# The Northern Virginia ALA Newsletter

ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS®
*The* Source of Legal Management Information and Knowledge

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

### by Kevin O'Hare

We started our Vendor Partnering program just over a year ago. In that short time, our Vendor Partners have become an important and vital part of our Chapter's development. Our Vendor Partners have made a significant commitment to our Chapter's vision of growth and improvement. Their contribution and support is vital to our efforts to increase opportunities for members such as scholarships to ALA regional and national conferences, seminars, as well as the Virginia Statewide Retreat (Spring 2005). Please take a moment to visit the vendor section of the Chapter website to learn more about our Vendor Partners - ttp://www.alanova.org/nvpub/nvendrp1.htm

I hope that you will take the time to meet our Chapter's vendor partners and consider them for your future needs. **A special thanks to Pam Walker who got this program off the ground and has made it the huge success that it is.**

**December 9, 12:00 Noon - 2pm**
**Chapter Holiday Luncheon**
Maggiano's
2001 International Drive
Tysons Corner

This promises to be a terrific event. I hope you will be there! Good food and good company, all in abundance!

I look forward to seeing you soon.
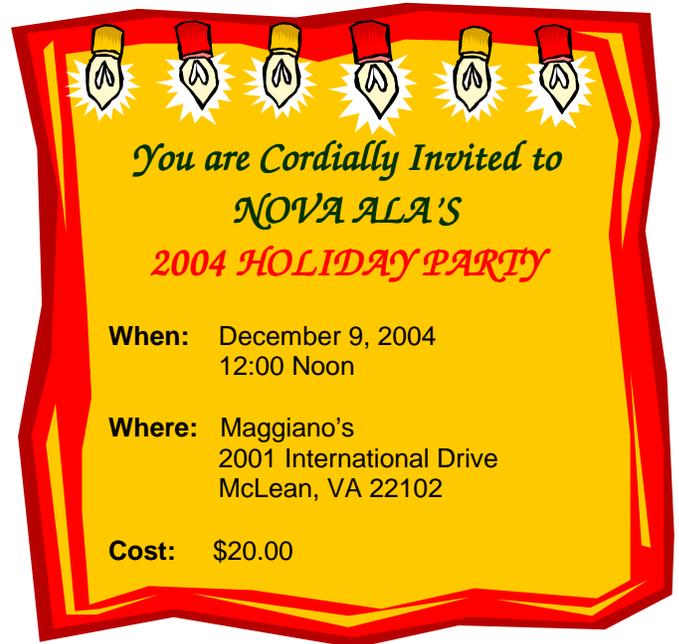
*You are Cordially Invited to*
*NOVA ALA'S*
*2004 HOLIDAY PARTY*

**When:** December 9, 2004
12:00 Noon

**Where:** Maggiano's
2001 International Drive
McLean, VA 22102

**Cost:** $20.00

### Table of Contents

## TECH NOTES
### By Alan D. Currin

### New Life for Old Computers

As Halloween approaches, it seems to be a good time to think about wading into the graveyard of old computers that is likely sitting somewhere in your office. Depending on the age and condition of your computers, the options for disposal of these computers are varied.

**Reuse** – If a PC is a Pentium II processor or higher, it is a good candidate for reuse. These computers, though considered to be too slow for most office work, can have a new life in a number of ways.

- **Home:** A Pentium II processor will perform quite well as a home computer in many ways. Even an early Pentium II computer, when outfitted with 128MB or more of memory can be quite serviceable for some uses, such as general web browsing and word processing. Consider installing an old computer in a public space somewhere convenient in the house such as a kitchen or family room. Coupled with a shared high-speed Internet connection and a small flat panel monitor, an old computer can be a great way to provide quick and inexpensive Internet access.

- **Charity:** It can be harder than one might think to give old computers away. Even though many charitable organizations can't afford new computers, they may not be able to use yours.

Schools for example, may need to run more advanced software than your old computers can handle. If you have a number of old computers, do a little networking and ask around. An e-mail to staff is likely to come up with at least one organization that might like to have the computers.

