



ATTORNEYS at LAW

Technology

Our first computer network was installed in September of 1984. It consisted of six Convergent Technologies work stations, three printers and a server, all running CTOS. It was used for word processing and some back office functions. A few months later, we acquired our first computer solely for a lawyer's use. It was a "fat" Mac, with 512k of RAM and one internal floppy drive. It was a great machine. Despite breaching its warranty, we installed a 10 meg internal hard drive. We used Multiplan on both systems. OverVue handled a variety of tasks on the Mac. The phones had buttons that lit up to identify which line was engaged. We still used carbon paper.

Since then, technology at Hoagland Longo has grown by leaps and bounds. By leveraging the latest virtualization technologies including VMWare and Citrix XenDesktop, the firm has been able to provide our clients and employees with flexibility and true business agility while reducing overall costs. All of our key resources and functions can be accessed through a browser. A properly authenticated client can do the same. The client is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, providing every subset of information needed to do the job at hand. Hoagland Longo is committed to keeping up with advancing technology to continue to serve our clients in the best, most efficient and cost effective way.

What makes this all possible is our integrated practice management system which we created in-house, called Albion. Albion started with the idea of creating a tool which would allow our attorneys, secretaries, and paralegals to do their job better and, thus, serve our clients better.

It seemed that the information necessary to create a calendar event such as a deposition, the documents associated with that event and the corresponding time slip overlap greatly. Why type the same information over and over. Also, it didn't make sense to have information spread out through multiple systems which didn't "talk" to each other and were hard, if not impossible, to keep in sync.

Albion serves these functions for us: calendar, tasks, to do's, case lists, address book, conflict searches, document production, document management, case management, time and billing, information sharing with clients, referrals, knowledge management, and management reporting. All of these functions are accomplished through a web browser. As one of our partners has said, there are no more snow days. If you have a browser and internet access, all of these resources are available to you and all in real time.

The calendar can be customized to view events or tasks for an individual, group or the entire firm, or for one or more matters. You can create as many custom views as you like, mixing and matching preferences as you go. From a calendar item or task, you can jump to other parts of Albion or create new items such as a time slip, document, or note defaulted to the matter to which the original item relates.

The case list is also customizable. It is the section of Albion which allows you to find one or more cases by a variety of criteria. You can have a personal case list which can include any case you choose. New files assigned to you are automatically added to the case list if you so choose. As in the calendar, you can jump from any case to another part of Albion or create a new item defaulted to that case.

The casebook pulls together information from the perspective of the case. All the standard items related to that case can be viewed from the casebook, such as the calendar, tasks, to-do's, parties, time slips, invoice ledger, notes and documents. The user can create an unlimited number of folders to organize any information related to the case. Documents are versioned, and can be of any type such as a Microsoft Word letter, an Excel spreadsheet, or a URL. Word processing documents can be saved, versioned and stored in multiple formats so that, for example, version 3 of a Microsoft Word status letter can be saved in a Microsoft Word format and a PDF. A special type of folder is the client folder(s). Anything placed in a client folder can be viewed by a properly authenticated client 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For instance, when an attorney returns to the office after arguing a motion, that attorney updates the event, including its disposition. If that event also is in a client folder, the client would see the disposition of that motion immediately -- no telephone tag, delay in mail, etc. Actually the editing of that calendar event automatically generates a note which can be received as email according to user-defined preferences. But that's another story.

Albion accommodates electronic billing, categorizing timeslips by UTBMS, or any other code set a client desires, and percent cost sharing among clients carried out to four decimal places.

What are Albion's implications? For us, it means having access to what is going on in any given matter or collection of matters from anywhere in real time. What economies of scale exist in the practice of law? Albion allows our central office to serve, in effect, as an ASP for our branch offices. Software maintenance is simplified. Everything flows from the server. The only client software is a browser. For the same reason, the life of hardware is extended. Training is simplified. Albion allows us to focus on the practice of law and get the job done for our clients faster, better, smarter. For you, our clients and potential clients, it means cost effective, quality legal services and an easy way to keep up on what information is important to you.