

Holding on to that Last Bit of Reliable Low Tech Equipment

With all of the new, improved, high fa-lootin, technology, how many of you still have that ONE thing that is either "old school", "low tech", or simply, "I don't care if there is something out there better, I like this!" piece of technology or equipment? I remember a few years ago, I met a family lawyer who kept ALL of his vital contacts on a laminated, index card. He had a few cards but he carried, at least, one with him every day in his shirt pocket. He said "I know I can save this on my computer or my phone but what happens if my phone crashes or I can't get to my computer. This info goes with me everywhere!".

What is your 'can't let go of the past' equipment?

This is relative, but I still use a BlackBerry. Although, it's beginning to give me problems, so I'm looking towards the Galaxy S III.

Ryan Phillips, South Carolina

Fountain pens try to always use a fountain pen to sign. I still use yellow pads too.

Someday when I get the snapscan and can make everything I have is electronic I'll get a tablet.

John Davidson, Pennsylvania

My phone has nothing smart about it, not even a camera. I still write checks by hand. I write about half of my letters with paper and ink for my clerk to type, although that percentage was probably even higher very recently. I'm a dinosaur.

Shell Bleiweiss, Illinois

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I still have a typewriter, though it gets used only rarely. Occasionally, it's just easier to fill out a form with a typewriter, though, with more and more forms being available now as fillable pdf's, less so now than even just a few years ago.

My cellphone has a camera, but only because other phone features made it the best option. I've never used the camera, just as other smartphone features would be of little use to me, on account of my being significantly impaired visually. ("Features" in my case means a big, solid 10 keypad and a sturdy feeling phone, since I have trouble with many keypads, and I tend to drop things.)

I have contacts in a computerized database. But if I'm at my desk and need a phone number, I'm more likely to turn to my rolodex.

And I have a card with emergency contact info in my wallet.

But I only use paper and ink for things that should be more personal, such as a thank you note. Shell, you are a dino. '-)

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James S. Tyre, California

Yellow legal pad and a pen?

Erin Schmidt

Vintage fountain pens.

Film camera - still grieving Kodachrome ;-)

Landline with one actual non-cordless phone tucked away in a corner; when the power goes out, it usually stays out for hours, long enough for the cell phone to be dead in an emergency.

Anne Pohli, Texas

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We still use legal pads. Long yellow ones and shorter white ones.

Until last year, we used carbon paper to fill out VS-4 forms. Now I just handwrite them neatly, in black ink, and I've never had one rejected.

I try to write most of our correspondence for the boss to sign. And I create pleadings for him to sign based on pleadings that we used on another case, with the necessary changes. But if he has to dictate something, we still use cassette recorders and players with a foot pedal, and when the tape has been typed, I erase it and put it back in his drawer for use the next day. These are regular cassettes, not mini-cassettes, which are much more contemporary.

Until last week, when the copier finally broke irrevocably, we used an analog copier that doesn't do anything but copy and collate. We had it for 15 years and made more than 1.3 million copies on it. It didn't scan, or fax, or e-mail. It just sat there and made copies like a champ when called upon.

We still use an appointment book with writing in it, to schedule appointments. And the boss carries a "pocket calendar" so he can check for available dates while in court.

We still buy the Code in book form.

I still pack and unpack his briefcase every day and take his paycheck to whichever bank he specifies, after signing and endorsing it for him. (I don't sign my own checks, of course.). I bring him water and help him find stuff that's right in front of him. I schedule his medical and vision appointments and do everything I can so he can decompress and concentrate on taking care of clients. (This paragraph isn't about technology but some of what I do for him, including babysitting the Beagle, is reminiscent of an earlier day. And he discourages me from dating or getting married, or even flirting. At least he doesn't mind when I point out how high-maintenance he is!)

Oh yeah, we still have a fax machine that actually can make single copies also. It's been here since when I worked here before, probably since 2001 or so. Getting a plain-paper fax was a big deal, rather than having those rolls of fax paper that had to be photocopied if they needed to be preserved. And we have a postage meter, which may or may not be archaic.

Lastly, when my other boss died last month, I used his rolodex-type thing to call as many of our old friends as I could locate, so they would learn

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of his passing from me rather than the newspaper. It's one of those flat metal things where you move the dial to each letter and push a lever and the lid opens with the correct letter of the alphabet displayed. He had used it since 1971. I began working for him in 1975, and every phone number I've ever had since that time, and every name I've used since that time, is in that directory. He used it to keep up with people, and it worked for him. It's staying on my desk now.

Marilou, a nonlawyer who takes care of old stuff until it wears out and who pampers her boss so he can take care of the things only he can do

I have a Mont Blanc fountain pen, with a gold nib, that I use to sign my name whenever possible. A *fountain* pen - no cartridges. I buy bottles of ink to refill it, and I never let anyone else use it. I recieved it as a gift 30+ years ago from a relative who has since passed away.

It is a pleasure to write with. And, I think of the relative every time I use it.

Russ Carmichael

I have more than one, but one oldie is my Rolodex. It has come in handy as has my landline with corded phone especially during the 8 day blackout of last October.

Marylou Lavoie, Connecticut

I still have a typewriter because our state still has a few forms that are not fillable and/or the spacing is insufficient to fill in on the computer but ok to fill in via typewriter.

Naomi C. Fujimoto, Hawaii

My paper Dayrunner calendar. The one that has the whole month on two pages and lines in the boxes of the days.

Jeena R. Belil, New York

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I still have a Rolodex, and I use it every day. My firm also still uses diary cards as our back-up calendaring system, and we also still have trust account cards as our backup system (and I'm much more likely to get up and look up a trust balance on the trust card than our accounting system).

