

## TL NewsWire: Special Edition Part 1: The Most Significant Legal Products

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We usually cover five new products each week in this newsletter. But we occasionally publish special issues. Today, we have two special issues for you.

In Part 1, eight legal technology pundits who frequently contribute to TechnoLawyer discuss the most significant products released over the past year.

We asked them:

*Of all the legal-specific products released over the past year, choose one of your favorites and briefly explain why it's significant.*

### **NO CLOUDY FORECASTS FOR WEB APPLICATIONS ...**

The acronym SaaS is unfortunate. So is cloud computing. Why don't we refer to applications that run in your Web browser as Web applications? Why did the companies behind these products develop an acronym that highlights their greatest weakness — a monthly subscription fee?

Semantics aside, five of our experts pointed to these products as the most significant of the past year.

Lawyer and document assembly and practice management expert and consultant [Seth Rowland](#) has reviewed several SaaS products for TechnoLawyer. He writes:

*On February 1, 2010, Business-Integrity launched ContractExpress, a cloud-based document assembly engine offered with SaaS pricing (\$200/month). The authoring engine is a simple Microsoft Word plugin that anyone can use to create templates.*

*The magic is a relevance engine that takes a simple markup and turns it into a fully-interactive and dynamic Web-based interview that can be used by anyone with a Web browser. This software is a "people-multiplier" enabling one attorney to do the work of five.*

Document management and practice management expert and consultant [John Heckman](#) didn't pick one product but a group of related products. He writes:

*I think the best answer here is not a product, but a category: SaaS practice management products: [Clio](#), [Rocket Matter](#), [HoudiniESQ](#), and [AdvologixPM](#). When they mature, they will expand rapidly. Some may fail, but others will make up for lost ground.*

Lawyer and legal technology consultant [Ross Kodner](#) whose [recent SmallLaw column](#) has everyone talking also pointed to a class of products, but even more broadly, writing:

*My answer would be all legal-focused SaaS products. While I don't believe any of the products in the billing or practice management areas are yet up to the abilities of their traditionally installed counterparts, the degree of innovation, the more rapid pace of new feature releases, and the flattening of the compatibility curve to allow Macs and any browser-based systems to have capabilities previously unavailable except to Windows users is the equivalent of the 1775 'shot heard round the world' from Lexington (and Concord).*

*Nothing will ever be the same and we may see a confluence of influence that ends up yielding a hybrid system of internally and externally hosted SaaS software from all competitive vendors.*

Legal technology consultant and trainer [Adriana Linares](#) likes one of the SaaS practice management

products so much she now teaches lawyers how to use it. She writes:

*I'm not just saying this because they pay me to conduct their Webinars and I don't just conduct their Webinars because they pay me — but [Clio](#) is by far my favorite new product. It (and other products like it) are breaking the typical barriers to entry that keep lawyers from integrating technology into their practice. It's affordable, easy to use while useful, and low-maintenance.*

Lawyer and legal technology futurist [Mazyar Hedayat](#) agrees with Adriana's assessment, writing:

*The SaaS explosion. My favorite is Clio, but there are a variety to choose from. I am just as big a fan of single-shot SaaS applications like [Tempo](#) for billing, [Freshbooks](#) for invoicing, and [RescueTime](#) for time and billing. It's a SaaS world.*

### **TALKING ABOUT AN IVOLUTION ...**

Apple's iPhone transformed the mobile computing market even before it shipped. With iPhones now selling at a rate of about 30 million units per year and no end to sales growth in sight, two of our experts took note.

Award-winning lawyer and legal marketing expert [Lee Rosen](#) writes:

*[Dragon Dictate for the iPhone](#) is terrific. You speak and it types. It's amazingly accurate and it's free. Speech to text is here. Transcriptionists and typing will soon be limited to those insisting on living in the past.*

Lawyer, author, and legal technology evangelist [Nicole Black](#) — don't miss her new book, [The Lawyer's Guide to Social Media](#) — also singled out an iPhone app, writing:

*[Fastcase's iPhone application](#) is one of my favorite legal-specific products released over the past year. It provides lawyers with the ability to conduct legal research on the fly. It allows users to quickly and easily search Fastcase's entire case law database using the intuitive iPhone interface. And best of all, it's free.*

### **LEGAL RESEARCH REBORN ...**

eDiscovery expert and consultant [Brett Burney](#) follows legal technology trends more closely than just about anyone. He sees something big brewing in legal research. He writes:

*[WestlawNext](#) wins my vote for most significant legal product — not because of the technology behind it, but because of the hype and conversations it has birthed.*

*All lawyers have to do research — it is a fundamental skill. And while the two leading legal research companies have re-packaged and re-wrapped their services for years, nothing has significantly shaken the foundation of how lawyers perform their research.*

*In today's world where it is sometimes easier and quicker to simply Google a case, the time has long passed when legal research companies offered true innovation. [Now we just have to work out the pricing.](#)*

Stay tuned for [Part 2](#) ...

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