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What's the Big Deal with GoTo – A Review of GoTo-MyPC, GoToMeeting, GoToAssist, and GoToWebinar

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INTRODUCTION: THE “CONNECTED” LAWYER

The “Connected” Lawyer of Today Is Wired with Technology.

Whether armed with a BlackBerry, Palm Treo, or Motorola Q, the modern lawyer constantly communicates with his/her clients, colleagues, and the court. Text messages, e-mails, and documents fly across the airwaves and wires 24-hours a day. With the expectation of “24x7” service comes the need for access to information “24x7” — far more information than the hard-drive of a PDA-Phone (or even a laptop) can store.

The “Connected” Lawyer of Today Works on Multiple Computers.

A lawyer's office usually has a desktop, maintained by the Information Technology (IT) Manager. At home and on the road, attorneys use laptops. They also have the family computers networked together in a home wireless network. In addition, a lawyer may use the computer at a client site or an airport. Therefore, when a lawyer complains that his computer doesn't work, he could mean any one of these computers — all of which serve a critical purpose in the conduct of his/her business.

The “Connected” Lawyer of Today Must Collaborate.

Collaboration requires meetings with colleagues; meetings with clients; meetings with experts; meetings with co-counsel; and negotiation meetings with opponents. The teams need to come together to make a decision. The teams need to see and review the evidence before they can make a decision. However, you don't have enough time in the day to

travel to all these meetings; nor can you schedule many of these meetings for a future date. These meetings need to happen now!!! E-mails and text messages can facilitate scheduling the meeting, but they cannot replace the actual meeting.

The “Connected” Lawyer Today Must Teach.

Unless you are the only lawyer in town, clients don't just walk in the door. You “invite” them. A client gets a referral from a friend, reads an article, finds a Web site, or attends a seminar. The prospective client gets to “know” the lawyer. Marketing means more than building a Web site (everyone does that); writing a blog (that's a lot of work); or sending out a newsletter (how boring). You need to have a personal touch — a connection with the client. What better way to get connected than in a seminar? Why not teach that seminar over the Web, and call it a Webinar?

GOING VIRTUAL

The “connected” lawyer must “go virtual.” The full information resources that a lawyer uses at his/her desktop must be available 24x7 from anywhere and accessible from any device. The IT Director of the firm must provide instant support to “all” the lawyer's computers (not just the ones tethered by Ethernet to the office network). And the lawyer must have the ability to setup ad hoc online meetings, as well as scheduled meetings.

Virtual Office

Fifteen years ago, I mobilized an army of paralegals to haul 50 banker's boxes of exhibits to the federal courthouse on the eve of a trial. A few years later, we replaced the boxes with a File Server in the

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Courtroom, which we brought back each night to upload the daily court transcripts.

Today, you can bring in any laptop with a wireless broadband connection and have access to the same information. Using remote access software, the attorney can have access to this information not only in the courtroom, but also at a conference table in settlement negotiations, at meetings with an expert witness, or during depositions of key opposition witnesses.

Virtual Support

At one time computers were a luxury, affordable only by the rich. Attorneys only used the computer supplied by the office. Today, computers are “appliances” in every room of the typical house. The expectation (and a reasonable one) is that the IT Manager must provide support for all of these computers — run the ROI. If a high-priced attorney has to spend 4 hours fiddling with his connections to do “office work” from home, who loses money?

Today, you can have instant support on your desktop, on your laptop, or on your MediaCenter PC. In one click of the mouse, you can have your office IT Manager connect to your computer (any of your computers) and fix it. The typical “support call” used to take 30 minutes with a 50% success rate. With remote desktop support, the IT Manager can “see” the problem, and often solve it in under five minutes. A happy attorney is a productive and profitable attorney. For you IT Managers, think of all the grateful attorneys you helped and how they will vote at the partner’s meeting when it comes to budget approval (and compensation!).

Virtual Meetings

The virtual or online meeting used to be the province of high-powered corporations and law firms. Only they could afford to set up a special audiovisual conference center with a dedicated T-1 line. Today, with secure online meeting software, you can schedule a meeting; send out invitations that include registration, time, and conference call information; and then conduct the meeting from your “virtual

office.” You can set up your virtual office anywhere that has an Internet connection — in your office, a conference room, or a table at Starbucks.

Virtual Seminars

In the past, setting up a seminar resulted in a big production involving publicists, mailings, space rental, and special preparation. Even virtual seminars involved costs: securing a phone connection, setting up the conference call, and charges per attendee that cost upwards of thousands of dollars. Today, secure online meeting products have “all you can meet” and “all you can reach” plans for a fixed monthly subscription. A single Web-console can handle the whole process from promotion, to conducting the meeting, to post-meeting follow-up — so easy an attorney can handle it without assistance.

