

BUSINESS CAREERS

Podcasts way for law firms, lawyers to

Can your practice produce promotional or educational radio and television segments? No? Well, if you can't do broadcasting, try podcasting.

Podcasts are essentially pre-recorded radio or TV shows that people subscribe to, then play back on computers, TVs, and personal media players such as iPods. People play them at home, during their morning commutes, while jogging or any other time they consume media.

Podcasts are popular in Canada. Social networking and knowledge management consultant Connie Crosby cites a study commissioned for the CRTC in 2009 claims 19 per cent of English Canadians who used the Internet listened to podcasts, along with seven per cent of French Canadians.

Law has yet to seize this trend. "When starting law



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school, I noticed there were hardly any legal podcasts in Canada. And absolutely no podcasts by law students," says Omar Ha-Redeye, currently articling in Toronto with Fireman Steinmetz. "So I decided to [start one]."

People who produce podcasts generally find they make great promotional tools. "Listening to podcasts tends to be more active than listening to the radio," claims Crosby.

"When people routinely listen to podcasts, strong bonds develop between listeners and podcaster. You just can't achieve the same connection with

advertising."

It's that bond that managing partner Suzana Popovic-Montag and her colleagues at Hull & Hull LLP sought when they first started podcasting in 2006. To introduce the concept, they sent iPods preloaded with their podcasts to referring solicitors. "This was very well received," she recalls.

Who listens to legal podcasts? According to Popovic-Montag:

- potential and existing clients
- referring solicitors
- students and lawyers looking to enter a niche
- other social media enthusiasts

"We get 2,000 to 2,500 downloads a week for each of our two podcasts," she claims.

Podcasting isn't all about promotion. Lawyers who edit their own podcasts find out what it's like to listen to them-

selves speak, an experience that affords them the chance to improve as speakers.

Ha-Redeye considers a "virtual audio library" essential for litigators. "Much of what we engage in includes oral advocacy," he explains. "Although the context is very different, clients can get a sense of a person's presence and tone through sound files that they can carry anywhere."

Podcasters also build relationships by inviting guests (clients, industry experts, referral sources and so on) to their podcasts, and accepting invitations to other podcasts.

All this podcasting can increase the value of a set of web assets. "My goal in starting the Law is Cool podcast was to add something new to the legal blogosphere, especially from the student slant," says Ha-Redeye.

"Podcasts were an important component in building the site up to be the largest law school site in Canada."

While Hull & Hull's podcasting start was deliberate, Ha-Redeye's introduction to podcasting happened when classmates at Centennial College volunteered him to podcast with a guest social media expert. "It was my first time trying anything like this," he says.

Crosby started as a "Canadian correspondent" for the *Check This Out!* podcast hosted by Jim Milles of the University of Buffalo's faculty of law. "I started the *Community Divas* podcast in August 2008 (along with co-podcaster Eden Spodek) as a way to raise my profile, learn about podcasting technologies, and talk to some interesting people about topics that

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We thank all applicants in advance,
but regret that only those selected for interviews will be contacted.

BUSINESS & CAREERS

develop 'strong bonds' with listeners

interest me," she says.

Potential podcasters might want to develop an "editorial calendar," a series of ideas that they can use to generate content. Fortunately, sources for ideas aren't difficult to come by. They can include:

- Blogs (even one's own)
- RSS feeds
- Other podcasts
- CLE (continuing legal education) programs
- Acquaintances and the activities they're involved in
- Controversial issues in an industry
- Conference speakers
- Guests a podcaster wants to interview
- Suggestions from loyal listeners

"We've taken public speaking opportunities and turned them into podcasts," says Ha-Redeye.

"After four and a half years, we're amazed that there is

always something new to talk about," Popovic-Montag adds.

How long should a podcast be? "We have discovered that people will listen to something for about 10 to 15 minutes before they tune out," Popovic-Montag says.

Getting equipped for podcasting isn't overly expensive. Many of the tools, like sound editing software and online interviewing systems (like Skype) cost nothing. Money goes mainly towards good microphones, web hosting and video cameras and lighting for video blogs.

