

FEATURES

[Law and the Internet: Opportunity](#)

[Knocks](#)

*By Jason Irving Epstein*

[Marketing Your Law Firm on the Internet](#)

*By Gregory H. Siskind*

[A Lawyer's Use for E-mail](#)

*By Gregory H. Siskind*

[A Trial Presentation Graphics Primer](#)

*By William T. Ramsey*

[Essential Web Sites for Lawyers](#)

*By Lucian T. Pera*

[Technology Rules?](#)

*By Lucian T. Pera*

NEWS & INFORMATION

[New tax law leaves some unanswered questions for lawyers](#)

[Use TBAlink® for free on October weekends](#)

[What are the rules for accessing appellate records?](#)

[Judges to be evaluated](#)

[Trust account problems lessen](#)

[Actions from the Board of Professional Responsibility](#)

DEPARTMENTS

[President's Perspective: Is 'one-stop shopping' for professional services next?](#)

*By Randy Noel*

[Letters](#)

[The Bulletin Board: News about TBA Members](#)

[Book Review: The Smaller Business Year 2000 Guide](#)

*Reviewed by Albert B. Maggio Jr.*

[Paine on Procedure: Our trubels getting to California](#)

*By Donald F. Paine*

[But Seriously, Folks! The Supremes' greatest hits!](#)

*By Bill Haltom*

[Classified Advertising](#)

[Back to Main Journal Page](#)

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## A Lawyer's Use for E-Mail:

### More important than a web site

By Gregory H. Siskind

While the web gets the glamour when it comes to discussing the Internet and the legal profession, I still preach what I have for years — the most important component of your Internet plans should be your use of e-mail, not your web site. That might seem surprising coming from someone like me. After all, our firm's web site is our claim to fame. [Http://www.visalaw.com](http://www.visalaw.com), established in June 1994, was the third law firm web site ever and the first immigration law web site, has received nearly 15 million visitors, has received every major award for law firm web sites and has received considerable media coverage. But in terms of the day-to-day servicing of our clients as well as the development of new business, how we use e-mail is still more important.

It is, therefore, interesting how little thought many lawyers who use e-mail every day give to their use of it. That's regrettable since there are many features in the latest e-mail programs that can make today's lawyer more effective and efficient.

A thorough understanding of how to use your e-mail program and shopping to find the best software for your needs are more important than ever. Chances are, most of your clients use e-mail. The other lawyers on the case probably use e-mail. The court or government agency officials you are dealing with probably have it. The volume of messages you are receiving has probably increased considerably in the last year or two and the amount of time you spend reading e-mail will no doubt increase.

In this article, I hope to give you a taste of what is available in the latest e-mail browsers and how you might incorporate these features into your practice. I'll focus on one of the leading programs, Qualcomm's Eudora Pro, not as a plug for the product, but because for years it has been widely recognized as the leader in this type of software. It has a number of features that are either not available elsewhere or are considerably more advanced.

Eudora Pro, unlike its competitors from Netscape and Microsoft, is not free (though Eudora has a free light version that is considerably less versatile). But cost should not be a big factor in your decision on which software to use. Eudora Pro can cost as little as \$40 per user. Given the importance of e-mail in your daily practice, this cost is negligible.

I will assume that most readers know the basics of e-mail — how to write an e-mail address, fill out the headers, send and receive messages, delete, etc. If the Tennessee bar closely reflects the legal profession as a whole, then the vast majority of you already use e-mail and a primer is unnecessary. Instead, I'll try and focus on what's new as well as more advanced features that you may have seen, but not understood what they are. I'll also point out why certain features are especially useful to lawyers.

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