



602: Technology Tools for Small Departments- Beyond Email & Word

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Faculty Biographies

Mark A. Donald

Mark A. Donald is associate general counsel of Vertis, Inc. and focuses on Vertis Advertising Production Services in Irving, Texas. His background includes experience with technology transfer and licensing, trademark and copyright protection, internet, e-commerce, and net-abuse transactions and litigation, wage, harassment, trade secrets, and related transactions and litigation, as well as general corporate and commercial litigation. Additionally, Mr. Donald manages technologies for the office of the general counsel including paperless workflow and filing systems. He has an extensive background in technology development including database driven application development, MS Office programming and customization, and Exchange Server.

Prior to joining Vertis, Mr. Donald was assistant general counsel for Columbine JDS Systems (now Encoda Systems, Inc.) and Laser Tech Color, Inc. (now part of Vertis, Inc.). He was also in private practice with the law firm of Rossi & Maricle, P.C. in Denver.

Currently, Mr. Donald is a member of the ABA. He is also involved with ACC's Colorado Chapter.

Mr. Donald is a graduate of the University of Arizona and the College of William and Mary Law School.

David A. Munn

David A. Munn is an attorney with Fair Isaac Corporation, a Minneapolis-based data analytics company that is best known as the developer of FICO(r) credit scores. Mr. Munn manages legal affairs for the company's global marketing services business and its myFICO.com consumer division. In addition, Mr. Munn heads up the Fair Isaac legal department's technology and process reengineering initiatives.

Prior to joining Fair Isaac, Mr. Munn was general counsel at Pella Corporation and associate general counsel at Menasha Corporation. He began his legal career in the Minneapolis office of Faegre & Benson. Prior to law school, he worked as a mechanical engineer for Monsanto and 3M.

Mr. Munn has been an active member of ACC for more than 15 years and was president and one of the founders of ACC's Iowa Chapter. He has written articles, organized, and participated in seminars dealing with technology and the practice of law, including heading up a session on Technology Tools for Small Law Departments at ACC's 2000 Annual Meeting. He is the author of "Creating a Matter Management System Using Outlook(r) Public Folders," published in the *ACC Docket*, in July/August 2002. He also served on the faculty of the Advertising Law for the Generalist program at ACC's 2003 Annual Meeting. He is a member of ACC's Small Law Departments Committee and the Information Technology Law and eCommerce Committee, as well as the Wisconsin State Bar Association and the ABA's law practice management section.

Mr. Munn received a BS from Iowa State University and his JD from Yale Law School.

Theresa Fremont Seem

Theresa Fremont Seem is corporate counsel for Onyx Waste Services, Inc. Her in-house practice includes commercial law, collections and creditor's rights, corporate transactions, real estate, contracts, renewable energy transactions, dispute resolution, litigation tracking, environmental/commercial compliance and tracking, antitrust, and comprehensive outside counsel management.

Ms. Seem came to Onyx Waste Services, Inc. from the law firm of Darnieder, West, Davis & Geraghty, S.C. in Milwaukee, where she was responsible for estate, employment, individual, and corporate tax matters, corporate transactions, probate, estate planning, and litigation. Ms. Seem also clerked and interned for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the eastern district of Wisconsin in the financial litigation and bankruptcy unit.

Ms. Seem received her BA from the University of Virginia, and she is a graduate of Marquette University Law School.

**SOFTWARE TOOLS FOR THE WELL OUTFITTED IN-HOUSE
COUNSEL**

**Program 602 – Technology Tools for Small Departments Beyond
Email & Word
(presented by ACC's Small Law Departments Committee)**

**Mark Donald
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Software Tools for the Well outfitted In-House Counsel

In-house practitioners receive information from a variety of internal and external systems. The purpose of this list is to make you aware of available software offerings that have capabilities proven useful over the years. None is an advertisement of any particular product and many alternatives may be available. All prices are rounded and may change.

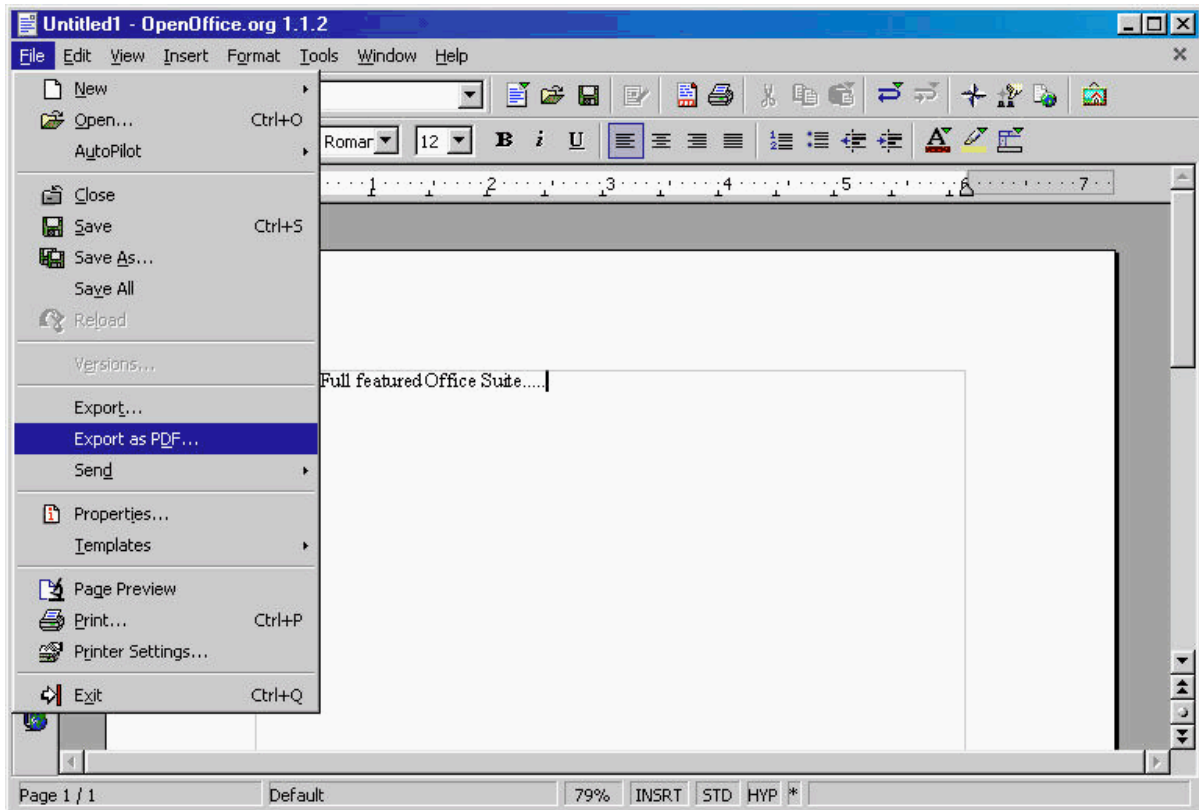
In keeping to the spirit of making more out of what you already have at hand, the focus here is on solutions that require minimal or no IT support and are inexpensive. While this list is targeted toward in-house life, some of these applications can have an immediate ROI simply by being recommended to outside counsel and avoiding time consuming, brute-force methods. It has been my experience that most law firms tend to adopt technology slowly. In addition to reducing costs, taking a leadership role with outside counsel regarding technology can create more advanced information exchange processes and greater efficiency.

Office Suites

This requirement goes without saying, however there are a number of newer office suites out there competing with MS Office and the fading Word Perfect based competitor. They tend to be far less expensive, and in the case of Open Office, free. In many circumstances having (or knowing of) these alternatives can add capabilities to your toolkit. I keep copies of, or links to, Open Office handy if for nothing else their included ability to output to PDF format. Compatibility with office formats is generally good although advanced features such as document markup and protection tend to be a little more hit and miss. Another great use for the low cost alternatives is equipping a second or third (or in my case, a sixth or seventh) computer with a low or no cost suite.

Check Out:

Open Office (free download)



Open Source, Free and Powerful. Runs on Windows, Mac and Linux.

<http://www.openoffice.org>

Ability Office (\$70) / Ability Office Studio (\$100)

This is a highly regarded suite that includes Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Relational Databases, and Image Editing (a better image editor is the difference between the "Studio" version and the regular version). This suite is known for an incredible level of compatibility with MS Office (even Access files) and in fact supports more old versions of MS Office files than current versions of MS Office itself. It also generates PDF format out of the box. A free 10-day demo is available.

<http://www.ability.com/>

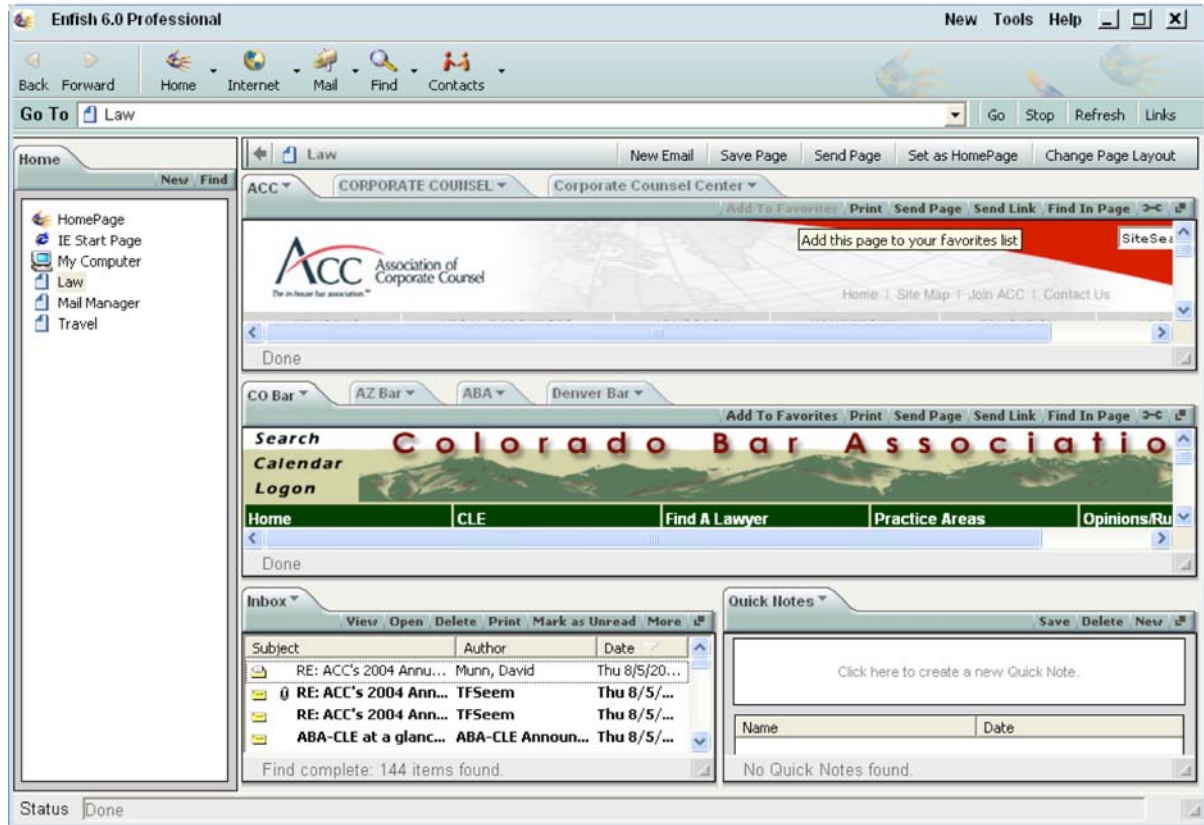
Finding your Information

What You Need to Know About Indexing

Indexing is the process of constructing a table of search terms to search against. Indexing electronic documents is the same process as creating a comprehensive index of every term in a book or indeed an entire library. The search features of MS Word and any other un-indexed search tool working against a local or networked drive is the equivalent of starting at word number one and going through a book page by page, looking at every word to see whether it matches a given search. An indexed system goes through the book in advance (or thousands of books or documents of any kind) in the background. When searching against an indexed system, the search needs only to check the index to find the location of all occurrences of the term in the entire library.

Newer versions of MS Windows include an indexing feature that will index certain types of files in folders and drives you select, but configuring indexing efficiently can be a hit or miss proposition and is not particularly easy to work with. Some commercial solutions are available that in addition to indexing offer a host of organizational tools. Here is one of my favorites.

