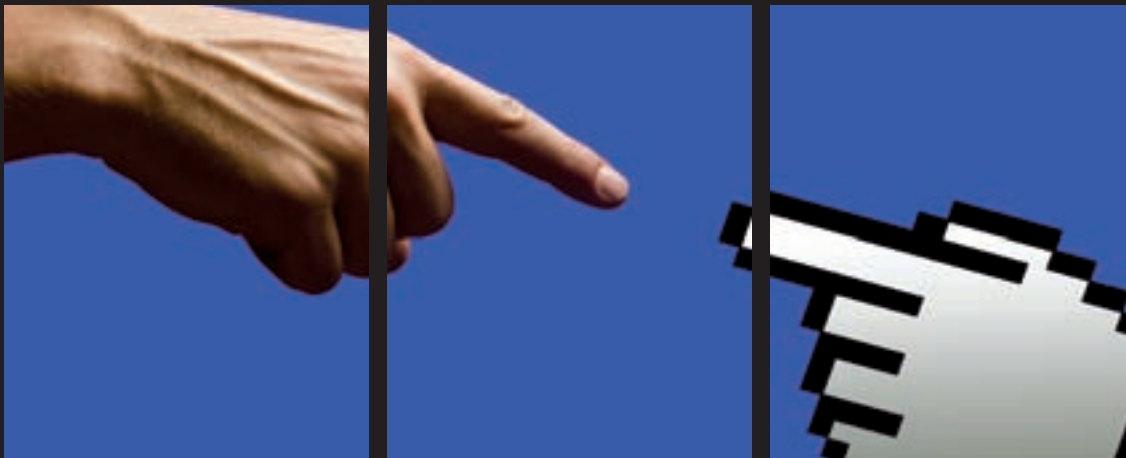


Social Networking for the Legal Profession

PENNY EDWARDS & LEE BRYANT



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Executive summary

THERE HAS been a great deal of interest in social network-based technologies among law firms in recent years, but relatively few firms have been able to adopt these new tools in a meaningful way. With the advent of the global recession, it seems firms are turning to lightweight social technologies not just for their innovative novelty, but for the cost savings, value enhancement and business transformation potential they embody.

Social Networking for the Legal Profession offers a timely survey of current practice, looking at ways in which law firms are adopting and exploiting social networking for business, both internally for operations and communication, and externally as part of their marketing and business development efforts. It will also provide an insight into the thinking of some key players in this space and look ahead to assess the longer-term impact of social networking in general on the legal profession.

The report explores the networking practices and social tools that are currently being adopted by individuals and firms, and provide guidance to those looking to get started with an online social networking strategy, including:

- What do we mean by social networking in the legal context?
- A survey of personal, professional and lawyer-to-lawyer social network sites, including the best sites for lawyers and what they have to offer;
- How social tools support social networking within the firm, including blogs, wikis, presence sharing, social bookmarking and tagging, RSS and social newsreading;
- Challenges to establishing and participating in online social networks;
- The role of social networks in improving both personal and network productivity, knowledge sharing, collective intelligence and relationship building;
- Using online social networks for recruitment, value-added legal services, thought leadership and reputation management;
- How to evaluate and select social networking tools, and assimilate them in to your professional and personal life in ways that suit and make sense to you;
- Policy and governance issues around social networking adoption; and
- Future social networking trends and their impact on the legal profession.

Throughout the report, there are case studies and interviews with legal professionals offering practical advice and insight into social networking and the use of social tools in support thereof.

About the authors

Lee Bryant co-founded Headshift in 2002 to focus on the emerging area of enterprise social software and social networking. He has been playing with words and computers since the age of ten and has a strong belief in the empowering potential of the internet. He is a board member of a social enterprise, Involve, and a trustee of the Foundation for Science, Technology and Culture.

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Headshift is Europe's leading enterprise social computing consultancy, with seven years' experience in designing, implementing and growing next generation social software solutions. Based in London, with offices in New York, Paris, Sydney, Rome and Zurich, Headshift delivers smarter, simpler, more social IT solutions internally within large enterprises, knowledge intensive firms, government and third sector organisations.