



A SUMMER OF LAW AND TECHNOLOGY

By Jesse Bowman, Valparaiso University Law Library

jesse.bowman@valpo.edu

Last fall, my Library Director and fellow CALL member, Emily Janoski-Haehlen, stopped by my office and asked if I would be interested in co-teaching a course in law practice technology. She had taught a similar course in her previous position and thought that I might be interested, given my role as Digital Services Librarian. Intrigued by the idea and believing that Emily was looking out for my best interests, it took me less than 48 hours to respond with a confident “Yes!” Less than a year later, I have not only survived my first summer of co-teaching the course but also truly enjoyed the process of doing so. In this brief column, I will provide a few thoughts and observations about my experience, including how our course proposal was received by the curriculum committee, how I learned a great deal about the topic in a short amount of time, and what class topics the students seemed to particularly enjoy.

Generally speaking, the idea of a course dealing with the intersection of technology and law practice was very well-received by our law school’s curriculum committee. Most everyone agreed that with the proliferation of social media, tablets, and cloud computing, a course dealing with how these trends and technologies are impacting the practice of law was a worthy addition to the curriculum. That being said, though, our idea was not entirely free from criticism. In particular, a few members of the regular law faculty argued that teaching legal technology was the responsibility of employers, not law schools. We disagreed with this assessment for a couple of reasons. First, the work of the ABA Commission on Ethics 20/20’s revised Model Rule 1.1 (Competence) notes that “a lawyer should keep abreast of changes in the law and its practice, including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology recognizing that understanding technology is increasingly a necessary part of practicing law.” Moreover, we believe that learning about issues such as data security and cloud-based practice management will benefit our graduates, whether they intend to hang their own shingle or simply wish to be conversant in these topics during interviews. Our arguments prevailed, and our course was approved by the curriculum committee, with a likely teaching date of Fall 2013.

Once this hurdle was crossed, Emily and I shifted our attention back to more immediate priorities, such as teaching first-year legal research and, in her case, also running the library. However, in early March, we were presented with an exciting yet terrifying request: we were asked to teach the course during the upcoming summer session, starting in late May. After taking a deep breath (or fifty), I knew it was time to get to work. My first priority was to read, read, and read some more. Of tremendous assistance were the titles published by the ABA’s Law Practice Management Section, such as Stephanie Kimbro’s *Virtual Law Practice: How to Deliver Legal Services Online*, and Sharon Nelson et.al’s *Locked Down: Information Security for Law Firms*. For those unfamiliar with this series, the entries are relatively short and explain legal technology topics in understandable, non-techie language. Along the same lines, I made a conscious effort to keep up with legal technology blogs and became a regular visitor to [iPhone J.D.](#), [The Droid Lawyer](#), [Virtual Law Practice Blog](#), and [Robert Ambrogi’s Law Sites](#). These sites provided excellent examples of apps, software, and cloud-based solutions to discuss in class. Finally, thanks to the generosity of both Emily and my law school, I attended the ABA Techshow in early April. The programming was phenomenal; not only did I attend excellent sessions on courtroom technology and mobile apps for lawyers, but I also came away with great outlines and slideshows, which were a tremendous help as I began to prepare my own materials. Now that I had acquired the necessary raw materials, it was time to manage information overload and build the class.

As tends to happen, I battled “paralysis from analysis” in preparing my lectures. More specifically, it was challenging to reconcile the vast amount of information and my excitement about the topic, with the fast-approaching first day of class. However, I resolved that few teachers are entirely satisfied with the first iteration of a course and that an imperfect first go-around is necessary for making the class better down the road. In the end, I believe our first attempt was largely a success. In particular, the stu-

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dents were very enthusiastic about the concept of virtual law practice. In fact, several of our students remarked that they are now interested in developing an online law practice once they graduate, whether as a stand-alone entity or as a supplement to a traditional, brick and mortar practice. Moreover, during one session, we considered social media policies for law firms and after looking at the applicable ethics rules, had students evaluate hypothetical scenarios such as Facebook friending a client or witness and Tweeting legal advice. The discussions were very lively in large part, I believe, because the students could easily identify with the issues. Finally, for one class session, we met in the courtroom and allowed students to conduct *voir dire* using iJuror, an app which allows users to rate potential jurors directly on an iPad or Android device. Especially for those students who are interested in litigation, this class seemed to generate a great deal of excitement.

Having just spent several months immersed in a sea of law and technology, I am happy to shift my attention back to teaching legal research to the incoming 1Ls. However, I do so feeling proud of our work this past summer and looking forward to teaching our new course again this upcoming spring. I would highly recommend the area of law practice technology for anyone who is looking to develop a course, write an article or blog post, or simply learn about a topic with which they are unfamiliar. It is a fascinating, rapidly-developing subject which is increasingly affecting the patrons we serve.

President's Letter *cont'd from p. 3*

One of our busiest committees has been our newly combined Nominations and Elections Committee, who has given us a fantastic slate of candidates for the upcoming 2014-2015 CALL Executive Board election. Your nominees are:

Vice-President/President-Elect:

Debbie Ginsberg, Chicago-Kent College of Law
Julie Pabarja, DLA Piper, LLP

Treasurer:

Stephanie Crawford, Schiff Hardin, LLP
Valerie Kropf, DLA Piper, LLP

Director:

Jesse Bowman, Valparaiso University Law School
Robert Martin, Chicago-Kent College of Law

The election will start February 18, 2014 and end March 15, 2014; you'll receive notice from the Nominations and Elections Committee as the election approaches. Extra special thanks to the Committee—Juli Jackson (chair), Kathleen Bruner, Ramsey Donnell, Lenore Glanz, Denise Glynn, Lyonette Louis-Jacques, Joan Ogden, and Susan Retzer—for all your hard work and for your excellent slate of candidates!

It has been wonderful to work with CALL in 2013 and I look forward to continuing all of our great work in the year to come. Happy holidays!

Maribel Nash
CALL President, 2013/2014

ADVOCACY TRAINING PROVIDED BY THE AALL GRO

By Jamie Sommer, Pritzker Legal Research Center,
Northwestern University School of Law

jamie.sommer@law.northwestern.edu

The CALL Government Relations Committee update that appeared in the Fall 2013 *Bulletin* misstated the advocacy training options provided by the AALL Government Relations Office. The AALL Government Relations Office offers monthly online advocacy training sessions in addition to the in-person Legislative Advocacy Training that takes place on the Saturday before the Annual Meeting. Training for chapter government relations committees is now accomplished virtually in lieu of in-person chapter training at the Annual Meeting, but the general in-person Legislative Advocacy Day still exists. Any members who are interested in advocacy training are invited to subscribe to the [AALL Advocacy Listserv](#) or follow the GRO on Twitter ([@AALL_GRO](#)).