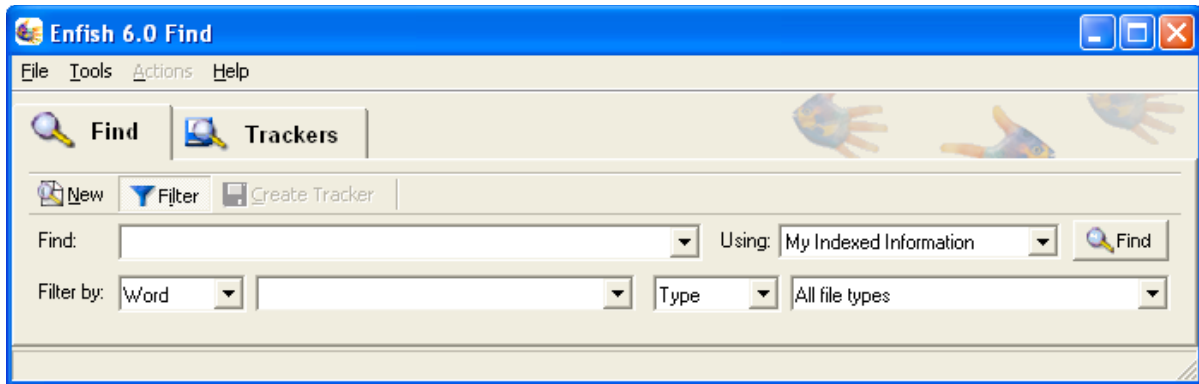
Enfish Find (\$50) / Enfish Professional (\$200)



Enfish is a little tough to describe because of the sheer number of things it can do. Essentially, after installing Enfish you tell it what information sources you want to index and let it go crazy. Both versions feature extensive indexing tools that will index any drive you choose including network drives. The indexing filters are comprehensive and include the important ability to index searchable PDF files (see below) and the content of email attachments. In addition to indexing drives, either program will index the contents of standard mail and contacts files (MS Outlook, Outlook Express, ACT, AOL and Lotus Notes) and the content of any web pages you have added as favorites in MS Internet Explorer. The search interface for both programs allows users to preview the returned documents and launch the relevant programs.

The difference between the two flavors of the program is that the more expensive Pro version has a far more extensive interface and cross referencing tools. These tools allow you to create custom, multi-pane views of multiple websites, view your calendars from other programs and otherwise organize and access your information. Definitely worth a look and demo versions are available. They occasionally have specials with deeply discounted licensing.

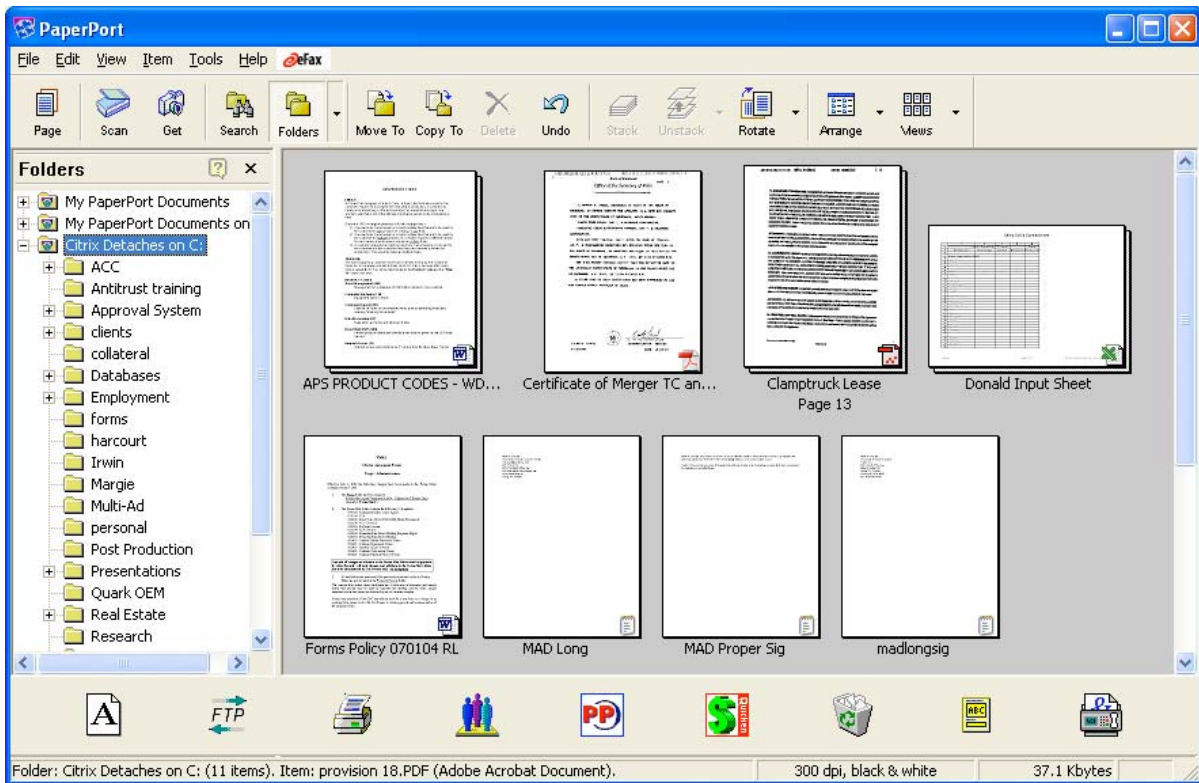
Enfish Find Interface



www.enfish.com

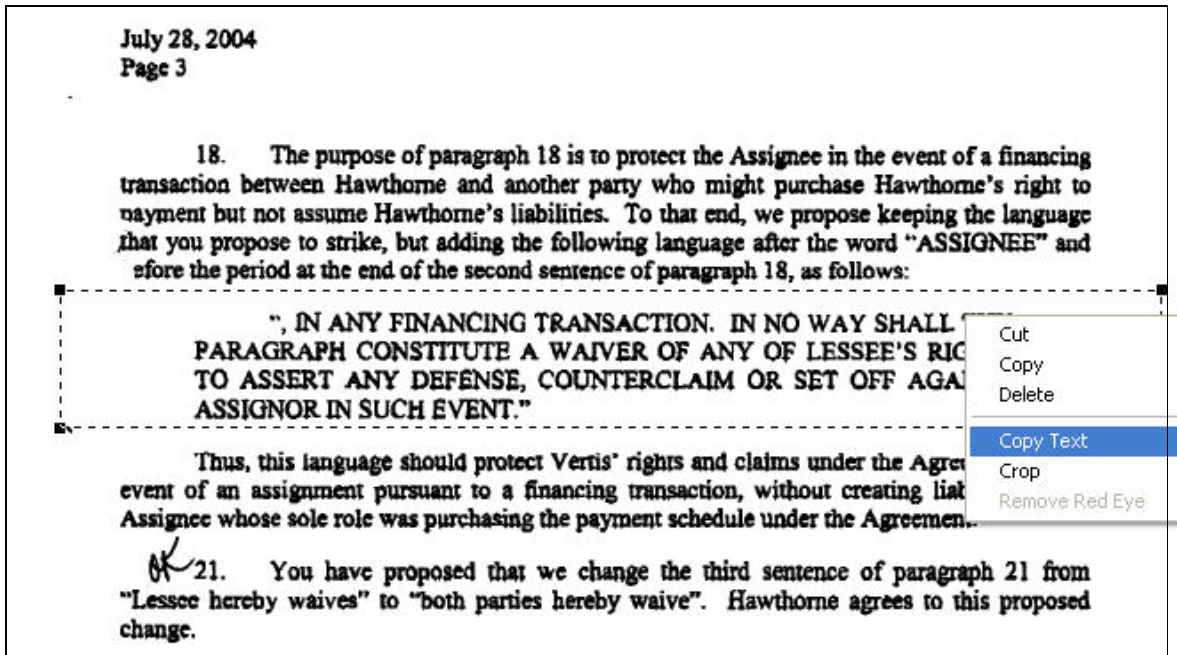
Scanning Tools

Paperport Pro 9 Office (\$200) / Paperport Deluxe 9 (\$100)



Paperport is probably the handiest single tool for getting more out of your scanner. Out of the box, both versions handle the typical scanning and organizing tasks common to all scanning software. In addition, both versions now output into image PDFs (see PDF discussion below). Paperport will also create an indexed search database of scanned documents using OCR (Optical Character Recognition) to derive the index. Both versions feature form-typer that automatically detects blanks on a scanned form and positions the cursor to fill in the form. Both versions feature lots of markup tools and even basic image fixing and converting tools. Both versions support export, either images or text, to a number of other programs and document management systems.

One of the handiest features of the new Paperport version is the partial OCR feature. This feature allows you to select a single region from a scanned document, convert to editable text and paste into another program (like a word processor) on the fly with a right-click from within the document view.



The primary difference between the two versions is that the more expensive version has additional PDF tools including support for PDF files made by any other program and direct PDF creation from within MS Office applications. You can further enhance either version's functionality with Omnipage Pro.

<http://www.scansoft.com/paperport/>

What you need to know about PDF Files

PDF stands for Portable Document Format and is an open standard for creating documents that display faithfully across platforms. Adobe is the creator and keeper of the PDF open standard.

There are three different types of PDF files of interest to In-House practitioners: Text-based PDF, Image based PDF and Image with Hidden Text - better known as Searchable Image PDF.

Text-based PDF

Text-based PDF is perhaps the most common format. In this format, a PDF file contains actual text (and sometimes inserted images) along with a host of information to tell PDF viewer software how to properly display the text and images so that the document embodied in the file will be faithfully reproduced. Because these files contain mostly actual text, they tend to be relatively small and comparatively easy to edit with PDF creation and editing programs. These files can then be indexed for easier searching (see above) provided that the indexing software has a filter that allows it to access the contents of PDF files.

Image-based PDF

The second type of PDF file is the Image-based PDF. This type of file, when used for documents, contains a visual 'picture' of the document represented by the file. Documents scanned from hard copy or converted from other image-based programs (like a faxing program) are often saved as image-based PDF files. This format preserves the exact appearance of the original paper document. Because this type of file contains images, the file sizes tend to be larger and indexing programs can't index this type of PDF directly since there are only images and no words to add to the search database. In fact, opening this type of document in Adobe Reader and using the find function to look for a term within the document will not work either for the same reason.

Searchable Image PDF

The solution to the indexing problem for scanned images is the final format of interest - the searchable image format (a.k.a. image with hidden text). This version is created by superimposing the original, unaltered image of the document over a text version of the same document that is created using OCR (see below). This format preserves the exact appearance of the original source document but allows indexers and viewers to search the document for terms included in the document, subject to the accuracy of the OCR process. This PDF format is larger than either of the preceding two formats, but is the most useful and recommended for scanned documents. Searchable PDFs can be created with Adobe Acrobat as well as with certain OCR software.

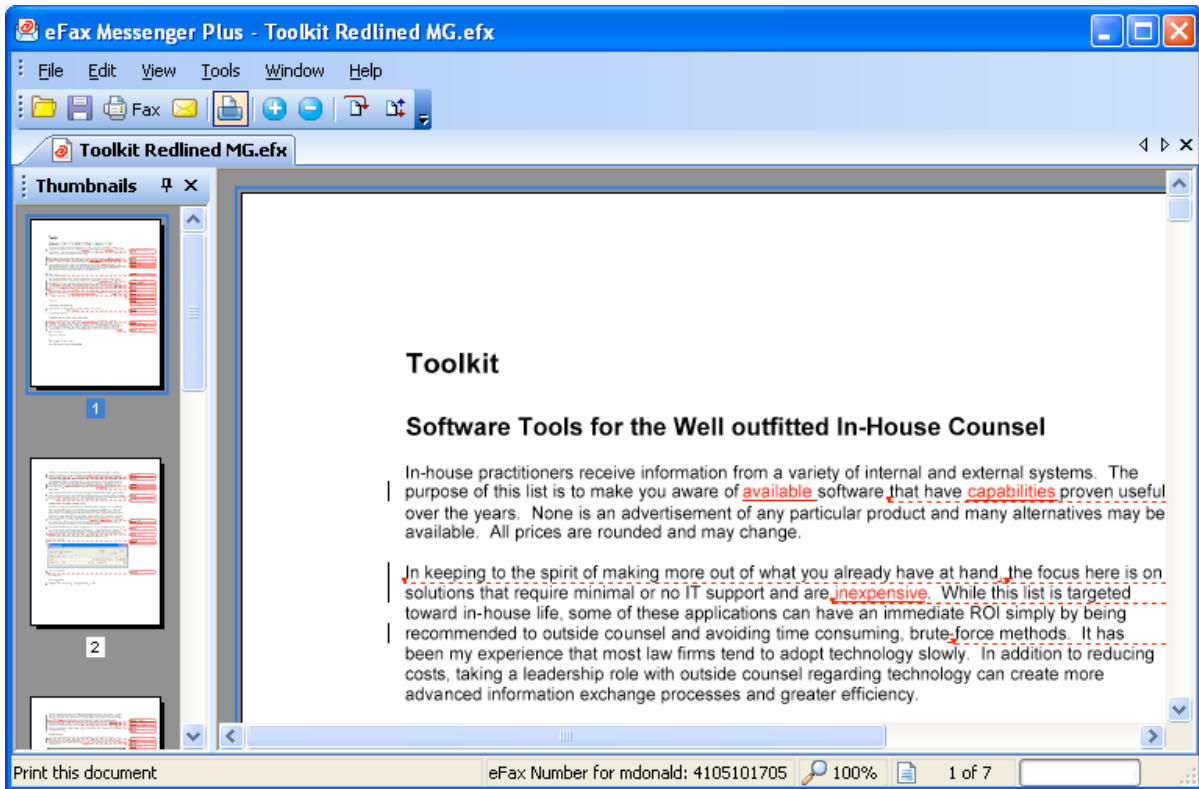
Security

One reason that PDFs are popular for in house document tasks is that the Adobe PDF products have a number of security features such as the ability to prevent accessing, editing, printing and copying the contents of a given PDF document. It is worth noting, however, that these restrictions require that the software used to open the PDF implement the Adobe security mechanisms. As I will point out below, almost any of these security features can be defeated using available software - a point worthy of noting before placing undue faith on PDF security.

