

The Latest Gadgets for Today's Immigration Lawyer

WHILE ROAMING THE HALLS of the massive 2005 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, I asked questions about whether there were any new innovations attorneys would find interesting. My questions surprised some of the vendors since our profession has developed a reputation for being behind the curve when it comes to using technology. More than one company representative expressed frustration with selling to the legal market. I couldn't really argue with the overall impression that lawyers tend to be slow to adopt, but I do think that many should be excited by some of the new and soon-to-be released products on display at the nation's largest trade show.

I hope this "favorite gadgets" report from CES will give you a few ideas on some new tools you can use in your practice. Some are very practical, inexpensive items that you can purchase right away. A few are pricier and may only be of interest to the unrepentant techies out there. And I have included a couple of items that are just plain cool even though they won't exactly make you a better lawyer.

Bluetooth Products

This year, Bluetooth products seem to be everywhere. Bluetooth is a standard that allows products to wirelessly connect to each other. So, for example, you can have a Bluetooth ear piece that allows you to talk on your cell phone without taking the cell phone out of your purse or pocket. Or you can send a print job from your laptop to your printer without the need for any cables. At CES, I saw a number of new Bluetooth-enabled products, including: cell phones; network access points/routers; printer adapters; GPS satellite receivers;

digital pens; pocket PCs, Palms, and Blackberries; stereo headsets; mice; keyboards; and speakers.

I was particularly impressed by some of the hands-free Bluetooth devices designed for automobiles. The devices attach to the sun visor or steering wheel, or plug into the cigarette lighter. To check out some of these products, see Kovol (www.ITCwireless.com), Parrot (www.parrot.biz), ECE (<http://commandes.cbhouse.fr/en/catalogue.htm>) and Mr. Handsfree (www.mrhandsfree.com).

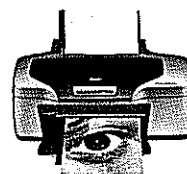
Data Storage

There were a number of advancements when it comes to data storage. IOGEAR's 1.8_ION USB 2.0 drive (www.iogear.com) is a portable hard drive that is only the size of a deck of cards and can store up to 80 gigabytes of data (about as much as your typical high end PC). The drive sells for about \$200 and runs through a USB port and does not require external power—something most of its competitors cannot claim.

SanDisk is the market leader in the manufacture of postage stamp-size CF and SD cards for devices like Palm computers, cell phones, and cameras. They are now selling a CF card with 8 gigabytes of storage and SD cards with 2 gigabytes. The 8 gigabyte CF card will sell for a hefty \$1,000, but you can expect the price to drop quickly.

SanDisk is also producing the first SD card that has built-in USB connectivity. This will, in effect, turn an SD card into a USB flash drive and make it even easier to transfer data from a portable device to a desktop or laptop computer. The new Ultra II SD Plus can be found at www.sandisk.com.

The new Epson Stylus Photo R800 printer has a feature that will interest lawyers. The printer can imprint thumbnail images onto CDs and DVDs using special inkjet printable disks. For firms that are storing backup data on CDs, this can make it possible to quickly determine the contents of a disk without having to load it into a computer. Or maybe you could include the slides of a PowerPoint presentation on the disk itself and provide the disk as a handout at a program.



Epson Stylus Photo R800



Migo USB Wristwatch

A new product from Migo lets you take your personal computing environment with you wherever you go without having to lug your laptop or PC with you. Migo integrates its software into a flash keychain, a smart USB wristwatch, or even your iPod (I know, you were looking for a way to write it off, weren't you?). Migo's software allows you to store your Outlook e-mail, desktop icon setup, Internet Explorer favorites, and your important files on your storage device so that when you connect that device to anyone else's computer, it will seem as if you're on your own computer. And when you're done working, everything is stored on your device leaving no trace of your work on the host computer.

Two major companies are now marketing digitized pens here in the United States. Logitech's io2 Digital Writing System (www.logitech.com) and Nokia's Digital Pen (www.nokia.com/nokia/0,5184,5795,00.html)



Logitech io2 Digital Writing System

are both similar and each live up to the promise of allowing users to leave their computers at home and save all of their notes without retyping or scanning. I had a chance to try out the Logitech pen, and it was the first item I purchased when I came back from the show. The pen has the look and feel of a typical ballpoint writing instrument. But this pen actually stores everything it writes in the pen itself, and when you place the pen on a docking station/recharger attached to your computer via your USB port, the image of what you wrote appears on your screen. The io2 software gives you the option of converting your handwriting to text or sending the image to an e-mail, calendar entry, your to-do list, Microsoft Word, and other applications.

And you can assign key words to your documents so you can find your handwritten notes more easily later on. How does it work? The io2 pen works with special paper that has nearly invisible tiny dots printed in it that track the movement of the pen and send the data back to the pen itself. The paper is relatively cheap, \$4.95 for a 122-page tablet. PostIt® notes are available as well as other paper sizes. This product has so many useful applications for lawyers, it is easy to justify the cost (you can find the pen selling from \$150 to \$200 on various websites).

Emergency Systems

Since 9/11, people have taken emergency preparedness in their offices more seriously. Of course, a weather emergency is the more likely crisis you'll face at home or at work. And one gadget that impressed me enough to buy two—one for home and one for the office—is the \$49 Eton FR300 portable radio (www.etoncorp.com) that has a built-in cell phone charger, flash light, NOAA weather bands, am/fm radio and television bands. It has a crank that can power it for an hour with just a minute of turning.



