

Tablet PCs in the Legal Profession

If the tablet PC owes its form and function set to any object in the analog world, it would have to be the legal profession's ubiquitous legal pad. Today's Toshiba Tablet PCs with Microsoft Windows XP Tablet PC Edition 2005 nicely emulate that classic pen-and-page medium as the interface to a powerful, mobile PC. And it's here just in time to help the legal profession deal with a caseload of 21st century challenges, including pressure to account for billable hours, optimize productivity and compete with technically savvy colleagues in firms of all sizes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The arrival of desktop PCs and the Internet brought about a two-edged revolution for much of the legal profession. On one hand it put a wealth of research resources at the fingertips of any associate with a network connection, and greatly simplified document preparation. But it also made lawyers increasingly dependent on tools and information sources that were only available on the desktop, with a wired connection to the office network.

The advent of notebook PCs and wireless local networks provided a more flexible blend of digital productivity and mobility. Many attorneys, however, found conventional laptop machines cumbersome in meetings where concentration and close observation were important. Their flip-up screens created a physical and psychological barrier, and the clatter of typing was distracting.

Today, the combination of the tablet PC and a broadband wireless network offers attorneys a platform that fits the varied environments in which they practice. Convertible models that combine a keyboard with bright, pen-based displays that can operate in slate mode are particularly versatile. Such advanced models as the Toshiba Portégé M400 convertible provide new ways to capture information, to collaborate with distant partners, to deliver results for the client, and to build a profitable practice.

MARKET CLIMATE

For the large number of attorneys in private practice, a few facts of professional life are inescapable. One is that the age-old pressure to account for billable hours has only intensified. At the same time, customer resistance to perceived high legal fees is stiffening. Corporate clients who themselves have streamlined business processes and reduced operating costs are insisting their legal service providers do likewise. Thus the internal pressure to maximize billable hours is balanced by an external pressure to optimize productivity, making lawyers an attentive audience for any innovation that promises to improve efficiency and increase output.

In fact, new technologies have dramatically extended the efficiency and productivity of firms that have deployed them effectively. Research tools that use artificial intelligence to improve query effectiveness, case management applications that focus strategy and optimize resource utilization, and portable devices that make information available anywhere and at any time are only a few of the advances that are driving attorney productivity to new heights.

One result is that small firms and even individuals can increasingly compete on an even footing with large ones. Another, closely related, is that more experienced attorneys are leaving the security of large established firms for the entrepreneurial adventure and potential financial rewards of a focused small practice. The effect has been to expedite the uptake



of any new technology that promises a significant increment of competitive advantage.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

While the demands of legal practice vary with the environment (corporate employment versus government service or private practice) and with the type of law (environmental versus intellectual property, for instance), all attorneys face challenges related to the sheer diversity of tasks competing for the limited number of hours in a Law practice is:

- Communication intensive. Meetings, interviews, presentations and negotiations are core activities, and much of an attorney's work is collaborative, requiring close cooperation with work teams that are often geographically distributed.
- Knowledge intensive. Preparation invariably requires extensive use of online libraries and research services.
- Document-centric. Preparing, reviewing and processing contracts, court filings and other official documents is a core function and responsibility.
- Investigative. Requires first-hand discovery, documentation and interpretation of widely varied information types.

This diversity of tasks and responsibilities translates into a set of management challenges that are common across most legal practice areas:

- Managing communications and information access. Attorneys must have real-time access to people, information and systems, wherever their workloads take them. The IT infrastructure and personal productivity tools must integrate with wireless connectivity to extend access and enhance productivity.
- Document management. Attorneys need the tools and systems to create and manage a wide range

of documents with the greatest possible level of efficiency and flexibility.

- Practice management. Attorneys need to leverage information technology to increase productivity, improve client service and reduce costs. Technology is the key to helping large firms respond to client requirements with the agility of small ones, and to helping small firms deliver service quality on a par with large competitors.
- Security management. All firms must rigorously protect the security and integrity of client communication, information and strategy.

Few IT assets support all these objectives as effectively as Tablet PCs such as the Toshiba Portégé M400.

