

Simple and Cheap Ways to Stay Current Regarding Legal Issues and Technology . By Amylyn Riedling

We all know that staying current and being aware of issues and technology that can help us do our jobs more efficiently and effectively is important. There are many places that you can turn to on the internet to get helpful advice and stay on top of issues that affect the Legal Assistants and Paralegals.

Many of you already know that NALS.org has started a series of seminars that are free to members. The topics for these seminars cover a wide range. They are also a great way to connect and network with your fellow NALS members across the country. For a current schedule, visit NALS.org.

Besides all of the resources that NALS offers its members, there are lots of other ways that you can stay current and aware of the trends in the legal field, without having to spend a ton of time and money.

- Facebook - There are many groups that have a presence on Facebook – so if you are already a member, you can become a Fan or Like the group – and when there is new information – you will be alerted by a post on your homepage. Just a few of them are: LegallyBlog, Legal Talk Network and Paralegal Gateway.
- Newsletters - Just a couple of places that have wonderful newsletters and update you by email: Paralegal Gateway and The Estrin Report. Both of these touch on trends and the legal field for legal assistants/paralegals as well as tips and trick on staying current and ahead of the curve in your employer’s eyes. They also discuss technology and software in the industry
- Blogs - Legal Blogs are everywhere on the internet and if there are specific areas for which your firm practices, I would suggest that you sign up for a few, so you can be alerted to changing laws and trends, even if they have not reached Washington State yet. Being aware of a possible issue or change is always better than playing catch up when a change takes place. Law.com had the Legal Blog Watch a conglomeration of many of the most popular legal blogs. The Empowered Paralegal website has blogs and other useful information put into categories, resources and professional associations. It is a great starting place for me when I have to dive into a new area of law for a lawsuit here in my office.
- Twitter – there are too many legal twitter feeds to count– and how do you decide the good from the bad? Well if you are on Twitter, and if you aren’t you should at least learn how it works, you can go to <http://www.practicalparalegalism.com/2009/06/practical-paralegalisms-top-50-twitter.html> for to the top 50 twitter feeds for the legal assistant/paralegal.
- Podcasts – these are also starting to gain in popularity for the legal assistant/paralegal (as much as for attorneys). Legal Talk Network has a monthly podcast, The Paralegal Voice. Podcasts are a handy and easy way to stay on top of topics such as regulation for paralegals. Podcasts can also be downloaded after the actual “broadcast” and listened to at your convenience. I have these loaded into my mp3 player and listen to them during my commute.

These are just a few of the ways that you can stay current, knowledgeable and educated, without a lot of time and expense.