

# Richmond Law's Technology Boot Camp

by Andrew M. Winston

Are law students getting the training they need to use technology effectively when they begin practice? Many lawyers and legal technologists answer with an emphatic “No!” With this need in mind, the University of Richmond School of Law held its inaugural “Technology Boot Camp” on April 16, 2013, in its Robert R. Merhige Moot Courtroom. Richmond Law’s boot camp was designed to introduce its third-year and second-year students to the technology tools they will encounter as they enter practice, as well as some of the innovations that are enabling lawyers not only to provide legal services with greater efficiency, but also, as Professor Richard Susskind writes in his new book, *Tomorrow’s Lawyers*, “To practice law in ways that we could not have done in the past.”

The boot camp featured presentations by experts and practitioners who discussed the role of technology in law practice, and offered guidance and perspective on how lawyers use technology to be effective advocates, advisors, and administrators and to craft practices that may not look like the traditional law office.

Sharon D. Nelson, president of the Virginia State Bar and founder and president of Sensei Enterprises Inc., a nationally-known digital forensics, information security, and information technology firm, served as the boot camp’s keynote speaker. Drawing on her experience as a legal technology expert, Nelson enlivened her presentation with eye-opening facts about the impact of technology on the legal industry, and encouraged students to understand the challenges and opportunities found at the intersection of lawyering and technology.

Alexandre Nemetz-Sinchein, channel programs coordinator at Clio, a legal-practice management software platform for small- to mid-sized law firms, spoke

about how lawyers administer their offices and handle cases and other matters using practice management software. Nemetz-Sinchein introduced the students to essential law office tools such as document management, time entry and billing, and calendaring systems, as well as practice management solutions, like Clio, that offer multiple office functions in an integrated application.

Thomas G. Shaia, deputy commonwealth’s attorney for Spotsylvania County, demonstrated how lawyers can use tablet computers and mobile applications to deliver compelling trial presentations. Making a dramatic entrance from the back of the Moot Courtroom while controlling an on-screen presentation at the front of the room using an iPad, Shaia showed the audience how mobile apps can enable attorneys to give creative, high-impact on-screen presentations in court while being able to move around a courtroom to engage with judges and juries.

Molly Peacock and Laura Sheehan, partners in The Peacock Law Firm PLC, offered insights on how they developed their own virtual law firm. Peacock and Sheehan described how they leveraged technology, along with their experience in larger “bricks and mortar” firms, to develop practices in Northern Virginia that do not require a traditional office space in which to thrive.

Sharon Nelson and John W. Simek, vice president of Sensei Enterprises, concluded the formal portion of the Technology Boot Camp with a discussion of technology-related ethics issues, such as the recent modification to comment 8 to ABA Model Rule 1.1 that requires lawyers to “keep abreast of changes in the law and its practice, including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology.” Their presentation was followed by a drawing at which a student

won an iPad Mini, and an informal dinner and networking session for the attendees and the presenters.

In addition to in-person instruction from technology experts and tech-savvy practitioners, each student received a packet of resources including the 2013 special technology issue of the American Bar Association’s *Law Practice Magazine*, articles and handouts on a number of technology-related topics, and a quick reference guide to various types of law practice technologies compiled by Richmond Law’s Muse Law Library. The quick reference guide included a list of various types of practice technologies, like time entry and billing programs, document management systems, and eDiscovery applications (among many others), with numerous links to vendors and other sources for more information. The guide is now available to the public for free on the Muse Law Library’s website at <http://law.richmond.libguides.com/lawpracticetechnology>, along with numerous other free research guides.



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