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*Rowan University*

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**A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEW JERSEY LAW FIRMS'  
WORLD WIDE WEB SITE HOME PAGES**

by  
Karen Kaufman

A Thesis Project

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division  
of Rowan University  
May 15, 1998

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved 5/12/98

## **ABSTRACT**

Karen Kaufman  
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEW JERSEY LAW FIRMS'  
WORLD WIDE WEB SITE HOME PAGES  
1998

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Larry Litwin  
Corporate Public Relations Graduate Program

The purpose of this study was to analyze the content of New Jersey law firm home pages on their World Wide Web sites in order to compare and contrast selected variables.

Previous studies and information on legal Web site presence on the World Wide Web was researched.

Fifteen Web sites were studied to compile an initial list of variables. The variables were adjusted based on research of the law firms and browsers' opinions. Twenty-nine variables were selected.

Major Web sites researched were the National Law Journal, the Indiana University School of Law, and the American Bar Association. None led to a comprehensive list of New Jersey law firms.

On-line research led to The Martindale-Hubbell Lawyer Locator with the most complete and timely information available at the time of this study. The first 40 New Jersey law firms were analyzed for content from February 2, 1998–February 16, 1998. The variable frequency was charted.

From the findings of the study, conclusions were made as to the most prominent frequency of variables found in New Jersey law firms' home pages.

Web sites vary in size and quantity of information but are similar in content. The purpose of these Web sites is to have a presence on the World Wide Web. Law firms as small as one and as large as 850 practitioners maintain Web sites with extensive home pages.

## **MINI-ABSTRACT**

Karen Kaufman  
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEW JERSEY LAW FIRMS'  
WORLD WIDE WEB SITE HOME PAGES  
1998

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Larry Litwin  
Public Relations Graduate Program

The purpose of this study was to analyze the content of New Jersey law firm home pages on their Web sites in order to compare and contrast selected variables.

The results found that the Web sites vary in size and quantity of information but are very similar in content. The purpose of these Web sites is to have a presence on the World Wide Web.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is dedicated to my research assistant, best friend and mother, Francine Kaufman. Nothing I do would be possible without the lessons she has taught me, the inspiration she has provided me and the unbelievable amount of love she has given me.

Thank you to my father, Joe Kaufman, who instilled in me the importance of education and gave me the tools to achieve.

Special thanks to my brother, Joe Kaufman, for getting on my case whenever I needed a jump start, even when I didn't want one.

Laura, John and all of my friends were so supportive while I was in school and preparing this paper. They deserve acknowledgement for their support and for listening when I brain stormed, expressed ideas and complained.

Thanks to Keith for helping me create the concept for this study over a bottle of wine in my living room.

*We are shaped and fashioned by what we love.*—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Thanks to my advisor, Mr. Larry Litwin, who helped me stay focused while doing this study. His mild-mannered approach, insight and obvious enthusiasm guided me to success.

# Table of Contents

## Acknowledgements

## Chapter One

Introduction.....	1
Need for Study.....	6
Statement of the Problem.....	7
Delimitations.....	7
Purpose.....	8
Procedures.....	8
Terminology.....	10

## Chapter Two

Related Studies.....	15
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## Chapter Three

Source Materials.....	21
Tools and Techniques.....	21
Variables in This Study.....	25

## Chapter Four

Summary.....	27
Findings.....	28

## Chapter Five

Conclusions.....	37
Recommendations.....	46

## Bibliography

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

What are the messages lawyers and law firms send to their external audiences through the electronic medium of the World Wide Web? Lawyers and law firms are jumping on the information superhighway just like millions of other service related industries. They spend time and money to develop Web sites. What do they tell us? What do they contain? What do they look like?

“With more than 40 million users, the World Wide Web offers boundless opportunities. It reaches a limitless audience, providing users with interactive technology and vast resources. No other medium can achieve this as easily or inexpensively.”<sup>1</sup>

Twenty-one percent of all adults use the World Wide Web, the Internet or both. A Baruch College–Harris Poll requested by Business Week surveyed 1,000 U.S. households and showed that 82 percent of those using the Internet or an on-line service are searching for information.<sup>2</sup> Thus the Internet has many benefits to the user.

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Clayton. (1997, August). Are you on the Web yet? *Corrections Today*, 59(5), 64.

<sup>2</sup> Amy Cortese. (1997, May 5). A census in cyberspace. *Business Week*

According to Laura E. Noonan, president of Screened Images Multimedia (SIM) and Corrections Connection, an online index for corrections professionals, can realize seven major advantages to developing a Web site:

1. Awareness. Users are aware of organizations with a Web presence. Absence is also noted, especially when entire industries are linked site to site.
2. Cost Savings. Mailing correspondence can be costly and frequently asked questions can be answered online. Also announcements can be posted and received in a few minutes.
3. Community Outreach. A Web site may provide information of general interest to the browser thereby assisting the community with little effort.
4. Equal Footing. Budget is no longer an issue when adding colors, graphics and amount of material. A Web site can look sophisticated even when not expensive.
5. Recruitment. Web sites can advertise employment opportunities.
6. Public Relations. On the Internet law firms can send a press release or mail a flyer quickly enough to acknowledge a change or error.
7. Instant Audience. People all over the country can be reached without doing a lot to attract them.

A Web site must catch the browser's interest within eight seconds, since the average visit is only about seven minutes, according to a University of Minnesota Study. Therefore, it is essential to spend time making a Web site visually and contextually appealing and interesting.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Clayton



An attorney or law firm can use its Web site to duplicate traditional information found in brochures and packets. Consistent with the production of any printed promotional piece, “identity is the cornerstone of any effective Web site.”<sup>4</sup> It could identify practice areas, major client lists, office locations and a roster of its lawyers with some biographical data for each of them.<sup>5</sup> One of the most important design considerations is making sure the browser knows where they are on the site.<sup>6</sup> Structure, consistency, solid information, valuable links, good art, timely updates and load time of less than two minutes are important to a Web site. Graphics are important but if they load too slowly people will go elsewhere for their information.<sup>7</sup> “When there’s a site that has a bulletin board or a chat room, [browsers] will definitely frequent that site.”<sup>8</sup> The site should also have contact information that is complete, accurate and up-to-date. “Many sites lack basics such as postal address, phone and fax numbers” or this information is buried and hard to find.<sup>9</sup> Sites should be easy to exit as well as easy to find. A table of contents may also be useful. “Most users want to get in, grab a few pages (probably print them out), and then get out.”<sup>10</sup>

Web site development and maintenance can be costly. “All the expense is worthless if no one visits a site.”<sup>11</sup>

Ethics rules violations are an issue to attorney sites. Some sites use disclaimers but some may be deterred from going online because of the strict rules.<sup>12</sup> Controversial issues

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew Culter. (1997, March). Designer label: webmasters typically don’t view themselves as graphic artists, but creating the site’s visual identity is part of the job. *Webmaster*.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel J. Pope & Helen Whately Pope. (1997, Jan.). Is it safe. . . *Defense Counsel Journal* 64(1), 138-143.

