

Tax Dollars/Oops Mail/Spam Wars/Bitches from Hell

Your Tax Dollars at Work to Kill You Prematurely

In an effort to make our lives easier, and thus insure that our cholesterol remains above 200 since we will get even less exercise, and probably die early, Circuit, Chancery, and General Sessions court clerks have established web sites that allow anyone to look up cases and a variety of information, such as service date, trial date, parties and their attorneys. Probate does not have cases on line, but it has an incredible array of forms, plus practice tips and other helpful advice for both lay and professionals. Juvenile Court has a web site also, but in an effort to keep us alive longer by forcing us to go to court for information, the site's only information is the fact that Bob Martin is no longer clerk. Oh, and we also get the current clerk's biography. Go to www.co.shelby.tn.us/county_gov/index.htm, where you too can participate in Shelby County's new population control program for older lawyers.

Oops Mail

Ever wonder just how private that email note to you is? Think again. We all know that if you want to conceal the name and email address of a recipient, that person's name is put into the "bcc" section of the email. But what if you get an email from a client in which you are one of the "bcc" individuals, letting you know that your identity has been concealed from other recipients. If you are not paying attention, and "reply to all", you will reveal your identity to everyone on the original list, thus blowing your anonymity. This may not put you on the sender's Christmas list, as you may have breached a confidence, or at the least, embarrassed the sender. To avoid this, make sure that your name is in the "To" box before responding to all. If it does not appear, then you are invisible to all but the sender.

Spam

Speaking of invisibility, it appears that I am the most visible email address in all of cyberspace. This morning upon arrival at work, I found 63 emails waiting for me. Only 3 were legitimate notes from clients or others that I communicate with. I have religiously added thousands of senders to "Block Sender" list in Outlook, but have learned that many spammers have figured out how to get around this feeble barrier by generating new addresses with each mailing. Fortunately, capitalism works both sides of a situation. Public interest web sites (www.spamcon.org; www.mail-abuse.org) feature a host of solutions, from software defenses to lawsuits against the spammers. Right now I am trying Spamkiller, by McAfee (www.spamkiller.com) which comes with thousands of preset address blocks, plus the ability to filter based upon message text. Like its virus scan progeny, it also checks the McAfee server daily for updates. It protects against inadvertent filtering of legitimate mail, as it saves killed mail for 30 days, allowing for easy retrieval. Another product recommended by my chief technoweenie is Surfcontrol, which operates at the server level. It filters both internally and externally. The product can be found at www.surfcontrol.com. Another recommended product is MailMarshall for Exchange (www.mailmarshall.com)

Miscellaneous Stuff

Check out www.ppbfh.com, a lawfirm web site where the “Bitches from Hell” operate. This is a funny, irreverent site created by a group of apparently excellent lawyers who do not take themselves seriously. Very refreshing. Here’s one for your secretary. Call a toll free number anytime, dictate, and then have your document emailed to any location in the world in about an hour for about \$.01/word. Go to www.youdictate.com for more. Finally, check out www.nita.com for its new book, *Effective Use of Courtroom Technology: A Lawyer’s Guide to Pretrial and Trial*. This book covers the use of evidence, cameras, digital projectors, and all other equipment that might be used to enhance a trial presentation. In addition it has a CD-Rom with examples of computer generated exhibits such as animations and useful color combinations that will assist the trier of fact in understanding the concept being illustrated.