- **Staff Giveaway:** If you have a large number of computers, and staff, you might consider offering the computers to staff at no charge. It can be good for morale and a lot of free labor to get the computers out of the office. Be careful to remove all software and data that shouldn't go with the computers, and be sure to remind your staff that your firm is not responsible for hardware failures or technical support. These computers are provided "As is".

**Recycle** – When the computer equipment is either too old or too broken to reuse, recycling is the next best option (at least for the environment). Computers, and particularly computer monitors contain some toxic materials that should not end up in landfills. They also contain many recyclable metals. In Northern Virginia, county governments are working with a company named ServiceSource to repair and reuse or recycle equipment. Check the ServiceSource website at www.keepitgreen.org to check for local collection events. ServiceSource takes old computers at no charge, and charges a $10 fee for each computer monitor. It is a good way to eliminate old computers in an environmentally friendly way and to avoid the "dumpster guilt" one feels when tossing old, but working equipment into the trash.

So, as Halloween approaches, don't let the computer skeletons of the past crowd your empty offices or storage areas. Put them to use at home, with your staff or find a charity that can make use of them. If all those options fail, give them a decent burial with ServiceSource. There, they may just rise from the dead – again.

\* Note: Regardless of how you dispose of your computers, they may contain sensitive data. Be sure to ask your computer support provider for the best ways to clear the data from the computers before they are disposed of.

*Alan D. Currin is a Senior Consultant with Compass Computer Services, Inc. in Northern Virginia.*

## Mark Your Calendars!

### March 4-5, 2005

Virginia Statewide ALA Retreat at the Boars Head Inn, Charlottesville, Virginia.

### April 18-21, 2005

The ALA 34th Annual Conference, the "Gateway to Your Success," will be in historic San Francisco! More than 100 educational sessions will be offered, along with first-rate entertainment and networking events.
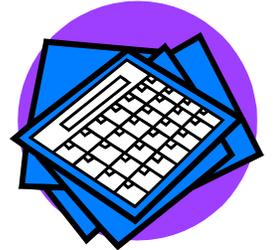
### June 10-12, 2005

The ALA's Chapter Leadership Institute
Westin Tabor Center
Denver, Colorado

### September 23-24, 2005

The ALA's Regions 1 & 2 Regional Conference Westin
JW Marriott
Washington, DC

## ALA Teleseminars

**December 2, 2004**
**Employee Investigation and Documenting Employee Conduct and Performance**
1:00 to 3:00 p.m. (Central Time)
Speaker:   Renee Koehler, Esq.
Andrews Koehler & Passarelli, P.C.

For more information, or to download a sample clip from a previously aired teleseminar, visit:
www.alanet.org/teleseminars.

**If you are interested in hosting a Teleseminar paid for by the Chapter, for our Chapter members, please contact Kevin O'Hare (kohare@reedsmith.com**

## SPOTLIGHT ON:
### Brian O'Rourke
**U.S. Army**

Brian O'Rourke is an Army Legal Administrator. He is currently stationed at The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School in Charlottesville, Virginia. During Brian's 19 years in the military, he has been stationed in Germany twice (living in Bamberg, Katterbach, and Heidelberg); Fort Clayton, Panama; Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico; Camp Casey, Korea; Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Fort McClellan, Alabama; Fort Meade, Maryland; and New Orleans, Louisiana. He was recently selected for promotion to Chief Warrant Officer Three.



His current job is in Combat Developments. Combat Developments deals with future concepts. Brian's research projects include designing future military legal offices and providing innovative ways of communication while in a tactical environment. He is currently mapping the Judge Advocate General's Corps business processes using the Architecture of Integrated Information Systems (ARIS) Toolset as part of the overall Army Transformation.

Brian's most favorite hobby is Amateur Radio. He holds an Amateur Extra class license. His call sign is K4UL. He loves to write and has published a book of poetry. His other interests include researching radio wave propagation and sipping Pina Coladas while contemplating quantum electrodynamics. He is a member of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and hikes the Appalachian Trail often.