<sup>6</sup> Culter

<sup>7</sup> Clayton, p. 64.

<sup>8</sup> Culter

<sup>9</sup> Mark Halper. (1997, August 25). So does your Web site pay? *Forbes*, 160 (4), S117.

<sup>10</sup> Halper

<sup>11</sup> Halper

<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey R Kuester. (1996), August 12). Attorney sites can avoid violations of ethics rules. *The National Law Journal*, 18(50), B11, col. 1.

range from viewing lawyers' Web pages as advertising<sup>13</sup> to considering attorneys' online comments as unauthorized practice of law if received by users in states where the attorney is not licensed to practice, to the fact that e-mail is not a secure medium thus challenging the attorney–client privilege.<sup>14</sup>

Technological advances have impacted the practice of law historically. Air travel allowed lawyers to fly across the country to do business, jets transported letters and documents overnight. With the introduction of the facsimile machine, lawyers are expected to respond to inquiries, motions and legal demands within hours.<sup>15</sup> Now there is the Internet, a global network connecting over 40 million users and proves to be a powerful communications tool for lawyers and other service related industries.<sup>16</sup>

What is the function of a Web site? "It is still too early to tell if Web sites actually help in client development."<sup>17</sup> There is positive information that proves lawyers' Web sites are effective in law student recruitment. Web sites also prove helpful in maintaining existing client relationships.<sup>18</sup> Web pages are capable of providing more detail about their practices than ordinary marketing materials.<sup>19</sup> "The Web is used more often for marketing, advertising, and public relations than for direct sales."<sup>20</sup>

In 1993 only two U.S. law firms "had a serious presence on the Internet."<sup>21</sup> By mid-February of 1995, 31 lawyers or law firms had home pages with information and

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<sup>13</sup> T.K. Read. (1996, Winter) Pushing the advertising envelope: building bill boards in the sky along the information superhighway. *Washington State University Law Journal*.

<sup>14</sup> Joan C. Rogers. (1996, March 6). Malpractice concerns cloud e-Mail, online advice. *ABA/BNA Lawyer's Manual*, 59.

<sup>15</sup> Pope, p. 139.

<sup>16</sup> Clayton, p. 64.

<sup>17</sup> Robert L. Blacksberg. (1996, July 1). Web sites can enhance existing client relations; a well designed Web site is an effective way to retain clients as well as recruit new ones. *The National Law Journal*, 18 (44),c14

<sup>18</sup> Blacksberg

<sup>19</sup> David P. Vangriff. (1995, July). Marketing in cyberspace. *ABA Journal*, 84.

<sup>20</sup> Business using Web sites conservatively. *USA Today*, (1997, August). 26(2627), 12.

<sup>21</sup> Peter W. Martin. (1995, September). Prospecting the Internet. *ABA Journal*, 52.

graphics. By June of 1995 that number doubled. Now the American Bar Association is on the Internet and nearly all large firms and many small firms and lawyers in private practice are accessible by e-mail and contemplating creating Web sites. In 1994, the New York Times described the Internet as a huge, new city. Lawyers are migrating to this city: The Internet. Why? Clients and potential clients are there. Other law firms and nonlawyer competition are establishing themselves on the Internet. Lawyers and potential clients are already communicating via bulletin boards and news groups. The Internet provides two way communication and cost-effective information is available.<sup>22</sup>

A Web site has to communicate just like a printed piece. What is the content of law firms' home pages? This is worth exploring.

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<sup>22</sup> Martin, p. 52-56.

## Need For Study

The need for this study emerges as one looks at the advances in technology. More and more people are going online to seek information. Millions of people are online sending information. A lawyer or law firm must establish its presence on the Web. No presence on the Web is duly noted. Presence can only help when your competition is there and a huge audience is emerging.

Since technology moves so quickly and so many issues need to be considered while developing a Web site, exploration of their content is needed.

Content analyses are needed to evaluate the content of any and all publications. Technology allows us to explore electronic publications. Content analysis is one method to analyze existing Web sites and to develop new ones. Content analysis is:

[An] examination of certain contextual elements [which] can bring to light facts about the structure of the material in question involving wider and more profound levels of meaning.<sup>23</sup>

Another definition of content analysis, found in Zito's *Methodology and Meanings: Variety of Sociological Inquiry*, states:

A content analysis may be defined as a methodology by which the researcher seeks to determine the manifest content of written, spoken or published communication by systematic, objective and quantitative analysis.<sup>24</sup>

Lawyers, law firms and those assigned with the task of Web site design, development and maintenance of legal or other Web sites will use this collected information as a reference for evaluating, adjusting, improving or developing Web sites.

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<sup>23</sup> Heather Sulzbach. (1994). *Content Analysis of the 1992-1993 Football and Basketball Media Guides*. Rowan College, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Laura E. Bolling. (1992). *NCAA Manual*, (Kansas: National Collegiate Athletic Association, 99.

## Statement of the Problem

This study entails a content analysis of lawyers' and law firms' home pages of their Web sites to determine their content.

## Delimitations

This study was limited to an analysis of Web site home pages of New Jersey law firms listed under the Martindale-Hubbell Lawyer Locator Web site (<http://www.martindale.com>). This may not be a complete listing of all New Jersey firms on the World Wide Web. This also may change before completion of this study as new Web sites are constantly emerging.

The study was limited to home pages because the information contained in a respective Web site for a law firm could be infinite.

Furthermore, due to the nature of the medium, Web sites change their addresses frequently, without notice. The home pages analyzed were the first 40 New Jersey law firms with Web sites listed at the time of the study.

The problem is firms and lawyers change Internet Providers almost as often as they change their shirts. So it is hard to have an accurate list of all possible addresses.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Juliet C. Smith, Electronic Services Librarian, Indiana University School of Law, in an E-mail reply to an E-mail request for assistance, December 6, 1997  
[jcsmith@law.indiana.edu](mailto:jcsmith@law.indiana.edu).

## **Purpose**

The primary purpose of this study was to analyze the content of lawyers' and law firms' home pages on their Web sites in order to compare and contrast selected variables. This was accomplished by implementing the following sub-purposes:

1. Selecting sample Web sites on the Internet and visiting their home pages.
2. Examining the selected samples to determine variables for study.
3. To determine which Web sites to use in order to narrow this study, various search engines were explored through the Martindale-Hubbell Web site (<http://www.martindale.com>).
4. Locating lawyers and law firms in New Jersey with active Web sites through the Martindale-Hubbell Web site.
5. Charting variable presence in each home page.
6. Determining frequency of variables.

