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Putting Windows on Macs

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Law Technology News

2013-10-08 14:03:22.0

When the iPad and iPhone gained popularity, law firm IT managers knew there could be problems. The vast majority of law firms and law offices use Microsoft Windows and the company's suite of office-related programs. While the days when Microsoft and Apple were locked in mortal combat and their products were completely incompatible with one another are long gone, there are still Microsoft programs that Apple users cannot access on their Macs, iPhones, or iPads.

Sure enough, individual lawyers flocked to the iPad and iPhone in droves. According to an [American Bar Association legal technology survey](#) from May, 91 percent of responding attorneys use a smartphone, and of that number, the majority (62 percent) use an iPhone. Android phones, which also have compatibility issues with Windows, are in second place among lawyers with 22 percent. When it comes to tablets, lawyers prefer Apple by an even larger margin, as 90 percent of responding attorneys say they use the iPad as opposed to other tablets.

Microsoft is the dominant player when it comes to law firm technology. According to a [legal technology survey](#) published by the International Legal Technology Association last October, 78 percent of firms surveyed use Windows 2008 as the primary file server operating system while 99 percent use either that program or its predecessor, Windows 2003. As far as desktop operating systems go, 99 percent of responding firms said they used Windows, with decades-old Windows XP as the most popular choice with 37 percent of responding firms. Some firms even admitted using the [much-maligned Windows Vista](#).

WINDOWS FOR MACS

Reed Smith had used products from [Citrix Systems](#) Inc. for many years to provide attorneys with remote access to their office desktops. Like most firms, Reed Smith uses Windows as its operating system, and has several internal custom-made applications that are Windows-compatible. When attorneys bought iPads or Android tablets, the firm instructed them to use [Citrix Receiver](#), a program that allows users to access their desktop computers from mobile devices. "There were some inquiries made by iPad or Android tablet users that they wanted to be able to access Reed Smith applications through their tablet rather than their home laptop or PC," said Reed Smith Director of IT Operations [Ryan McEnroe](#) to *Law Technology News*. "We were prepared, since we were already a Citrix shop, to provide them with access to our Citrix environment."

The firm uses Citrix for its desktops, too. All users, even ones at the office, have to log on to Citrix before they can access Reed Smith's data center. "We are a firm that is growing and has the expectation of continuing to grow," said

McEnroe, who estimates that there are 500 attorneys at the firm using some form of tablet. "It's too difficult, costly, and time-consuming to have a data center in every office. So we have regional data centers that serve up all of our applications, such as the internal intranet, email, Microsoft programs, and financial applications." McEnroe noted that using a regional model was also good for security and preventing data leakage. "When we upgrade our applications, we can do it in the data center rather than go to each office and upgrade their PCs one at a time," said McEnroe.

Dentons is another firm that was a long-time Citrix customer that utilized the Receiver to provide attorneys with access to Windows programs on non-Windows tablets. Like Reed Smith, Dentons found Citrix to be useful as it expanded its reach.

[Dentons was officially formed in 2013](#) after a three-way merger between SNR Denton, Fraser Milner Casgrain and Salans. Last week, Dentons [confirmed](#) it is talking with McKenna Long & Aldridge about a possible merger. "In order to quickly open up offices, we had to expand our investment in Citrix," said [Michael Barnas](#), director of global client technologies at Dentons, to *LTN*. "We already built remote access for the entire firm, so we figured, why not use it daily? That's when we started down the road of providing access to our private cloud from any location."

Barnas, who said that almost all of the firm's applications are Windows-based, admitted there were some early problems with the Citrix Receiver — namely the mouse didn't always work with certain applications and users couldn't print off of it. Plus, Barnas recalled that Citrix was not the market leader when it came to virtualization — VMware Inc. was. Barnas said that the firm chose Citrix Receiver, in part, because everyone at the firm was already used to using Citrix. Also, Barnas said he was impressed with how Citrix worked to resolve issues, like the printing problem and the mouse incompatibility. "Other vendors, including VMware, have really struggled with that," said Barnas. "Citrix had a specific vision and worked closely with customers to resolve issues like printing, screen resolution, and performance & 151; very common problems, but critical deal-breaking issues for us."

According to Citrix Director of Product Marketing [Kevin Strohmeier](#), hundreds of law firms use some kind of Citrix technology to provide their lawyers with access to Windows applications on mobile devices. "It started three to four years ago," said Strohmeier, who estimated that, in corporate America, about 95 percent of the applications used are Windows-based. "There's a growing trend of people who want to be more productive on tablets. At the same time, you have massive growth of tablets that don't run many of the applications they would need. We were able to build on the foundation of what we've been doing for our customers for many years- giving them clean and secure remote access to use Windows apps regardless of what device they're on."

Not everyone was swayed by Citrix. [Matt Kesner](#), chief information officer at Fenwick & West, told *LTN* that his firm uses VMware's [Horizon View](#) instead of Citrix to provide attorneys with remote access to their office applications. "We used to use Citrix & it's a great product set," said Kesner. "But we found that it had some rough edges. Meanwhile, we had good experience with VMware and decided to use their product. We found that VMware is easier to use and deploy." With the firm being in Silicon Valley, Kesner heard lots of rumors about the iPhone and iPad and knew they could be a game changer. "Lawyers were asking us about whether or not the firm could support the devices even before they came out," said Kesner. Like Reed Smith and Dentons, Kesner has found that utilizing a virtual desktop has significant security advantages, especially for lawyers who travel all the time. "It's a secure way for us to deliver our systems in countries that do a lot of spying," said Kesner. "It's not more secure than Citrix, but generally more secure than a desktop or laptop. We definitely do that with iPads and androids since lawyers tend to like traveling light."

Although incompatibility problems appeared to be resolved with the release of the new [Surface 2 and Surface Pro](#) from Microsoft, law firm CIOs that spoke to *LTN* are not anticipating any change from the status quo. "Even if everyone used the Surface, we would still need to use Citrix," said [Andrew Jurczyk](#), chief information officer at Seyfarth Shaw. "We have an obligation to our clients to protect data from potential leaks. The most important thing is that Citrix allows us to keep the data protected inside the data center." Dentons' Barnas and Reed Smith's McEnroe agree, adding they aren't seeing much demand from their lawyers for Microsoft tablets. Barnas, however, said that the firm would consider developing some of its apps for Surface, and noted that lawyers might yet adopt Microsoft's device. "We are seeing a demand for a lighter laptop, especially from our road warriors," said Barnas. "A laptop that has desktop replacement capabilities and weighs less than three pounds has always been a challenge. Maybe the Surface can fill that void."

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