

The iPad in Law Practice (Part 2)

Beyond the Basics

By Scott Bassett

Last month, I wrote about using the iPad 2 in my law practice. I covered the basics, from the initial purchase decision to accessories I find useful, along with the all-important collection of apps that turn the iPad into a law practice tool. This month, I move beyond the basics to explore less obvious ways I use the iPad in my practice and related activities.

Speech Recognition

The new third-generation iPad has speech recognition integrated into its operating system. If you have the original iPad or the iPad 2 like mine, don't fret. Similar functionality just requires downloading a free app or two.

For speech recognition, I primarily use Dragon Dictation from Nuance, one of the most popular free apps in the iTunes App Store. Dragon Dictation incorporates Nuance's NaturallySpeaking technology that has become popular for use on desktop and notebook computers. However, those devices have much faster processors and more RAM than the iPad to handle the task of converting speech to text. To perform speech-to-text conversion on an iPad, most of the work is offloaded to Nuance's servers. An Internet

connection is required. Wi-Fi is preferred, but a good 3G connection should also work. The built-in dictation feature in the third-generation iPad also requires an Internet connection (Wi-Fi or 4G) for the same reason, but connects with Apple's own servers presumably running some variation of the NaturallySpeaking application.

Dragon Dictation is simple to use. Tap the red record button at the top of the screen to start recording. I can even use some of the same voice commands (new line, new paragraph, etc.) available on the Windows version of NaturallySpeaking. When done dictating, I tap anywhere on the screen to stop. My recognized text will then appear on screen once the servers finish their transcription magic. It takes only a few seconds.

There are limitations to the free Dragon Dictation app. You can dictate only one minute at a time without stopping. Fortunately, you are not required to exit and restart the app to continue; just tap the record button again to add more dictation to your document. The one-minute limit ensures accuracy responsiveness from the Nuance server system and promotes good dictation habits. Nuance recommends dictating many short sentences instead of a few long ones (stylistically, think Hemingway).

Once your dictation has been recognized and appears as text on your iPad's screen, it can be copied directly to an e-mail mes-

sage or Facebook or Twitter post. More importantly, it can be copied to the iPad's clipboard and pasted into any app, including word processing apps. Although you could write letters and legal documents this way, for me it works best for e-mail messages and short notes. An advantage of the speech dictation in the third-generation iPad is that you can dictate directly into any application that allows typed input, eliminating the copy-and-paste step.

Dragon Dictation is not the only free iPad app from Nuance that accepts voice dictation. PaperPort Notes is a decent note-taking app in its own right. It accepts typed input from the on-screen keyboard (or an external keyboard if you have one). It also lets me take handwritten notes directly on the iPad's screen using a finger or, preferably, a stylus. The bonus is that I also have the option of voice dictation using a "Tap & Speak" button just above the top right corner of the on-screen keyboard. The direct transfer options in PaperPort Notes are more robust than those in Dragon Dictation. I can send dictated notes directly to the iPad's built-in e-mail app (as with Dragon Dictation), Google Docs, Dropbox, or Box, or copy them to the clipboard to paste into any app.

No matter which Nuance dictation app I use, an inherent problem with dictating on the iPad is the location of its microphone

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on the top edge of the device. When holding the iPad in portrait mode, the mic is a fair distance from my mouth and angled slightly away. In landscape mode, the mic is on the side edge and sometimes blocked by my hand as I grip the iPad. Neither position is optimal for good recognition accuracy. I get better results with an external microphone.

My first external mic choice is a Bluetooth headset. I use the same Plantronics Discovery 925 Bluetooth headset I pair with my Android phone to handle dictation duties and Skype phone calls on my iPad (more on that below). The Discovery 925 has been replaced by the upgraded Discovery 975. My second choice is a pair of wired earbuds with an in-line mic similar to what is supplied with the iPhone (it would be nice if Apple would ship a set with each iPad). I think the Bluetooth headset works best, and it leaves me untethered to the iPad if I want to get up to stretch or get something to drink.

Both of Nuance's free dictation apps for the iPad do a credible job of accurately converting voice input to text. In a relatively quiet environment with a good external mic and a solid Internet connection, I can't easily distinguish the results from what I achieve using NaturallySpeaking 11.5 on my Windows 7 laptop computer. Of course, the Windows version of NaturallySpeaking has features useful to lawyers without the limitations of the free iPad apps. For that reason, I reserve long dictation sessions for NaturallySpeaking on my laptop. I briefly tested the built-in speech recognition on a new third-generation iPad when visiting a noisy Apple store, and accuracy was surprisingly high given the environment and lack of an external mic.

