

Popular Threads on Solosez

How Do You Enter Your Time?

To all of you out there who do not have support staff - what do you all do for entering your time? At our firm, the two of us here have been dedicating one day a month for an "administrative day" - meaning that much of the day is spent typing in our time and creating bills. I'm sure there must be a better and less time-consuming way. I'm looking for ideas - whether software, dictating time into Dragon, typing it in daily (not always an option), or any other methods that work well. Any ideas? What works for you?

I use Practice Master to track time during the day. At the end of the month, I generate a Client Time Summary report for each client (this report tracks fees and not just time). I send each client a letter that says my bill for the month is X and I attach the report to justify X. There is probably a more efficient way to bill, but I can't imagine trying to bill/track time without some sort of practice management software.

I have found the "Law Practice Accounting Using QuickBooks" book available at <http://attorneystechology.com/books.htm> to be helpful.

Jeremy J. Richey, Illinois

Timeslips, using their timers. Greatest thing of my life. When the system is down I become very grouchy. An administrator at BigLaw where I worked in the 90's told me that studies have shown that timers increase accuracy in billing by a significant percentage. She claimed that most attorneys tend to UNDER-bill when tracking time on paper. Naturally I don't remember her source for this golden nugget but I did take it to heart and have used timers faithfully ever since. Timeslips is so comprehensive, it would be such a waste not to use it.

My goal this year is to figure out how to get Timeslips to sync with my Outlook and email all my bills to my clients so I can stop printing them out one by one and snail mailing them. Now there's a time-sucker.

Jill C. Engle, Pennsylvania

Jill, call me - if you have one of the more recent versions of Timeslips, I can walk you through it. The simplest thing is the email, though: enter the email address in the Client's page, the same page where you enter the client's address when you open a new client. Then click through the tabs (arrangement 1, arrangement 2, etc.) and look for an option to email bills to the client (if you can't find this, call me and I'll open up TS and tell you where it is). TaDa - (and if you forget the second step above, when you run your bills, you'll get a list of clients whose email you have entered, and ask whether you want to have it emailed...check the little boxes and you're done).

Kathleen Dillon Hunt, Washington

If you're not up for buying Timeslips or some other time entry system, I have a buddy who opens an email form addressed to himself, and he updates it during the day with whatever he's working on, usually just enough data that he can put together a time entry later. Then he send the email and puts it in a folder. At the end of the month, he's got most of his entries ready to be put into his billing system.

Kevin W. Grierson, Virginia

I use BillingMatters and enter my time as I go along.

Marion J. Browning-Baker, Germany

I enter my time as I go, otherwise I forget to enter it or I don't have a huge block of time to do it. I use Harvest, a web-based timekeeping and invoicing SAAS. If I'm not near web access, I use a simple table in Word with columns for date, client, time, description, then I copy and paste it into Harvest later.

Mark D. Matthews, Virginia

well, I have a very small support staff, 1 secretary at 10 hours per week. I write my time down in a Franklin Planner, and she inputs it into Quickbooks (in the customer register).

Zack Paakkonen

Seems like I am the minority or solo on this one, but I write my time down in the file as I work on a case then manually input it into a client invoice at the end of the month. Yes, I do all my calculations myself and I do tweak it a lot, giving some breaks to the clients. I like this because as I am inputting it, I tend to mentally refresh my memory of the case and what has happened that month and most times am able to add to my thoughts of a case mentally, which helps the case in the end. Hope this makes sense, but I believe we, as thinkers, sometimes just "do the work" and put the case aside. I know I do. So when I have to think about the case as a whole, and not just some task on it, then most of the time it helps the case. It is antiquated, and I KNOW there are easier ways...but I like it my way.

Micah G. Guilfoil, Kentucky

Using the Quickbooks help feature is how I set it up. And asking questions on boards like this and there is an intuit QuickBooks forum too. If you have some simple questions I might be able to help you. Also, Sasha Golden, I think is her name, is very good at QuickBooks.

Michael A. Blake, Connecticut

I keep a little yellow pad next to my computer, and scribble down what I do on it. Then once a month I enter it all into Excel spreadsheets, one for each client. Then I cut-and-paste the entries into a Word document to create a bill. It's a terrible system and I don't recommend it. However, I've followed the discussions here of the different systems for months, and I've ended up confused and paralyzed, so here I am.

-Melanie Morgan

Happy to help you and anyone else do that whenever you like.



Nancy Duhon, Georgia

I use a modified time and billing access database I modified from A MS template.

Ronni S. Jillions, Washington, D.C.

I am still trying to set up my Quickbooks Pro 2009 for time and billing. Stuck on how to set up the dual business and then trust account. It's driven me way past drinking 

Is there a good "how to" guide for lawyers? Either that or someone in northern Illinois I can pay to set it up for me?

Sandra J. Slaga, Illinois

I use PCLaw Quick Timer to track my time. I delay post the different time entries during the day and then at the end of the day review my timesheet and post it to PCLaw.

I am also using Dragon more often to dictate my time entries.

Winky Glover, Mississippi