Top Legal Benefits of Tablet PCs

Tablet PC Feature	Benefits in Legal Services
Powerful: CPU options include Intel Core Duo processors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runs Microsoft Windows XP Tablet PC Edition, delivering great performance with any Windows XP application
Lightweight and portable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows an attorney to work productively almost anywhere, including airline coach seats
PCs are too large to use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augments or replaces handhelds, wireless e-mail devices, and conventional notebook computers with a single device
Real-time access to e-mail, case management apps, and online research tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With Wi-Fi and Bluetooth wireless connections attorneys can easily access case documents, databases and court records, check precedents, or confer with colleagues—even from the courtroom
Clear, multifunction display	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-resolution swivel screen well suited for presentations, in client offices or in the courtroom • Convertible screen design operates with both pen and keyboard input • Capture signatures as well as keystrokes • Ideal electronic platform for reading and research
Captures text, pictures and sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attorneys can take handwritten notes, draft documents, draw diagrams and mind maps, or record audio and video, all in one program—Microsoft OneNote • Save, organize and search handwritten notes and other non-text files • Handwriting and speech recognition capabilities automate translation to digital text • The ability to create documents using the attorney's choice of keyboard, handwriting or voice can significantly increase productivity
Digital ink capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The easiest way to review, annotate and edit contracts and other documents • All Microsoft Office 2003 applications support digital ink
Secure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure Web and e-mail using industry-standard encryption methods • Toshiba Portégé M400 includes an optional fingerprint reader for added device security
Enhanced version of Microsoft Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short learning curve • As easy to use as desktop or notebook computers

SOLUTION: TOSHIBA TABLET PCS WITH MICROSOFT WINDOWS XP TABLET PC EDITION

The Tablet PC, coupled with an operating system and applications that harness its capabilities, is the ideal platform for an efficient legal practice. In contrast to the “slate” style of keyboardless tablet, a convertible tablet such as the Toshiba Portégé M400 has both a conventional keyboard and a display surface that can capture handwriting, drawings and “gestures”—strokes of the pen that cause specific actions. Furthermore, Tablet PCs can convert handwriting into machine-readable text and can even accept voice dictation.

Hardware advantages. The latest Tablet PCs from Toshiba compare favorably with conventional notebook computers for lightness, ergonomics and battery life, and have full wireless capability through Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. The pen-based interface supports what is, for many attorneys, the most natural method of note taking and document review. Plus the ability to incorporate multiple input methods offers many options to streamline document preparation.

Communications advantages. The Tablet PC puts lawyers in constant contact with the communication and information access services they need to function. Whether it’s e-mailing a colleague in the middle of a court session or retrieving a relevant precedent from an airline lounge, the Tablet PC’s unique combination of portability and connectivity keeps the case moving toward a successful completion.

Software advantages. All Toshiba Tablet PCs run an enhanced version of Windows XP called Microsoft Windows XP Tablet PC Edition, which includes specific extensions for the tablet. All Windows applications run on it without alteration, and most will accept stylus input without modifications. Some applications that would be of particular interest to law firms have been enhanced for even greater functionality when running under this hardware, such as Form Designer and Form Filler from Active Ink Software.

Because the Tablet PC runs the full suite of Windows applications in addition to industry-specific software such as case management applications, attorneys can use familiar tools like Microsoft Office to create correspondence, draft contracts, prepare court filings and plot strategy. Furthermore, applications such as Microsoft OneNote harness the tablet’s

diverse input capabilities, seamlessly blending key-strokes, handwriting, sketches and diagrams—even recording audio and associating the audio with specific notes. OneNote is preinstalled on all new Toshiba Tablet PCs.

Portability advantages. One advantage is that attorneys can easily record client meetings and discovery interviews and save them directly to the Tablet PC’s hard drive. Because all data and data types can be stored in the case records, the Tablet PC overcomes the problems typically inherent with multiple devices and media.

Furthermore, because the Toshiba Tablet PC easily runs the most demanding Windows XP-based applications, attorneys can have all the resources of the office environment at their fingertips, wherever they are. Online research, court rules and calendaring, case mapping and contact management—every tool for project and practice management is instantly accessible.

