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On Cue: Apple Acquires Personal Assistance App

Victor Li

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Apple Inc.'s Siri might be getting a powerful upgrade. Multiple news outlets are reporting that Apple has agreed to purchase Cue, a personal assistance app that automatically pulls data from emails, messages, social networking sites, contacts and other information sources to create a daily agenda. The Apple Insider blog, [which broke the news](#) on Thursday, reported that the price tag would be between \$35 million to \$60 million. Cue announced to its users on Tuesday that it [was shutting down](#) and that premium users would receive a refund, AI said.

Originally known as Greplin, Cue's functions have been [compared to Android's Google Now](#), which also pulls data from multiple informational sources to create a unified list for users. Several commentators, including [TechCrunch](#), [The Mac Observer](#) and [9to5Mac.com](#), have speculated that Apple could integrate Cue into its mobile operating system, giving Siri and iOS 7's "Today" notification section the predictive power they need to compete with [Google Now](#).

"The Cue acquisition could be used to make Siri more powerful and aware, notifying you either via push notification or voice of things you may not even know you needed. The early arrival of a flight or train, congestion along your favorite route to work, and more," wrote Matthew Panzarino at TechCrunch.

The Cue acquisition could also be a boon for lawyers. [Chad Burton](#), founding attorney of five-lawyer Burton Law, told *Law Technology News* that lawyers will probably embrace Cue if it's integrated in with Apple's mobile operating system.

"I'm not a big fan of using third-party apps to pull data from emails due to attorney-client privilege," said Burton, the recipient of the 2012 *Law Technology News* small firm Innovation Award. "If it's integrated into iOS 7, then, at least in my mind, it's more secure. My impression is that the information would be kept locally, taking a third-party app out of the equation in terms of who has your data."

[Brett Burney](#), principal at legal technology consulting firm [Burney Consultants](#) who maintains [a blog called "Macs in Law,"](#) told *LTN* he's always thought that Siri was an underutilized resource for lawyers. For instance, Burney said that when he's traveling, he often relies on Siri to read emails to him as he's driving.

As for improvements to Siri and iOS 7 as a result of the Cue transaction, Burney was optimistic. "Right now in iOS 7 the 'Today' tab of the Notification Center is just my calendar and Reminders at the bottom," said Burney. "If I scroll down it will tell me how many events I have scheduled for the next day. That's all great but not the most helpful."

Burney said that he would love to have his flight information and live updates integrated into his notification center, as well as information on restaurants, hotels and businesses close to his destination. "I'm just tired of having to jump into multiple apps to find my info (email, contacts, recent phone calls, calendar, Tripit, Yelp, Starbucks app, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), that I believe Apple will use some Cue technology to consolidate it," he said.

Not everyone was impressed with the Cue acquisition. Cue "does not seem to be revolutionary in any way," said Larry Port, CEO of Rocket Matter. "It doesn't appear, at first glance, to be an [Evernote](#) kind of tool that will completely change work habits."

Port also said that any technology has to fit with a user's existing workflow. "If the technology fits within the existing mental model of the user (their expectation of how it should work), then adoption will be a lot faster," he said. "If the technology does not jive with that model, then adoption is slower, even if the software or hardware has all the bells and whistles."

Victor Li is a staff reporter with Law Technology News. Email: vli@alm.com. Twitter: [@victorli_alm](https://twitter.com/victorli_alm).

LTN's editor-in-chief Monica Bay [interviews](#) Chad Burton at LegalTech New York.

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