## **Procedures**

Research was done in an attempt to locate any previous studies and information on legal Web site presence in general. Methods of database research were through ProQuest CD-Rom Retrieval Periodical Abstracts Research at Burlington County Public Library and Infotrac Search Bank at Rowan University Library. The Internet Yellow Pages were used to find potentially helpful Web sites. Over 45 Web sites were visited. Rutgers University Law Library card catalog and Rowan University card catalog were also used. This research focused on analysis of the content of published communications on-line. Particular attention was focused "on the determination of the relative frequencies of arbitrarily established content categories,"<sup>26</sup> with the categories stated in this chapter.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Schramm. (1994) *The process and effects of mass communication*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, (1974), 314.

Web sites located through the National Law Journal's 1997 Technology Survey were studied to compile an initial tentative list of variables.<sup>27</sup> The variables noted were download time, presence of photos, existence of hyperlinks, non-technical follow-up tools, e-mail addresses, layout items such as colors, rules, designs, repeating elements, lawyer profiles, client lists, fog index, ability to print information, chat rooms and bulletin boards. The variables used for this study were adjusted based on what research revealed was important to the law firms on-line and the browsers visiting those sites.

A two week Web site search was conducted from February 2, 1998 through February 16, 1998 for a complete, credible list of lawyers' and law firms' Web sites. The Martindale-Hubbell Lawyer Locator was well maintained and had the most complete and timely information available at the time of this study. The first 40 law firms or lawyers licensed to practice in New Jersey with Web sites linked to the Martindale-Hubbell Web site were studied.

Each Home page was visited and explored for content.

From the findings of the study, conclusions were made as to the most prominent variables frequently found in New Jersey law firms' home pages.

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<sup>27</sup> Culter

## Terminology

Address– A method of identifying a resource on the network.

ex. <http://www.abanet.com>.<sup>28</sup>

America On–Line, AOL– An on-line service used to access the World Wide Web.

Baud– A measure of modem speed. The higher the number, the faster the modem.<sup>29</sup>

Browser– A program that enables a user to search information on a server. Or a person looking for information on the World Wide Web.<sup>30</sup>

Conversational Hypertext Access Technology, CHAT– The worldwide party line of the Internet. Technically called IRC Internet Relay Chat. IRC allows multiple users to converse in real time. Used for world wide discussions.<sup>31</sup>

Connect Time– The amount of time spent waiting for files to open. The amount of time a user is online.<sup>32</sup>

Cyberspace– “Nowhere space” that exists because time and distance are irrelevant when communicating via interconnected computers.<sup>33</sup> A society of computer users.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Getting Online: The REAL Basics, Teleconference, Wednesday, January 31, 1996, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm eastern time

<sup>29</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations

<sup>30</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations

<sup>31</sup> Basic Internet Terms, handout from Sable Advertising, NJ

<sup>32</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations

<sup>33</sup> Career Track seminar, Fundamentals of the Internet: A basic skills Seminar for the “Internet Illiterate”, Mt. Laurel, NJ June 1997.

<sup>34</sup> Basic Internet Terms



Domain Name– A unique name referring to a specific Web site on the Internet.

ex. <http://www.abanet.org>.

Download– Transferring files electronically from a remote computer or system to your own computer so you can read, modify, print, and upgrade programs. <sup>35</sup>

Electronic mail, E-mail– Similar in principle to postal mail but using the Internet.

Communication with one or thousands of computer or FAX users.

File Transfer Protocol, FTP– Method for document retrieval from other computers. <sup>36</sup>

Gunning Fog Index– An equation used to determine the reading level of printed matter by counting words, syllables and using a mathematic equation.

Hits– Visits to a Web site.

Home Page– The first or introductory page on a Web site. <sup>37</sup> The document you access first at a Web site. <sup>38</sup> Serves as a main menu to documents or graphics that an individual or association maintains as a site on the World Wide Web. <sup>39</sup>

Hyper Text Markup Language, HTML– The commands added to text files with styles and links (jumps) for use by World Wide Web browsers. <sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations

<sup>36</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations

<sup>37</sup> Basic Internet Terms

<sup>38</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations,

<sup>39</sup> Martin, p. 53.

<sup>40</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations

Hyper Text Transport Protocol, HTTP– Beginning of a Web site address.

ex. <http://www.abanet.org>

Hyperlink– A connection to another area in a Web site achieved by clicking an icon or button on a web site. Can also be called “a link”.

Hypertext– Text containing highlighted words that users can click on to bring up additional information about the word or to connect to another document the word refers to. <sup>41</sup>

Internet– A network of networks. “A world wide uncontrolled, unadministered network of computers.” Developed by the US Defense Department in the late 1960s and today connects over 75,000 independent networks into one global network. <sup>42</sup>

Internet Service Provider, Internet Provider or ISP– A company that maintains a network that has access to the Internet. A fee is usually required. <sup>43</sup> Services such as AOL and Yahoo that allow users access to the World Wide Web.

Internet Information Center, InterNIC– ”Registration Authority responsible for filing and maintaining World Wide Web Domain Names.” <sup>44</sup>

Internet Relay Chat, IRC– The worldwide party line of the Internet. Multiple users may converse in real time. <sup>45</sup> Referred to as “CHAT,” Conversational Hypertext Access Technology.

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<sup>41</sup> Martin

<sup>42</sup> Basic Internet Terms

<sup>43</sup> Vandagriff

<sup>44</sup> Pope, p. 140.

<sup>45</sup> Basic Internet Terms

Jump– An optional command for access to the destination described in that command. <sup>46</sup>

Layout– The elements of design in a publication.

Link– Short for hyperlink. A connection to another area in a web site achieved by clicking an icon or button.

Login– Identifying a computer to a host computer using a user ID and password. <sup>47</sup>

Microsoft Explorer– A World Wide Web browser.

Modem, MODulator/DEModulater– A machine that connects your computer by using phone lines and changing the digital computer signal to analog to be carried over the phone line. The receiving modem transfers information from analog to digital so it can decipher the transmission. (16)

Netiquette– A code of conduct on-line.

Newsgroup– A discussion group to talk about almost any topic online. <sup>48</sup>

Post– To send a message to a discussion group, list or bulletin board. <sup>49</sup>

Search Engine– An enhanced Web site that is used to index and access information on the Internet. <sup>50</sup>

Server– A computer that makes service available on a network to client programs. <sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Vandagriff

<sup>47</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations

<sup>48</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations

<sup>49</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations

<sup>50</sup> Basic Internet Terms

<sup>51</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations

Surfer– A person looking for information on the World Wide Web.

