



Focus on the Future

Guest Predictions: Eric Zimmerman

Guest Predictions is a regular feature in which we ask leaders in a number of professions questions that affect us all.

Eric has been a member of the Loudoun County Bar Association since 1975. He has served that organization as Secretary and as past member of the Judicial Selection Committee. He also has been appointed by the local judges to serve as a Commissioner in Chancery for the Court and currently serves on the Real Property Section of the Virginia State Bar.

Eric served two terms as Mayor of his home town of Purcellville, Virginia and was President of the Greater Loudoun Babe Ruth World Series at which time the National World Series for 16-year olds was held in Virginia for the first time. As a result of that effort he was named 1999 Loudoun County Citizen of the Year. Those efforts also resulted in his being awarded the Tradition of Excellence by the Virginia State Bar for his contributions to his community.

Q: What do you see as the key emerging uses of the internet for the legal profession?

A: Without question the internet has changed the **process** involved in the practice of law. While the function of an attorney remains the same, but the method of research and communication has changed dramatically. In earlier days an attorney often maintained an extensive (and expensive) library, but now with the click of a mouse we have access to volumes of information. Also, communication is now measured in minutes rather than hours or days.

Q: What surprising applications of the internet have you found?

A: Nothing is necessarily "surprising" but I find the internet makes my practice easier. Probably the down-side to the internet is its distractibility.

Q: What have been the "Best Uses" of the internet for you in your role as a lawyer?

A: As stated above, access to huge amounts of information, both legal and general, is a best use.

Q: What should be avoided when dealing with the Internet?

A: As we are always telling our kids, remember that whatever gets on the internet, stays on the internet. Avoid posting anything that can possibly be embarrassing or damaging. Also, referring again to the immediacy of messages, NEVER compose and send a message while angry. At least when we had to write letters, our emotions could moderate.

Q: Which next steps related to the internet might you recommend that legal professional take?

A: Continue to put more information online. For example, our local court is digitizing individual cases so rather than having to travel to the court house to review a case; one can do it at the desktop. Already the land and tax records are available for a fee – best expenditure of \$200 I ever made. Also, the Federal Courts allow filings to be online, again a big time-saver. And as you know, with attorneys “time is money.”