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The World of Mobile Devices is Changing ... Are You Ready to Move On?

For more years than I like to acknowledge, my wife has described my mobile phone of choice (Blackberry) as a "Crackberry" because I obsessively look at it seven days a week, 365 days a year. It was the first and last thing I did every day. To me, that was just part of life and not unusual for someone working in the legal arena.

Three months ago, my information technology department approached me to review the Apple iPhone 4, to see whether I thought it was a contender for attorneys to use as a replacement for the Blackberry. Having seen countless iPhone users staring at and swiping their fingers across the flat iPhone screen in restaurants, bars and across town, I agreed, and the following Monday the phone arrived on my desk.

It definitely wasn't love at first sight, and after the first week I wanted to throw my new phone out the window and go back to my old friend. Every email was a challenge, as the words appearing on the screen were not those I was trying to type, and capital letters were appearing everywhere, giving the impression I was shouting. My son, who was already an iPhone convert, intervened. He told me to hang in there and assured me that, after I got used to it, I would never want to hand the iPhone back. At the time, this seemed hard to comprehend, but his advice is worth passing on: *Change your techniques and attitudes toward the new device; it is certainly not a Blackberry, so don't try to use it as though it is one.* Respecting his views, I decided to start again with a clean slate, and spend the next week looking at the iPhone as a completely different device.

With this new approach, the sun started to shine again, and suddenly my iPhone and I were becoming friends. Emails were saying what I wanted them to say, and the capital letters only appeared where I wanted them to. My typing speed started catching up to where I was before, and the most wonderful part was that in addition to emails, I could now read on the device the wide range of attachment-types I receive daily, and surf the Web anywhere, anytime. By the close of the second week, I had to acknowledge that there was a good chance the iPhone could work for me, and did not hesitate to continue the evaluation for a third week.

At the end of week three, there was no doubt that I had been converted, and my only fear was that the IT department would now ask for the iPhone back at the end of the trial period. I dreaded the thought of returning to my Blackberry, which was hidden in one of my desk drawers. I had now joined the ranks of iPhone users that were searching for the best applications and refining the ways to make the most of the device.

During the three-week evaluation period, eight key lessons changed how I used the iPhone, which in turn flipped my view from hating to loving it. For anyone thinking of taking the plunge, here are my lessons learned:

Forget how you used your previous device, as the techniques that worked for that device will almost certainly not work for the iPhone.

In the early stages of using the iPhone, visit "settings" and make the following adjustments: In the general settings, change the keyboard to the US extended keyboard – this will improve your typing accuracy. Turn off the annoying sounds, so that you can work quietly without everyone else knowing. In the brightness settings, turn off the auto-brightness setting and set the manual level to half way – this will help extend the life of your battery each day.

To type, use only your dominant hand, and hold the iPhone horizontally in the palm of your other hand. Use as many fingers to type as you feel comfortable with. This helps avoid all sorts of typing problems.

When typing, keep your eye on the screen, as the iPhone will suggest words it thinks you're trying to type. Either accept the suggestions by tapping the space bar, or tap the "x" by the suggested word to close it and move on. This can help save a lot of time.

Have the iPhone configured to receive all of your email accounts. If one of your accounts happens to be Gmail, I recommend that you load the full Google suite of applications, which are all free and work extremely well on the iPhone.

Add other applications that make life easier. Don't forget Everlite Free, which allows your iPhone to act as a flashlight – perfect for reading menus and finding the right key when you arrive home late at night.

Remember to close iPhone applications after you're done using them. Applications stay open until you close them, and each open application drains your battery. To close multiple applications at once, first double click the button in the center of the frame at the bottom of the iPhone, below the screen. In doing so, icons for each of your open applications will appear at the bottom of the screen. Place your finger on the first icon and leave it there until a minus sign appears in the top left corner of each application. Next, tap your finger on the minus signs for each application you're not using, and they will close. As a matter of routine, I close all the applications every couple of hours, and my battery life has been extended quite dramatically as a result.

Invest in a protective case for your iPhone, which also includes an extra battery. I use the Mophie, which works well and enables the use of the iPhone for over two days without any need to recharge.

I am now in the process of evaluating the iPad 2 and, having applied the same settings as I did on my iPhone, you can probably tell that the iPad evaluation is going well. I now use the iPhone to create a personal hotspot, so the wi-fi-only version of the iPad works everywhere for me. In fact, I am writing this article on the iPad while sitting in my yard by the pool. How life has changed in such a short time, thanks

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to devices like the iPhone and iPad. I hope this article proves useful, and no doubt I will soon have more thoughts to share regarding the iPad 2.

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