Uniform Resource Locator, URL– An address to access World Wide Web pages on the Internet. ex. in the Web address: <http://www.abanet.org>, http is the URL. <sup>52</sup>

World Wide Web, WWW– Tool for accessing and storing information on the Internet. <sup>53</sup>  
Used “to electronically publish and display documents including advertisements, brochures and catalogs” among other things.<sup>54</sup>  
An Internet service. <sup>55</sup>

Web Browser– A software program that automates the use of the World Wide Web by simplifying programming into a usable form.

Web site– An area or “address” on the World Wide Web belonging to a certain entity which contains information.

Webmaster/Webmistress– The person responsible for keeping the server running properly.<sup>56</sup>

Yahoo– An on-line service used to access the World Wide Web.

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<sup>52</sup> Kuester

<sup>53</sup> Basic Internet Terms

<sup>54</sup> Career Track seminar

<sup>55</sup> United Cerebral Palsy Associations

<sup>56</sup> David Siegel. (1996) *Creating Killer Web Sites*. Indianapolis, Indiana: Hayden Books.

## CHAPTER 2

### Related Studies

This chapter presents the highlights of studies related to this content analysis thereby allowing a better understanding of the information available on Web sites belonging to law firms. This researcher conducted a complete on-line research of law related Web sites checking every hyperlink available during the month of February, 1998.

Extensive research was done through Martindale–Hubbell, an authoritative guide to the American legal profession whose database is now regarded as the primary research source for information about attorneys and law firms around the world.<sup>57</sup> Also researched were Web sites belonging to the National Law Journal, American Bar Association, and the Indiana University School of Law. The Internet searches were initiated by The Internet Yellow Pages references.

Every external hyperlink available from Law Firms during primary research was explored to find related Web sites. The only closely related study which emerged as a result of on-line research was National Law Journal Technology Surveys from 1995, 1996 and 1997. A review of the studies over the three years clearly indicates a rapid growth in the number of law firms going on-line. It provides a basis for this study and opens up other ideas and issues of interest for further study.

<sup>57</sup> Martindale-Hubbell Online, [http://www.martindale.com/company/about\\_company.html](http://www.martindale.com/company/about_company.html).

*Law Journal Extra!*, a service of The New York Law Publishing Co., is one of the largest and most comprehensive commercial legal sites on the Net.<sup>58</sup> This Web site posted the 1996 Computer Technology Survey done by the National Law Journal. The 1997 survey was not available on the Web site and the 1998 survey has not yet been completed. The National Law Journal Circulation Department was contacted to request a copy of the October 6, 1997 issue of the National Law Journal which had the most extensive information on the topic of Web sites and other related information.

The National Law Journal 1997 Computer Survey and preliminary data for “The NLJ 250” annual survey of the nation’s largest law firms revealed that almost two thirds of the largest U.S. law firms now have Web sites. The computer survey revealed that 64 percent of 75 responding firms maintain Web sites. The number of firms with sites has increased 70 percent since 1996. “There are now 2,639 businesses registered with the law firm directory of Yahoo’s search engine.”<sup>59</sup> There are an estimated 3,000 law firms on the Net. Thirty-three percent of the 48 firms responding said that their sites generate business. The National Law Journal Computer survey asked firms with Web sites which pages received the most visitors, or “hits.” Twelve of the 48 respondents stated that the most popular aspects of their sites were attorney biographies, firm news, reprints of professional articles and basic information about the firm traditionally printed in brochures. The study also revealed that technology budgets for the largest firms ranged from \$1 million to \$10 million. These expenses were not totally related to Web usage but also included hardware, software and upgrades.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Wayne J. Lovette. (1996, August) Free information online proliferates. *National Law Journal*, 50(18), B7.

<sup>59</sup> Cynthia Cotts. (1997, October 6) Sharp rise in Web sites by largest firms. *The National Law Journal*, B7-B9.

<sup>60</sup> Cotts

The 1996 National Law Journal Computer Technology Survey asked questions strictly geared to the use of hardware, software, budget, operating system, word processing, time and billing, document management, litigation support, imaging, user groups and asked if the law firm had a Web site or planned to develop one within the next year.<sup>61</sup>

Research for this study also consisted of manual searches through card catalogs and several data-base searches through ProQuest CD-ROM Retrieval Periodical Abstracts Research at the Burlington County Public Library and Infotrac Search Bank at the Rowan University Library. The Rutgers University Law Library was also used to research Law-specific periodicals.

Several books were purchased for use in research due to the timeliness of this study as libraries did not stock such books at the time of research. Most books on the topic of the Internet have been published since 1996.

Much of the scrutiny of Legal Web sites is that there is limited published information. Controversy surrounds the content of lawyers' sites due to reasons cited in Chapter One. The controversy over Web site design has emerged for lawyers in an article, "Are Ethical Dignified Sites Dull?" This National Law Journal Article reveals that the issue of Lawyers and advertising is studied extensively in the courts. It was only 21 years ago that the Supreme Court lifted the ban on state legal ethics codes which barred lawyer advertising, in *Bates v. Arizona*, 433 U.S. 350 (1977).<sup>62</sup>

At the American Bar Association's 1997 convention, several round tables were dedicated to the topic of Web Advertising. The pervasive sentiment was that the biggest challenge was trying to determine which state rules apply and how to comply with different

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<sup>61</sup> Computer technology survey. *The National Law Journal* 19, B12.

<sup>62</sup> Wendy R. Leibowitz. (1997, August 18). The sins of law firm Web sites: are ethical, dignified sites dull? *The National Law Journal*, 51(19),B6.

state rules. A national standard was suggested from sources such as the Federal Trade Commission, which deals with consumer protection. Another suggestion was to impose a Uniform Commercial Code or that lawyers should refer to the American Bar Association's Model Rules of Professional Conduct when setting up a Web site. Legal issues continue to be the focus of much formal and informal discussion.<sup>63</sup> State legal ethics committees are charged with the task of policing these ads. They try to prevent false or misleading statements and keep lawyers from practicing out of their jurisdictions. This article focuses on the legal considerations that are under scrutiny regarding lawyers using Web sites to advertise. Studies by the courts and professional committees may cause more controls to come to fruition. This information may be useful in understanding why lawyers have disclaimers in their Web site which is one variable of this study.<sup>64</sup>

Another study by Forrester Research polled 50 companies and found that 32 percent of the 43 that responded spent from \$500,000 to more than \$5 million to create a commerce-based Web site, not a legal Web site.<sup>65</sup>

A Baruch College–Harris Poll requested by Business Week revealed the number of people using the Internet for information. One thousand U.S. households were surveyed in the middle of 1997. This survey revealed that 21 percent of all adults use the Internet, the World Wide Web or both. Eighty-two percent of those using the Internet or an online service search for information. Seventy-five percent use it for education, 68 percent for news and 61 percent for entertainment.<sup>66</sup>

Many books are now available in bookstores containing ideas about what people like and don't like regarding Web site design. *Creating Killer Web Sites* explains in detail what is appealing, what works graphically and how to design a Web site.<sup>67</sup> *The Web*

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<sup>63</sup> Leibowitz

<sup>64</sup> Leibowitz

<sup>65</sup> Halper, p. 117.

