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Cool Court Tools for the Mobile Litigator

By Warren Christopher Freiberg

July 6, 2018

Litigators resistant to change and court policies hostile to technology have long stood in the way of mobile devices in the courtroom. For example, last decade, TechnoLawyer documented the many courts that disallowed mobile phones with cameras. Eventually, the courts had to relent with the transition to smartphones with two cameras let alone one. But for a while, many litigators purposely bought phones without cameras.

Today an even more dramatic change is taking place thanks to mobile apps. Fewer lawyers bother to bring bankers boxes of books and files to each hearing when their tablet or laptop has all the information they need. Many courtrooms are now even letting lawyers access Wi-Fi.

This *TL Research Learnpaper* explores five ways litigators use their mobile devices to succeed in court — and prevent a muscle

strain. You'll also learn how to securely get online in a courtroom.

1. ProView Offers Portable Books — And Portable Annotations

Reference books are of course a cornerstone of law practice, but who wants to carry them to court? Of course, books gain even more value from the bookmarks and notes you add to them. You don't want to fumble around in court.

[Thomson Reuters ProView](#) is an ebook platform that offers both individual book purchases and subscriptions. ProView is a proprietary platform built specifically for legal professionals while competing solutions use the standard third-party e-reader platform, [OverDrive](#), for their ebooks.

ProView is fully functional both online and offline, and runs in a web browser on a PC

Lighten Your Load in Court With These Tools

- ☑ ProView — Access essential law ebooks online and offline.
- ☑ TrialPad — Present evidence and impeach from your iPad.
- ☑ Fantastical — Manage your calendar with speed and style.
- ☑ Scanning App — Convert paper to PDF using your phone.
- ☑ Calculator App — Finalize a settlement in the courthouse.
- ☑ VPN — Stay secure when you use a court's Wi-Fi.

or Mac, or via a native app on Android and iOS. It eliminates the need to lug titles to court in banker boxes. Also, citations in ProView ebooks link directly to Westlaw for a deeper dive into primary sources if necessary.

Where ProView really shines though is portable annotations. What this means is that when you've bookmarked or highlighted something in an older edition of a reference, it automatically moves to new editions even if the page changes. If a section is deleted in the new edition, you can move your notes somewhere else, or completely delete them. PDF apps and consumer ebook readers don't have anything like this.

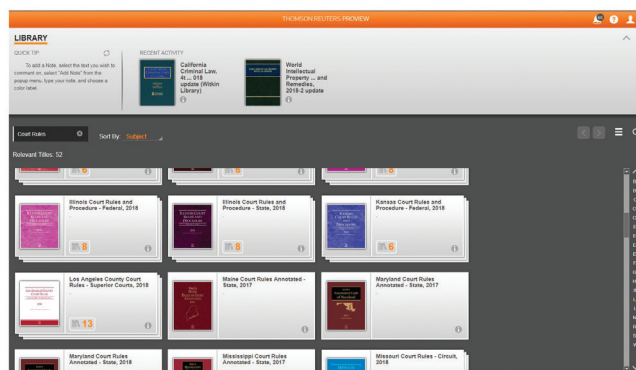
"Freaking amazing" is how Greg Galloway of Law Offices of Stephen J. Montalvo describes ProView. "You can make a Boolean search of text, obtain the results of interest, annotate the text on the spot, cut and paste into your pleading, and highlight text in ProView for later reference. ProView is my go-to source. The entire library is on my computer. When I'm in court and an issue comes up, I have my reference materials I can easily search and provide relevant comment. It's easy!"

2. TrialPad Levels the Trial Presentation Playing Field

Ediscovery consultant and iPad trainer [Brett Burney](#) says that iPads are the only tablet that actually make sense for attorneys. The reason is simple: [TrialPad](#), a powerful trial presentation tool that's available only on the iPad.

"TrialPad is by far the most polished app out there," Burney says. "Some attorneys balk at the \$130 price, but compare that to [TrialDirector](#), which starts at \$795 not

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ProView's proprietary e-reader offers portable annotations.

including mandatory maintenance. That's a pretty good deal."

The beauty of TrialPad is its ease of use and multitude of functions. The software can call out specific sections of a document, create side-by-side comparisons, and edit and display video. The result is a piece of software that can allow a solo practitioner to create presentations on par with what any large firm can produce.

"I used to do full day CLEs in North Carolina," Burney says. "I met one guy who's 73, and all he uses is an Apple TV and iPad while the other side is a larger firm full of associates, laptops, and projectors."

3. Fantastical Keeps You on Schedule

If you're a litigator, you're going to be in court a lot, and without some sort of organizational system in place, you're quickly going to lose track of which hearing is before what judge.

The default calendar in iOS does a decent job of scheduling, but if you never want to miss another appointment, download [Fantastical](#) — \$4.99 for the iPhone version, \$9.99 for the iPad version, and \$49.99 for the Mac version.

"You can create events much faster by using natural language, and it is easy to hold down on an event already scheduled and then slide up a little to duplicate the event (adding a new date but keeping all of the other information) which I often find useful," says Jeff Richardson, the New Orleans attorney who publishes [iPhone J.D.](#) "Plus, it uses the same database

as the iPhone's built-in calendar, so you can easily go back and forth."

4. Scan Documents and Document People With Your Camera

Every smartphone includes a versatile tool — the camera. There's really no limit to how you can use it. With a scanning app like [Scanbot](#), [Scannable](#) (free), [Scanner Pro](#), or [TurboScan](#) you can quickly create high-quality PDFs of documents you receive in court. But some lawyers have found other uses too.