PDF Tools

In the old days (4 years ago), creating PDF files was the arcane and exclusive province of the rather pricey Adobe Acrobat. Now there are many tools available for working in this handy format. During the last few years there has been considerable confusion relating to the program "Adobe Acrobat" owing in some part to Adobe's changing branding relating to its PDF product line. In the past, it was easy to misunderstand whether someone referring to Adobe Acrobat meant the free reader program or the full PDF creation program. In the past, the various Adobe products used to create PDF files have been known as Adobe Acrobat Distiller, Adobe Acrobat Exchange, Adobe Acrobat (versions 4 and 5), and now Adobe Acrobat Elements, Standard and Professional versions. The reader software was called Adobe Acrobat Reader and is now called Adobe Reader. As more tools come on to the market to handle and create PDFs this is less of an issue, but it can be helpful if you are sending a PDF for markup or editing to verify what software the recipient has on hand. Below are some of my favorite PDF tools.

Jfax a/k/a Efax (free/\$15 per month/enterprise pricing available)

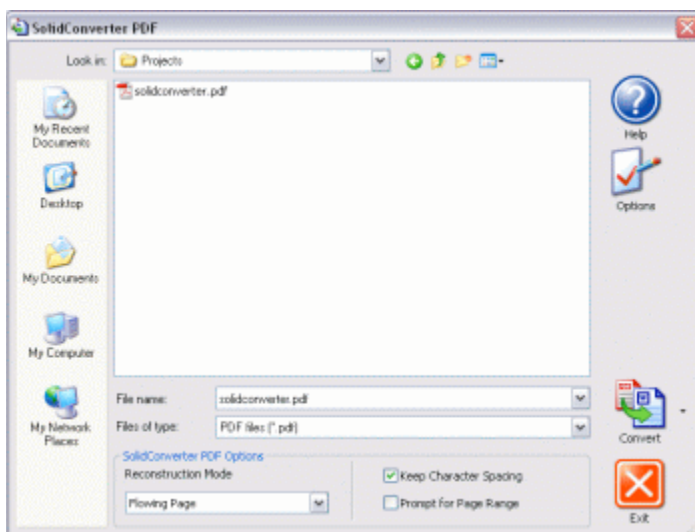


Why is an internet fax service listed as a PDF tool? Because, among many other features, they have implemented the ability to receive your faxes directly as PDF files sent to your email inbox. This is extremely convenient if you are working in a paperless office as it provides immediate delivery and no scanning or paper handling is needed.

J2 Global Communications

<http://www.j2.com/jconnect/twa/page/homePage?CMP=OTC-US>

Solid Converter PDF (\$50)



Have you ever received a PDF (particularly a locked, Text Based PDF) and wished to easily convert it to an editable MS Word document? That is what this software does and does well, preserving the formatting of the original. It also ignores most Adobe security standards.

<http://www.solidpdf.com/>

Paperport

Yes, Paperport (see above), particularly the Pro 9 Office version, has become a full-fledged PDF tool complete with creation, editing and markup tools. When coupled with Omnipage Pro (below), scanned documents can be converted into searchable image PDFs right from the scanner.

Other PDF Creators

In addition to Paperport and the ubiquitous Adobe Acrobat, there are a host of commercially available programs that can create or convert PDFs for office use. Rather than listing them here, please see the PDF Zone Buyer's Guide. Note that there are a variety of freeware programs available. In addition, a number of programs in other categories include PDF creation capabilities.

PDF Zone Buyer's Guide

<http://www.pdfzone.com/bgguide/product/searchproduct.asp?sitename=pdf>

General PDF Links

PDF Zone

<http://www.pdfzone.com/>

and

Planet PDF

<http://www.planetpdf.com/>

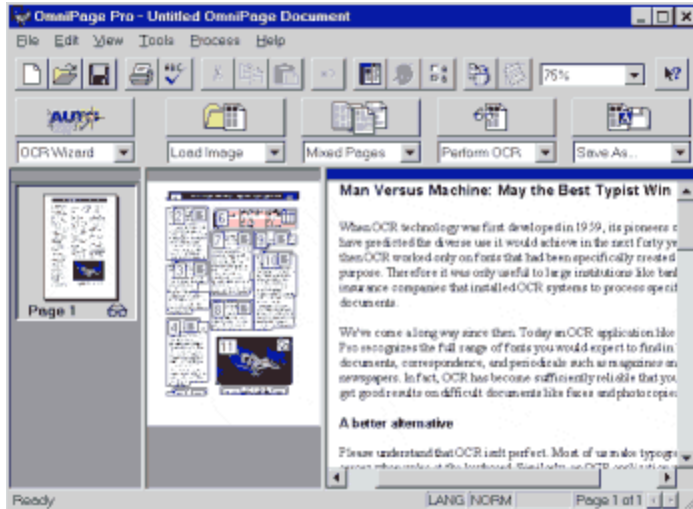
Both are sites of general interest covering developments in the PDF world from simple office use of the format through advanced prepress and other uses of the PDF format.

OCR

What you need to know about OCR

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is the process by which software accepts an image of a document and attempts to recognize the text written on that image. The ideal end-result is a conversion of an image into editable text, reducing or eliminating the need for re-typing. The success of this process depends on the clarity of the original document, the quality of the scan, the quality of the OCR software, and the clarity of the fonts in the original document. Most current OCR software does a good job with reasonably clear office-type original documents. OCR capabilities come either as a feature set in a program with other functions (like Paperport) or in more robust, stand-alone OCR software. Dedicated OCR software typically has more importing and formatting options, the capability to "learn" to recognize new fonts and a broad variety of export options.

Omnipage Pro 14 (\$150 as upgrade to any OCR software)



In addition to being one of the best-known OCR engines, recent versions have included the ability to save as PDF and to create searchable image format PDF files either on its own or as a supplement to Paperport. Proofing tools to check the quality of the character recognition include the ability to have the software "read" the document to you using text-to-speech conversion.

<http://www.scansoft.com/omnipage/>

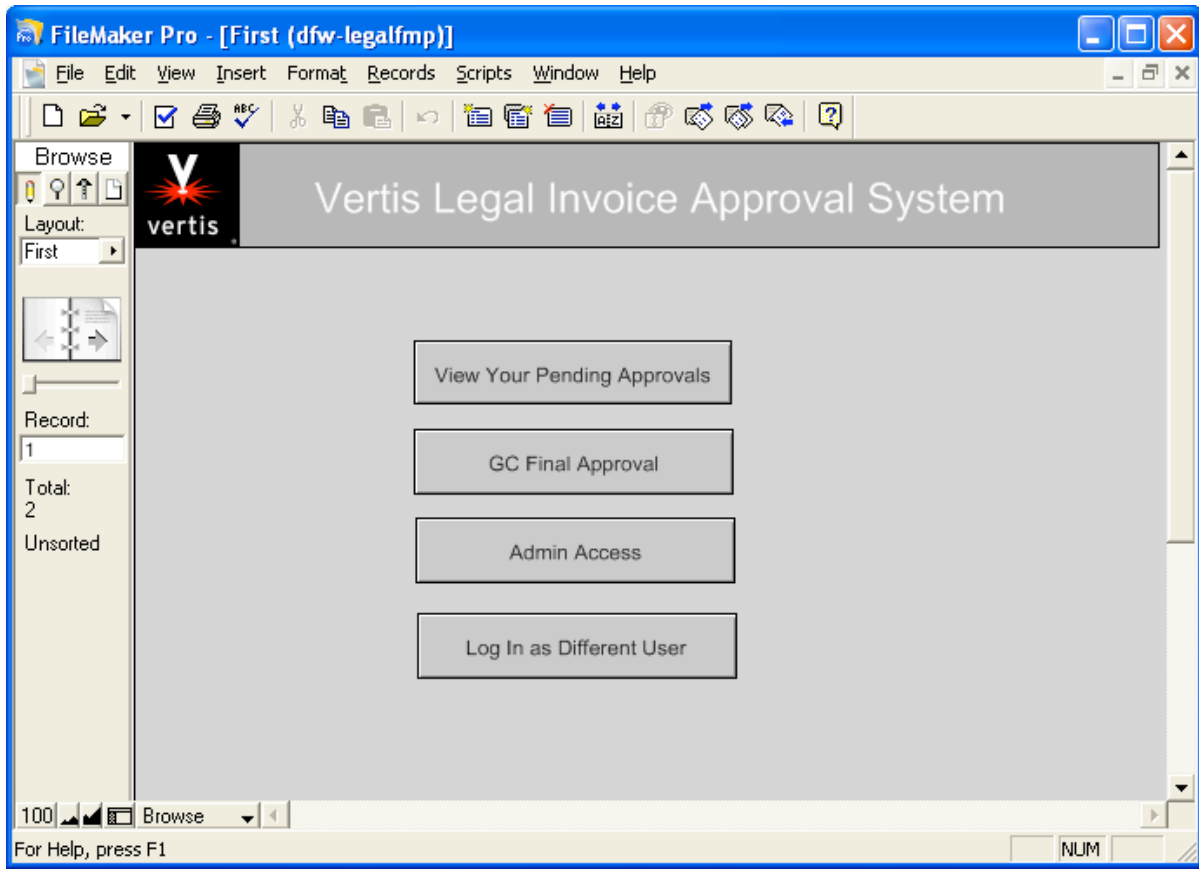
Paperport

In addition to its other functions, Paperport includes basic OCR features.

Database Tools

Databases are far more than just places to warehouse information. Modern and friendly database systems like Filemaker Pro offer the ability to create full applications, accessible by multiple users - even through web browsers - without any programming knowledge at all.

Filemaker Pro 7(\$300)



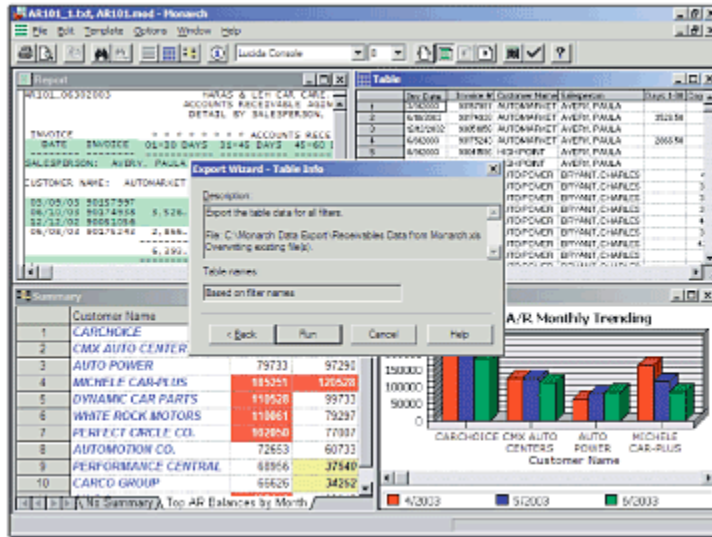
While this database system will take some getting used to for Access users, its overall ease of use will have you creating applications to collect, organize and share data in no time. Tired of passing around spreadsheets of data to update internal reports? You can create, host and serve a web accessible version in minutes with no additional web server software needed. A very powerful system, Filemaker Pro allows up to five simultaneous connections to your desktop databases and can scale from there with a Filemaker server, though this may require the intervention of your IT department. A must-have for quickly creating departmental or workgroup database applications on your own.