<sup>66</sup> Cortese

<sup>67</sup> Siegel



*Design Cookbook* explains in detail what elements to include in a Web site.<sup>68</sup> In these books, graphic designers explain what they feel is attractive in page design. They refer to studies used in layout and design of a web page. The studies in these two books review the look of the Web site, not the content.

A study by Harper Business reveals the demographics of Web surfers. In July of 1996 the number of surfers was 7.5 million, 30 percent female and 70 percent male. In 1998 the number of surfers was 60 million, and in the year 2000 it is projected that there will be 95 million. This is a huge target audience for an advertiser on the Web.<sup>69</sup>

A University of Minnesota study revealed that a Web site must capture the interest of the browser within eight seconds, since the amount of time people spend online looking at Web page averages seven minutes. The author of this study concluded that it is therefore essential that Web sites be interesting and appealing, both visually and contextually. “The first screen could be the last one the browser views, unless he or she is given reason to explore further.”<sup>70</sup>

No effort to study Web sites by content analysis has been located by this research effort. What exists as related studies are technology surveys, Web usage polls and books on Web site content and design.

The related research determined that content analysis is necessary to determine the content of law firms’ home pages. What will emerge is what legal professionals find important enough to put on their firm’s home page which must catch the readers’ attention in eight seconds and keep them engaged.

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<sup>68</sup> William Horton. & Lee Taylor. (1996). *The Web page design cookbook*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

<sup>69</sup> Mary Meeker & Chris DePuy. (1996) *The Internet report*. Harper Business.

<sup>70</sup> Clayton

Further areas of study, discussed in Chapter Five, easily emerge as this is a new and rapidly changing topic. Once it is determined what is on these sites and what is included in Home Pages, they can be further evaluated.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Source Materials**

Forty of New Jersey law firms' home pages linked to the Martindale-Hubbell Lawyer Locator were studied through content analysis.

### **Tools and Techniques**

Explored was a sample of 15 Web sites indicated in the National Law Journal's 1997 Technology Survey and the Web site Yellow Pages. This investigation led to a vast number of law related Web sites and a wealth of online information.

Major Web sites used as a road map were the National Law Journal's Web site (ljx.com), and the Indiana University School of Law's Web site (law.indiana.edu). The most extensive and up-to-date site was the Indiana University School of Law's Web site. The site included information about the law school with hyperlinks to an extensive listing of law firms all over the world, legal information, journals, schools and career opportunities. After realizing the information was so vast, the Webmaster at Indiana University was contacted via E-mail requesting assistance in finding a listing of Web sites.

The reply sent from Juliet C. Smith, Electronic Services Reference Librarian stated:

“I am afraid there is no simple listing of Web address for lawyers and law firms. Martindale–Hubbell Law Directory is available on the Web and will list Web addresses when available, but I don’t believe you can query the database to get just a listing of lawyers/firms with Web addresses. The other problem is firms and lawyers change Internet Providers almost as often as they change their shirts. So it is hard to have an accurate list of all possible addresses. If you need statistical data about lawyers on the Web, you should look at the American Bar Association’s Web site.”<sup>71</sup>

This prompted research of the American Bar Association’s Web site address (<http://www.abalog.net>) and a visit to it online. This site, among other things, provided hyperlinks to search engines with legal Web site listings. The lawyer Web sites in each search engine can be explored by location, practice, and other variables. Then the search was further narrowed by requesting only New Jersey lawyers.

Each site’s home page was entered through its respective search engine, listed in the American Bar Association site. There were only 14 New Jersey law firms found after an exhaustive search.

Martindale-Hubbell was researched and its Web site address was located in the *ABA Journal*. Martindale-Hubbell’s Worldwide Headquarters is located in New Providence, NJ.

“Since 1868, generations of lawyers have relied on Martindale–Hubbell as the authoritative guide to the American legal profession. The database is now regarded as the primary research source for information about attorneys and law firms around the world.”

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<sup>71</sup> Juliet C. Smith. Electronic Services Librarian, Indiana University School of Law. In an E-mail reply to E-mail sent requesting assistance, Dec. 8, 1997 [jcsmith@law.indiana.edu](mailto:jcsmith@law.indiana.edu).

The following table lists results of the search for the first 40 New Jersey law firms through the Martindale Hubbell Web site (<http://www.martindale.com>).

1. Archer & Greiner P.C.	<a href="http://www.archerlaw.com/">http://www.archerlaw.com/</a>
2. Ballen, Gertel & Dicintio	<a href="http://members.aol.com/ballen.html">http://members.aol.com/ballen.html</a>
3. Beasley, Casey & Erbstein	<a href="http://www.tortlaw.com/">http://www.tortlaw.com/</a>
4. Buchanan Ingersoll	<a href="http://www.bipc.com">http://www.bipc.com</a>
5. Capehart & Scatchard	<a href="http://www.capehart.com/">http://www.capehart.com/</a>
6. Louis A. Colaguori, P.C.	<a href="http://bc.emanon.net/colaguori.cgi">http://bc.emanon.net/colaguori.cgi</a>
7. Cuyler Burk	<a href="http://www.cuyler.com/">http://www.cuyler.com/</a>
8. Jennifer Chandler Hauge, Esq	<a href="http://www.nonprofitcounsel.com/">http://www.nonprofitcounsel.com/</a>
9. Connolly Epstein Chicco Foxman Engelmyer & Ewing	<a href="http://www.philalaw.com/">http://www.philalaw.com/</a>
10. Corcoran & Greene	<a href="http://www.corcoran-greene.com/">http://www.corcoran-greene.com/</a>
11. Dessen, Moses & Sheinoff	<a href="http://www.dms-lawyer.com/">http://www.dms-lawyer.com/</a>
12. Duane, Morris & Heckscher LLP	<a href="http://www.duanemorris.com/">http://www.duanemorris.com/</a>
13. Marc A. Futterweit	<a href="http://www.futterweit.com/">http://www.futterweit.com/</a>
14. Epstein Becker & Green	<a href="http://www.ebglaw.com">http://www.ebglaw.com</a>
15. Fragomen, Del Rey & Bernsen, P.C.	<a href="http://www.fragomen.com/About_Firm.html">http://www.fragomen.com/About_Firm.html</a>
16. Jay H. Greenblatt & Associates, P.C.	<a href="http://www.algorithms.com/users/jhg/lawfirm.html">http://www.algorithms.com/users/jhg/lawfirm.html</a>
17. Hill Wallack	<a href="http://www.hillwallack.com/">http://www.hillwallack.com/</a>
18. Kelley Drye & Warren, LLP	<a href="http://www.kelleydrye.com/">http://www.kelleydrye.com/</a>
19. Lerner David Littenberg Krumholz & Mentlik	<a href="http://www.ldlkm.com/">http://www.ldlkm.com/</a>
20. Littler Mendelson	<a href="http://www.littler.com/">http://www.littler.com/</a>
21. Marshall, Dennehey, Warner, Coleman & Giggin	<a href="http://www.mdwecg.com/">http://www.mdwecg.com/</a>
22. Meislik & Levavy	<a href="http://www.meislik.com/">http://www.meislik.com/</a>
23. Mesirov Gelman	<a href="http://www.mesirov.com/">http://www.mesirov.com/</a>
24. Morgan, Bornstein & Morgan	<a href="http://www.morganlaw.com/">http://www.morganlaw.com/</a>
25. Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, LLP	<a href="http://www.mlb.com/">http://www.mlb.com/</a>
26. David T. Norrie	<a href="http://users.nac.net/dnorrie/">http://users.nac.net/dnorrie/</a>

