

It Takes More than a Scanner: What Small Law Firms Must Know to Successfully Go Paperless

According to the International Legal Technology Association, almost half of all legal purchases of imaging, scanning or optical character recognition is made by small law firms. If you're among them, congratulate yourself for making a smart investment in paperless technology, considering that increasingly:

- Clients prefer the speed and ease of communicating electronically.
- Jurisdictions require documents to be submitted electronically — last November, the Supreme Court began requiring this and more than 150 jurisdictions are following their lead.

While it would be great if merely acquiring a scanner would be enough to operate an effective paperless law office, it's not quite that easy. You need to know how to make your investment drive firm efficiency while sidestepping the pitfalls that too many firms fall into.

Avoiding a Paperless Mess

This includes:

- Which files to start digitizing first — and that's not the ones sitting in storage.
- How to optimally manage, organize and backup paperless files.
- Why it's critical that your entire firm embraces paperless filing — and how to make that happen with ease.

Making the transition away from paper is well worth the effort. When your firm depends less on paper documents, you're doing more than responding to the demands of the marketplace, you're on your way to making your life — and the lives of your colleagues — considerably easier.

- You won't have to haul 50 pounds of paper files to court. You can simply access files from a mobile device. Think about what will look better in front of a judge

and jury: fishing through piles of files or instantly pulling up a document on your laptop?

- You can break the chains of the office. Whether you're at home, at the airport or in court, you'll be able to access files anywhere there's internet access.
- Instead of having an associate spend hours rifling through files to find a misplaced document or information related to a certain subject, you can simply type a word or phrase into a search bar and your computer screen will be populated with what you're looking for.
- You'll always have secure backup of your work. That is worth thinking about now that we're entering severe-weather season when a tornado, hurricane or flood could destroy your paper files.

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