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Ten Great Apps for the Treo Mobile Lawyer

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If your Treo is part of your anatomy, and couldn't be pried from your cold hands with a winch, then you'll find something in this column that you can use.

The Treo 700p is the newest Treo using the Palm operating system, and is the twin to the Windows Mobile based Treo 700w. The Palm operating system is small, fast and efficient. While it won't run multiple applications simultaneously, it runs software designed for it with steady reliability, and quick response.

First and foremost, the Treo is a great cell phone, even if it's a little chunky compared to current styles. It fits nicely in the hand, and is small enough for a shirt pocket.

The Palm application list is long; partly because it's the oldest and longest-lasting of PDA operating systems. There are thousands of free, shareware, and commercial applications for it, and the choices are mind-boggling. Unlike BlackBerry, which has very few proprietary applications, and for which applications are controlled by a central server, the Palm is open to hundreds of developers and companies.

This list is not really a ranking, because each Palm app that I use has its own functionality. The list is made up of a group of my most-used and useful applications, several of which I use in my law practice on a daily basis. That said, here goes:

1. Tops on the Treo most-useful apps list has to be e-mail functionality. While the built-in Versamail application is a good e-mail program, I favor the \$20 e-mail program, SnapperMail. Snapper handles attachments better than Versamail, is easy to set up and is always in my right hand. I can check e-mail with a push of two buttons with my thumb. If you're addicted to e-mail, a Treo in your hand with SnapperMail installed is manna from heaven. And -- wonder of wonders -- you only get e-mail when you want it, unlike a certain other device that is favored by Big Brother-like corporations.

2. The wonderful built-in Treo Web browser, Blazer, is a daily boon to the mobile lawyer. This is the little browser that could, and it automatically adjusts normal Web pages to fit nicely on the small Treo screen. Browsing the Web will never be



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the same on a Treo as it is on a full monitor, but Blazer is a great way to find stuff on the Web, and there are many applications that automatically convert Web pages to Treo size. Mdog is a mobile portal that is designed to fit the Treo screen, and modifies sites to fit. Palm's own mobile portal also contains links to the mobile versions of many useful Web sites.

3. The excellent Treo calendar, contacts and phone applications are like having Outlook on your phone. They sync seamlessly with Outlook. I use Amicus Attorney for case management, and Amicus also syncs with the calendar, contacts and task application on the Treo. The contacts application permits attachment of a photo to a contact, and you just click on the contact to make a call.

4. If I absolutely have to look at my office network server to see what my secretary has changed in the calendar or contacts list, I can use the next program on my list, EZRemote. This great little program has a host program that sits on any computer attached to the Internet, and a client version that runs on the Treo. Just click connect, and you're looking at a resized version of the network desktop. It's sometimes tough to view the desktop on the small screen, but, in a pinch, you can actually control any computer remotely using the built-in 3G connection of the Treo.

5. Communication with my secretary is a high priority, and I use the Treo e-mail and phone functions to contact her regularly. However, if instant access is necessary, I use AIM instant messaging, which is always loaded at her work station, and the mobile version works great on my Treo. AIM works the same as it does on a desktop. Just load, log in and type, and an instant message pops up on her screen. This is a great way to communicate when you don't want to be too obtrusive.

6. All of the Google applications work great on the Treo, and the Palm Google search bar is on my Treo home page. However, the most useful Google app for Treo is Google Maps. You don't need a GPS to find and map any location in the United States -- and you can get easy driving directions to boot. Never get lost again. I should also include, however, TomTom Navigator, a GPS navigation application that connects the Treo, via its built-in bluetooth app, to any portable GPS receiver. I use both to find my way around, and they are invaluable when I am looking for a courthouse in another county, or if I am looking for a client or witness address.

7. The Treo version of one of my desktop favorites, Palm Dictate, from NCH Swift Sound in Australia, is next up. Palm Dictate permits me to use the Treo like a digital dictation machine, and to sync or e-mail dictation audio files from anywhere. The mobile Palm application is just as functional on the Palm as on the desktop, and creates dictation files in both standard audio format and encrypted format for wireless transfer.

8. When I need a break, SlingMedia's Palm version and MobiTV, a subscription service, allow me to check with any of the news channels I like, and I can also watch baseball and other sports live wherever I am. Collectively, these are my entertainment outlets whether I'm out and about or sitting in a judge's anteroom waiting for a hearing to be called. There is something really amazing about connecting from my Treo to my home cable box, and watching the recording of "24" that I made the previous night.

These applications make any downtime, or waiting-room time, or line-waiting time, a thing of the past. I once watched five innings of a Devil Rays game while waiting in line for a ride at Disney World with the kids. I didn't feel any more out of touch than the teenagers with iPod earphones in their ears.

9. Another of my favorite productivity tools for the Treo is ScanR, which uses the built-in Treo camera to shoot photos of white boards and documents, which are then e-mailed to the ScanR Web site, and converted to PDF versions for use as documents. The resolution doesn't match dedicated scanners, but the price is right (free), and you can do it with your Treo. I have used it in courthouses, clients' offices, legal seminars and other locations, to make quick document copies for transmission back to the office. It's like having a portable scanner, without having to carry one.

10. Finally, I use the mobile version of MobiPocket, an e-reader and RSS reader that syncs with its PC cousin. I read a lot of RSS feeds, although I normally do it on my regular computer. The Palm version of MobiPocket allows me to get all my blogs on the Treo, and to read them whenever I like. In addition, MobiPocket for Palm allows the storage of the Rules of Civil Procedure, Florida Statutes, and other legal resource material, for viewing and searching anywhere. The small screen is surprisingly adaptable to blog, news and legal research reading.

11. My top 10 lists keep exceeding 10, but when it comes to Palm applications, 10 just doesn't cover it. Some applications that

I don't use every day, but which are occasionally useful in my law practice are LoanExpert, which is a great finance and amortization tool for the mobile practitioner and PdaNet, which is a great fall-back application that permits the Treo to be used as a modem for a notebook computer.

Naturally, the power user of the Treo smart phone will have his own favorite applications. These are mine. If you have suggestions for other applications you use with Treo, e-mail me, and I will post them to the FutureLawyer blog. Happy mobile lawyering!

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