Brian is married to Louise McEnally of Mitchelstown, County Cork, Ireland. They have two children: Colin (12) and Fiona (9).

## DANCING AWAY OFFICE STRESS[1]

Nearly three-quarters of American workers believe that people in their workplace are more stressed today than a year ago. Workers believe this leads to more errors (42 percent) and arguments with co-workers (34 percent), according to the 2004 Attitudes in the American Workplace poll conducted by Harris Interactive.

One Chicago-area company is taking the lead to reduce this stress, and they've been dancing their way to happier employees, happier customers, and a 20 percent yearly revenue growth for the past 5 years.

Featured in the June 2004 issue of HR Innovator, New Age Transportation, Distribution & Warehousing has decided to respond with a stress-busting initiative called "Daily Dancing". Every day at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. employees can de-stress by joining in an office wide dance party. The initiative started when employees asked CEO Carolyn Gable if they could dance during breaks as a way to relax from the high pressures of coordinating third-party freight logistics. It caught on.



Led by employees, everyone is first gathered together for a word of inspiration, then the sound system is cranked and employees enjoy a time of stress-releasing dance. Some favorite steps include: 70's disco, the Hokey Pokey, and "The Conga", a giant centipede-like line-dance around the office. "Leading the hurrah," says Gable, "gives the employees a sense of ownership, builds relationship skills, and promotes a positive work environment for all of us."

According to the same poll, job stress is a becoming a bigger factor than ever in the home life of U.S. workers: 63 percent say job pressures interfere with their family or personal life at least some of the time. "We don't want our people taking stress home with them," says Gable, "its better for them and their families if they can leave it at the office."

This holistic approach to taking care of her employees has paid off. To accommodate their rapid growth, an 85,000-square-foot warehouse will be completed in October 2004 to add to the existing 20,000 square feet

in office space. Other initiatives Gable has established to help balance her employees' work and personal life include:

* "Bring Baby to Work" program -- new moms can bring their infants to work and care for them at their desks.

* "Fitness Challenge" program -- employees are paid $1 for every mile they walk or $15 for every pound they lose.

* "I Care" program -- employees are rewarded for writing thank-you cards and volunteering in the community with gift cards from Kohl's and Home Depot.

Gable realizes that her employees need intervals of "unwind time" each day to stay motivated throughout the workday and then have energy left for their home responsibilities. "For some its relaxing on the couch with a good book in our employee quiet room," she says and others "feel a build up of kinetic energy that just needs to get out." In that case, Gable says, "Let's Dance! "

# NOVA ALA
# Vendor Partners!

### Monticello Level - $2,000
*Compass Computers, Inc.*
*Beers & Cutler*
*Washington Express*
*Trak Legal*
*Osmio Incorporated*
*Potomac Consulting*

### Gunston Level - $1,000
*Juris*
*Davis Carter Scott, Ltd*
*Oce!Business Services*
*Kfoury Construction*

### Mount Vernon Level - $500
*State Street*
*Premiere Conferencing*
*All-State Legal*
*Network Alliance*

The NOVA ALA Vendor Partnering program's primary goals are to:

❖ build positive relationships between vendors and law firm administrators

❖ continue to offer our members special events (such as seminars and retreats), a high caliber of speakers at our monthly meetings

❖ provide opportunities to send more members to the annual National and Regional conferences.

If you have vendor contacts that you would like to be invited to join our program, please email Pam Walker, pwalker@hunton.com the following information: Contact Name, Company Name, Address, Telephone Number and Fax Number.