Microsoft Onenote: Just What The Doctor Ordered

Microsoft OneNote—found on every Toshiba Tablet PC—records and displays textual and graphical information seamlessly, making it a powerful tool for taking notes, collecting information, and documenting interviews and depositions. Scanned documents can be annotated, and the annotations made part of the permanent record. Notes and other non-text file types can be stored, organized and searched for easy retrieval. Other features of note include:

- Captures all information in one place
- Takes advantage of digital ink, including customizable pens
- Easy for attorneys to draw diagrams or annotate a document while meeting with clients
- Quick search to find all handwritten and typed notes
- Makes gathering research information easier by collecting text, pictures, audio files, and other content all in one spot
- Can send handwritten notes in an e-mail message after a meeting

LEGAL SERVICE-SPECIFIC BENEFITS

Natural note taking. While the need to record information and impressions acquired in meetings and presentations is not unique to the practice of law, the ability to take handwritten notes unobtrusively, without imposing a screen between meeting participants or distracting a colleague or client with the act of typing, is uniquely valuable in the legal discovery process. The ability to save, organize, search and cir-

culate those notes without transcription represents a major potential time savings.

A roving research platform. Few professions are as dependent as the law on access to large online research archives. Services such as LexisNexis are indispensable, and the ability to access them and fully utilize the resources they provide—at any time and from any location—is a major benefit of a Tablet PC equipped with high-speed wireless mobile connectivity¹. The ability to read downloaded documents in portrait display mode on a large, bright screen greatly enhances the user's ability to quickly survey large volumes of information and efficiently identify relevant material.

Convenient collaboration. Because it combines the full functionality of a high-performance notebook PC with integrated wireless connectivity and pen input capabilities, the Tablet PC provides an ideal platform for legal collaboration. Attorneys can easily annotate and exchange case documents, or solicit a colleague's opinion, wherever they happen to be working. And the ability to communicate from a court session via silent, handwritten e-mails—using handwriting recognition for composition and pen gestures to open and control the e-mail application—can be extremely useful.

Sophisticated tools for writing and editing. Perhaps the greatest advantage of a Tablet PC for lawyers is the range of innovation it brings to writing and editing. The ability to initiate a draft using keyboard input, handwriting or voice recognition supports creativity with unprecedented flexibility. And the ability to edit drafts using the tablet's pen to highlight, annotate, correct and revise returns the writing process to its most natural and appropriate format.

Maintaining privacy and security. Protecting the client's interest means protecting all client communication and sensitive case materials, even if the PC holding them is lost or stolen. The Toshiba Portégé M400 is equipped with an optional fingerprint reader and the Trusted Platform Module chipset, which verifies user identity and handles encryption. If required,

¹ Wireless may require the purchase of additional software, hardware or services

Selecting The Right Hardware

The Toshiba Portégé M400 Tablet PC contains many features that are particularly well-suited for attorneys and other legal professionals.

- Rugged hinge allows convertible display to quickly transform from slate mode (for writing notes or annotating legal documents) to upright display for typing
- High-resolution color screen works in portrait or landscape mode (similar to a legal pad) and swivels for display in meetings
- Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connections help attorneys communicate at court, while traveling or in conference with clients
- Long battery life keeps users productive for hours away from the office
- Secure hardware and software work together to protect confidential information
- Includes Microsoft OneNote application for organizing client notes, capturing digital signatures and recording audio files

additional security is available via a digital token card or even a motion-sensing alarm. Together with operating system security features and encrypted communication with the server, the Tablet PC platform is part of a robust solution that meets or exceeds the most stringent security requirements.

TECHNOLOGY LEVELS THE LEGAL PLAYING FIELD

Information technology is exerting a transformative effect on the legal profession and on the marketplace for legal services. By automating and expediting routine tasks, making vast reference libraries easily accessible and readily searchable, and most of all, by dramatically increasing the productivity of individual attorneys, technology is erasing the purely numerical advantage of large firms and the effectiveness of brute force tactics. Today the scale of justice is tilting toward talent, vision and innovation, and few innovations have done more to level the legal playing field than Tablet PCs from Toshiba. ■

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