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Does Anyone Use A Mac In The Law Practice?

I love the way Macs look and for years have wanted to buy one (a laptop) with the idea that it could eventually serve as my office computer but several things always hold me back with the biggest one being my notion that not a lot of legal-related software exists for Mac's.   My other hesitation is that I haven't used any Apple products since a friend of mine lent me his Macintosh during law school, about 12 years ago so I don't know how hard it will be to learn Apple-speak.

Any of you out there have any input on this topic: the use of Macs in their practice?

 Check out http://www.maclaw.org/ Mac-speak isn't all that hard to pick up for a windows user. In part, because it's designed to be much more user-friendly, and in part because Windows liberally borrows from the GUI.   Steve O'Donnell

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Yep. I switched after too many years of being forced into MS by big firm policies, once I went solo I went Mac. What a feeling. And maclaw.org<http://maclaw.org>(*MacLaw@yahoogroups.com) *has been great.

John Mitchell

I use Macs in my practice. My only hesitation was that there was no WordPerfect for Macs (there are some old versions out there, but I never got them up and running). However, now that Word has won the WordPerfect/Word war, I bought Word for Mac and everything's hunky-dory.

You might be interested in joining this group: http:// groups.yahoo.com/group/MacLaw/

Jimmy Verner, Dallas, Texas

I didn't know that WordPerfect was not available for Macs. that sucks-- I always thought WordPerfect was better than Word. But it does seem that most people work with Word documents.

Gabriel

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I'll jump in and second everything John and Jimmy have said. I've used Macs since I left my firm and went solo three years ago, and have loved them from day one. No problems at all. Word for Mac is a pretty good product, and there's usually a good Mac solution for any application need (time and billing is one glaring exception). I will also recommend joining the MacLaw list -- it is an invaluable resource for any Apple using lawyer.

Mark Jakubik

Time and billing?   TimeMatters can be used for Macs, I've read that it is a good time and billing product.

Gabriel

I like WordPerfect much better; since it has so much more power as to programming within it. For standard tasks, all word processors work the same; but when it comes to really utilizing the power of programming macros; WordPerfect is just amazing in what it can do; and it's unfortunate that Microsoft has taken over the world.

I'm still trying to find WordPerfect users I can have try out a program I wrote; which I think is great; but you never know until you get somebody impartial to try it. I still use WP 8; but also have 10 and 12; and do feel that a person should use the best word processor. If you buy one for $120; and use it for six years; that's an irrelevant expense; and that's what it cost me to upgrade to 12. I've tried to write the same kind of program in Word, and you just can't do it. Even PC magazine thinks Word is a crummy word processor; but for most people; they all work the same.

Bob Woodley

I prefer WordPerfect and always have...I have been accused of showing dinosaur tendencies in that respect, but it is what I grew up on. Now I have both WP and Word on the system. I used to be a member of a firm which used a Mac network. Everyone else liked it, but I was the iconoclast PC user. The network was set up and I had no problems using a PC in a Mac network...I have no idea how the tekkies did it, but it worked and I was able to use my WP on a Mac network.

Alan P. Bernstein

I think only the Enterprise (expensive) edition can. I looked into this, as I wanted to go Mac, but then I would have had to give up TM.

Brian Schowalter, Durango, Colorado

The TimeMatters website does not reflect that their products can be used on an Apple operating system (http://www.timematters.com/products/timematters/requirements/professional/). If they can, that's great news, but this is the first I've heard this.

Mark Jakubik

Question for those who do use Macs (I use either Windows or Linux, depending on many things). I thought there was software for Macs that would allow Windows programs (such as WordPerfect and TimeMatters, the two just mentioned) to be run under emulation. Yes? No?

James S. Tyre, Culver City, California

I guess someone should tell the folks at Time Matters that their products run on OS X .;-0

There are. If memory serves, Steve O'Donnell knows a bit about this. I've tried them, but find thaat the apps don't work as smoothly as apps that are written specifically to run on Apple's OS, so I try to avoid using the emulators if at all possible.

Mark Jakubik

Actually, one of the former members of the Illinois State bar's Legal Tech committee worked for a firm that used Mac's and ran Time Matters using virtual PC software. Food for thought.

Nerino J. Petro, Jr., Loves Park, Illinois

I think that's probably the least bad solution, and is what I've been doing. If someone came out with a Mac specific product, though, I'd switch at the drop of a hat.