Seattle plaintiff's attorney Karen Koehler regularly uses her smartphone to take photos of witnesses during trial. "I take photos of witnesses interfacing with and/or creating exhibits and use those during closing for example," she says. While this could run afoul of some local rules, Koehler says that she hasn't heard any objections from opposing counsel or judges.

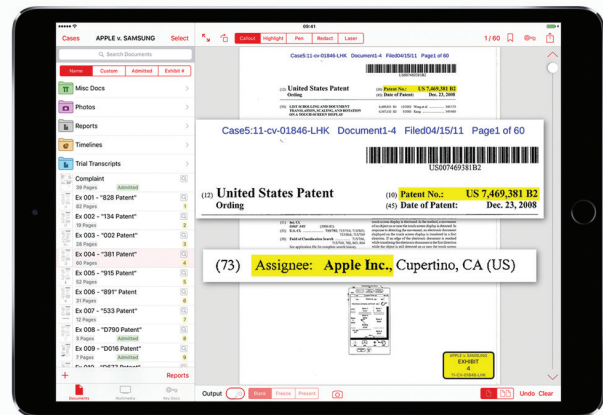
And while you might get some odd reactions if you try to snap pictures of other attorneys you meet, Richardson recommends you at least pull a picture off the website of co-counsel or opposing counsel.

"That way, you can remember what the attorney looks like when you are looking for them in court," says Richardson. "A bonus tip: put information about the attorney in the notes field in Contacts to help you remember things that you might otherwise forget, such as something that you have in common with that attorney, mutual friends, names and ages of their kids, etc."

5. Calculator Apps Help Hammer Out a Hallway Settlement

Hallway settlements are always a possibility at trial. You don't want to crunch numbers

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TrialPad offers callouts for key portions of documents.

in your head. Instead, keep a variety of calculators on your smartphone.

For the iPhone, [CalcBot](#) and [Soulver](#) show and store your calculations unlike Apple's default calculator app. For Android, [Xlythe Calculator](#) and [CalcNote](#) are good options.

You may also need a financial calculator for Net Present Value, Time Value of Money, etc. Look no further than HP 12 C Financial Calculator ([Android](#), [iOS](#)), a digital replica of the iconic calculator. Alternatively, [EZ Financial Calculators Pro](#) offers a more modern take.

Getting Online and Staying Secure

With so many cool apps and services readily available to you in the courtroom, there's only one obstacle standing in their way — your ability to get online.

While some courthouses, mostly in larger urban areas, are now finally letting attorneys access their Wi-Fi networks, this policy is hardly universal.

Kenton Brice, the director of technology innovation at the University of Oklahoma's College of Law says that students at the school are being taught to use technology in the courtroom, but they're also being warned that they may have to improvise to get online.

Assuming your courtroom isn't dungeon-like and you can get a signal, you can use your cellular service. "Your phone is already

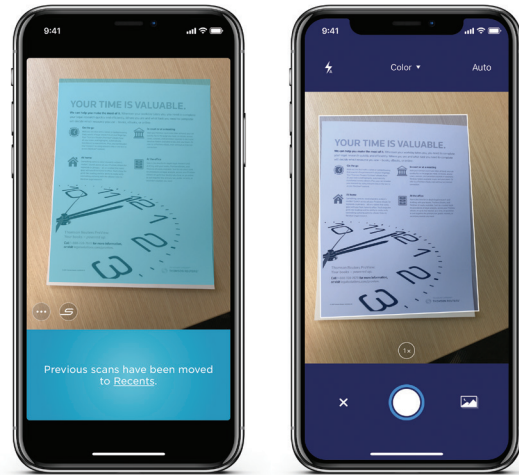
a hotspot, you just need to check your data plan,” Brice says. “As a lawyer, it’s a piece of overhead you probably need. In trial for presentation purposes, using that combination and an Apple TV and AirPort Express to create your own wireless environment is invaluable.”

Even better than tethering, Apple sells iPads with a cellular option as does Microsoft for its Surface laptops. If you spend a lot of time out of the office, an unlimited plan will provide peace of mind about data caps and overage charges. Also, cellular connections are far more secure than public Wi-Fi.

“Call the clerk and figure out what technology’s available,” Brice says. “Jetpack mobile hotspots create your own network through 4G or God forbid a 3G signal. You’ve got to know what technology is out there and if they don’t have internet access and you need it, you’ve got to create it.”

If you must use the court’s Wi-Fi network, protect yourself with a virtual private network or VPN. [PCMag regularly reviews and ranks VPNs](#), and lets you know which operating systems and web browsers they support and how much they cost. There’s a bit of an installation process so make sure you set up your VPN beforehand, and that you know how to switch servers in case one gets congested.


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Apps like Scannable and Scanner Pro work as well as a real scanner.

The Golden Age of Wireless

The mobile future has finally come to courtrooms, ready to make the practice of law much less stressful for attorneys willing to embrace it. Lugging stacks of books and bankers boxes to court remains the norm for many litigators — but it’s an anachronism and not a good look in front of a jury. Once you understand what mobile devices are fully capable of and how they can assist your litigation practice in and out of the courtroom, you’ll find them a superior solution



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Warren Christopher Freiberg spent more than a decade working for newspapers around the country before starting law school. After graduating cum laude from Valparaiso University Law School where he was a member of both law review and moot court, Freiberg was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 2015. He continues to write for a variety of websites, and is an associate attorney with the firm of Midwest Disability.

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