<http://www.filemaker.com/>

Report Mining and Data Analysis

Ever had to sift through a massive information dump from a financial system? How about an attempt by an opposing party to drown you and your outside counsel in a very "thorough" disclosure or discovery response, provided in the least efficient manner possible? Often this information takes the form of formatted reports from financial systems complete with page headers and footers. Even in an electronic format, this presents the problem of manually removing the headers and footers and trying to get the information into a spreadsheet or, even worse if it is a subtotaled report, manually scrutinizing and summarizing the report data. If you have to confront this situation - even once - you will want to know about this product:

Monarch Standard (\$450)

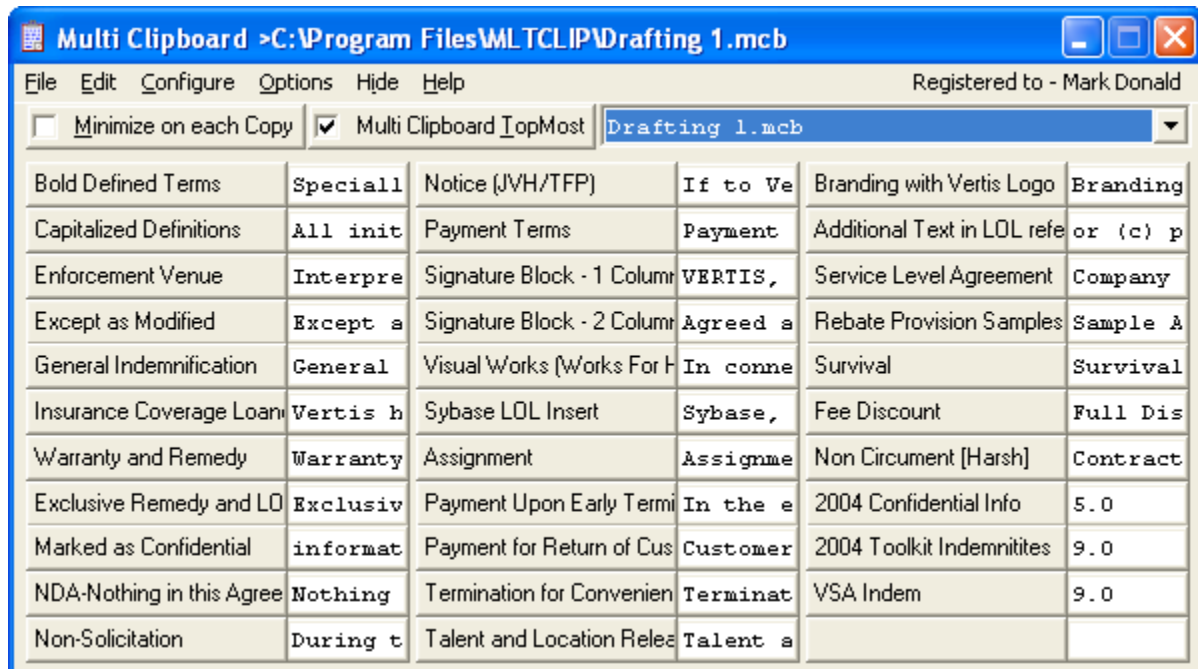


With a slight learning curve, you help this program "learn" the format of even the most massive of reports and then output and summarize the data to Excel, Access or other formats. For the both times I've been called on to use this program, even the members of our finance team were blown away that there was a tool to do this. Using this program will require spending a little time with the tutorials, but a paralegal or assistant with good tech skills can easily pick it up. A must have on your "tool belt" if you ever confront this type of information.

<http://monarch.datawatch.com/monarch-report-mining.asp>

Other Handy Tools/Goodies

Multi Clipboard (\$20)

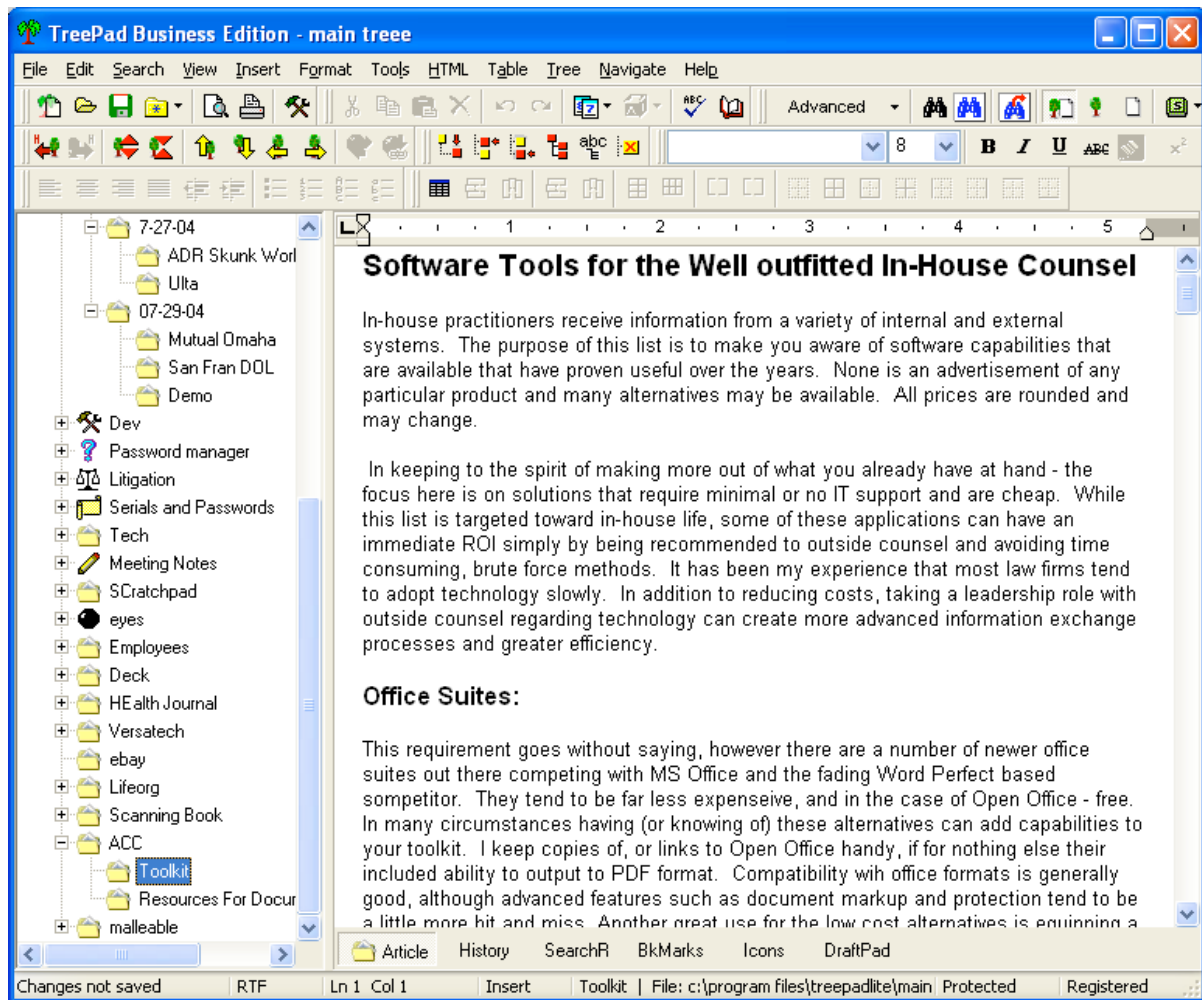


All who have encountered this handy tool sing its praises. In short it is a little clipboard program

that holds an infinite number of frequently used text blocks and resides in the screen "tray" in the lower right corner on Windows computers. The text blocks are displayed as a bank of buttons - 33 at a time. One click brings up buttons, one click on the right button closes and sends the program back to the tray and copies the chosen text block to your windows clipboard for pasting in to any application. Buttons are organized into "libraries" and can be changed on the fly.... and these libraries can be shared with other users by emailing and installing the library file in the correct folder. As an example, I keep two libraries for standard contract clauses and one for other frequently used information (i.e., office addresses, phone numbers, footers and the like). Highly recommended.

<http://www.electrasoft.com/#MultiClipboard>

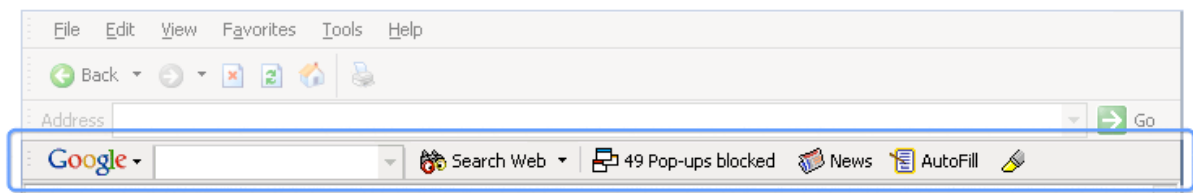
TreePad Lite (Free) / TreePad Plus (\$30) / TreePad Safe (\$35)/ TreePad Business Edition (\$44) / TreePad Enterprise (\$70/\$90)



TreePad, in its many flavors, is essentially a note taking and organization program useful to store information that does not fit anywhere else in your toolkit. Think of a notepad that is organized by a hierarchical "tree" of folders that can hold links, images and text. The differences among the versions relate to the types of information that can be stored and output, backup and security options. A comparative chart can be found at: <http://www.treepad.com/featurechart/>.

<http://www.treepad.com>

Google Toolbar (Free)



If you aren't already making use of this internet search tool that integrates with Internet Explorer you should be! Adds right-click searching for highlighted terms in your browser, Google searching from your Internet Explorer toolbar, popup blocking and form filling. All for free.

<http://toolbar.google.com/>

**RESOURCES FOR LEARNING DO IT YOURSELF DOCUMENT
AUTOMATION IN WORD AND OFFICE**

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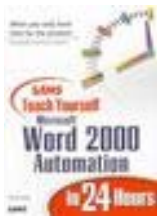
Resources for Learning Do it Yourself Document Automation in Word/MS Office

Books



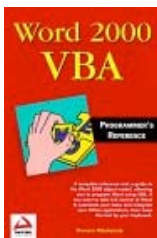
MS Word Visual Basic Step by Step

I have always found that the Microsoft Press Step by Step series can take users from zero experience through fairly good skills. Sadly this title has not been updated since Word 97, although the object model has not changed too much and the language syntax is principally the same. I first learned VBA through the Excel 95 step by step book. The Excel titles have been kept up to date and the VBA skills in those books transfer readily to Word.



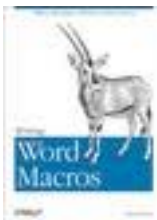
SAMS Teach Yourself Word 2000 Automation in 24 hours.

This book is targeted at VBA/macro beginners as well.



Word 2000 VBA Programmer's Reference

This little book never leaves my side when I am building a solution. A very handy reference on VBA as it specifically applies to Word.



Writing Word Macros

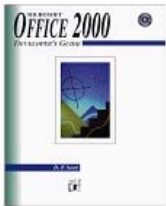
A great book that goes with the philosophy that the easiest way to learn VBA is to let the Macro Recorder teach you. Not necessarily for absolute beginners as the VBA coverage is not too in-depth.



Word 2000 VBA Document Automation

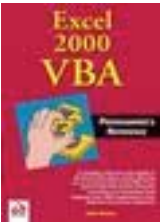
This is a highly regarded title for those that already have exposure to VBA concepts and the word object model.

Other Office VBA Titles:



Microsoft Office 2000 Developer's Guide

This huge 900-page volume is a great reference for development in VBA across the entire MS Office Suite



Excel 2000 VBA Programmer's Reference

This a companion title to the Word 2000 VBA Programmer's Reference above. Invaluable for developing VBA automation that includes spreadsheet features.

Websites and OnLine Resources

Word-VBA Code Samples by JoJo Zawawi

<http://www.jojo-zawawi.com/code-samples-pages/code-samples.htm>

A great short collection of Word VBA code samples.

VB Programming for Non-Programmers from About.com

<http://visualbasic.about.com/library/courses/blecvbai0201.htm>

Microsoft User News Groups

Lots of certified MS Gurus and other helpful folks hang out on these news servers and can provide help.

microsoft.public.word.vba.addins
microsoft.public.word.vba.beginners
microsoft.public.word.vba.customization
microsoft.public.word.vba.general
microsoft.public.word.vba.userforms

Accessible through your newsreader or at
<http://communities.microsoft.com/newsgroups/default.asp>

Woody's Office Portal

<http://www.wopr.com/>

Site of a writer of technical books on MS Office. Has a useful newsletter.

USING OUTLOOK® PUBLIC FOLDERS TO MANAGE INFORMATION IN A CORPORATE LEGAL DEPARTMENT*

**Materials for the
Association of Corporate Counsel 2004 Annual Meeting
Program 602
Technology Tools for Small Law Departments**

By David A. Munn**

Summary: This article will explore some of the options available for matter management and how a law department can achieve some of the benefits of a matter management system by simply making more effective use of the technology already available to it. Given the ubiquity of Microsoft Office, it's a safe bet that most in-house lawyers use Microsoft Outlook, so that's the focus of this article. Like other Microsoft products, Outlook doesn't come with a manual telling you how to adapt it for use in a corporate legal department. Recognizing that most law departments are relatively small and will have limited IT support, most of the suggestions in this article are not particularly difficult from a technical standpoint and can be accomplished by an average user.

Nevertheless, please work closely with your IT department before implementing any of the steps described in this article.¹ Above all, make sure your IT department has a reliable and tested backup procedure before committing any critical data to any electronic information management system. Disasters do happen, and people do make mistakes. Your planning should take these possibilities into account.