CITRIX ONLINE OFFERINGS

Citrix Online has built a suite of services:

- [GoToMyPC for Virtual Office](#)
- [GoToAssist for Virtual Support](#)
- [GoToMeeting for Virtual Meetings](#)
- [GoToWebinar for Virtual Seminars](#)

Each of these services is offered on a subscription basis (monthly or annual). Each has an “all you can use” plan, charging only per “organizer” or “host.” According to Citrix Online, they all offer: standards-based cryptography with true end-to-end encryption, a high-availability hosted service infrastructure, and an intuitive user interface combined to maximize confidentiality, integrity, and availability. In other words, your information remains secure, available upon request, and easy to access.

A “desktop screen sharing” client functions as the core of the system, combined with a hosted distribution service with easy setup and maintenance. The Citrix Online offerings stand out because of the combination of (1) security, (2) ease of use, and (3) price. My comments below stem from extensive use

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of this suite of products over the past five years. At Basha Systems LLC, we use all of these products to communicate with and support our clients numerous times every single day.

Each of these services is offered on a subscription basis (monthly or annual). Monthly prices per user start at \$19.95 for GoToMyPC; \$49.95 for GoToMeeting; \$99.95 for GoToWebinar, and \$300 for GoToAssist. These numbers can quickly add up, unless the right business-case is made for their use of these services. You can, of course, get discounts for annual plans and multiple users, plus special promotions. The pricing is competitive compared to comparable offerings from other vendors. As the expectation of clients and colleagues for instant collaboration and the need for law firm marketing increases, these fees will soon become just part of the cost of doing business.

Disclosure: As a consultant I have used a courtesy copy of GoToMyPC, GoToAssist, and GoToMeeting for several years. I have served as an unpaid advisor first to ExpertCity and then Citrix Online to give advice on which features would make the service attractive to lawyers. In addition, I beta-tested GoToMeeting prior to its launch. This has given me a unique insider's perspective on the technology.

GOTOMYPC

This program will get your feet "wet" in virtual computing. Get GoToMyPC Pro or GoToMyPC Corporate and install it on your office computer and on your home PC. Be sure to assign a high quality password (text and numbers). With a Pro or Corporate account, the IT Manager can manage the installation and the access rights from a central Webpanel.

Once installed, GoToMyPC enables the attorney to login to their PC from anywhere, and work on their desktop, the same way they would in the office. You do not need to install special office files on each PC and configure them for access to the network. By controlling your desktop PC, you can see everything you see at the office, without being there.

If you want to impress your colleagues about how

late you stayed at the office, you can remote in from a late night Internet Cafe and send an e-mail from your office computer. If your child's school declares a last-minute snow day, you can continue your work from home.

Most often, this means grabbing a file or two from your office to work on your home PC. GoToMyPC has an excellent built-in File Transfer Utility. In addition, it has a remote printer setup that enables you to open up a file on your office desktop, but then send it to print on the printer in your Hotel's business office. The benefits of "remote desktop access" include added security since you do not need to transfer the file to the hotel computer. You can also use GoToMyPC for invitations for one-on-one collaboration. However, GoToMeeting or GoToWebinar will serve you better if you need to connect with more than one person.

GoToMyPC has had security issues in the past. The security of a PC with an active GoToMyPC client on it is only as good as your passwords. While there are 3 levels of passwords: GoToMyPC login, Remote Access login, and Network login (if you lock your desktop), any failure to rotate your passwords or the use of obvious passwords will put your computer at risk. In addition, accessing GoToMyPC accounts from untrusted computers (i.e. airport, Internet cafes, Kinkos etc.) can subject you to risk of keystroke logging programs recording your login information. This happened at one Kinkos in New York. However, there was a happy ending. Because Citrix Online records connection information (time, location, IP address), their fast response team was actually able to identify the offending PC and aided the police in arresting the culprit.

Another drawback of GoToMyPC occurs when you go on vacation. When your client calls asking you to review a document or check on the status of his case, you no longer have excuses. He knows you have GoToMyPC, and expects you to find a HotSpot and login into your desktop.

GOTOASSIST

This program is a must for any IT Manager. You

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can set up an Remote Desktop Connection (RDC) in Windows to enable you to support computers inside the office (tethered to the Ethernet). However, you should avoid setting up an RDC for a home PC or laptop. It takes too much time, and is often done wrong. Moreover, you should not take a highly anxious senior partner through the steps of properly setting up the RDC at the time of the support call (when the crisis is brewing).

This is where GoToAssist shines. Set up a link on the law firm's Web site. The lawyer clicks on the link, accepts a download, and you now have complete remote access to their PC. You pay for the GoToAssist service on a monthly or annual basis with a charge per concurrent support technician. The support call comes in over GoToAssist as a request for connection. The technician sees the desktop and places a call to the user. Assistance is immediate.

