



Social Networking and Lawyers

Some sites

- Legal OnRamp (exclusive, aimed at in-house counsel).
- Avvo (more individualized, for attorneys and the public to connect).
- e-circles: California State Bar social networking service (exclusive to California attorneys, referral network).
- Justia: (Includes directory of attorney and legal blogs).
- Lextweet: (directory of attorneys who are using Twitter).
- LawLink: (directory of attorneys, includes Twitter directory).

Issues with attorneys working with law firm who blog, twitter, facebook

- *Does the firm support the effort?
- *Does the attorney brand his efforts with the firm logo?
- *Does the attorney link back from these social networking efforts to the firm website?
- *Does the firm have a written policy about how attorneys can utilize social media as firm employees or members of the firm?
- *If the firm approves and agrees to the attorney branding his efforts with the firm logo and links, who approves or reviews the content to insure he/she isn't revealing information about clients or stating opinions about clients he might not be aware are clients of the firm?

Recent lawsuits involving social media and what they mean

Yelp: (Chiropractor sues patient who used Yelp to complain about chiro's billing practices, settled through mediation).

Facebook:

(Happy Facebook poster busted when claims in lawsuit that his social life had been harmed by his whiplash injuries).

(Also spa worker fired via a private email sent to her Facebook account).

Twitter: (case of the defamatory retweet) tenant forwarded on someone else's tweet about the moldy conditions her landlord supposedly condoned and the landlord sued).

Classmates.com: (case of the Christmas eve email supposedly from old school chum).



Pro and cons of social media for attorneys

***Benefits**

- Easy way to connect with other attorneys for information, tips and referrals.
- Good way to connect to potential clients inexpensively.
- A litigator can obtain a lot of discoverable information that will reveal true intent, behavior and activities.

***Concerns**

- Publishing material that might be funny, intimate that is fine to share with friends and family but not with the general public.
- Commenting on a client matter in such a way as to jeopardize or violate client confidentiality.
- That being active on social media sites as an attorney will violate state bar advertising rules.
- If don't keep it up, looks bad.

Examples of social networking attorneys:

Associate: Chris Cheatham: (LEED attorney, has a very nice blog and strong social media presence).
<http://www.greenbuildinglawupdate.com>

Partner: Lawrence Friedman: (trade attorney, active blog and strong social media presence).
<http://www.customslaw.blogspot.com>

Social networking websites of interest:

- *Stumbleupon: <http://www.stumbleupon.com> (utilizes users tagging articles, video etc. as valuable to others).
- *Digg.com: <http://www.digg.com> (allows you to publish your content and have it ranked by others).
- *Lextweet: <http://www.lextweet.com> (directory of attorneys that tweet).
- *Justia: <http://www.justia.com> (directory of online resources for attorneys including an excellent lawblog directory).
- *Legal OnRamp: <http://www.leglonramp.com> (matches outside law firm with in-house counsel for legal services).
- *Avvo.com: <http://www.avvo.com> (consumer-focused attorney directory).
- *Real Lawyers have blogs: [www.http://kevin.lexblog.com](http://www.kevin.lexblog.com) (LexBlog founder's blog).
- *Twellow: <http://www.twellow.com> (directory of twitterers by category).

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