**Please patronize our vendor partners!**

### ALA's Mission Statement
*Improve the quality of management in legal services organizations;*

*Promote and enhance the competence and professionalism of legal administrators and all members of the management team; and*

*Represent professional legal management and managers to the legal community and to the community at large.*

# Introducing Our New Vendor Partners
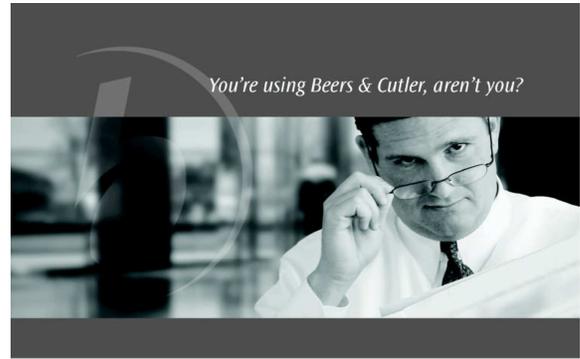
## KFOURY CONSTRUCTION GROUP

### Great Team. Great Work.

Kfoury Construction Group, one of the largest general contractors in the DC metro area, was founded in 1982 with the mission to provide superior general contracting and project management services by delivering quality construction projects of exceptional value.

Kfoury focuses on high-end commercial interiors and base building construction, and counts among its clients Fortune 500 corporations, dozens of government agencies, the largest and oldest law firms in Washington, and many retail, financial and religious institutions.

Kfoury has been recognized as one of Inc. Magazine's 500 fastest growing companies. Hispanic Business Magazine ranks the company as one of the top 100 largest Hispanic-owned corporations in the United States, and the Washington Business Journal consistently ranks Kfoury as one of the Washington DC metropolitan area's top interior contractors.

For more information, contact Kathy McCormick at 703-736-1007.

## Earn Your CLM℠ Designation!

Distinguish yourself among your peers and position yourself for even greater success as a legal management professional by becoming a Certified Legal Manager (CLM℠).

For more information on the Certified Legal Manager (CLM℠) program, visit www.alanet.org/clm.

### ALA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
### Excerpts from the Minutes
### August & September 2004

Locations: Venable LLP (August) and Millen, White, Zelano & Branigan, P.C. (September).

Kevin O'Hare presided over both the August and September meetings.

Treasurer's Report: The financial reports, including the budget report, meeting attendance report and paid dues report, for August and September were distributed. As of August 31, 2004, , there was a balance of $14,274.51, which included the registration fees for three new members, bringing our total membership to 52 members. Discussed the sponsorship of the statewide retreat in March 2005. Also discussed the CLI meeting in June 200 in Denver, CO and the

need to send EC members.

Secretary's Report  The July and August minutes were reviewed and approved.

Hospitality Report:  Discussed the great turnout for the August Crab Feast (18 members and 5 guests in attendance.)  Discussed the need to find a hospitality chair and potential candidates.

Membership Report:  It was reported that our membership is now at 53 with the addition of recent new members.  Kevin O'Hare reported that he has a list of Region 2 unaffiliated ALA members to contact and will work on contacting them and introducing our Chapter.

Newsletter Report: Discussed the publication deadlines and topics for upcoming newsletters.  Also discussed vendor, ProDocs, will be printing our newsletter for advertising space in our newsletter.  Chapter has been approved to use ALA's logo in our newsletter.

Education Report:  The 2004 calendar is complete.  The 2005 calendar is being worked on.

Webmaster Report: Discussion of the progress of the website.

Vendor Partnering Report:  Discussion of new vendor partner, Kfoury Construction Group.  Also discussed hot prospects of new vendor partners.

Past-President's Report:  Discussed December's holiday lunch and the accommodations at Maggiano's.  The Judges', comments for our chapter's entries in the National Awards program was distributed. Discussion of potential new members' role with the EC. Also a discussion of combining the Hospitality Chair position and the Education Chair positions.

President's Report:  Discussion of several community projects, including the Community Challenge in October/November.

## Congratulations!

### Teddy Bears and Backpacks Program

The Chapter's collection drive in September was a huge        success!   We collected over 40 Teddy Bears and Backpacks for the Arlington County Police Department.

The Arlington County Police Department collects new backpacks and teddy bears to give to children whose parent or parents are incarcerated.  Often times the backpack is all the child has to keep their belongings in as they are moved into foster care or to other family arrangements.  The teddy bear provides great comfort to a child facing such a stressful situation.