Cynthia V. Hall, Florida

Pretty stamps, all my envelopes sent first class mail get a pretty or a fun stamp. I love me some printed stamps!

My calculator with big ol' buttons on it that does nothing fancy, I think it was a freebie from CourtCall.

My white boards!

Of course post-its and yellow pads -- that is the beauty of a Scansnap, you can scan in your handwritten docs. Especially if I am organizing something I need paper as i need to draw big charts -- sometimes I have to use my whiteboard or posterboard, I just HAVE to chart things so my brain can grasp it -- or draw a timeline.

I use self-inking stamps for my address as well as quite a few other things, then I address many envelopes with pen or print out labels.

Printing on envelopes is WAY too much of a disaster when I attempt it, so I gave that up a long time ago and found more joy in my life.

-- Amy C K

-- Amy Clark Kleinpeter, Texas

I forgot to mention mine.

1) My dry erase white board - it's amazing how the brain works when you're writing things out

2) My legal pad - I can type as fast as I write but when I write, i can jump all over he place quicker.

3) My highlighter - which I'm not using as much these days (and I need to figure out how highlight things using pdf on my iPad) but back in the early days when I was reviewing 400 to 500 pages of records a pop, my highlighter was my best friend. Still got a bunch of them hanging around.

Anthony Reeves, Floridad

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Does anyone else take pictures of their whiteboards?

I do, with my phone! Email it to myself, download it, and then if I need to, I turn the JPG into a PDF.

Can only be so low-tech, you know...

-- Amy Clark Kleinpeter

A colleague has a white board that functions like a copier. When he presses a button it spits out a copy of what was on the board at the time. Very cool.

Shell Bleiweiss

I still use a pencil and eraser!

David Crosson, Pennsylvania

Shell, I saw one of those. Still one of the coolest devices I've seen.

Anthony Reeves

Is a baseball bat at settlement negotiations considered low tech?

Christopher Palmer

I only recently got a white board, and I've only used it for out-of-office presentations. Shortly thereafter, I noticed an office lower in the building simply uses their window-wall; the window, when viewed from a seated position, is backed by the clear sky, so whether it's hazy and gray or bright blue, the background is clear enough and unobstructed enough to function as a blank canvas!

-Rick

Richard J. Rutledge, Jr., North Carolina

I use a pad and pen.

Every day gets a new page with date in the corner. I take notes all day long. Sometimes I doodle.

Every night a picture gets taken and loaded to Evernote.

I've tried to write on a pc/tablet since 2007. It is not the same as writing on paper.

Nothing engrains in my brain the way information does from writing it down; and since Evernote - knowing I have my notes accessible from anywhere AND backed up - PRICELESS.

-- NotanAtty--

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Andrea Cannavina,

I didn't even think of my fountain pens when I saw this question. But me, too - I write with fountain pens because they are such fun to write with!

My other answer - my 15 (gasp) year old Brother copier. It has a sheet feeder and turns on and is ready to copy instantly. You can't beat it when you just need a quick copy. Large jobs go to the local copy shop or Staples, and when appropriate I scan and print, but there are still times when my little copier is the most efficient way to go.

Caroline

Caroline A. Edwards, Pennsylvania

Okay, now THAT's weird, Amy.

:)

Sharon C.

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The white board with a copier sounds soo cool! I saw a similar version of it at CES last year where the white board memorized whatever you wrote and uploaded it to your pc. It even tracks what you've erased up to a certain point so that you can back-track if you accidentally erase something you need. Entirely spiffy.

Hai Ling Chu

I also use yellow pads and pen when meeting with a new client. Sometimes I scan the notes after the client has left and I will use PDF Converter or Acrobat to type in additional notes.

Dennis Chen, Florida

Ditto on the paper and pen notes scanned to PDF.

Ditto on the white board. If my partner and I have a particularly good white board session, we take a picture, print it to PDF and put it in the file.

David Masters, Colorado

To incorporate another post, "printable" white board - Smart Board, PanaBoard, etc. - are fairly common in the estate planning world. I think estate planning is more whiteboard-centric than most practice areas.

I used a Mimio XL for a number of years. However, I got tired of all that and decided to go Amy's route and simply take a picture of the whiteboard. I take notes of the initial meeting in Evernote on my iPad and take pictures of the whiteboard throughout the meeting.

As for low-tech, I still use a mechanical "Paymaster" check imprinter for checks. It was my dad's. I don't need it. However, it reminds me of my dad, and that is better than any technology I could ever find.

With that lone exception, there is nothing low-tech about my existence. If available, I would use a Bluetoothbrush.

Cheers,

David Allen Hiersekorn, California

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Now things you use that came from your parents.

My first deposit only stamp was one my father used when he was a church treasurer from the 1960's it;s now too worn out to really use.

I also have a gavel my father got when he was President of the Federation of Societies for Paint Technology. That dates back to 1971. It's on my desk. I've resisted the temptation to smack certain clients over the head with it.

John Davidson

We have an old fashioned hand crank pencil sharpener that came from my father. Works like a charm. It's screwed into a built in bookcase in our 107 year old house and looks like it came from the builder.

Pat

Patricia Kane Williams, New Jersey

Geez, folks, snip!

I periodically bump into the hand crack sharpener that I installed at child height probably more than a quarter century (I just lost my breath with that phrase) on a log-end of the wall between the kitchen and the rest of the house. Funny how that thing comes in handy. If you knew Ron, you know he left me a lifetime supply of pens and pencils, so that sharpener will come in handy until I'm too short and twisted to use it.

I guess I'll have to use the old wooden apple crate to step up to it.

I also keep a paper faux dayrunner-type thing in a zippered 3-hole 6x8 notebook.

"Redundant systems" is a phrase and a practice I learned young and have appreciated more times than I can remember.

CJ Stevens, Montana