27. Pitney Hardin Kipp & Szuch <http://www.phks.com/>
28. Proskauer Rose, LLP <http://www.proskauer.com/>
29. Riker, Danzig, Scherer, Hyland & Perretti, LLP <http://www.riker.com/>
30. Rosenman & Colin, LLP <http://www.rosenman.com/>
31. The Rothfelder Law Offices <http://www.rlo-law.com/>
32. Satterlee Stephens Burke & Burke LLP <http://www.ssbb.com/>
33. Saul, Ewing, Remick & Saul, LLP <http://www.saul.com>
34. Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis LLP <http://www.shsl.com/>
35. Scarinci & Hollenbeck <http://www.njlegalink.com/>
36. St. John & Wayne, L.L.C. <http://www.stjohn-law.com/>
37. Stanton, Hughes, Diana, Zucker  
& Salsberg, P.C. <http://www.stantonhughes.com/>
38. Stark & Stark <http://www.stark-stark.com/>
39. Waters, Sherman & Puma <http://www.jaguarsystems.com/salemlawyers/>
40. Wells, Jaworski, Liebman & Paton <http://www.wellslaw.com/>

## Variables in This Study

The 29 variables of interest in this study were:

- A. Advertisements for other businesses or products including Web site designer
- B. Animation/Audio—referring to any graphics which move or any messages that can be received audibly
- C. Attorney Biographies link
- D. Awards received from on-line sources indicated on home page
- E. Bullets use as a graphic element
- F. Client Lists or References available through a link
- G. Colors used on home page
- H. Contact information other than electronic, including mailing address and phone number
- I. Copyright indication
- J. Disclaimer written in full on home page
- K. E-mail link
- L. Employment opportunities link
- M. Fonts used on home page
- N. Hit indicator
- O. Illustrations used on home page
- P. Legibility—ranked: poor, fair, good, excellent
- Q. Links: externally to other related sites
- R. Links: internally to search entire Web site
- S. Logo presence on home page
- T. Newsletter link
- U. Number of practitioners in all locations of firm
- V. Office locations
- W. Photographs present on home page
- X. Practice specialty as indicated in site
- Y. Professional articles link

- Z. Purpose or intent of Web site stated on home page
- AA. Table of contents with links to indicated topics
- AB. Unique features to home page not common to most home pages
- AC. Update indicator to state last update of site

When the Web site was visited, the 29 variables were searched for and recorded.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to perform a content analysis of New Jersey law firms' home pages on their World Wide Web sites.

On-line research was conducted to locate New Jersey law firm Web sites. The first 40 law firms with home pages located through the Martindale-Hubbell Web site (<http://www.martindale.com>) were selected for review.

Twenty-nine variables to search for were isolated based on Web site review, research of what experts in the field of Web site design determine important and studies which reveal what Web site browsers and law firms find important.

The home pages were reviewed for the 29 chosen variables. All information was put into a grid with the law firm listed vertically and the variables listed horizontally.

## **Findings**

The findings are contained in the following grid. The vertical list represents the first 40 New Jersey Law firms found through the Martindale-Hubbell Web site. The Horizontal grids show the variables of interest to this study.

## FINDINGS

### 40 New Jersey Law Firms with World Wide Web Sites and 29 Variables of their Home Pages

NEW JERSEY LAW FIRMS	A	B
	ADVERTISEMENTS	ANIMATION/AUDIO
1. ARCHER E. GREINER	NO	NO
2. BALEN, GERTELL & DICINTIO	NO	NO
3. BEASLEY, CASEY & ERBSTEIN	YES-MS, NETSCAPE	NO
4. BUCHANAN INGERSOLL	NO	NO
5. CAPEHART & SCATCHARD	NO	NO
6. LOUIS. A. COLAGUORI, PC	NO	NO
7. CUYLER BURK	NO	NO
8. JENNIFER CHANDLER HAUGE, ESQ.	NO	NO
9. CONNOLLY EPSTEIN CHICCO FOXMAN	NO	NO
10. CORCORAN & GREENE	NO	NO
11. DESSEN, MOSES & SHEINOFF	NO	NO
12. DUANE, MORRIS & HECKSCHER, LLP	NO	NO
13. MARC A. FUTTERWEIT	NO	NO
14. EPSTEIN, BECKER & GREEN, PC	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
15. FRAGOMEN, DEL REY & BERNSEN, P.C.	NO	NO
16. JAY H. GREENBLATT & ASSOCIATES, P.C.	NO	AUDIO GREETING
17. HILL WALLACK	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
18. KELLEY DRYE & WARREN, LLP	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
19. LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG, KRUMHOLZ &	NO	NO
20. LITTLER MENDELSON	NO	NO
21. MARSHALL, DENNEHEY, WARNER, COLEMAN	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
22. MEISLIK & LEVAVY	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
23. MESIROV GELMAN JAFFEE & CRAMER	NO	NO
24. MORGAN, BORNSTEIN & MORGAN	YES, SD, MART-HUB	NO
25. MORGAN, LEWIS, BOCKIUS, LLP	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
26. DAVID T. NORRIE	NO	SPINNING GLOBE
27. PITNEY, HARDIN, KIPP & SZUCH	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
28. PROSKAUER ROSE, LLP	NO	NO
29. RIKER, DANZIG, SCHERER, HYLAND &	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
30. ROSENMAN & COLIN, LLP	YES-NETSCAPE	NO
31. ROTHFELDER LAW OFFICES	NO	ANMTD ADDRESS ENVELOPE
32. SATTERLEE STEPHENS BURKE & BURKE, LLP	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
33. SAUL, EWING, REMICK & SAUL LLP	YES-GRAPHICS	NO
34. SCHNADER HARRISON SEGAL & LEWIS LLP	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
35. SCARINCI & HOLLENBECK	NO	AUDIO WELCOME
36. ST. JOHN & WAYNE, L.L.C.	NO	NO
37. STANTON, HUGHES, DIANA, ZUCKER &	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
38. STARK & STARK	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO
39. WATERS, SHERMAN & PUMA	NO	NO
40. WELLS, JAWORSKI, LIEBMAN & PATON	YES-SITE DESIGNER	NO

