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Technology can expose strengths and weaknesses of law firms

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Technology is changing the legal world, raising some concerns and developing some interesting

consequences.

We spoke with Leah Freed, managing partner for Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart PC, and Steve Davis, WGM Associates, a Scottsdale-based data security and technology firm that works with law firms and other businesses.

Here are a few of their answers:

How much has technology changed the legal profession during the past couple of years?

Freed: In general, technology has allowed us to receive and send information more quickly and to practice law “on the go” with a more virtual practice. Technology has also provided clients with access to more information, which has increased competitiveness amongst firms.

Davis: Another example is the maturation of e-discovery

applications and the ability to more easily collect and disseminate data electronically. These types of technology also allow smaller firms to compete with larger firms.

What will be the next big thing technology wise when it comes to the legal profession and how lawyers do their jobs?

Freed: With some improvements, voice recognition software could be a useful tool in our practice.

What are the biggest drawbacks to a high-tech legal world?

Freed: The heavy reliance we have on technology is a drawback when the technology doesn’t work. In addition, the cost of keeping up with the latest technology is a struggle in the law firm model. Technology has also increased the pace of work and created an expectation of ‘round-the-clock service – which is, at times, difficult to effectively manage.

Davis: The constant contact phenomenon achieved via mobile technology creates higher client expectations, for example that the firm is “always on.”



Steve
Davis