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## What's Hot in Marketing Technology for Law Firms?

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### Lessons learned from the [International Legal Technology Association's Conference - ILTA 2010](#)

For the past several years, the International Legal Technology Association (ILTA) has included a one-day marketing technology track at their annual conference. While the track originally focused on client relationship management (CRM) software (namely InterAction), it has grown to include all things related to marketing technology. This year there were four sessions:

- I. Web Analytics and Search Engine Optimization: Smart Strategies
- II. Using Technology for Successful Events
- III. ERM and CRM: Compare and Contrast
- IV. Marketing Technology Roundtable



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## Marketing Technology Session Highlights

### I. Web Analytics and Search Engine Optimization: Smart Strategies

In order to stay competitive it is important that law firms utilize a search engine optimization (SEO) strategy to help improve their rankings in both branded and non-branded searches performed on Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc. This session focused on changes firms can make to their websites to support their SEO goals, including:

- Eliminate pages with duplicate content
- Name URL's rather than using numbers
- Add metadata to all pages
- Create links between pages on your site and use meaningful phrases to describe the content to which you are linking (not just "click here")
- Seek inbound links to pages on your site from reputable sources
- Push out your content as much as possible through e-mail distributions, RSS feeds, social media and syndication services - such as the [National Law Review](#).

Also, the session covered the importance of using web analytics to track how your website is performing and whether the changes implemented are successful. Several free web analytics tools are available, including Google Analytics, Yahoo! Web Analytics and Piwik.

At the end of the session, the panelists provided the audience with [10 Questions about SEO and Web Analytics That You Should Know How to Answer](#).

### II. Using Technology for Successful Events

This session focused on the increasing importance of e-mail communications for events and tools available to manage those communications. Two e-mail platforms were mentioned that link directly to CRM software: [Tikit eMarketing](#) and [Concep](#). The Tikit eMarketing solution requires your firm to have in-house resources to design and send e-mails through your own server. The Concep solution involves a third-party vendor that aides in template design and uses its own servers to distribute your e-mails.

Important things to remember regarding invitations and RSVP forms:

- Include disclaimers, the firm's address and an unsubscribe link (important to comply with CAN-SPAM).
- Apply alt tags for all images.
- Use a combination of images, background color and text, rather than one big image for your invitation.
- Link to a survey in your invitation to find out what people are interested in hearing about.
- Link to a survey in your post-event follow-up e-mails to gauge the response of the audience, find out what else they would have liked to learn and their interest in future events.
- Cross-market events in appropriate client alerts and other news-like e-mail distributions.
- Personalize the e-mail with the recipient's name in the subject line or body of the e-mail for a better response rate.
- Use social media to promote the event to an audience who may not already be familiar with your firm.

### **III. ERM and CRM: Compare and Contrast**

This topic turned into a hot debate among the panelists and drew a large crowd of enterprise relationship management (ERM) and CRM vendors who were anxious to hear how their solutions would be discussed. There were three panelists from different law firms, one with only an ERM solution, one with only a CRM solution and one with both solutions in place. One of the main functions of both ERM and CRM software is tracking "who knows who" among your clients, prospects and referral sources. ERM gathers this information by monitoring e-mail traffic and possibly phone calls of your employees and brings that information into the system automatically. Most CRM systems pull this information from address books in Outlook (and other e-mail systems) and require more active participation from attorneys to be successful.

The message from the panel was that every firm is different, and selecting one or both solutions depends on the culture of your firm and its needs. If you have attorneys who won't take the time to share their contacts through CRM software and will not object to the information being pulled automatically, an ERM solution may work for you. If you have attorneys who are concerned about privacy and want to be able to do more (such as track business development efforts, e-mail marketing lists and client information), the CRM option is the way to go. If you have a combination of needs, you might look into implementing both solutions.

During the presentation, the panelists were careful not to mention what vendors they used, but did supply the following list of ERM and CRM providers that to cater to the law firm market.

#### **CRM Vendors**

[LexisNexis - InterAction](#)

[Versys Corporation - IntelliPad](#)

[Client Profiles/Microsoft - CRM4Legal](#)

[Cole Valley Software - ContactEase](#)

[Hubbard One - Contact Manager](#)

#### **ERM Vendors**

[Cole Valley Software - Relationship Discovery](#)

[LexisNexis - InterAction IQ](#)

[Hubbard One - ContactNet](#)

[BranchIt Corporation - BranchIt](#)

## IV. Marketing Technology Roundtable / Hot Trends in Law Firm Marketing Technology

In the fourth session, all panelists from the previous sessions returned to answer audience questions about marketing technology. The first thing discussed was what's hot or new in the market. Below are some of the advances that are happening now or may be coming your way in the near future.

**Websites:** Looking at the future of law firm websites, the group saw many changes on the horizon. One panelist described a recent demo she attended from [Saturno Design](#) that featured a new tool that essentially sets up a "mapping" feature to deliver customized content to each visitor based on what they viewed during prior visits to your site. Several panelists also predicted a blurring between the traditional law firm site and social media. Examples included pulling content from LinkedIn profiles for attorney bios or replacing the traditional newsletter and alert sections with blogs.

**Video:** Video was a hot topic throughout the sessions. Many firms have already begun to use this medium on their websites and in their electronic communications, adding a human element that was not possible before. Mary Tomaro, Web and Interactive Marketing Manager for [Jones Day](#), said videos on their website have become quite popular. An important note, if your firm is comfortable using YouTube to host its videos, there are two benefits to this approach: 1) you can save the cost of purchasing software to host them yourself, and 2) you can increase the reach of the videos, as they can be spread virally and are more easily found by search engines.

**Mobile Apps:** To date, only a select few firms have released applications for use on mobile devices. The panelists saw this as an increasingly important trend as users move away from traditional desktop computers and use their mobile devices and other tools, such as iPads, to search for and read content. [Read a blog post describing the recent success of Morrison & Foerster's iPhone app.](#)

**Social Media:** Although social media may not be a new tool, many firms have yet to establish a usage policy or firmwide strategy. As you iron out how your firm will utilize social media, keep in mind that relevance is more important than reach – it doesn't matter if you have 2,000 Twitter followers if the content you give them doesn't resonate.

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