## FINDINGS

### 40 New Jersey Law Firms with World Wide Web Sites and 29 Variables of their Home Pages

	C	D	E	F
	ATTORNEY BIOS	AWARDS	BULLETS	CLIENT LISTS/REF
1	YES	NO	NO	NO
2	NO	NO	NO	NO
3	YES	NO	NO	NO
4	YES	NO	YES	NO
5	YES	NO	NO	NO
6	YES	NO	YES	NO
7	NO	NO	NO	NO
8	NO	NO	NO	NO
9	NO	NO	YES	YES
10	YES	NO	NO	NO
11	NO	NO	NO	NO
12	YES	NO	NO	NO
13	NO	NO	NO	NO
14	NO	NO	YES	YES
15	YES	NO	NO	NO
16	YES	NO	NO	NO
17	YES	NO	NO	NO
18	YES	NO	NO	NO
19	YES	NO	NO	YES
20	YES	NO	NO	YES
21	YES	NO	YES	NO
22	YES	NO	NO	NO
23	YES	NO	NO	NO
24	YES	NO	NO	YES
25	YES	NO	NO	NO
26	YES	NO	NO	NO
27	YES	NO	NO	YES
28	NO	NO	NO	NO
29	YES	NO	NO	NO
30	YES	NO	NO	NO
31	YES	NO	YES	NO
32	YES	BOTWA'97 L.O	NO	NO
33	YES	NO	NO	NO
34	YES	NETGUIDE GOLD	NO	NO
35	YES	NO	NO	NO
36	YES	NO	YES	NO
37	YES	NO	NO	NO
38	YES	NO	NO	NO
39	YES	NO	NO	NO
40	YES	NO	NO	YES

## FINDINGS

### 40 New Jersey Law Firms with World Wide Web Sites and 29 Variables of their Home Pages

	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>
	<b>COLORS</b>	<b>CONTACT INFO.</b>	<b>COPYRIGHT</b>	<b>DISCLAIMER</b>
1	FULL	YES	YES	NO
2	2	YES	NO	NO
3	FULL	YES	NO	NO
4	4	NO	NO	YES
5	2	YES	NO	NO
6	2	YES	NO	NO
7	FULL	NO	NO	NO
8	4	YES	NO	NO
9	3	YES	NO	NO
10	2	NO	NO	NO
11	2	YES	YES	YES
12	4	NO	YES	YES
13	2	YES	NO	NO
14	FULL	NO	NO	YES
15	3	NO	YES	NO
16	3	YES	NO	NO
17	2	NO	NO	YES
18	FULL	NO	YES	YES
19	2	YES	YES	NO
20	2	NO	YES	NO
21	FULL	NO	YES	YES
22	3	NO	YES	NO
23	3	YES	NO	NO
24	4	YES	YES	NO
25	FULL	NO	YES	YES
26	3	NO	NO	NO
27	FULL	NO	YES	YES
28	2	NO	NO	ENTIRE HOME PAGE
29	2	NO	YES	NO
30	FULL	NO	NO	NO
31	2	YES	YES	NO
32	FULL	NO	YES	YES
33	FULL	NO	YES	YES
34	3	YES	YES	NO
35	FULL	NO	YES	NO
36	4	NO	NO	NO
37	3	NO	YES	NO
38	4	YES	YES	NO
39	2	YES	NO	NO
40	2	YES	NO	NO

## FINDINGS

### 40 New Jersey Law Firms with World Wide Web Sites and 29 Variables of their Home Pages

	K	L	M	N
	E-MAIL LINK	EMPLOYMENT OPPS.	FONTS	HIT INDICATOR
1	YES	YES	1	NO
2	NO	NO	1	NO
3	YES	NO	2	NO
4	NO	YES	2	NO
5	YES	NO	1	NO
6	YES	NO	1	NO
7	NO	NO	1	NO
8	YES	NO	3	NO
9	NO	YES	3	NO
10	NO	NO	1	NO
11	YES	NO	2	NO
12	YES	YES	2	NO
13	YES	NO	2	NO
14	YES	NO	2	NO
15	NO	NO	2	NO
16	YES	NO	1	NO
17	YES	NO	1	NO
18	NO	YES	2	NO
19	YES	YES	2	NO
20	YES	YES	3	NO
21	NO	NO	1	NO
22	YES	NO	2	NO
23	YES	YES	3	NO
24	YES	NO	2	YES, 136
25	NO	YES	2	NO
26	NO	NO	1	NO
27	YES	NO	2	NO
28	NO	NO	2	NO
29	YES	NO	2	NO
30	NO	YES	2	YES, 22486
31	YES	NO	1	NO
32	YES	NO	2	NO
33	YES	NO	1	NO
34	YES	YES	3	NO
35	YES	YES	3	NO
36	YES	YES	2	YES, 272
37	YES	NO	1	NO
38	YES	YES	2	NO
39	YES	NO	1	YES
40	YES	NO	1	NO

## FINDINGS

### 40 New Jersey Law Firms with World Wide Web Sites and 29 Variables of their Home Pages

	O	P	Q	R
	ILLUSTRATIONS	LEGIBILITY	LINKS: EXTERNAL	LINKS: INTERNAL
1	NO	FAIR		24
2	NO	FAIR		NO
3	3	POOR	LEGAL LINKS	20
4	NO	GOOD	OTHER RESOURCES	23
5	NO	EXCELLENT		3
6	NO	GOOD		10
7	NO	EXCELLENT		1
8	1	GOOD	LEGAL LINKS	10
9	1	GOOD	REFERENCE CENTER	10
10	NO	EXCELLENT		4
11	NO	EXCELLENT	LIBRARY OF LINKS	6
12	1	EXCELLENT	RESOURCES	9
13	1	GOOD		6
14	NO	EXCELLENT	LEGAL LINKS	11
15	NO	GOOD		9
16	NO	POOR		1
17	NO	FAIR		7
18	1	GOOD	SITE DES, GOV AG.	13
19	NO	EXCELLENT		7
20	NO	GOOD		7
21	2	GOOD	OTHER RESOUR.	30
22	NO	POOR	FAVORITE LINKS	11
23	1	POOR	OTHER INTEREST	16
24	2	FAIR	MART-HUBBELL	9
25	8	GOOD	SITE DESIGNER	13
26	1	EXCELLENT	LAWLINKS	9
27	9	FAIR	SITE DES, LEG RES	9
28	NO	GOOD		1
29	1	GOOD	SD, LEGAL BASE	12
30	18	GOOD	INTERNET RES	22
31	5	GOOD	REG INFO	5
32	9	GOOD	LEG/CIVIC RES	14
33	1	GOOD	OTHER FIRMS	18
34	NO	GOOD	LEGAL LINKS	29
35	1	GOOD	LAW LIBRARY	13
36	NO	EXCELLENT		8
37	1	FAIR		7
38	2	GOOD	SITE DESIGNER	18
39	1	GOOD		4
40	NO	GOOD	SITE DESIGNER	12