**The Chapter's Annual Teddy Bears and Backpack Drive** started at our **September 23, 2004** Chapter Meeting.



At our September Chapter meeting, Officers Jerome A. Lee and D.W. Staneil spoke about the comfort these teddy bears and backpacks bring to local children during a very emotional time.

# What is Electronic Discovery? How Do We Handle It?

*By: David Scher*

**Electronic Discovery Process**

Consider this: one in 20 companies has battled a workplace lawsuit triggered by email, and 14 percent of companies have been ordered by a court or regulatory body to produce employee email[1]. Even if attorneys have not been asked to produce electronic documents to date, learning about electronic discovery now can be very beneficial when they do receive their first request for electronic data, and it can lessen their risk of sanctions due to a lack of understanding with regards to the preservation of electronic evidence.

So what should attorneys do if they receive a request to produce electronic data? How do they protect themselves, or their clients in the case of outside counsel, from committing spoliation by unintentionally erasing electronic evidence relevant to the case? Below is a step-by-step guide to help attorneys navigate the challenges of electronic discovery and provide them with tips for making the process more manageable.

*Understanding Your Data*

The first step in the electronic discovery process is understanding where relevant data is stored and how much data is at issue. Even before a lawsuit involving electronic data is commenced, counsel should understand how their client's information systems are set up, and what procedures are in place to store – and destroy – electronic data.

Data today can be found in many different places and on an increasing number of devices. The most common locations are desktop and laptop computers, network hard drives, backup tapes, and removable media (floppy disks, tapes, CD-ROMs, thumb or lipstick drives). But other locations such as personal digital assistants, cell phones and "thumb" or "lipstick" drives – which, despite their small sizes, can hold hundreds of thousands of pages of data – have become popular places to store information. Third parties, such as Internet service providers, may also be in possession of data.

*Types and Amount of Data*

Determining what type(s) of data you will be producing is imperative. Are you only producing emails, word

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[1] American Management Association, 2003

processing documents, spreadsheets, database information, or a combination of these types of data? Once you know this, you will need to determine what packages and versions of software were used in creating this data. For example, is the email Microsoft Outlook, Lotus Notes, Groupwise, etc. The type of data can have bearing on exactly what can be done with the data in the filtering and processing stages, and not all e-discovery vendors have the capabilities to work with all software packages and versions.

### Data Collection

Not many years ago, the destruction of documents meant simply throwing them in the trash or running them through a shredder. Today, the question of whether a document was destroyed or tampered with demands more consideration. Computer users destroy and alter electronic data every day, and often without knowledge. Simply turning on a computer can overwrite documents such as those in "slack" and "temporary" files. And just clicking on a file can change the documents metadata (data about the data) such as the "last-accessed" date.

To avoid possible spoliation issues, best practices dictate that you immediately make a copy of relevant data using mirror-imaging technology and halt electronic document-destruction processes such as the recycling of backup tapes. Mirror imaging creates a copy of every sector in the computers hard drive. This is very different from simply copying every file, which may result in alterations such as those listed above.

### Filtering

If the amount of data collected in the steps above brings up questions like, how are we going to review and produce all of this data by our discovery deadline, don't panic. One of the characteristics of electronic data that can make your life easier is the ability to filter your documents. Filtering techniques extract documents based on specific dates, custodians, keyword searches, and file types, and also offer de-duplication options so that you do not have to review the same document twice. Effective filtering parameters can reduce your data by an average of 75 percent, which often results in significant cost savings through lower processing costs and more efficient document review.

### Production

A common debate with regards to the electronic discovery process is whether documents should be kept in their native file format, which is the format in which the documents were created, such as MS Word, MS Excel, etc., or whether they should be converted to a uniform format, such as .tiff or .pdf. This decision should be made at the outset of the electronic discovery process as it impacts almost all of the other steps. There are advantages and disadvantages to both native review and converted file review, which will not be

discussed, here, but it is important to evaluate these factors before deciding how you would like to review your data.

While there is a lot to consider when evaluating and producing electronic data, understanding the process upfront can result in significant savings in terms of cost and time. It may also obviate the possibility of sanctions due to the inadvertent destruction of data.