Mark Jakubik

I'm sure it can be done but as Mark said it doesn't seem like it would be smooth. I could see problems if you're in TM using virtual PC and then you want to import an email or word document from the Mac OS. I could be wrong, but the set up seemed problematic.

Brian Schowalter, Durango, Colorado

You're absolutely right, Brian, at least in my experience. Its clunky, at best, but I haven't yet found a less bad way to do it.

Mark Jakubik

Has anybody used LawStream Law Office Management software? It is also referenced in apple store as being specific for Mac (as well as windows).

My point is that just like there is windows-specific case management software, there must be some that is made for Macs.

Gabriel

The specifications are for the TimeMatters 6.0 Linux version, but there is no version 7.0, despite initially announcing one. Lexis as the new owner determined they should not continue the Linux and Oracle variants of this product.

TimeMatters 6.0 does come in Linux flavor, but I am not sure you can buy it anymore. This is one of Lexis's grand "improvements" where an incremental upgrade was released as a new version for Windows but not developed for all platforms.

Can you tell what my opinion is of this vaporware decision? Product was announced but withdrawn.

Darrell G. Stewart, San Antonio, Texas

Tried it once. Anything that resulted was a pure emulation of what was intended. Maybe better now, but I would never go near it.

Alan P. Bernstein

Yes. As you know, Linux will run WINE or variants. OS X has similar capabilities, as Linux based. Prior versions had emulators also. Please note I run no Apple products, just read a lot and occasionally help out a friend with an Apple.

Darrell G. Stewart, San Antonio, Texas

 Macs have nice styling, but are horrendously overpriced for the power. I would suggest that you look any "IBM compatible" PC and then consider loading LINUX as the operating system. LINUX is a more stable platform than MS Windows. There are many great flavors of Linux out there, with

UBUNTU and KNOPPIX being the current darlings.

As far as law related software, I am sure there many freeware applications already created for LINUX that could be easily modified for the purposes of a SOHO practice.

My 2 cents.

Hassan Abbas Shakir

Some people with Macs also run TM on a Windows box and purchase the TM "World Server" product which provides a web-based front end to TM, and then use that web-based front end via their Macs.

I haven't done it, don't know how well it works, am not sure that buying a Windows box is palatable to an otherwise Mac shop, but figured I'd mention that option for completeness' sake.

I am running TM/BM 5.0 Enterprise on a Linux server and am now apparently orphaned unless I want to move to a Windows server, which is unappealing to me.

Greg Broiles, San Jose, California

Virtual PC allows you to run Windows software but I don't like it. It tends to run very slow on the Mac. MS purchased the program (and/or the company) so now they control it. I have it but don't use it anymore.

Fred DelSignore

There are other strong word processor alternatives available for Mac users, and they can open, interact and send to Word and WordPerfect. Nisus Writer comes to mind. I use Word myself.

I have tried Windows PCs over the years but have never felt any need (except for the occasional CD or program written exclusively in MS formats) to move from the much more attractive, innovative and user-friendly Apple products that I have relied on for over 20 years. List prices may appear higher, but all-in expenses, including time saved, makes these a real bargain.

The Maclaw list group are currently working on developing a strong billing program. It is based on Filemaker, so that it is customizable by various users. It may be the best such program yet. It is just about ready for release and interested parties might wish to sign up for that list to get a description of all its features.

Norman Solberg, Osaka, Japan

I've never used a Mac; and find Windows works fine. I have a billing module in my program; but it doesn't generate bills. It's just a quick way to make an instant note on a task you just performed; or for a secretary to do so; so that (s)he can use those notes when information is put into the billing program. I use Timeslips, and haven't had the problems with it that some here have noted; but I only have one hourly rate; and do like the text-expanding feature it has; though I suppose they all do. I could write a billing program; but nothing as comprehensive as you can buy for a few hundred dollars. The cost of any program I'm going to use for at least 6 years becomes an irrelevant cost; when measured against how quickly you can enter information into it and use it. Time is the important thing to me; whether mine or that of my secretary; along with ease of use.

Bob Woodley

What's your program? What level WP does it require? I could be interested.

Jay S. Goldenberg, Chicago, Illinois

It works with any version of WordPerfect. I'll e-mail you as to the specific description of the program.

Bob Woodley

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