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Rules
Working with Email
Shortcuts
Searching Public Folders
Moving Public Folders
More Public Folder Tips**

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* An earlier version of this article was published in the July/August 2002 issue of the *ACCA Docket*.

** The author is an attorney at Fair Isaac Corporation in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

INTRODUCTION

The Challenges of Digital Information

“We just have to get our department better organized. I can never find what I need. We have all these computers, but I still can’t find things. Why does this have to be so hard?”

How many times have you heard these thoughts expressed in your department – or thought them yourself? Let’s face it. You can’t run a law department without organization, but getting organized sometimes seems to be tougher than ever.

Traditional filing systems for paper files can be quite effective – except for the seemingly universal tendency of lawyers to want to “organize” everything in piles stacked on every horizontal surface they can find. More often than not, however, the information we deal with today is in digital form. We’ve moved from an era when organization of information meant dealing with the relatively simple concepts of paper files and piles of papers on lawyers’ desks, to the age of “virtual files” and “virtual piles” – the electronic equivalent of those paper files and piles of paper – which are harder to see, and which can reside in so many more virtual places.

The promises of digital information – available to whomever needs it wherever they are – often gives way to the reality of too much information that nobody can find. Even though we all have computers and other marvels of technology, they don’t come with built-in systems for organizing a law department. Because digital information takes many different forms (e.g., email, spreadsheets, faxes, and word processing documents) that do not necessarily exist in the same virtual location or system, organizing it is not as simple as replacing a paper file with an electronic equivalent. Unfortunately, for many lawyers, the age of email and electronic documents has meant not only that they have more information to deal with, but also that they have more places where they can lose things – and while paper files had the virtue of being visible, the multitude of often invisible places where digital information can reside can make it much harder to find than paper files ever were.

To make matters worse, there is essentially no limit to the number or size of virtual piles we can create. We can store information in corporate email systems, in personal contact lists, on folders in hard drives, on floppy disks and CD-ROMs, on servers, and on backup tapes. No longer does finding information simply involve finding that paper file – or the right pile. Without systems for organizing digital information, it can become as hard or harder to locate as it is to find that piece of paper you know you had on your desk just last week – let alone trying to locate information someone else in your department has in her own virtual piles.

Matter Management Systems

So how do we go about making sense of all this information? More specifically, how can we use technology to improve the processes and better organize the information typically found in a law department?

Matter management systems (also called case management or practice management systems²) are often touted as the final answer to a law department's information and document management needs, and some of them are trying to approach this ideal. There are a number of vendors (see Sidebar) that offer systems that promise to be "your total practice management solution," or something to that effect. Some of these systems offer an impressive array of features, and there is no question that the best of them have the potential to organize your department and, in fact, to revolutionize the way you practice law.

But does that mean that every law department needs to have a matter management system? The answer to that question is – Yes! – every law department, from a one-lawyer department to the largest mega-department, needs a system for managing the flow of work, the information about the matters it deals with, and the documents related to those matters. But that doesn't mean that a commercially available matter management system is the only answer.³

Choosing and implementing a commercial matter management system can be a major undertaking, and not every law department is ready or able to make that commitment.⁴ Not every department will be able to get IT support for a system that will only be used by a small number of people in the company. And at this point a matter management system is somewhat of a gamble. There are a lot of systems out there, but at least among those designed for corporate law departments, there are not yet any real market leaders.⁵ That means that it's not as simple as choosing the system that everyone else is using, the way you can with an office suite. In addition, industry consolidation is almost inevitable given the number of vendors, meaning that some of the current vendors probably won't be around in a couple of years. You don't want to make a major commitment of time and resources to a proprietary system, only to have your vendor disappear a year or two later.⁶ As the market matures, a few of these systems will likely emerge as the leaders that will set the standards and make these choices easier, and although that may be starting to happen, this is still an immature market.

If you have the option, hiring the right consultant to assist with planning, implementation, and training related to a matter management system can be an excellent investment. But keep in mind that consultants who specialize in assisting lawyers with technology—few of whom work extensively with corporate law departments—tend to recommend the systems that they sell and/or with which they are most familiar. Check references and make sure the consultant that you use has a record of success in working with corporate law departments.

Matter Management Vendors:

Systems designed for corporate legal practices:

Bridgeway (www.bridge-way.com)

Case & Point (www.caseandpoint.com)

Web site claims the system is used by more than 250 companies.

CaseTrack (www.case-track.com)

Corprasoft (www.corprasoft.com)

Inslaw (www.inslawinc.com)

Law Manager (www.lawmanager.com)

LAWTRAC (www.lawtrac.com)

LegalEdge (www.legaledge.com)

Mitratech (www.mitratech.com)

Serengeti Tracker www.serengetius.com

SmartCounsel (www.tripointsystems.com)

TyMetrix CynOps (www.cynops.com)

Systems generally used by law firms:

Abacus Law (www.abacuslaw.com)

Amicus Attorney
(www.amicusattorney.com)

LawBase (www.lawbase.com)

Legal Files www.legalfiles.com

ProLaw (www.prolaw.com)

STI Legal (www.stilegal.com)

Time Matters www.timematters.com

Systems built on Microsoft Outlook:

InControl:
www.infoware.ca/content/inctrl.html

Existing Technology

So what if you aren't ready to take the plunge into a full-featured matter management system? Sometimes the best approach with technology is to try to make better use of what you already have before you buy something new. Companies have spent a lot of money on technology over the past several years, and the technology available to us as corporate employees is getting better all the time. Are your department's needs that different from those of the rest of the company? Do you really know what your current technology is capable of, and are you using more than a small fraction of that capability? Do you really want to add one more piece of software that your department will have to learn – and probably still not take full advantage of? If you add a new software program, will it actually accomplish the goals you want, or will it simply be one more place where you have to input and search for information? Given these considerations, it's worthwhile to at least consider the capabilities of your existing technology.

Is it realistic to think you can use existing technology in place of a commercial matter management system? Well, it depends on what you want to accomplish and it depends on what your alternatives are. While most home-grown systems will never achieve the capabilities of a good commercial matter management system, if your primary needs are to become better organized, to share information, and to improve efficiency, you may be surprised what you can accomplish with your existing technology. In addition, there are advantages to using a system that is the same as what everyone else in the company is using, rather than a proprietary system. For example, no additional software is required, it's easier to provide access to persons outside the department, there are no additional licenses to purchase, and training and support issues are reduced.

Microsoft Outlook for Matter Management?

Most of us who use Microsoft Outlook have probably wondered at some point why Outlook couldn't be used as a matter management system. Outlook is a powerful personal *information*-management and email program, and it has a lot of similarity to a matter management system. However, it does not come close to the *groupware* functionality of a true matter management system. However, it turns out that Outlook, while it does have limitations, also has much more power than most people realize.

The power of Outlook as a shared information system comes from a feature called Outlook Public Folders.⁷ “Public folders are shared databases, accessible by anyone with the appropriate permissions, that can contain any of Outlook's item types. In addition, public folders can also store documents, threaded discussions, newsgroup feeds and scheduling information.”⁸

Most Outlook users understand how to create subfolders where they can organize and file email. Public Folders can be thought of as super folders, where you can store not only emails, but many other types of information – and make it accessible to anyone else within or outside your department that you choose.

In addition, it is possible to create custom forms in Outlook that can be linked to a database to store some of the kinds of information you might want to track in a matter management system. Figure 1 shows a custom form we developed (with considerable assistance from our IT department) to track matters in our department.

While that is *starting* to look like a matter management system, it's time for a reality check. Although it can be done, the amount of planning and effort required to turn Outlook into a true matter management system is probably more than most law departments (and IT departments) are going to want to take on. As will be discussed below, with a modest amount of planning and effort Outlook can become a great tool for storing and sharing many kinds of information, but if you want the features of a true matter management system, you may be better off going with a commercial matter management system.

However, for many law departments a commercial matter management system is not an option. And even if it is, unless you are able to find a matter management system that is integrated with your email system, you'll probably continue to use your corporate email system, and you'll need a way to organize the information in the email system. Therefore, whether your department decides to go with a commercial system, design its own, or some combination of the two, the steps described in this article may help you in the planning process and may show you ways to use your current software that you might not have realized were possible. It may even give you some insight into what features you want to look for in a commercial matter management system if you decide to go that route.

Because of the limitations of Outlook as a matter management system, what I recommend is that you consider using Outlook Public Folders primarily as a filing system for storing email and documents, and possibly as a place for shared calendars and contacts. The rest of this article focuses on the use of Outlook as what I would call an information management tool rather than a true matter management system. The idea is to get as much as possible out of Outlook with a reasonable amount of effort and minimal need for involvement of your IT staff.

What can you do with Public Folders?

Public Folders in Outlook have a number of characteristics that make them suited for use as a law department information management system.⁹

1. Public folders are very flexible. They can contain a group calendar, email, documents, threaded discussions, notes, and custom forms.

Interested in going paperless? Reducing paper to electronic form by means of scanning and computer-based faxing is beyond the scope of this article. However, the goals of information consolidation, universal access to information, making information easier to locate, and remote access can be greatly enhanced by turning paper documents into files that can be stored in an electronic system. Public folders can be used to store scanned documents and can also contain electronic voice messages, photographs – anything that can be stored in digital form.

2. Because Public Folders can be made available to many people, they are perfect for sharing information about a case or matter, about subjects of interest to the law department, or items of interest to any other group within the company. If department members file their emails and other information in “Personal Folders” within Outlook, that information is stored on the user’s hard drive – where others don’t have access to it. In contrast, if matter information is stored in a Public Folder and the attorney working on a matter is out of the office and unavailable, any information in that Public Folder is available to anyone in the company with the appropriate permission, making it much easier for another person to find out what’s happened on a file and pinch hit in an emergency.
3. “Public” doesn’t necessarily mean that anyone in the company has access. Access to Public Folders can be controlled so only designated individuals or groups have the ability to view folders or perform other actions (e.g., create, edit, delete) on items within a folder.
4. Public folders can be searched by name and description [Tools menu, Search Public Folders], making it possible to answer questions like: “What matters have we worked on where Company X was involved? (As long as the folder name or description includes the name of Company X or any other information you might want to search for.)¹⁰

5. If you are a laptop user, Public Folders can be made available offline by adding them to your Public Folder Favorites [Highlight the folder you want to make available offline, go to the File menu, choose Folder and Add to Public Folder Favorites, click Options, choose the options you want for that folder]. Before the days of remote access and wireless connectivity, this was more important than it is today. Because offline folders can significantly slow synchronization, I recommend that this feature be used on a limited basis and only when necessary.

The Planning Process

Here are some tips to keep in mind in the planning process.

Whether you are dealing with a commercial matter management system or building your own information management system, planning is critical. It is essential to have one person in the department with the responsibility to champion and oversee the project. It is also important to have support and input from your IT department, from law department management, and from the people who will actually be using the system.

Less is often more. Try to design systems that will support as many of the processes in your department as possible. Try to keep information in as few places and as few systems as possible.

In designing your systems, look for opportunities to use the technology to improve the way your department operates rather than just trying to automate existing processes. Try to simplify your systems as much as possible – people won't put up with complicated or time-consuming processes for long.

Don't try to design the perfect system from the start. Once you think you have a system that is close to what you want, consider rolling it out to a small number of users before turning it over to the entire department. As we designed our system, we received valuable feedback from the initial users that allowed us to make changes while it was still relatively easy to do. Even after you roll the system out to the entire department, continue to improve the system, but understand it will never be perfect.

DESIGNING AND USING AN OUTLOOK PUBLIC FOLDER SYSTEM

Getting Started with Public Folders

Once you've decided that you want to use Outlook as a shared information management tool, how do you get started using Public Folders? If you are using Outlook and you don't already have a public folder dedicated to your department, ask your IT department to get one set up. You can find Public Folders at the bottom of your Outlook folder list (Figure 2). You will also want the IT Department to limit access to the folder to the appropriate persons within your department and to set the appropriate access permissions for each person. To make sure that general company users cannot access the folders within your system, set the default folder permission to None. If you decide to create a public area that is accessible to general users, you can change the default within that area only. Setting permissions is discussed below.

Folder Organization

Once your main Public Folder is set up, you will have to decide how you want to organize subfolders under the main folder. Creating a new subfolder is easy if you have been given permission to do so by your system administrator. Simply right-click on the main folder in which you want to create a subfolder and choose "New Folder."

The way you organize your folder system is critical to ease of use of the system. What subfolders you need and how you organize them will be determined by such factors as the kinds of matters your department handles, the types of information you want to store, and who needs access to the information. The sample Public Folder structure shown in Figure 3 shows how subfolders might be organized in a simple Public Folder system.