*Dave Scher, Esq. is a Legal Consultant with Kroll Ontrack, Inc. Kroll Ontrack is a global leader in providing systems and products that assist major law firms and Fortune 250 corporations in managing electronic evidence, paper discovery, computer forensics and data recovery needs. For more information visit* www.krollontrack.com *or contact Mr. Scher at 202-230-2767 or via email at* dscher@krollontrack.com .

## Welcome New Members

### Margaret Gainer
Office Manager
McGuire Woods, LLP
mgainer@mcguirewoods.com

### Brian Chad O'Rourke
Legal Administrator
US Army
brian.orourke@us.army.mil

### Benjamin S. Sotelo, Jr.
Firm Administrator
Vaughan, Fincher & Sotelo, P.C.
bsotelo@vfspc.com

### Deborah Wilkes
Legal Administrator
Needham, Mitnick & Pollack, PLC
dwilkes@nmpattorneys.com

## Hackers & Thieves: Protecting Your Technology Assets

**By Jeff Greenspan**

If your company has a connection to the Internet, your company's network and data are potentially at risk. The theft of your data is just one possibility; new exploits can steal information about your bank accounts, or hijack your computer and use it to attack others. Worse, some hackers spread worms that make it impossible to use your computer (or worse, your entire network) *to get your job done*. How would that affect your company?

I am frequently asked by my clients why they should worry about hacking; after all, they reason, "no one would want to attack us!" Most viruses and hacking exploits have been developed by professional hackers and released into the wild to create *white noise* that masks these professionals' activities. Once released, the exploits are picked up by amateurs who often do not fully understand the tools that they are using. These amateurs exercise the tools in broad sweeps, most frequently affecting those with little reason to be concerned, and therefore least prepared to defend themselves.

Thus, you need to protect your network, and you need to reduce problems that affect your systems. Good security stands on three pillars: prevention, detection, and response. The most cost-effective of these is prevention. Fortunately, there are several fairly inexpensive steps that you can take to protect your computer systems and the vital information that they contain.

First, all Internet-connected organizations should protect themselves with a **firewall** that uses stateful packet inspection (SPI) and deep packet inspection (DPI). Firewalls are devices that are deployed between the Internet and your network. They monitor incoming and outgoing traffic, and only allow traffic that is acceptable. SPI looks at packet headers to see whether they should be allowed to pass through, and DPI actually checks the packet for malicious content. If your firewall cannot do DPI, it can be obtained by purchasing a security appliance with just that functionality. Note that advances in hacking technology make the use of once-acceptable systems like NAT and packet filters no longer appropriate, so you may not be protected now even if you think you were protected before.

Second, all organizations must implement **anti-virus** (AV) systems. AV software can be implemented in several different ways, but it is important that the software be configured to update itself regularly, preferably every day. The software should also be checked at least once per month to make sure that it is up to date and that the user operating the computer has not inadvertently disabled it.

Third, keep in mind that new viruses and hacking exploits are developed all the time. It is not possible to provide perfect prevention; therefore you need to **plan for problems**. *In other words, develop a Disaster Recovery Plan; implement a backup system including off-site storage of important data; and periodically **test** this system to make sure it works.*

Fourth, update your systems regularly to ensure that you are protected against new threats. This means applying all relevant **patches** and updates to your file servers, computers and applications.

The four items above go a long way toward preventing most problems, or toward recovering from problems that do occur. They are the minimum actions that all organizations should take.

But there are many other actions that might be appropriate for you. For example, organizations with more than 20 people should implement a "Systems Usage Policy" that all users are expected to sign. This document makes it clear that the systems are for business use and that there can be no expectation of privacy. Many organizations opt for external monitoring of key connection points, like firewalls and public file servers. The precise security measures that your organization implements should be based on the threats, risks, and costs particular to your network.

