

Book Reviews

The 2009 Solo and Small Firm Legal Technology Guide: Critical Decisions Made Simple

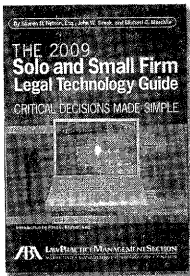
by Sharon D. Nelson, John W. Simek,
and Michael C. Maschke

195 pp.; \$84.95

ABA Law Practice Management Section, 2009
321 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60654
(800) 285-2221; www.ababooks.org

Reviewed by Todd A. Stahly

Todd A. Stahly is an associate at Dale E. Johnson, P.C. in Louisville, Colorado, where he practices domestic relations law—(303) 666-4468, todd@dalejohnsonfamilylaw.com.



Plenty of books have been written that teach lawyers how to be lawyers. There are resources on improving one's skills in evidence, conducting a trial, taking a deposition, defending a deposition, and just about every other aspect of a case in most areas of law. However, very few resources speak to the backbone of a lawyer's organization: the technology they rely on every day. In the past, lawyers could view their computers as an "add

on" to their practice; today, technology is at the nucleus of the lawyer's practice. In the world of mandatory electronic court filings, ethical metadata requirements, data management, electronic discovery, and demand for split-second response, technology can make or break a law firm.

The 2009 Solo and Small Firm Legal Technology Guide (Guide) addresses one of the most relevant issues to solo/small firms today: whether the firm is using the appropriate technology. The authors state in the preface that they have taken a "simple" approach to this complex topic, and are quick to point out that the *Guide's* suggestions should not be applied to large firms.

A resource on law firm technology would comprise volumes if it evaluated every available option on the market. Fortunately, the authors have done the hard work for us by filtering out the extraneous issues to create a concise, readable reference on every possible area of technology as it applies to the solo/small firm law office.

The *Guide* is organized by topic and includes a glossary to help readers with the technical terms used. The text begins with recommendations for hardware (desktop, laptop, monitor), and then moves on to software recommendations. The authors cover many familiar

software options, such as Windows Vista, along with some unfamiliar software options that may prove to be indispensable, such as Jott (www.jott.com). The authors provide guidance on specific upgrades. For example, they recommend that rather than purchasing a costly new wide-screen monitor, lawyers may want to use two existing monitors to create a dual-monitor setup at their workstation.

Using appropriate technology is critical to the lawyer's survival in the marketplace, and the *Guide* is a great resource for helping attorneys make the right choices. However, because technology changes so frequently, it's important to keep in mind that the *Guide* offers only a snapshot of what is recommended for a solo/small firm right now. It would have been too advanced if it had been published two years ago, and it likely will be outdated in two years.

The *Guide* is highly recommended for anyone currently practicing law in a solo/small firm capacity. Practitioners with little computer knowledge and limited funds can use the resource to choose appropriate technology instead of having to consult (and pay for) expensive professionals. At \$84.95, the *Guide* is not an inexpensive reference; however, this is far less than you would pay for a consultation with an IT professional. Practitioners who are computer savvy may use the *Guide* to confirm that they're making the right technology choices.

Colorado Water Law for Non-Lawyers

by P. Andrew Jones and Tom Cech

276 pp.; \$26.95

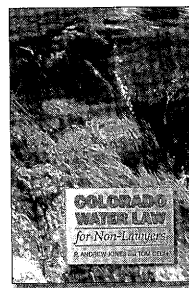
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5589 Arapahoe Ave., Ste. 206C, Boulder, CO 80303

(800) 627-7377; www.upcolorado.com

Reviewed by John Livingston

John Livingston is a District Court Magistrate for the First Judicial District—(303) 271-6202, john@livingstonlaw.net.



Colorado Water Law for Non-Lawyers serves as an overview of water law in Colorado. The authors, water lawyer P. Andrew Jones and water district manager Tom Cech, relate a fascinating story about the history of water law, and also foretell problems as our population increases.

In the historical setting of the Gold Rush era, Colorado adopted a priority system (first in time is first in right) based on California

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