It pays to spend the time to design your folder organizational structure and the rules for creating and organizing folders. At the very least, you will probably want to create a subfolder for each matter handled by the department. The matter folder is the heart of this system. It becomes the repository for almost anything related to the file, and anything put there can be available to anyone working on the matter. The matter folder could even contain subfolders with calendars, contact lists, notes, discussions, documents, and task lists related to the matter. However, in general, it's best to keep the number of subfolders related to a matter to a minimum. For simple matters, you may only want a single folder for email related to the matter, plus perhaps a subfolder set up at the end of the matter containing any final documents related to the matter (e.g., contract documents, reports, or settlement documents). Or you may want to set up a subfolder specifically for draft documents so they can be easily located. For more complex matters, you may want to set up multiple subfolders to better organize the information. The only limiting factor is how much complexity is appropriate for any given matter. In many cases the added complexity is not only unnecessary, but actually counterproductive. It's easy to move items around from folder to folder, so additional folders can be created or deleted at any time as the need arises.

It's a good practice to include some portion of the matter name in the name of any subfolders created for each matter. The reason for this is that when moving email from the Inbox or Sent Items into the matter folders using the "Move to Folder" icon or command, a list of recently used folders will come up. It would be confusing if the list of recent folders contained a number of folders named "Documents," with no indication of what matter that folder related to.

The goal is to design a system that is easy to use, that is intuitive, and that allows people to quickly locate the information they are looking for. The drawbacks of multiple folders include additional complexity, the inability to see everything in one place, and the fact that the contents of Public Folders can't be directly

searched. The more subfolders someone has to look in to find relevant information, the harder it can be to find that information.

Security considerations may also dictate your folder structure. If the department deals with certain matters where access needs to be restricted to a small group, you may want to set up a folder where subfolders related to those matters are kept and restrict access to that main folder. Restricting access to folders involves setting permissions. Permissions are set in the folder Properties dialog (right click on a folder, choose Properties, and click on the Permissions tab). Permissions can be set to prevent or allow users from viewing contents of a folder, creating and modifying items, and deleting items. See Figure 4. If the permissions are set using defined user groups within Outlook rather than on an individual basis it will make keeping the permissions up to date when personnel changes take place much simpler.

Because Outlook is such a flexible system, it is important that everyone using the system understand how your system is designed and how they are expected to use it. Simply giving users access to your Public Folder system without rules and training is an invitation to disaster. Even though people may resist following rules, consistency is the key to a system that will be efficient and easy for the entire legal team to understand and use. Although we try to keep the number of rules to a minimum, it is critical to enforce some rules to make the system most useful and to avoid system chaos. The more information people put into the system, the more useful it will be – but only if people consistently follow the rules.

A logical folder structure, together with folder naming conventions that make it easy to identify the contents of each folder, can make a big difference in the usability of the system. In fact, if you already have a paper filing system that works well, you may want to consider duplicating the organization of your paper system in a Public Folder system as you transition from paper files to virtual files. In general, the more similar your various systems are, the easier it will be for people to use them.

Types of Folders and Subfolders

The default Public Folder type (Mail and Post Items) is the most flexible type of folder, and the one you would use most often. In addition to mail, it can contain “Posts.” A Post is similar to an email, except that it is simply “posted” to the folder rather than being sent as an email. A post is analogous to putting a note or a document into a paper folder. Figure 5 is an example of a posted item, which shows how a Post can be used to store documents as well as provide some additional information about those documents. Contrast this with a typical folder view you might see with a shared Windows folder, to see why Public Folders showing information in context can be so much more useful for document storage than the typical Windows file list on an individual hard drive or a shared network drive.

To post a message to a Public Folder, choose New Post in this Folder from the Edit menu or use the “New” button on the Outlook toolbar. Posts can also be used to create discussions using the “Post Reply” command. You can also file email in a Mail and Post Items Folder to make the email accessible to anyone with access to that folder.

Public Folders can also be set up to contain moderated discussions, which allows the folder owner to review and control what can be posted to the folder. You might want to use the Moderated Folder option to create a “Library” folder as a shared repository for information that is not related to a matter, and where one person is responsible for controlling what gets posted to that folder. Examples would include standard forms and topical information. Access the Moderated Folder options through the Administration tab of the Properties dialog.

You may want to create a shared calendar (e.g., a department vacation calendar) or a shared list of contacts. Figure 6 shows the different types of folders that can be created.

Copying contact information or calendar information from a personal contact list to the shared contacts or calendar folder, or vice-versa, is a simple matter of dragging and dropping. However, one thing to be careful of is that, because Outlook does not use a “relational database,” if there are multiple copies of information (e.g., contact information for an outside counsel in your own personal folders as well as in a shared Public Folder), and that person’s contact information changes, it is necessary to make the change in every place that information is stored. Most, if not all, matter management systems are built on relational databases, so it is only necessary to make changes in one place, and they will show up wherever that contact is referenced.

The types of information you will be storing will affect how you want to organize your folders. For example, the Board Communications and Minutes folder in Figure 3 is organized by year because that is a logical way for people to search for that kind of information. In contrast, the File Cabinet is organized alphabetically by the name of the other party because for matters involving contracts or litigation the party name is generally a more logical way to organize information than the year the contract was signed or the year the litigation was initiated. If the year is important, there are other ways to capture that information and make it searchable. (See Searching Public Folders, below.)

Matter Identification, Folder Names and Descriptions

One of the downsides of Public Folders is that, unlike searches in Personal Folders, searches in Public Folders will not look at the contents of the folders. The only fields that can be searched in Public Folders are the folder name and the description. (See discussion of Searching Public Folders, below.) Right click on a Public Folder and choose “Properties” to get to the properties screen, as shown in Figure 7. Note that the folder name in this case is the name of the other party. The folder Description contains other information about the company that might be useful or that someone might want to search for in the future. Figure 7 shows information that applies to a contract. Note that all the information in the Description is searchable, so careful planning can ensure that the information put into the Description will be the information that will be most valuable to anyone searching your system.

I highly recommend a numbering system for identifying matters. Our department’s system simply uses a consecutive number that is generated for every matter when it is opened. Every email, every contract, and all correspondence should include a reference to that matter identification number. Since our department handles thousands of matters and hundreds of contracts every year, this simple rule saves countless hours in filing and searching.

If the matter number is included in the name of the folder for that matter, it becomes easy to search your Public Folders to find the folder or folders related to that matter. Figure 7 shows an example of a folder name including a matter number. The folder name identification convention shown is:

[Other Party Name][Short Matter Description][Year folder was created]-[Consecutive number assigned to matter][Initials of staff member assigned to the matter].

Although the folder name contains the year the matter was started, I recommend that the matter number itself be a unique number that is not reset each year. Using that system allows the matter number itself to be the only necessary identifier for emails and documents, and it should make searching the Public Folders related to that matter easier and more effective.

Outlook organizes folders in alphabetical order, so start the folder name with a logical matter name that will organize your folders in a way that makes sense in your system. If you want to force a non-alphabetical order, start the folder names with a number, which will take priority over a file starting with a letter.

Creating the Public Folder for each matter (and setting security for that matter if necessary) should be part of a standardized file opening process. Part of that process should also involve creating a database that contains basic information about the matter. As previously discussed, it is possible (though not necessarily recommended) to use custom forms in Outlook to create this kind of a database, but that is beyond the scope of this article. Creating non-Outlook databases for tracking matters is covered in other materials for this program.

Rules

Keep in mind that one of the main objectives of using a Public Folder system is to share information and to allow anyone to find information. By establishing and enforcing rules regarding the creation, naming, and use of your Public Folders, you can make it easier for people to find the information they need. One of those rules should be that the Public Folder system is the primary location for storing emails and documents. People should get in the habit of filing emails and documents related to a matter in the folder for that matter as soon as possible.

Working with Email

In our system, every important email that we need to save should be filed in the Public Folder created for that matter or a subfolder under that primary folder. There are many tricks for organizing email and other items in Outlook (e.g., using rules for automatically sending emails to designated folders), but one of the most important principles is that you should not use your Inbox or your Sent Items folder for storing email. If you don't need to keep an email, delete it. If you need to do something with it, you can create a Task or a calendar entry by dragging the email to the appropriate icon on the Outlook taskbar. If you need to save it, move it to the proper matter folder.

Each person will have a different style of working with open matter folders, and that is one area where we allow users to have flexibility. However, each user needs to develop a system for easily and quickly moving email into the proper folder. It's a good practice to move email into the proper folder as soon as possible. Moving emails to Public Folders is exactly the same as moving them to any other Outlook folder.

Shortcuts

To make it easier to get to the folders you use most often, you can create shortcuts on the Outlook shortcut bar by simply dragging the folder to the shortcut taskbar. Since most of the email that needs to be stored in the system either comes in to the Inbox or will be in the Sent Items folder, having a shortcut to your Sent Mail folder (See Figure 8) makes it easier to get to your sent emails to file them in the proper matter folder, which is something everyone should be doing on a regular basis. If you have numerous shortcuts, you may need to select the "Small Icons" taskbar option.

Searching Public Folders

The real value in creating a Public Folder system comes when people are able to quickly find the information they need. The primary keys to finding information are a logical structure of folder organization and the ability to search the folder system. As previously noted, Outlook provides the capability of searching Public Folders, but the search is limited to the folder name and description. To search for Public Folders, choose "Find Public Folder" from Outlook's Tools menu. You can choose to limit your search to particular folders, and you can search the folder name, description, or both. See Figure 9.

This is where the folder name and description become critical. The more information contained in the folder name and description, the better your search capabilities will be. Establishing rules for folder naming and for what is included in the folder description will pay off every time someone searches your Public Folders. For example, if you want to be able to search for folders created in a particular year or involving a particular jurisdiction, you could put the year and the jurisdiction in the folder description and search the description.

Searches can be limited to particular subfolders, so if you want to be able to search for litigation matters without searching other matters, you could maintain litigation matters in a separate subfolder structure. On the other hand, if you want to be able to see all matters involving a particular party without doing a search, an alphabetical organizational structure including all matters might make more sense.

Although Outlook doesn't provide for searches of the contents of Public Folders, here's a trick that can be used if you need to search the actual contents of a Public Folder. Simply copy the Public Folder to a Personal Folder, where you will be able to use the more extensive search capabilities that Outlook offers for Personal Folders. Whenever you copy a folder, however, be careful of creating multiple, duplicate folders. See the discussion of Moving Public Folders, below.

Moving Public Folders

Public Folders can be moved from place to place, just like a paper folder. For example, in our system each attorney and staff member has a folder for current open matters. If one attorney starts working on a matter and has the matter folder in her Open Files folder, and she assigns the matter to another attorney or staff member, it's easy to drag the folder from the first attorney's files to the second's. Then, once a matter is complete, it can be moved from the Open Files folder to the File Cabinet for long-term storage.

The system I developed to try to stay on top of my work is to create subfolders under my main Open Files folder (Figure 10). I like to have one folder for matters I know I have to work on immediately (A-Priority), another for matters where I am waiting for someone else to do something (B-Waiting), and another for matters I think are complete, but are not yet ready to be closed (C – Close?). I can easily move matter folders from one place to the other as the status changes. Other people in our department have developed their own methods of organizing their open file folders.

Similarly, individual items within Public Folders can be moved from folder to folder or copied into another folder.

However, there is one major caveat with respect to moving Public Folders from place to place or moving individual items from folder to folder. **Always use the RIGHT mouse button to move folders and items from place to place in Public Folders.** Using the RIGHT mouse button will give you a dialog box that gives you the option to move or copy the item, or to cancel the move. See Figure 11 .In almost all cases, you want to **MOVE** the file or item rather than copy it. If you choose the copy option, or if you use the left mouse button to drag the file or item, you will end up with duplicate folders and duplicate information. If this isn't what you intended to do, *you will create an organizational nightmare.* Unfortunately, Outlook is set up to use Copy as the default when working with Public Folders, so if you move items by dragging them using the left mouse button, you will not get the dialog box giving you the option to move, and Outlook will make a copy of the folder or item *whether you want it or not.* Having duplicate folders and duplicate information is generally not a good thing.

REPEAT: When using Outlook, get in the habit of moving files and items by dragging using the RIGHT mouse button only.

More Public Folder Tips

1. Almost everything of any significance a user works on should be filed in the system. The question to ask is whether you or anyone in the department might ever have a use for the information. If in doubt, save it.
2. Don't underestimate the importance of training of all system users. Even though this system uses software that is familiar to all users, they need to understand how the system is intended to work, why things are set up the way they are, and why it is important to follow the rules. It's also important to have a number of people who understand the system well enough to keep it running even if the most knowledgeable person leaves the department. You do not want to have a system that is completely dependent on one individual.
3. Provide users with clear instructions. Instructions can be included in the system itself. Figure 12 shows some sample instructions.
4. Instead of keeping notes on paper about meetings or phone calls, use postings in the matter folder.
5. Get into the habit of using the right mouse button when working with Public Folders. Using the right button to drag a file gives you the option to move the file or copy it. In almost every case, you want to move the file. Copying a file results in multiple copies of every item in the folder, which can lead to extreme confusion about which is the correct or current item.
6. When you see a date field in Outlook, try typing in "yesterday", "today", "next Wednesday", "end of month", and "5 years" and see what happens. I have no idea how many of these shortcuts are programmed into Outlook, but it's often an easy way to insert dates.