Eton FR300 Radio

Security Features

Last year at CES, I noticed more products incorporating security features, such as fingerprint recognition technology. One company extending this feature to many of its products is Silex Technology. A product that should especially appeal to lawyers is Silex's biometric-based SecurePrint System (www.silexamerica.com). This relatively inexpensive combination fingerprint reader and USB device server prevents unauthorized access of printed materials at a shared printer in an office. Items are held in storage at the printer until the sender gets there. After the sender verifies his or her identity via fingerprint, the queued print job is released and printed to guarantee that a confidential document is not seen by others.

Satellite Navigation

Two new devices offered by XM Satellite Radio (www.xmradio.com) should appeal to the traveling lawyer. The XM MyFi is the first handheld satellite receiver. Listeners can tune to XM's 150-plus digital music, news, talk, and traffic stations as well as local FM stations. The device also records up to five hours of programming and has adapters that allow it to play in the car, on a home stereo system, or on a boom box. The conventional wisdom that handheld devices without external antennae could not receive a decent satellite signal has been proven wrong. I was impressed by XM's new



XM MyFi

NavTraffic service that delivers current traffic information to a car's navigation system. Late for court? The NavTraffic system will map out a route →

**MISSED THE DEADLINE FOR
OVERNIGHT DELIVERY TO THE BOARD
OF IMMIGRATION APPEALS?**

**WE OFFER SAME DAY SERVICE
TO THE BOARD**

WE ARE ONLY A BLOCK AWAY

**SEND US YOUR BRIEF BY 2:00 P.M.
AND WE WILL PERSONALLY FILE IT
FOR YOU ON THE SAME DAY,
OBTAIN A DATE-STAMPED COPY
AND MAIL IT TO YOU.**

**ALSO AVAILABLE TO FILE
NOTICES OF APPEAL AND MOTIONS**

**BRIEF X-PRESS
FALLS CHURCH, VA
(703) 845-5991**

that avoids accident locations, road closures, and too much congestion.

Personal Viewer

A breakthrough device from Sling Media could transform the way we view television, particularly when we are at the office or on the road. The company's new Slingbox enables people to watch their television programming from wherever they are by turning virtually any laptop or Internet-connected device into a personal TV. The Slingbox connects to your high-speed Internet service and then connects to and "placeshifts" content from any cable box, satellite receiver, or personal video recorder (e.g., TiVo). For example, if you have high-speed Internet, DirectTV, and TiVo (a combination I have in my home office), you could watch DirectTV on your laptop computer when you're traveling, as well as movies or shows you recorded on your TiVo. The Slingbox will charge a flat fee (\$249) and no monthly service charge. You can find more information at www.slingmedia.com. On the other hand, this might make it too easy to catch up on the latest "Desperate Housewives" or "Sopranos" episode when you should be working.

Projection Technology

The most amazing device I saw at CES will probably not have a near-term impact on the legal profession, but it is worth mentioning if only to let folks know how close we are to living in a "Star Wars" world. Remember the hologram of Obi Won projected by R2D2 in the original Star Wars film?

I saw a demonstration of the Benq 231W 3D LCD monitor and was stunned by its three-dimensional image. Think how persuasive computer presentations by courtroom lawyers will be when one day, they are able to incorporate 3D technology? The product is expected to be released in late 2005 or early 2006.

Organization

A much more down-to-earth innovative product is the myKeyO Keyboard Organizer. The handy \$20 computer keyboard opens up like a clam for internal storage of everyday desktop items like pens, CDs, markers, keys, stamps, etc.

Targus made a splash at CES with the introduction of its ladies laptop computer cases. The leading manufacturer of computer bags has managed to incorporate high fashion with the protection needed in a laptop bag. The new bags come in multiple styles and range in price from \$49 to \$149. They can be found at www.targus.com.



Targus Laptop Bag

Wi-Fi

Last year, I told you about a Wi-Fi finder that lights up when you are in a wireless Internet hotspot. I will likely replace it soon with Targus'

new Wi-Fi scanner. The small device can fit onto a keychain and has a digital display that tells you if a network is secure or open (important if you are looking to get onto a public or free network as opposed to a private or pay service) and how strong the signal is. It also uses a single AAA battery that is more convenient than the special-size batteries required on other products.

PC Phones

One product I quickly purchased after seeing it at CES is the HP iPaq h6315 Pocket PC phone. In 2002, I bought an Audiovox Thera, the first Pocket PC phone in the U.S. market. After reviewing many of the products in this category at CES, I concluded that the iPaq gives the biggest bang



HP iPaq h6315 Pocket PC phone

for the buck. If you're looking to leave your laptop computer at home when you travel, the 6315 is as close as you'll get to a replacement. In addition to all the regular features of a Pocket PC, this iPaq is a phone serviced by T-Mobile, has built in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, and has a small snap-on keyboard that makes the product work like the popular Blackberry (it has "push" e-mail like the Blackberry). Also, the 6315

has a built-in camera (not a great camera, but comparable to other phones). Perhaps the best news about the iPaq phone is the long battery life. The phone easily outperforms most others on the market and can go more than a day on a single charge. The iPaq can be found at www.hp.com.

Portable Power

Finally, a product that is a useful complement to the iPaq, as well as any cell phone,



digital camera, iPod, or other handheld device, is the Socket Mobile Power Pack. This little device is about the size of an iPod, but is simply a portable, very powerful battery that can recharge a cell phone 15 times and a Pocket PC up to 10 times without having to find a socket. The Socket battery retails for about \$100 and can be found at www.socketcom.com. ■

Greg Siskind is a partner in the immigration law firm of Siskind, Susser, Haas & Devine.

Articles in ILT do not necessarily reflect the views of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.