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Book Review, *The Digital Practice of Law: a Practical Reference for Applying Technology Concepts to the Practice of Law*

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Bookmarks

HAZEL L. JOHNSON

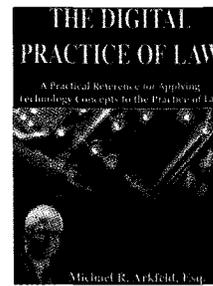
Streamlining. Searching. Shopping. Technology continues to transform law practice activities ranging from e-commerce to e-research to *e-whatever* is new this week. As high-tech tools improve, we poor humans must try to figure out how to make use of all the available possibilities. The authors and creators of this month's resources seek to provide guiding lights for those of us who prefer not to inhabit the cutting edge of technology.

The Digital Practice of Law: A Practical Reference for Applying Technology Concepts to the Practice of Law

4th edition. Michael R. Arkfeld
(www.arkfeld.com). Law Partner Publishing.
1999. 350 pages. \$49.95. ISBN: 0966934709.
Order: (602) 993-1937.

Reviewers of past editions describe Arkfeld's book in glowing terms: "... the most comprehensive explanation and analysis of both the hardware and software applications required to automate the practice of law that I have ever seen ... bar none"; "worth its weight in gold." The fourth edition is exceptional, as well.

Arkfeld's objective is to show the reader how to use computers and software as tools to replicate the lawyer's method of storing, accessing and retrieving critical information. He accomplishes this very well, and his material is well organized and easy to understand.



Arkfeld divides his book into eight chapters followed by a glossary of key computer definitions and an index. Chapter 1 deals with the

reasons for automating a practice. The second chapter, "Hardware and Software," explains basics ranging from how much RAM you might need to software concepts and practical considerations. The third chapter explores the role of computer networking and the use of intranets. Chapter 4, on the Internet and telecommunications, includes pointers on accessing the Net, locating and selecting an Internet service provider and building your firm's Web site.

Chapter 5, "Management and Personnel Technology Considerations," offers how-tos for implementing technology and a technology culture in the firm. It deals with the human resource issues associated with technology and includes a section on choosing a technology consultant. Chapter 6 discusses computer concepts and their application to legal functions such as document assembly, databases, spreadsheets and multimedia. The seventh chapter, "Managing Litigation Information Using Technology," discusses how a lawyer can control paper and digital materials using technology; it reminds lawyers to consider factors such as time and expense.



Hazel L. Johnson, editor of "Resources & Reviews," is a reference librarian at McGuire, Woods, Battle & Boothe LLP, 901 E. Cary St., Richmond, VA 23219; hjohnso@mwbb.com.

Bookmarks

■ ONLINE OFFICE SHOPPING

For the solo and small firm lawyer who struggles daily to take care of clients and their legal problems, the business of running a firm often gets short shrift. A relatively new Web site provides hope and help.

Onvia.com (www.onvia.com) lets you purchase computer equipment, office furniture and office supplies through a centralized ordering facility. Additionally, it offers access to a variety of vendors such as telecommunication providers, printing services, insurance companies, and accounting services. You can submit an RFP for the service you need, and the vendors will contact you with a bid.

You must join to participate, but there's no charge to register. The site provides e-mail addresses and phone numbers for customer support—a big benefit not offered on all Web sites. The prices for office supplies seem comparable to those at your local office supply superstore.

Can Onvia.com save you money? Maybe. Can it save you time? Absolutely. The site offers one-stop shopping for most of the supplies and equipment you need for the small business. And after all, time is money, isn't it?

—HAZEL L. JOHNSON

The final chapter deals with multimedia in legal proceedings. It concludes that “the employment of technology in the courtroom can provide a significant advantage if properly used.”

Detailed examples and illustrations of different concepts, issues and practices throughout the book will help first-time (and even advanced) users avoid “reinventing the wheel.” Keep this book near your desk. It is clearly written, packed full of examples and illustrations, and well worth the price.

—Reviewed by Timothy L. Coggins, director of the law library and associate professor of law, University of Richmond School of Law

Law of the Super Searchers: The Online Secrets of Top Legal Researchers

T.R. Halvorson. *Information Today* (www.infotoday.com). 2000. 220 pages. \$24.95. ISBN: 0-910965-34-X. Order: (609) 654-6266.

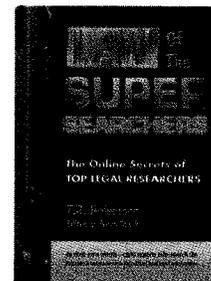
Halvorson, a Montana lawyer and author of several articles about online legal research, interviews eight “super searchers,” law librarians and legal researchers who exploit the strengths of the Internet and other online sources to the benefit of their employers. The interviews cover the background, daily work and searching secrets of each individual. The subjects share both successes and failures and provide expert opinions on electronic research sources and methodology. The interviews provide a good overview of the state of electronic legal research today.

Among the issues covered are when to use the Internet for research and when Lexis or Westlaw is the better choice; opinions on citator services; strategies for searching (when to use the shotgun approach and when to be more focused); and research tactics generally (e.g., where to start and where to end).

The book features a bibliography of all the sources referenced in the interviews. The publisher has created a Web site to support the book, providing hyperlinks for all the Internet-based resources at www.supersearchers.com.

If you read only the introduction of the book, you can gain valuable insight into the paradigms of online legal research today. As a law librarian, I want my managers to read this so they will begin to understand what I do every day.

—Hazel L. Johnson



ACTION

Other Technology Resources

- **Law Library Resource Xchange** (www.llrx.com). Reviewed March 1999.
- **Lawyer's Quick Guide to E-Mail**. Johnson. ABA. Reviewed March 1999.
- **Computerized Case Management Systems**. Adkins. ABA. Reviewed May 1999.
- **Complete Internet Handbook**. Lawson. ABA. Reviewed November 1999.
- **Submissions**. Would you like to write a review for BookMarks? Contact Hazel Johnson below.
- **Comments**: Contact Hazel Johnson at McGuire, Woods, Battle & Boothe LLP, 901 E. Cary St., Richmond, VA 23219 or hjohnso@mwbb.com.