

THE DAILY RECORD

WESTERN NEW YORK'S SOURCE FOR LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908

How will lawyers use the iPad?

Lawyers' reactions to the iPad are mixed, to say the least.

A few, like myself, are gung ho and can't wait to get their hands on one.

Another minority appears absolutely convinced the iPad is destined to fail from the very start, having little to no utility for the legal profession.

The rest either could care less or are reserving judgment until the dust settles.

In other words, the vast majority of lawyers are not yet sold on the idea of the iPad. Many of those same attorneys, however, have expressed frustration at having to carry around large stacks of documents while commuting or traveling, and have indicated the iPad would hold far more appeal if they could annotate and edit documents on it.

For that group of lawyers, the ability to reduce the amount of paperwork and quickly and easily edit and annotate documents, as if writing on an electronic document, would be a deal breaker.

Those lawyers do not envision creating documents on the iPad, but rather marking up a pleading or contract, making notations in the margins to a draft appellate brief, or commenting on an internal memorandum. Such tasks, currently, are not accomplished easily while on the road, since neither laptops nor smart phones are well suited to those types of document annotations.

The iPad — with a larger screen and unique touch screen functionality — has the potential to change all of that but the real question is, will it?

Not surprisingly, I think it will.

There already are a number of iPhone apps that permit the annotation or revision of a variety of documents. Some are quite popular, others are not — in large part because of the difficulty inherent in working with documents on a screen of such small proportions. The iPad's larger screen will breathe new life into those applications, and other new apps will be developed to allow documents to be annotated and revised on the fly.

Let's take a look at a few of the iPhone apps already available

that permit annotation and revision of documents. Documents to Go Premium — www.dataviz.com/products/documentstogo/premium — allows users to view and edit Word, Excel and PowerPoint files.

RightSignature— <https://rightsignature.com> — allows Word or PDF documents to be signed using the iPhone app. Those files also can be uploaded to RightSignature's Web site for distribution.

Aji — <http://ajidev.com/annotater/index.html> — allows PDs to be signed and marked up, and enables text notes, strike-through text and highlight text. Documents also can be annotated in free form; however, users can't distribute the documents using the iPhone interface. Instead, the annotated document must be processed using Aji's Web site on a computer, then sent.

One app goes a step further — Zosh (<http://zosh.com/>). Zosh allows users to sign, annotate and distribute documents in a variety of formats, including .doc, .pdf, .xls, .ppt, .jpg, .png, .tif and .bmp — all from the iPhone. The app enables users to insert free-form annotations such as a signature and text boxes. The ability to highlight text is in the works, according to Zosh CEO Joshua Kerr.

Some companies that developed the apps I've mentioned already have announced that iPad-compatible apps are in the works. I have no doubt other new apps will be introduced, tailor-made for the iPad. Such functionality will make the iPad a must-have for lawyers and other business users.

While I think the iPad will be used primarily as a device for media consumption, undoubtedly there is room for certain types of business use that will make it a mainstay for business travelers and commuters.

Nicole Black is of counsel to Fiandach and Fiandach and is the founder of lawtechTalk.com, which offers legal technology consulting services, and publishes four legal blogs, one of which is Practicing Law in the 21st Century (<http://21stcenturylaw.wordpress.com>). She may be reached at nblack@nicoleblackesq.com.



By **NICOLE BLACK**

Daily Record
Columnist