



A New York minute

Gotham's Legal Tech offered tips for PDA users and more

The ABA Techshow, scheduled as always for March in Chicago (see last month's *National*, p. 50), is the premiere North American legal technology event. But there are plenty of regional programs as well that draw large crowds. Both Vancouver and Toronto now host successful annual legal technology shows, and New York's is one of the biggest around.

The most recent New York edition included seminars and demonstrations of gadgetry designed to make every lawyer's practice more efficient — as well as some more exotic items. For instance, Expedite VCS demonstrated its eye-catching audio-video ViewWriter designed for multi-media presentations.

The main focus in both the seminars and at the trade show was on practical things every lawyer could use.

The ViewWriter is a screen mounted into a tabletop credenza. Presenters can input a camcorder, computer, cable network/video switch, or microphone into the ViewWriter, or they can write directly onto the screen with a marker. The View-

Writer then outputs via television or computer monitor, videoconference or LCD projector, CD recorder/VCR, PA system or even Web conference.

Two Canadian companies hosted trade fair booths alongside the many American companies: Toronto-based Amicus Attorney,

PHOTODISC

Mobile devices like laptops and Personal Data Assistants (PDAs) have become standard tools of the trade for lawyers. But if you use either or both of these devices, your ability to keep client confidences could be questioned.

Why? PDAs and laptops are so small and portable, they're particularly susceptible to loss or theft. Chances are, you have a great deal of confidential and privileged client information on one of these devices. What would happen if you left your PDA at Tim Horton's, or if your laptop was stolen from your office?

You can take some steps to protect your data, of course. On your PDA, you can enable the password feature, which requires the user to provide the right password before gaining access to the information on the PDA.

As for your laptop, you can configure it so that it displays a login screen at startup. That said, for Windows 98, getting past the login screen is as simple as pressing the [Esc] key —

Can you keep a secret?

Maybe — but your laptop and PDA probably can't.

this bypasses the login and gives the user full access to the hard drive. Later versions of Windows are more secure, and won't finish loading if you can't provide the correct password.

While these measures will stump the average person,

they're not foolproof: someone who knows what they're doing can easily get around these challenges. And once they've done so, they'll have full and unfettered access to all the information on the device. In order to really protect sensitive

information on your PDA or laptop, you need to take extra steps to secure or encrypt the information on them.

There are various security and encryption programs that can achieve this goal (see inset). While each works in different ways and has different features, they all share some common functionalities.

On startup, they'll challenge the user to provide a password, a more challenging variety that's more difficult to get by. They'll also encrypt the data, so that even if a thief can get by the initial password challenge, the data will be scrambled and incomprehensible. The encryption process occurs in the background and is completely transparent to the user, so there's no need for user intervention or user training.

Don't take chances with your portable devices — they're not very good at keeping secrets.

By Dan Pinnington, Director, PracticePRO (www.practicepro.ca).

Portable security software

Laptops

- PointSec for pc: www.pointsec.com
- SafeGuard Easy: www.safeguardeasy.com
- SecureDoc: www.winmagic.com
- TokenGuard: www.tokenguard.com

PDAs

- PDADefense: www.pdadefense.com
- PDASecure: www.trustedigital.com
- PointSec for Palm: www.pointsec.com
- SafeGuard PDA: www.safeguardeasy.com
- TealLock Corporate: www.tealpoint.com

demonstrating its widely used practice management software; and Burlington, Ontario-based Adlib eDocument Solutions, a vendor of document conversion software.

The main focus in both the seminars and at the trade show was on practical things every lawyer could use. For instance, at a seminar on handheld devices, two legal technology experts, consultant Carol Schlein and Brett Burney, provided a wealth of advice to optimize your Palm Pilot and or Pocket PC handheld:

- 1.** Learn to use shortcuts: record commonly used phrase shortcuts such as "telephone call with client," and learn to use the Copy, Cut, Paste and Undo commands.
- 2.** Synchronize your PDA to management programs, including Amicus Attorney or Microsoft Outlook. Schlein even uses Time Matters to download her children's schedules into her handheld.
- 3.** Purchase a billing program to record your time directly onto your handheld. Both speakers said this was one of handheld technology's most direct economic benefits to law firms. After using such a program, Schlein was surprised to learn how much time she'd previously been undervaluing in answering client phone calls while away from her office. The same held true for tracking her mileage and out-of-pocket expenses on her Palm.
- 4.** Take documents with you: *Documents to Go* lets you copy documents, including spreadsheets, onto your PDA.
- 5.** Use a USB Drive to back up critical files onto your handheld (see "The portable brain," *National*, November 2003, p. 16)
- 6.** Use the free advice offered by your handheld vendor, at www.pocketpc.com, www.pocketpassion.com, or www.palmone.com. **N**

Mince, alors!

