

An Apple Skeptic Turned iPhone Fanatic: 11 Essential Apps for Lawyers Plus a Review of AT&T's 3G Microcell

By Christel Burris

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She's back. Last year, legal technology consultant Christel Burris had Mac-loving lawyers seething with her takedown of Macs in the law office. However, cats and dogs did not start living together, and the world did not end. In today's TechnoFeature, Christel has her sights set on the iPhone 3GS. She discusses its pros and cons, but more importantly, she also discusses 11 essential apps for lawyers, and reviews AT&T's 3G Microcell for those who live in poor coverage areas. Brace yourselves.

INTRODUCTION

Some of you may remember a TechnoFeature article I wrote last year, [Mythbusters: Should Your Law Firm Switch From Windows to Mac?](#) It created a firestorm on the Mac legal Web.

You might surmise from that article that I dislike all Apple products. You'd be wrong. I have fallen in love with one Apple product — the iPhone. Not surprisingly, [the iPhone now comprises more of Apple's revenue than any of its other products](#), including Macs.

I admit I'm a bit behind on the iPhone craze as I am very much an "anti-trend" kinda gal. But I finally caved in and switched to AT&T so I could have an iPhone ... and there's no going back for me. The iPhone — from its display to the way it feels in your hand to

the capacitive touch screen — is simply gorgeous.

While its business applications are definitely not what drives the iPhone (get a BlackBerry if that's all you need), it will give you both time-wasting and business functionality. During my research for this article, I asked three of my iPhone-using attorney clients which legal business apps they use and all three sheepishly replied, "None."

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APPS, APPS, AND MORE APPS FOR LAWYERS: MY TOP 11 PICKS

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1. [LogMeIn Ignition](#) (\$29.99)

If you have an account (fee-based or free) with LogMeIn, you can access your desktop using LogMeIn Ignition. Granted, the display is

quite small but I've been able to log onto a client's desktop using LogMeIn Ignition and perform a quick task like attach a document to an email message or troubleshoot an error.

2. [Ilium eWallet](#) (\$9.99)

I live and breathe by this app. Store all your passwords, credit card information, etc., and sync it to your Windows desktop.

3. [Facebook](#) (free)

If you're a Facebook junkie, this is one app you can't live without. Keep in touch with all your Facebook friends directly from your iPhone.

4. [TaskTask](#) (\$4.99)

If you have an Exchange server (2003 or 2007) and you need to manage Tasks, try this app. Create and modify tasks directly on your iPhone, and synchronize wirelessly with your Exchange/Outlook account.

5. [Dragon Dictate](#) (free)

No set up or training required, and the accuracy is exceptional. This app is useful for composing email or text messages and even updating your Facebook status.

6. [TouchMeeting](#) (free but requires account)

A desktop and mobile Web conferencing service. Attend or host an online meeting from your iPhone.

7. [InerTrak for iPhone](#) (\$4.99)

An easy-to-use app that can keep track of time and expenses spent on different matters. You can check off days as they are billed, and view daily totals for each matter as well as a summary view across all matters. Each matter can include an hourly rate, automatically showing the monetary as well as time totals. InerTrak for iPhone can synchronize data with InerTrak for Windows. You can also email your time entries.

AT&T does not offer insurance. Insurance is useful for those of us who tend to run over, drop, or give swimming lessons to our smartphones. Fortunately, you can purchase insurance through a service like SquareTrade.

8. [DocScanner](#) (\$5.99)

Scan black and white and color documents to PDF or image files using your iPhone by snapping a photo. This app can also make scanned images searchable with its build-in OCR software. All image processing takes place on the iPhone, after which you can email the files.

9. [Evernote](#) (free but requires account)

Create text, snapshot, and voice

notes that you can access from your iPhone or Mac or PC using the desktop software or a Web browser.

10 [LawStack](#) (free)

Looking for a “legal library in your pocket?” LawStack comes pre-loaded with the US Constitution, Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure, Federal Rules of Evidence, Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure, and Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. You can also download other materials from within the app.

11. [Fastcase](#) (free but requires account)

Search case law from anywhere you have access to the Internet.

IPHONE PROS AND CONS

The iPhone is not perfect, but it has more going for it than against it. Below you’ll find my principal pros and cons.

Attributes of the iPhone worthy of praise include:

- Native Support for Exchange Server — works with no drama.
- Voice Memos (iPhone 3GS only) — a simple voice recorder for making notes to yourself.
- Voice Control (iPhone 3GS only) — Place a call or play a song using voice commands. To activate this feature, hold the “Home” button down for 3 seconds.
- Games — Stuck in an airport and don’t want to work? Play every kind of game imaginable. Or just surf the net with the excellent Web browser.

I may love the iPhone but there is definitely room for improvement:

- Keyboard Navigation — What, no cursor keys? Editing can be quite cumbersome with no easy way to move back and forth through text.
- USB Support for Transferring Data — Most apps sync data via WiFi. I have set up an ad hoc wireless connection with my laptop but getting it to work reliably can be a challenge.

The 3G Microcell is simple and it just works. I’ve used it for three months.

- AT&T — At this point, the iPhone is only available through AT&T. I dumped Sprint (which has excellent coverage in my area) to move to AT&T and my experience with its network has been less than stellar. There is a rumor afoot that a Verizon iPhone is en route this year. We’ll see.

Also, AT&T does not offer insurance. Every smart phone I ever had from any carrier included the option to buy insurance through the carrier and have the cost appear on your monthly mobile bill. Insurance is useful for those of us who tend to run over, drop, or give swimming lessons to our smartphones. Not so with the iPhone. Break your iPhone, and you will dish out bucks for a new one. If you have a problem with it, take it to your local Apple store (if you have one) for a warranty repair. However, if you need a loaner, it will cost you. You can, however, purchase insurance through a service like [SquareTrade](#).

As an aside, AT&T offers a device called a [3G Microcell](#) (\$150). With AT&T coverage less than desirable, this device has made my transition to AT&T from Sprint relatively painless. Currently, the device is being tested in a few US markets (North Carolina being one of them). There are no per minute fees or any other charges whatsoever. There is an optional package (\$19.99/month) that enables you to make unlimited mobile calls using your 3G Mi-

crocell connection. Also, there are some rebates available to lower the \$150 price tag.

The 3G Microcell is a device that acts like a wireless network extender (also called "femtocell"). It uses a broadband Internet connection to give you 5-bar 3G access in your home or small office. The set up process is simple and it just works. I've used it for three months, and have had to reboot (power off/on) maybe three times. There are a lot of

complaints that the 3G Microcell is just AT&T forcing the customer to pay for extending their less-than-adequate network. The AT&T 3G Microcell will roll out to the rest of the US starting this month.

CONCLUSION

Bottom line? I love my iPhone despite a few drawbacks. It has all the functionality I could ever need (or imagine) in a handheld device. Would I give it up? You'll have to pry it from my cold dead hands!

Christel Burris has been providing legal technology consulting and implementation to law firms of all sizes for over 25 years. She is CEO of [Push One Button, Inc.](#), a legal technology firm that provides training, legal-specific technology, content development and consulting to businesses from California to the UK. Having started her legal career as a receptionist for a small law firm in San Francisco, she has held positions in law firms ranging from the previously mentioned receptionist to IT Manager (and everything in between). She understands how law firms work and how lawyers think.

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