Offloading of the speech-to-text conversion process to servers in the cloud raises potential security concerns. This is particularly true if you are dictating confidential matters, as will often be the case in law practice. Nuance posts its privacy policy online at <http://www.dragonmobileapps.com/EULA-dict.html>. Read the privacy policy to make sure you are satisfied with the protection it provides.

iPad as Telephone

Instead of using my cell minutes when traveling or tying up the single telephone

line at my home-based office, I often use my iPad as a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone. I do the same with my fourth-generation iPod Touch. Doing so with either device requires a Wi-Fi connection. My VoIP app of choice is Skype. The Skype iPad app is free, but I gladly pay \$3 monthly for a Skype subscription that lets me make unlimited local and long-distance calls from my iPad, iPod Touch, or PC to any land line or cell phone in the U.S. or Canada. Without a subscription, I would be limited to voice or video calls to users who have Skype installed on their computer, smartphone, or tablet. Skype video-to-video or audio-only calls are a great way to communicate with a remote staff member in the next town or a virtual assistant who works halfway around the world. Skype-to-Skype video calls from the iPad can also keep you in touch with distant family members, particularly children away at college.

For privacy and courtesy, I use a headset (Bluetooth or wired) when making Skype calls from my iPad. The same headsets mentioned above for speech dictation are the ones I use for Skype. On those occasions when I need a speakerphone, I unplug the wired headset or turn off the Bluetooth headset to use the iPad's built-in speaker and mic. In that mode, the iPad speaker is loud enough to fill an office or moderately sized conference room.

iPad as Second Monitor

Despite the versatility of the iPad, there are times when I need to use my notebook computer, a Lenovo ThinkPad X220, to run applications not available on the iPad. That doesn't mean the iPad sits unused in my briefcase. Instead, with the free DisplayLink app, I use it as a second monitor for my notebook PC. The productivity benefits of expanded screen real estate are well known, whether in the form of a larger monitor or adding a second or third screen to your primary display.

Using my iPad as a second monitor with my laptop computer requires installation of a free DisplayLink iPad Software for Windows application on my laptop computer. Then, so long as my iPad and my laptop are on the same Wi-Fi, the iPad appears as an additional screen in the Windows graphics

display utility. I can choose to place the iPad on either side of the laptop's built-in screen and extend the Windows desktop to include the iPad screen. The connection isn't speedy enough to watch fast-moving videos on the iPad's screen, but it works fine for more static content such as monitoring e-mail, browsing the web, or displaying business applications such as Word, Excel, and Outlook.

iPad for Presentations

Most lawyers need to occasionally present information in the form of documents, slides, or videos to a group using a projector or large-screen television. This could be at trial, mediation, a CLE program, or a marketing presentation. Doing this from a compact and portable tablet like the iPad instead of a bulkier computer has advantages, particularly the ability to use the iPad's touch-screen interface instead of a mouse or keyboard.

With the 2011 update to iOS 5, the iPad, when used with a \$99 Apple TV box, has become a useful presentation tool. Before iOS 5, connecting my iPad to a projector in court, mediation, or at a seminar required a hard-wired connection from the iPad's 30-pin docking port to the projector's input. This left me tethered to the projector and somewhat negated the freedom of using a portable touch-screen device like the iPad to manage my presentations.

To solve this problem, I purchased an Apple TV box. With an iPad and an Apple TV box, I can use the AirPlay video-mirroring feature in iOS 5 to wirelessly project whatever is on my iPad's screen to a projector or HDTV. There are many apps that let me display PowerPoint slide shows or use the iPad as a sort of white board on which I can write notes. I use 2Screens, a \$4.99 app, but I also like the free SlideShark app/service that converts PowerPoint presentations to display properly on the iPad. While the iPad can display most presentations, much of the animation and other complex formatting may be lost. SlideShark preserves most of those features.

There are three obstacles to using my iPad as a platform for wireless presentations. First, my iPad and Apple TV unit (which has a built-in wireless network adapter as well as an ethernet port) must be on the same

Wi-Fi network. If Wi-Fi is not available where I plan to present, I can bring my own Wi-Fi router to create a temporary wireless network for the iPad and Apple TV to use for the AirPlay connection. To date, my wireless iPad presentation work has been limited to teaching at Stetson University College of Law. At Stetson, there is not only campus-wide Wi-Fi, but also Apple TV units permanently installed in several classrooms and connected to the classroom projection system. If I wanted to present wirelessly in the many trial courts lacking Wi-Fi networks, I would need to bring my own router.