CONCLUSION

What's been described in this article can be the basis for a decent shared information management and organizational system, that can be implemented quickly and without any significant technical expertise. It's not a true matter management system, but it may be a great improvement over your current systems.

Set up and used properly, the system described in this article is an extremely powerful system, yet it's built on very simple principles. Using this system, it is possible to organize in one place everything related to a matter that can be expressed in electronic form. Without doing anything more than taking advantage of the features built into Outlook Public Folders, it is truly possible to make the matter folder the only place one needs to look for every letter, fax, email, spreadsheet, contact, event, and document connected to a matter, and to enable attorneys to work on their matters from almost anywhere.

Because it uses a platform that is common to the entire company, the system easily lends itself to sharing of information and collaboration within the company. It may not have all the bells and whistles of a commercial system, but this system has capabilities that many of the commercial systems don't have.

Prediction: The law department matter management systems that will emerge as the leaders will have the following characteristics:

- Browser-based, requiring only a web browser and little or no internal IT support
- Simple to implement, simple to use
- Both outside law firms and in-house departments will use the same system
- Integrated with corporate email and calendar systems
- Integrated document assembly and document management
- Integrated budgeting and electronic billing
- Cost-effective even for smaller departments

At some point in the future all of this will probably be much easier. There will be a few very good matter management systems that we will all be using to manage our work and connect with outside counsel, and the systems will actually make our lives easier and our practices much more efficient.¹¹ Until then, I hope the suggestions in this article will help your department make much better use of what you already have.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The screenshot shows a web-based form with a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Insert, Tools, Actions, Form, Layout, Help) and a toolbar. Below the toolbar are several tabs: General, File Access, Sales Input, Contacts, and File Closing Info. The form contains numerous input fields and dropdown menus, including:

- ProjectMatterName: [text box]
- DateReceived: [None] DateOpened: [None] DateReopened: [None]
- ClientOtherParty: [text box]
- AdditionalParties: [text box]
- ProductProjectType: [text box]
- FI Client Contact: [text box]
- Responsible Attorney: [dropdown]
- Admin/ParaLegal: [dropdown]
- PhysicalFileLocation: [dropdown]
- File Number: [text box] FiscalYear: [dropdown] SequenceNumber: [text box] SR/AH: [dropdown]
- FileNumber: [text box] FileStatus: [dropdown]
- Project Description: [large text area]
- Status Information: [text area]
- Current Atty. Status Report: [text area]
- LastUpdatedDate: [None] ProjectStatus: [dropdown]
- Remaining Legal Involvement: [dropdown] EstimatedCompletion: [text box]

Figure 1 – Custom Matter Form



Figure 2 – Finding Public Folders

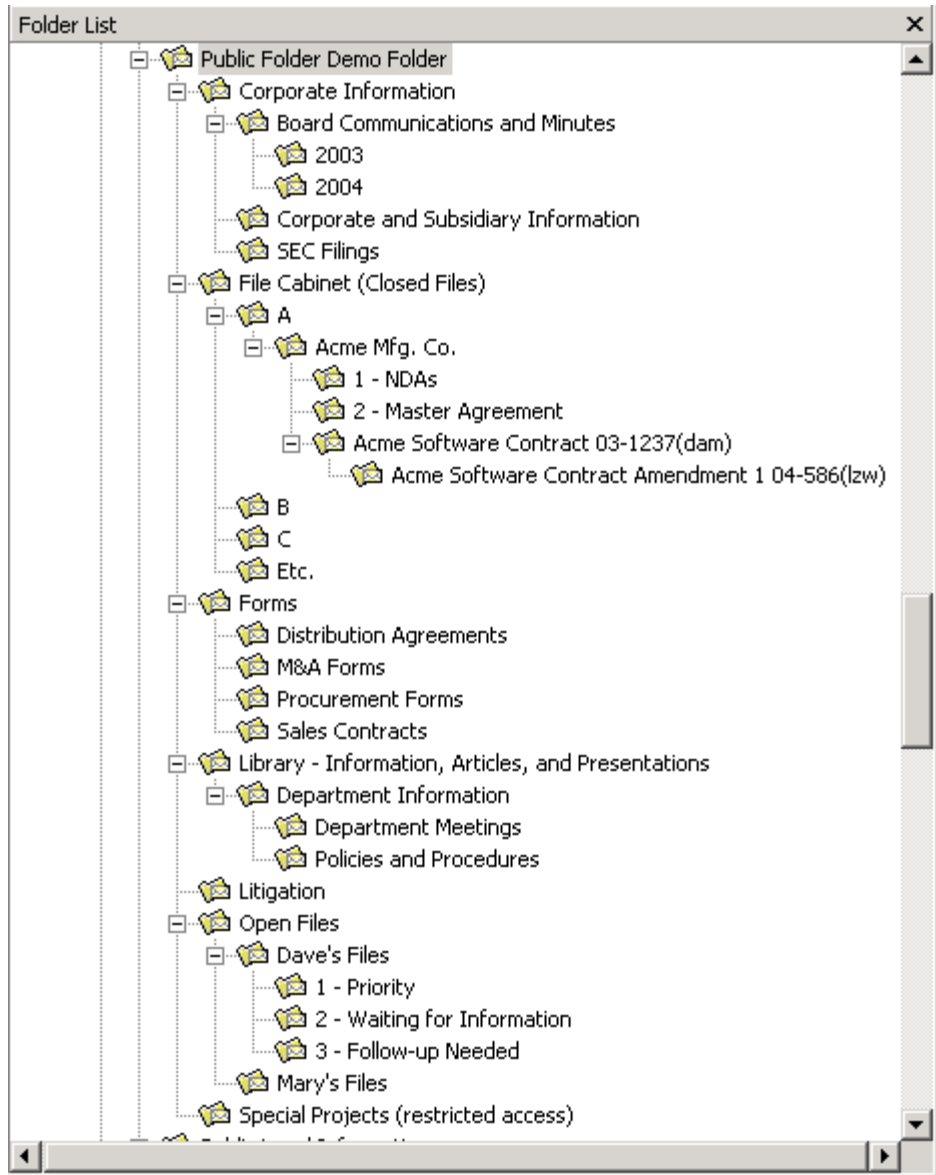


Figure 3 –Sample Folder Organization

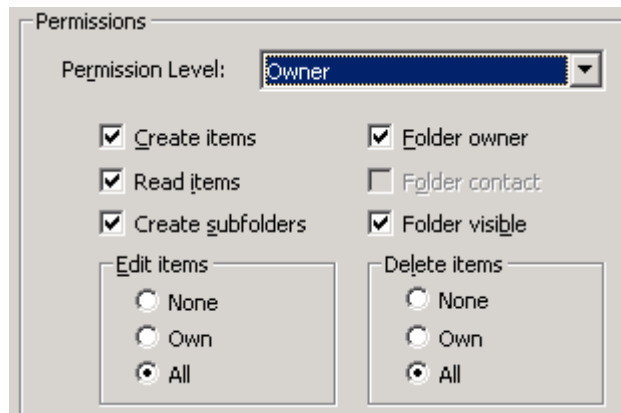


Figure 4 – Folder Permissions

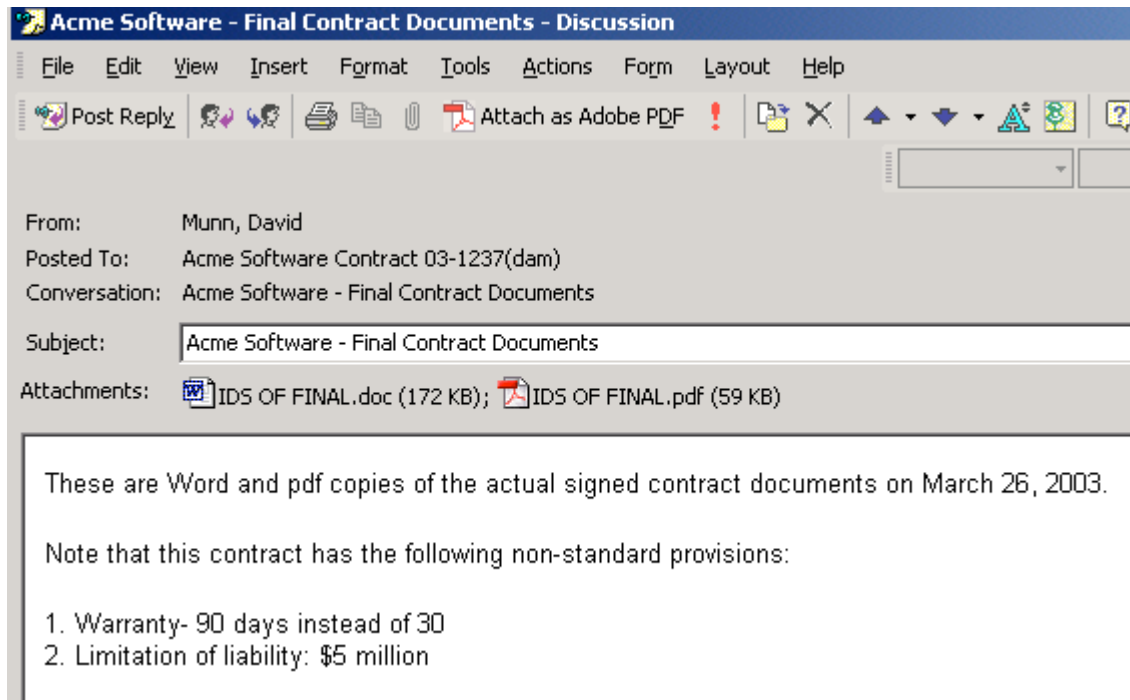


Figure 5 – Post Item – Showing the Flexibility of Public Folders
Note how related documents can be grouped and annotations can be added.

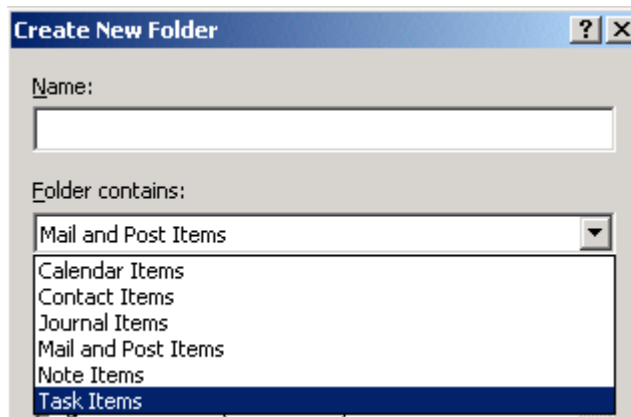


Figure 6 – Creating New Folders
Note that different types of folders (e.g., calendars and contact folders) can be created.