The real expense in podcasting is time, both to master the technology and to produce individual episodes. The time factor caused Ha-Redeye and Crosby to drop out of podcasting (for now).

"Since we've [Ha-Redeye

and Devin Johnston, who also worked on podcasts for the legal blog *Law Is Cool*] started articling we haven't had any podcasts at all, because we simply don't have the time to do it," Ha-Redeye says. "We need a new law student to take over the show."

While Crosby participates in other podcasts, both she and her partner let go of *Community Divas* and the minimum six hours a week they each put into their podcast. "Our plan was to team up so that, if one of us was busy, the other could step in to do production. But we could not keep up with it and busy work and family lives," she admits.

Hull & Hull has more people on the podcast team. After Popovic-Montag and her partner, Ian Hull, started podcasting in 2006, "our other partners even-

tually became interested and they and the lawyers of our firm started to alternate on Hull on Estates."

She figures podcasting represents about 10 per cent of the firm's marketing efforts. "Our financial and time commitment to podcasting is minimal compared to the rewards we reap," Popovic-Montag claims, citing both marketing and education among those rewards.

Both Ha-Redeye and Crosby

plan to produce podcasts again. "I'll probably do video podcasts in the future," Ha-Redeye says.

Crosby recommends budding podcasters not face the technology setup and learning hump alone. "It is well worth the money to bring in an expert to help you rather than wasting time figuring out the technical side," she says. ■

We want to hear from you!
E-mail us at: tlw@lexisnexis.ca

Announcement

LAWYERS' PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY COMPANY

LawPRO announces the following changes and appointments in the Claims Department



Executive Vice-President **Duncan Gosnell** is now responsible for the Claims and Underwriting & Customer Service departments at LawPRO. A member of the LawPRO executive group since 1995, Mr. Gosnell has been instrumental in developing the underwriting and customer service functions at the company. For much of the past year, he had been acting Vice-President, Claims as well as overseeing the Underwriting and Customer Service Department as Executive Vice-President.

The claims function at LawPRO will consist of two departments, each headed by a vice-president.



Jerzy Adamowicz is Vice-President of the new Specialty Claims Department, responsible for a number of areas including, among others, TitlePLUS and Excess Insurance claims and claims involving coverage issues. Mr. Adamowicz holds LL.B and LL.M degrees from universities in Israel, and has extensive experience as a practitioner, counsel and claims examiner in both Israel and Canada. He has held several managerial positions in the LawPRO Claims department since 1994, most recently as Claims Director.



Jack Daiter is Vice-President of the new Primary Professional Liability Claims Department, responsible for most of LawPRO's primary professional liability claims. After obtaining his LL.B (Ottawa) and LL.M (Osgoode) degrees, Mr. Daiter gained extensive experience in private practice before joining LawPRO as a claims examiner in 1997. He was appointed a Claims Manager in 2007 and Claims Director in 2009. As well, he has taught courses in ADR and has spoken on risk management issues to a variety of student and professional audiences.

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Announcement

LexisNexis® Canada Welcomes



WARREN HOOLE

WORKERS' COMPENSATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

LexisNexis Canada Inc. is pleased to welcome **Warren Hoole** as the updating author of the looseleaf publication *Workers' Compensation in British Columbia*.

Warren Hoole received his LL.B. (co-op) from the University of Victoria Law School in 2000. Since then, Mr. Hoole clerked at the Federal Court of Appeal in Ottawa and articulated and practised at a large downtown law firm. Mr. Hoole is particularly interested in administrative law and co-authored a legal text on standards of review of federal administrative tribunals. In September of 2003, Mr. Hoole joined the Review Division of the Workers' Compensation Board of B.C. After two years as a review officer, Mr. Hoole joined WCAT as a vice chair in September of 2005.

LexisNexis Canada Inc. wishes to thank the original authors **Heather McDonald** and **Marguerite Mousseau** for their contributions to *Workers' Compensation in British Columbia*.

For further details of *Workers' Compensation in British Columbia*, go to www.lexisnexis.ca/bookstore