Second, if Wi-Fi is available, there might still be a problem or two. Although the Apple TV's internal wireless adapter can connect to a secured network, it cannot connect to a network that requires it to sign in on a web page (known as web authentication). The Apple TV box has no built-in web browser that can be used for this purpose. Also, it cannot connect to networks that use enterprise-grade (WPA2—Enterprise) encryption. Fortunately, many institutions and businesses using enterprise-grade encryption also offer guest networks that use only standard consumer-grade encryption. If not, I would need to revert to bringing my own router.

Third, the projector must have an HDMI input. The Apple TV box outputs only a digital video/audio signal via its rear-mounted HDMI output. Many projectors, especially in schools and professional settings, have only a VGA input. When using a VGA-input projector, I need a converter that will take the Apple TV's HDMI signal (digital) and convert it to VGA (analog). I use an inexpensive converter purchased from monoprice.com (Model 8126) for \$38.25 plus shipping. It works, but with many older projectors, the image run through the converter is slightly off-center when displayed on screen. This is not a huge problem, but if given a choice, I opt for a projector with an HDMI input.

If I am doing a presentation where there is already a PC or Mac connected to a projector (as is common at CLE presentations), there is an inexpensive software option that eliminates the need for an Apple TV unit and HDMI to VGA converter. AirServer software (www.airserverapp.com) can be in-

stalled on a PC or Mac. It works with the iPad's AirPlay feature to mirror on the computer's monitor anything showing on the iPad's screen. That, in turn, is sent to the projector. The iPad and PC/Mac must be on the same Wi-Fi network. The Windows version does not yet mirror the iPad's audio output, but AirServer states that this feature will be added soon.

iPad as Scanner

My iPad goes with me almost everywhere. If I need to scan a document, I can use my iPad 2's rear-facing camera and any one of a number of clever apps to scan documents and receipts. The apps convert the scanned images to PDF or JPEG format for e-mailing or uploading to a file synchronization service. I currently use DocScan HD Pro, a \$3.99 app. It lets me scan documents to PDF and e-mail them or upload them using my Dropbox account. I can also upload them to my Google Docs account where the scanned text can be recognized using Google's OCR function.

The iPad 2 has a notoriously poor rear-facing camera. The resulting scans are less than perfect, but usually serviceable if the lighting is decent. I expect the scanning apps will work better with the much-improved camera in the third-generation iPad—at least once the developers update their apps to work with the better camera.

iPad as Credit-Card Terminal

All these great ways to use an iPad in my practice would be meaningless if I couldn't get paid for the work I do. Accepting credit-card payments greatly enhances the likelihood I will get paid—and quickly. For years I've had a PayPal account that allows clients to pay by credit card from a computer's web browser. What I didn't have was a mobile solution that let clients pay in person via credit card.

The iPad (as well as the iPhone, iPod Touch, and most Android phones) can serve as a mobile credit-card swipe terminal if I have an Internet connection (3G, 4G, or Wi-Fi). Both Square and Intuit GoPayment

have apps and card readers for that purpose. I use Square; the tiny card reader plugs into the headphone jack of my iPad or Android phone. I can also accept payments without swiping the card if my client calls and wants to make a payment without being physically present. However, the merchant fee increases from 2.75 percent to 3.5 percent plus a fee of 15¢ per transaction if I manually enter a card number.

When accepting credit-card payments using your iPad or any other mobile device, you need to comply with all trust accounting rules. Either Square or GoPayment will link to a lawyer's operating account, so this option works only to collect fees for completed work or when it is ethically permissible to charge a nonrefundable fee that goes directly into the operating account. It is improper to link one of these services to an IOLTA account. These services deduct fees before transmitting the balance of the payment to your account, impermissibly using client money to pay the merchant fee.

Conclusion

The iPad is the proverbial game changer for lawyers. It represents the best implementation of a new category of tablet devices that are, in many ways, more convenient and intuitive to use than traditional laptop computers. The hardware form factor is the smaller part of the story. The reason the iPad stands above competing Android devices is the availability of apps for almost any purpose, including many that are helpful when practicing law. ■



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