $200 per hour, that extra 21 hours per month would yield an extra $50,000 per year and a priceless reduction of stress.

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Vehicle Accidents

Has Your Client Made a Full Recovery?

Have you asked yourself: Is anything wrong with the vehicle’s safety systems that may have caused your client’s injury or death?

Vehicle safety systems routinely fail during accidents and expose people to the risks of serious injuries and death. To ensure your clients’ have obtained a full recovery, a crashworthiness evaluation of the vehicle must be conducted.

At the TRACY law firm, we constantly question how the vehicle’s safety systems perform during an accident.

The TRACY law firm is a nationwide law practice dedicated to the issue of identifying vehicle safety systems that violate the principles of crashworthiness.

The TRACY law firm

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