Jeff Greenspan is President of DBLS. DBLS provides a complete suite of computer, network and Internet support services to small and medium sized businesses in the Washington, DC, MD and VA metropolitan area. DBLS specializes in network security solutions and is a Gold Partner of both Sonicwall and Fortinet. Jeff has almost twenty years experience in software engineering, systems analysis, and systems development. He possesses extensive experience in the following: software engineering, computer programming, LAN design, implementation, training, and maintenance. For more information visit www.dbls.com or call Jeff at 703-503-4485

| Executive Committee Meetings | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Date** | **Place** | | |
| 12/7 | Reed Smith | | |
| 1/4 | Hunton Williams | | |
| **Membership Meetings & Events** | | | |
| **Date** | **Time** | **Place** | **Topic** |
| 12/9 | 12:00 pm | Maggiano's | Holiday Party |
| 1/19 | 12:00 pm | Squire Sanders | TBD |

## How to Make Good Technology Decisions [2]

by
**Timothy Slattery, Esq.**
**Kraft Kennedy & Lesser, Inc.**

A good management decision is one that produces useful results. A well-executed technical result, say, installing a document management system, is not necessarily useful. That's because usefulness, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. In a law office, usefulness is ultimately judged by the clients who pay, the attorneys and staff who produce, and management who accounts-who together constitute "your clients." This article looks at some practical steps and processes that will improve the odds of getting useful results out of your technology decisions.

### Step 1: Know who needs results.

The person who needs results is not just your boss, the senior attorney, or the squeaky wheel. The firm's success and your future depend on the performance and satisfaction of your clients. You need to know who your clients are and the role they play in the success of your business. List your clients. Who "buys" or depends on your services? Talk to your boss and to senior management about your clients. Are you in agreement on who is on the list and who is most important?

### Step 2: Find out exactly which results are needed.

If you think you already know, then you're wrong! Your knowledge and experience might enable you to see

"objective" technology requirements, but your clients have practice and personal needs that are beyond your view. Even if you could spot them, you would never be certain of your clients' subjective evaluation. That uncertainty can be minimized if you tap into your clients' knowledge and experience. A good way to do that is to ask them what they need. A better way is to involve them in your technology decision processes.

### Step 3: Include your clients in technology decision-making processes.

Ad-hoc technology decisions might be quick and easy, but they are risky. Without input from clients, you have no certainty of the results they need or expect. Without clients' participation, you have little influence on their evaluation of the results. But how can you include clients without endless meetings and "too many cooks?" Here are four processes that can help:

### Process 1: Strategic technology planning.

Once a year, develop or revise a written technology strategy for the enterprise. The technology strategy is a high-level view of the business advantages technology will provide the firm over the next three years. The process elaborates the strategy and then narrows it down to a short list of strategic initiatives or goals, (e.g., all attorneys and designated staff shall have wireless messaging capability). Including your clients in the strategic planning process enables you to learn their critical business needs and to give them valuable technology insights.

### Process 2: Technology operations planning.

At least once a year, list, prioritize, and schedule your major objectives and projects, namely, those that are needed to execute the technology strategy and administer the firm's system during the next 12 months. Also, explain what you will need to get the job done, such as staffing, budget, and other resources. Including representative clients can help you incorporate their needs into your annual plan and also influence their expectations regarding the services you can provide. If they want you to do more, they can help you get the necessary resources.

### Process 3: Project management.

Technology initiatives are almost always projects-temporary activities (usually by a team) to produce specified results within defined time frames. Project management includes methods for decision-making on all the details required to plan, execute, and deliver the project results. Including interested and affected clients in the planning and delivery phases of the project can help you incorporate their needs and influence their expectations.

### Process 4: Needs Assessment.

Before considering any major technology investment or changes to your system and related processes, you should conduct a needs assessment. A needs assessment is an investigation of user needs and a report of findings and recommendations on priorities and possible solutions. Typically, this includes interviews with representative groups of users and management. As with the process mentioned above, involving your clients not only yields knowledge about their needs, but also influences their expectations and perceptions of results.