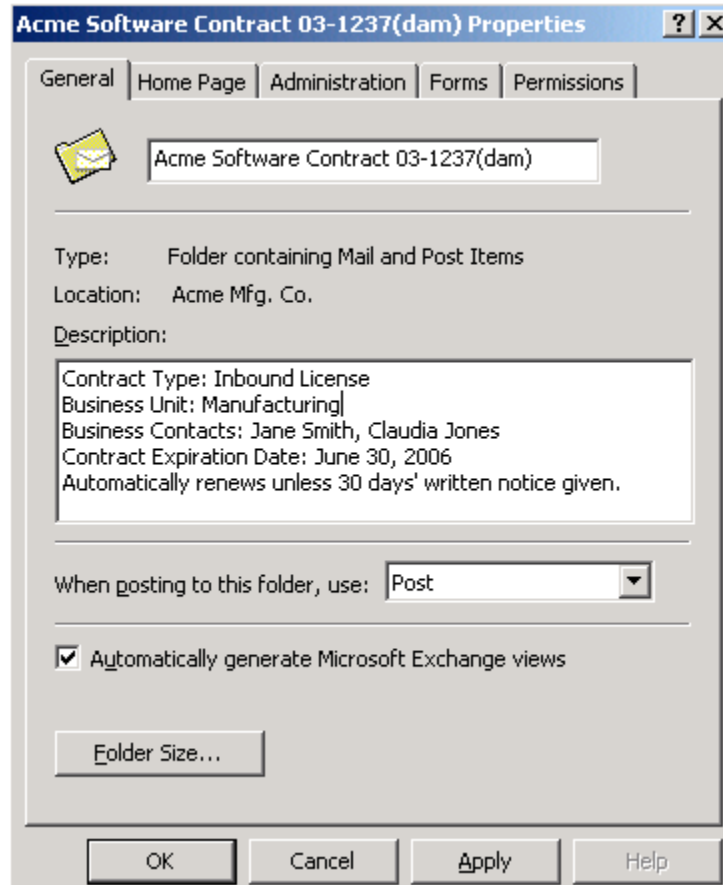


Figure 7 – Folder Properties (name and description)

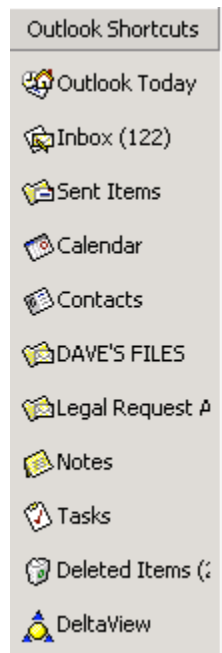


Figure 8 – Outlook Folder Bar with additional shortcuts

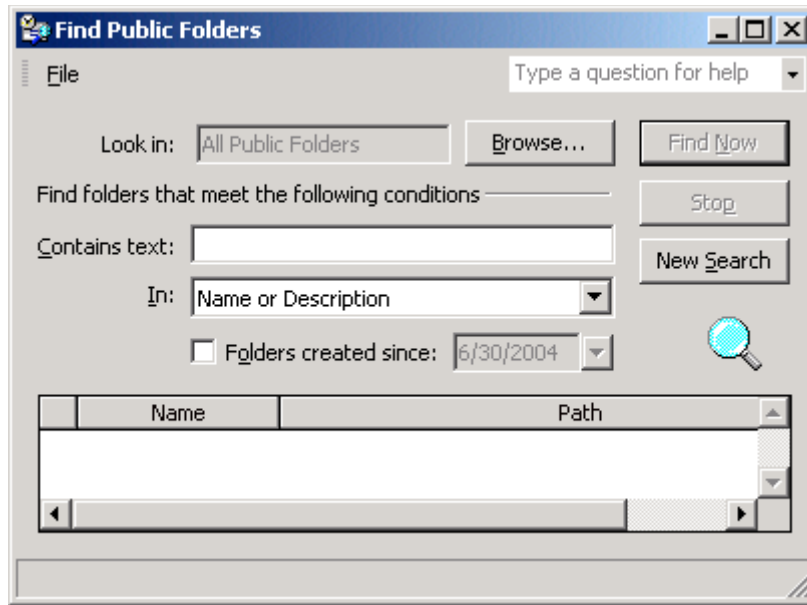


Figure 9 – Searching Public Folders

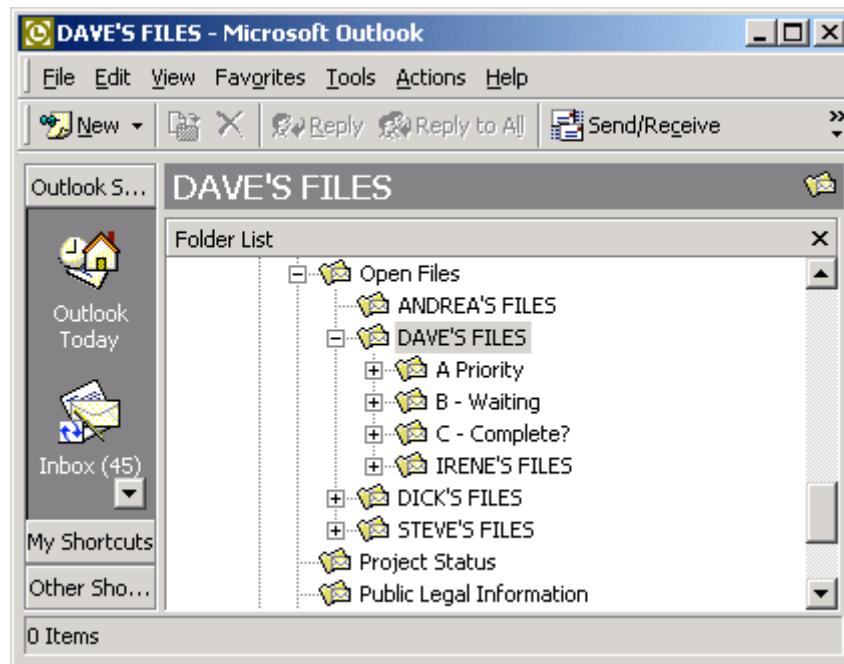


Figure 10 – Example of organization of active open file folders

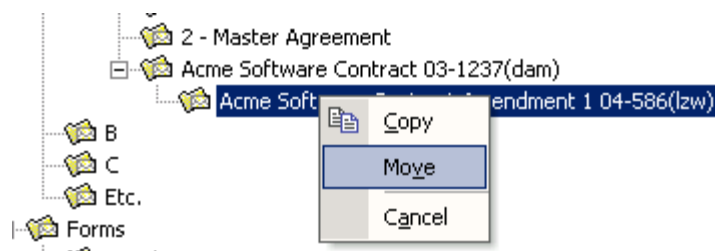


Figure 11 – Moving Public Folders

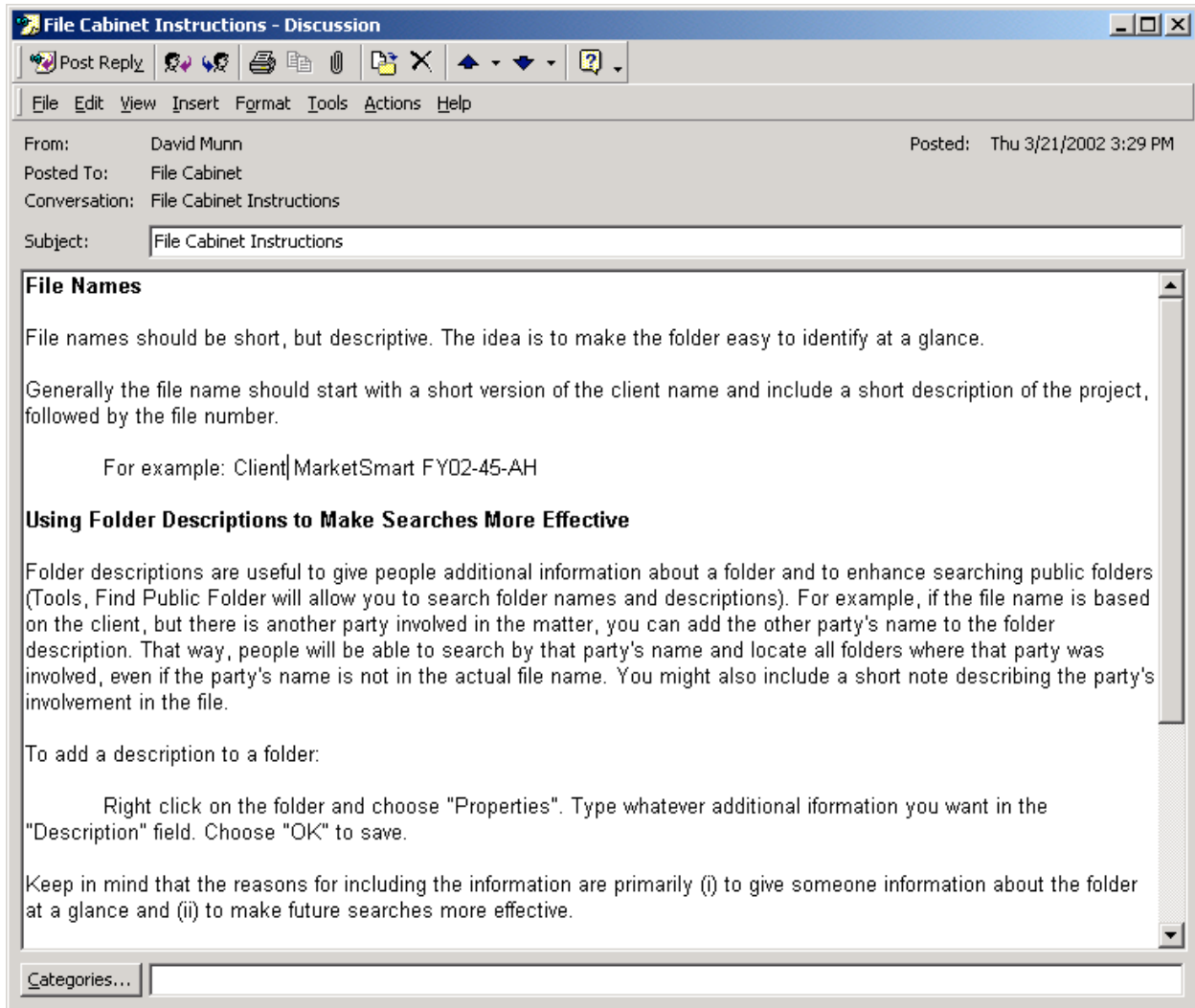


Figure 12 – Sample user instructions

End Notes:

¹ Although every attempt has been made to ensure that the information presented is technically accurate, tested, and reliable, neither the Association of Corporate Counsel nor the author takes any responsibility for any actions taken in reliance on information or suggestions presented in this article.

² I tend to use the term “practice management” to refer to systems that attempt to bring many aspects of a legal practice together in one integrated system, and “matter management” to refer to more limited systems that are primarily information repositories, and do not try to coordinate all aspects of a practice. For simplicity, I will use the term matter management in this article, since that term is more commonly applied to systems for corporate law departments.

³ For a contrary view, see *Practical Rules for Purchasing and Implementing a Matter Management System* by Philip G. Davis, ACCA Docket, April 2000.

⁴For an excellent summary of the advantages of case management programs for private law firms, tips on the planning process, and a discussion of the disadvantages of Microsoft Outlook, see “Case Management Systems:

Practical Tips for Implementation Success,” by Ross Kodner of [Microlaw, Inc.](http://www.llrx.com/features/cmsystems.htm), at www.llrx.com/features/cmsystems.htm.

⁵ In *Corporate Counsel's* 2003 Technology Survey (<http://www.gramtel.net/downloads/sih.pdf>) the leading matter management system was Hummingbird's LawPack, a system that was discontinued in 2001. <http://www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id=1024078857745>

⁶ See “**Legal Anywhere Goes Nowhere**” – Law Technology News, September 2001.

⁷ Outlook Public Folders are available in Outlook run under Microsoft Exchange Server (the typical configuration in a corporate environment).

⁸ **Outlook 2000 in a Nutshell**, Syroid and Leuf, O'Reilly & Associates, Inc., copyright 2000.

⁹ Some Advantages of Microsoft Outlook:


- No additional investment in hardware or software (assuming the company already has Microsoft Office and Microsoft Exchange Server)
- Supported by corporate IT departments
- People already know how to use basic features
- It's used by the entire company
- Built-in support for remote access
- Using the Public Folders features of Outlook allows information to be shared selectively with anyone else in the company who is using Outlook.
- Public Folders are more than just email. Compare the Public Folder post in Figure X with a typical Windows folder view of documents in Figure X. Note that the Public Folder can contain multiple related documents, annotations, and other useful information.
- It's a Microsoft product (it's hard to go wrong with the standard)

Disadvantages of Microsoft Outlook:

- Not a true relational database program that links people, events, and documents to cases and matters.
- Requires time and thought to design a workable case and matter management system.
- It's a Microsoft product (fill in your own comment here)

¹⁰ Unfortunately, although you can search the *name* and *description* of any number of public folders, it is not possible to search the *contents* of more than one public folder at a time.

¹¹ If you want a system that is available today that will connect you with your outside counsel, enable you to implement electronic billing, and provide a variety of management reporting tools, you might want to look at a system like Tracker from Serengeti (See Sidebar). Tracker is a web-based matter management and outside counsel management system. A major advantage of a system like this is that it is a common platform that all outside counsel can use and enter information into themselves, and, being an ASP (application server provider) system, it is not something your IT department has to install or maintain. Combining this type of stand-alone system for managing outside counsel and a separate Outlook-based system for managing email and internal information may also make sense for some departments.




**Program 602 – Technology Tools for Small
Departments<Beyond Email & Word
(presented by ACC's Small Law
Departments Committee)**

●Theresa Seem – Onyx Waste Services, Inc.

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**Creating Microsoft Excel
Spreadsheets for Ease of
Manipulation of Information**

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**Recommend placing all outside
counsel information, location /
division information, matters /
invoices in Excel spreadsheets.**

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WHY?

**Ease of use
Ease of reporting
More efficient use of time**

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Example:
Create legal directory.
Creation of legal directory in Excel spreadsheet can be used to send faxes, write form letters (engagement letter), send letters like policies

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Example:
Create matter listing with invoices.
Creation of matter listing in Excel spreadsheet can be used to show all invoices received during year, all invoices paid during year, total amount spent on one firm, one matter, etc.

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**Example:
Create location listing.
Creation of location listing can be
used to send faxes, write form
letters, send policies, send
memoranda**

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**Once all the information is in spreadsheets, most matter
management systems will be compatible and you can
export the information to your new matter management
system already in Excel.**

**Voila! MICROSOFT ACCESS
DATABASE.**

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