GoToAssist is expensive; the monthly charge adds up. Realize however, since the license is concurrent, you will likely need only a single license for the firm.

Also, the program sometimes has problems with firewalls. If the attorneys you are supporting have Zone Alarm or Norton Internet Security on their home PCs, they will have to affirmatively allow access before the session can begin. Once the connection is made, of course, you have full remote desktop control during the length of the session.

Finally, a high-speed internet connection is essential. While it functions over dial-up, the delays in screen-updating make the provision of remote support tortuous. We once had a client in a remote part of Nebraska who had a satellite connection that made dial-up look fast. Transferring a 15 megabyte file took over an hour and the screen refresh delays were 10-15 seconds. These are the exception, rather than rule. Most connections are instantaneous.

GOTOMEETING

All lawyers collaborate on documents. And since most documents are digitized, collaboration involves hovering around a computer screen (or projector) and discussing the document. GoToMeeting makes

meetings easy, with an "all you can meet" product. You pay a monthly or annual subscription for each authorized organizer; there is no fee for attendees or per meeting.

You can start a meeting by simply clicking on the GoToMeeting icon in your system tray, a toolbar icon in Word, or using Instant Chat. Simply choose (or list the attendees) and send off your invitation. GoToMeeting includes a free conference number that attendees can dial into and enter the meeting ID. Collaboration could not be easier.

Once the participants sign in, GoToMeeting enables you to "chat" with attendees, use markers and highlights to illustrate points, and even enables you to pass the mouse to other attendees or pass the baton to another presenter. It gives you all the tools found in other online meeting programs.

While most GoToMeeting connections are quick and easy, there are some minor annoyances. When the meeting starts, there is a control panel on the upper right hand of the screen which blocks a view of the desktop. The attendees need to be instructed how to collapse the panel and then maximize the desktop viewer. It would be far better to have the collapsed panel and a maximized viewer as the default.

Also, from the perspective of the organizer, the settings for allowing drawing and keyboard control could be more intuitive. When you switch presenters, the new presenter has to manually give keyboard and drawing privileges to the original presenter. It would be far better to get those issues resolved when the presenter is passed, enabling the presenter to show his screen, allow drawing, and give mouse control in one click.

GOTOWEBINAR

The online seminar product is only a few months old; Citrix Online currently bundles it free with a 10-user GoToMeeting account. GoToWebinar is an "all you can reach" product. It enables lawyers to reach their clients and prospective clients with maximum ease and minimum cost. Like GoToMeeting, you pay a monthly or annual subscription for each

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authorized organizer; there is no fee for attendees or per meeting.

GoToWebinar works just like GoToMeeting, but differs in its design as a marketing and educational tool. It includes special tools for sending out slick customized meeting invitations. A Webpanel enables you to describe the meeting, add graphics and information, and conduct a pre-attendance poll of the attendees. You can get reports of a mailing's success, how many people registered, and what their answers were to the poll.

During the meeting, you can have multiple organizers. While one attorney makes a Web presentation, another attorney can field written questions from the users or prepare quick-poll questions to get feedback from the attendees. The meeting control panel even enables you to gauge the interest of the attendees in real-time so you can liven up the presentation.

After the meeting, you can automatically send out surveys of the users to either test their "recall" for instructional Webinars or to gather useful feedback for future presentations. Attendees can even record the Webinar for future playback. In addition, for invitees who could not attend the meeting, you can have a link to a recording of the meeting on the hosted Webinar site sent automatically.

GoToWebinar is a new product, with some issues still being worked out. Firewalls may block certain attendees from viewing the meeting. The innovative poll is a great feature; however, the full report on the attendees and their responses to the polls is not available online until 2 hours after the end of the meeting. It would be nice if it were available right after the meeting for instant analysis.

Further, GoToWebinar presumes that attendees do not intend to speak during the session, assigning

a conference number that is "listen only." You can manually override that number and supply one that can have up to 100 speakers (sufficient for most Webinars).

CONCLUSION: WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

Getting the GoTo line of products may well be your best technology investment ever. The service will make you as a lawyer more productive and more responsive. It will help you secure new clients and new business. With the new business you can afford (and happily invest in) all the other technological productivity systems, including case management, document assembly, or digital voice transcription software.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Recovered attorney Seth Rowland was named TechnoLawyer Consultant of the Year in 2002 for his contributions to TechnoLawyer on the subject of document assembly and law practice automation, and more importantly, his service to law firms around the country. He is a nationally known technologist whose company, [Basha Systems](#), has helped many law firms and content providers build document assembly applications for both internal use and for resale. Please feel free to visit his [blog](#) for the latest on document assembly or the [video tours page](#) to see what such a system can look like. Basha Systems currently offers document assembly consulting services in DealBuilder, Perfectus, Ghost-Fill, and HotDocs.

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