L'écran plat à cristaux liquides n'est plus un bien de luxe.

Dans nos sociétés de consommation, la réussite se mesure trop souvent à la possession de certains objets à la mode. Il y a vingt ans, quiconque disposait d'un téléphone cellulaire montrait qu'il avait réussi. Dernièrement, posséder un écran d'ordinateur à cristaux liquides, communément appelé « écran plat » constituait le nec plus ultra. D'ailleurs, il y a à peine deux ans, un collègue coupait le souffle à tous ses clients avec un semblable moniteur qui lui avait coûté près de 2 500\$.

Les temps ont bien changé et l'acquisition d'un écran à cristaux liquides n'impressionne plus personne. On ne déboursa maintenant qu'environ 400\$ pour un écran de 15 pouces. Pourtant, s'ils n'épatent plus la galerie, les écrans plats constituent plus que jamais un achat judicieux. Pourquoi? Mis à part leur « look » plus moderne, le gain d'espace qu'ils permettent sur un bureau encombré n'est pas à dédaigner. Ils sont aussi plus respectueux de l'environnement puisqu'ils sont moins énergivores et contiennent moins de matières dangereuses comme le plomb. De plus, ils émettent moins de radiations et sont moins sujets aux interférences électriques.



Mais avant tout, l'écran plat provoque moins de fatigue visuelle que l'écran classique. Un avantage indéniable pour les usagers intensifs comme les juristes et leur personnel.

Côté désavantages, mentionnons un léger déficit par rapport à l'écran classique au niveau de la définition des couleurs et de la vitesse de rafraîchissement des images. Cependant, l'impact est peu important en ce qui concerne les besoins des cabinets juridiques puisque ces faiblesses resteront difficilement perceptibles. Seuls les infographistes et les adeptes de jeux vidéos seront justifiés de s'en plaindre!

Un choix écologique, économique et bénéfique pour votre vision, l'écran plat à cristaux liquides n'est peut-être plus l'apanage des frimeurs mais ne manque pas d'honorer les astucieux. Exhibez-le fièrement! **N**

Surviving the crash

Rescuing lost computer

data is possible, but full recovery is rare

Despite our growing dependence on computers, the sad truth for many small- to medium-sized law firms is that few invest in a proper backup system. "I don't think anyone loses any sleep over their hard drive — but they should," says Cory Furman of Saskatchewan's Furman & Kallio.

"I've had the horrifying experience of losing something that is not backed up," he says. "It only has to happen once or twice, even for something as simple as a factum, for you to regret it."

But if you're one of the unfortunate who've lost their data and didn't back up, there's more you can do than just wring your hands. There are now options at your disposal for when that screen inevitably goes blank.

"It depends on what kind of a data loss you have," Furman explains. "If it's something where somebody just screwed up and hit 'Delete,' you can buy little programs for about \$100 that you sort of sic on your drive — then you cross your fingers and hold your breath and hope that the program finds it."

These so-called "Undelete" programs are often included as part of an operating system, or they can be bought from companies like Norton Utilities. The best of these recovery programs don't write to the hard drive, which means they won't take

over any sections of your drive that contain data.

Sometimes, though, software can't save you. If your drive has suffered more severe physical damage — a screeching or grinding sound from your CPU is usually a sign — don't try to fix the problem yourself. It's time to call in the big guns.

There are a number of outside data recovery companies that specialize in the delicate job of salvaging your files. "For a hefty fee, they can take your dead hard drive and try to breathe some life back into it," he says. Some of these firms can even resurrect files lost as a result of fire damage.

But be forewarned: they can't always deliver 100 percent satisfaction. "They may not get you everything back, but they'll get you some of it, anyhow."

Furman recently shelled out \$5,000 for a tape backup system that records days' worth of memos, briefs and scanned documents onto a Zippo-sized tape that can be stashed in his pocket. Pricey, but invaluable, even when it comes to the smallest of mistakes.

"Say you deleted something that you shouldn't have," he says. "You don't want to be the one to have to go to your secretary with your head in your hands and tell her that the brief that she's been typing for the last ten days is gone. Trust me — it's well worth the price." **N**