### Step 4: Develop your access to external knowledge and information.

To produce useful results from a technology decision, you also need knowledge and creativity concerning technology solutions. Internal technology resources are essential, but internal knowledge is not enough for your firm's survival and your success. See Haim Mendelson & Johannnes Ziegler, *Survival of the Smartest: Managing Information for Rapid Action and World-Class Performance*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1999. Over-reliance on internal knowledge has both direct costs - such as higher risk of error - and opportunity costs - such as missing a better or cheaper solution. In contrast, joining networks of your peers, such as ALA, and developing relationships with outside technology experts gives you access to a larger, richer knowledge base to support your technology decisions.

### Step 5: Communications planning.

The technology decision and the results it produces are often misunderstood or unknown. You need to tell your clients about your decisions and results. That's not to say you should tell everybody about everything - which would be impractical and counterproductive. Instead, before making an important decision or reporting useful results, think about the audiences you want to reach and the specific messages you would like them to hear. Then plan how to deliver those messages.

To make good technology management decisions, you need to focus on useful results and effective communications. This article has suggested a few steps and processes to help you do that. Making the results happen, by executing well, is another story.

*Tom Slattery is a lawyer and a law practice technology consultant with Kraft Kennedy & Lesser, Inc. Kraft Kennedy & Lesser,Inc. is a system integration and technology consulting firm serving law firms and law departments throughout the United States since 1988. You can contact Tim at Kraft Kennedy & Lesser, Inc., 351 California Street, Suite 1330, San Francisco, California 94104. You may also reach Tim at slattery@kkl.com or 415-352-2423.*

| Executive Committee | |
|---|---|
| President & Membership Co-Chair | Kevin O'Hare<br>kohare@reedsmith.com |
| Immediate Past-President | Aurora Quasebarth<br>aquasebarth@wickwire.com |
| President-Elect & Treasurer | Deborah Stickles<br>dmstickles@venable.com |
| Vice President & Membership Co-Chair | LeAnn Cruse<br>lcruse@mwzb.com |
| Secretary | Deborah Tomme<br>dtomme@ssd.com |
| Newsletter Editor | Brenda Hansen<br>Hansenb@jacksonlewis.com |
| Education/Program Chair | Diana Glazer<br>dglazer@hunton.com |
| Regional Council Representative | Tempie Tavenner<br>ttavenner@katzandstone.com |
| Webmaster | Scott Kovaleski<br>skovaleski@hunton.com |
| Vendor Relations Chair | Pamela Walker<br>pwaker@hunton.com |
| Hospitality Chair | Cheri Edwards<br>cheedwards@wcsr.com |

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[1] Reprinted with permission from ALA Currents dated August 5, 2004.

[2] Reprinted with permission from *New York/New York*, the newsletter published by the New York City Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators, July/August 2002.

# ALA NOVA Chapter
# 2005 Calendar of Events

## *January*

**4**    **Executive Committee Meeting**
Location: Hunton Williams
Time: 12:00 noon

**19**    **Chapter Meeting**
Topic: Untangling Complex ADA/FMLA Issues
Location: Squire Sanders
Time: 12:00 noon

## *February*

**1**    **Executive Committee Meeting**
Location: Wickwire Gavin
Time: 12:00 noon

**24**    **Chapter Meeting**
Topic: IT Roundtable
Location: Venable
Time: 12:00 noon

## *March*

**1**    **Executive Committee Meeting**
Location: Katz & Stone
Time: 12:00 noon

**24**    **Chapter Meeting**
Topic: Lawyers Helping Lawyers
Location: TBD
Time: 12:00 noon

## *April*

**5**    **Executive Committee Meeting**
Location: Millen White Branigan
Time: 12:00 noon

**21**    **Chapter Meeting**
Topic:  Change of Gavel Ceremony
Location: TBD
Time: TBD

## *May*

**3**    **Executive Committee Meeting**
Location: Venable
Time: 12:00 noon

**26**    **Chapter Meeting**
Topic:  Ergonomics 101
Location: Reed Smith
Time: 12:00 noon

**For more information concerning these meetings, please contact any of the Executive Committee Members.  Thank you.**