



## TECHGEAR

ViewSonic's upcoming dual-SIM V350 smartphone (price TBA) includes a 3.5-inch HVGA capacitive touch panel and a 5-megapixel camera. Two SIMs allow users to subscribe to different data plans and providers while traveling.



## WEBLINKS



**HERMAN MARTINEZ** is a partner in the Houston criminal defense firm of Madrid, Martinez & Associates. Specializing in DWI defense, Martinez is a former chief prosecutor for Harris County. He is the author of the *Houston Criminal Law Journal* blog ([www.houstoncriminallawjournal.com](http://www.houstoncriminallawjournal.com)). He routinely provides local commentary for Spanish radio stations.

### Razzball ([razzball.com](http://www.razzball.com))

Since baseball is around the corner, I will be reading this blog frequently. The blog delivers humorous fantasy baseball coverage on a daily basis.

### Google Analytics ([www.google.com/analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics))

This site provides me information about how anyone reaches my websites. A must for any small firm that wants to track its traffic.

### Harris County District Clerk ([www.hcdistrictclerk.com](http://www.hcdistrictclerk.com))

A very user-friendly site that has eliminated needless trips to the courthouse.

### Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Blog ([www.txccablog.com](http://www.txccablog.com))

This blog provides an insightful review of the Court's opinions. A real time-saver.

### Sports Illustrated ([si.com](http://www.si.com))

Keeps me up-to-date on sports news. It also has the best sports writers on the web.

### Avvo.com

This is a legal site that a lot of attorneys dismiss, but it allows the public to ask questions, research attorneys, and find answers to common legal questions.

# The Real Question Is "Why Not?"

BY MICHAEL P. MASLANKA

**L**awyers tell me they don't blog. Why? Because they don't have time, there is no definable return on investment, or clients and potential clients don't care. Allow me to rise in defense of lawyer blogging and to make the case for joining the blogosphere.

Exhibit A is an idea from playwright Arthur Miller, who remarked that he never wrote to explain — he always wrote to understand. Same with blogging. Writing about a topic compels you to understand it. When you truly understand something, you can simplify it. And, when you simplify for the reader, you attract more readers, spurring you to write more. You become a better lawyer; the reader becomes enlightened. It's a virtuous circle.

This is the reality of law practice in 2011. Firm websites are static; blogs are dynamic. They show clients that you care — not just tell them that you do. A blog can be infused with your personality. The blogger becomes a person to the reader, not just a headshot. Potential clients hire people. Blogs help you become a reality, not an abstraction.

Blogs work so well with the evolving business model because they are nimble. A blog reacts to events in real time, not snail time. When a U.S. Supreme Court decision is announced on Tuesday, clients want to hear about it on Tuesday — not in next week's mail or in an unsolicited email later in the week. They want the information when they want it, and they want it from a dependable source.

Blogs fit the bill. Here is an interesting statistic from the 2010 Corporate Counsel New Media Employment Survey: 27 percent of in-house counsel put substantial weight — in deciding whether to hire outside counsel — on whether a lawyer writes about relevant topics.

Blogs can be targeted. They can also deliver a message to the world-at-large. A blog empowers the writer to spread the word about him- or herself to the most people in the most efficient and least expensive way. (Cost-conscious managing partners rejoice!)

Think of your blog as a platform. Build a "share" feature so readers can pass on your posts to their friends and colleagues. When I started blogging, I thought the value would be in engaging the reader in a dialogue. I was wrong. It is not about the reader and me. It's about the reader's network and their dialogue. Readers will proselytize for you. (St. Paul would be envious.)

Here is another way to exploit the platform. Put your posts on your Twitter timeline or Facebook page. One re-tweet can introduce you to hundreds — often thousands — of new people, all with one finger of a follower who hits the re-tweet icon. Or, your Facebook friends can share your posts with their friends who often can become your friends.

Need more? Let me turn to fellow blogger Cliff Tuttle and his article "Why Blog? 10.5 Good Reasons" (<http://www.pittsburghlegalbacktalk.com/2009/06/11/why-blog-105-good-reasons>).



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Reason No. 9: Developing a portfolio. All the posts you ever wrote will be on the Internet for a long time. You'll receive comments popping up on posts written many months, or even years, ago — ones you've actually forgotten you wrote. You'll find yourself saying to people, "Read my blog posts(s) on the subject." A few weeks ago, a colleague in another office asked for case law on an issue under the Family and Medical Leave Act. I knew the answer because I had written about the issue.

Generally, lawyers are a conservative bunch, embracing incremental change — not radical shifts. So, you might have questions from colleagues when you tell them about your blog. While I think I have made my case to bloggers-in-waiting, they must make their case to their colleagues. Here is one question you

might get: Will you link to information from competitors? Well, from time to time, yes. Blogging (and the Internet as a whole) is about generosity and sharing, not selfishness and hoarding. The real bottom line in 2011 and beyond is that clients and potential clients want the best information and insight — not just *your* information and insight.

Here's another question you might hear: Will one person write the blog or will it be a communal effort? As Mark Twain famously remarked, a camel is a horse designed by committee. Better to have a single, strong voice with firm opinions than many disparate voices with lukewarm, diluted ones. A colleague might ask, "won't the time spent blogging take away from billable hours and, thus, profits?" No, it won't. Much of the time spent on writing a blog is

already being invested — time spent reading cases, analyzing developments in your field, attending CLE. And, remember, the best blog posts are short posts, so they are not time-consuming to write. I usually write my posts (absent a breaking development) over the weekend, sipping a libation.

I know many of you reading this article are thinking: Should I leap into blogging? Take the leap for all the reasons I mentioned, but also for one more. Someday, you will turn on your computer, or check your tablet, or glance at your PDA, and see an unfamiliar email. It will be from a stranger — soon to be a friend — thanking you for your post and your insight. It'll make your day. ✦

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