## FINDINGS

### 40 New Jersey Law Firms with World Wide Web Sites and 29 Variables of their Home Pages

	S	T	U	V
	LOGO	NEWSLETTER LINK	NUMBER OF PRACTITIONERS	OFFICE LOCATION
1	YES	NO	85	NJ, PA
2	NO	NO	6	NJ, PA
3	YES	NO	18	NJ, PA
4	NO	YES	300	DC, FL, NJ, NY, PA
5	YES	NO	41	NJ
6	NO	YES	2	NJ
7	YES	YES	21	NJ, NY
8	NO	NO	1	NJ
9	NO	NO	37	NJ, PA
10	NO	NO	5	NJ, PA
11	YES	NO	22	NJ, PA
12	YES	YES	240	DC, DE, FL, NJ, NY, PA
13	YES	NO	NA	NJ
14	YES	YES	250	CA, CT, DC, FL, MA, NJ, NY, TX, VA
15	YES	NO	57	CA, CT, DC, FL, IL, NJ, NY
16	NO	NO	4	NJ
17	YES	YES	32	NJ, PA, NY
18	YES	NO	300	NJ
19	YES	NO	29	CA, CT, DC, FL, IL, NJ, NY, INT.
20	YES	YES	350	NJ
21	YES	YES	240	DE, NJ, OH, PA, VA
22	NO	YES	4	NJ
23	YES	NO	75	NJ, PA
24	YES	NO	4	NJ
25	YES	YES	850	CA, DC, FL, NJ, NY, PA, INT.
26	YES	NO	1	NJ
27	YES	YES	165	NJ, NY
28	NO	NO	460	CA, DC, NJ, NY, INT.
29	YES	NO	140	NJ
30	YES	YES	200	NJ, NY, DC
31	NO	NO	3	NJ
32	YES	NO	41	NJ, NY
33	YES	NO	167	DE, NJ, NY, PA
34	YES	YES	200	DC, GA, NJ, NY, PA
35	YES	YES	24	NJ, NY
36	YES	NO	45	NJ, NY
37	NO	YES	9	NJ
38	YES	YES	54	NJ
39	NO	NO	5	NJ
40	NO	YES	10	NJ



## FINDINGS

### 40 New Jersey Law Firms with World Wide Web Sites and 29 Variables of their Home Pages

	W	X	Y	Z
	PHOTOS	PRACTICE SPECIALTY	PROF. ARTICLES	PURPOSE OR INTENT
1	1	FULL SERVICE	YES	NO
2	NO	PERS. INJ./CRIMINAL	NO	NO
3	3	CATA. INJ/LITIGATION	NO	NO
4	NO	BUSINESS	YES	YES
5	NO	TAX/CIVIL LIT/LABOR	NO	NO
6	1/CHANGES EA. X	BUS., ORG/R. ESTATE	NO	NO
7	NO	INTELLECT. PROP.	NO	NO
8	NO	NON-PROFITS	YES	NO
9	BACKGROUND	FULL SERVICE	NO	NO
10	NO	COMMERCIAL	NO	NO
11	NO	FULL SERVICE	YES	YES
12	NO	FULL SERVICE	YES	NO
13	1	PI, FL, M, RE, COL	NO	NO
14	NO	FULL SERVICE	NO	YES
15	NO	IMMIG. NATIONALITY	YES	NO
16	1	CIVIL TRIAL	NO	NO
17	NO	FULL SERVICE	NO	NO
18	NO	FULL SERVICE	YES	YES
19	NO	INTELLECT. PROP.	NO	YES
20	NO	EMPLOY., LABOR LAW	NO	NO
21	NO	DEFENSE LIT.	YES	NO
22	NO	BUSINESS, RE	YES	NO
23	NO	FULL SERVICE	YES	NO
24	NO	COLLECTIONS/CR	NO	YES
25	8	FULL SERVICE	YES	YES
26	NO	RE,EP,DL,IM,LITCORP	NO	NO
27	NO	FULL SERVICE	NO	NO
28	NO	BUSINESS	NO	YES
29	NO	BANKING, INDUSTRY	NO	NO
30	NO	FULL SERVICE	YES	YES
31	NO	UTILITIES	NO	YES
32	NO	RANGE	YES	YES
33	NO	RANGE	YES	YES
34	NO	INDUSTRIES	NO	YES
35	NO	GENERAL	NO	NO
36	NO	FULL SERVICE	NO	NO
37	NO	LABOR, EMPLOY	NO	NO
38	NO	PI, BUSINESS	YES	NO
39	NO	RANGE	NO	NO
40	NO	COMMERCIAL	YES	YES

## FINDINGS

### 40 New Jersey Law Firms with World Wide Web Sites and 29 Variables of their Home Pages

	AA	AB	AC
	TABLE OF CONTENTS	UNIQUE	UPDATE INDICATOR
1	YES	ANNOUNCEMENTS	YES
2	NO	SPEAK SPANISH	NO
3	YES	BUILDING TOUR	NO
4	YES	ANNUAL REPORT	YES
5	NO		NO
6	YES	CHANGING PICTURE	YES
7	NO		NO
8	YES	GUEST BOOK	NO
9	YES	NOTEWORTHY CASES	NO
10	YES		NO
11	YES		YES
12	NO	SITE MAP	NO
13	YES	SPEAK SPANISH	NO
14	YES	UPCOMING EVENTS	YES
15	YES	BULLETIN BOARD	NO
16	NO	PERSONAL PHOTOS OF LAWYER	NO
17	YES	NEWS AND EVENTS	YES
18	YES	LINK TO GOV'T AGENCIES	YES
19	YES	SIGNIFICANT CASES	YES
20	YES	SEMINARS AND PRODUCTS	NO
21	YES	MAP LOCATOR OF OFFICES	YES
22	YES	GUESTBOOK	YES
23	YES	UPCOMING EVENTS	NO
24	YES	ONLINE CLAIM FORM	NO
25	YES	FEEDBACK PAGE	NO
26	YES		YES
27	YES	TRIVIA GAME	NO
28	NO	HOME PAGE IS DISCLAIMER	NO
29	YES	UPCOMING EVENTS	YES
30	YES	INTERNAL SEARCH ENGINE	YES
31	NO	SPECIAL LINKS	NO
32	YES	FREE SPEECH ONLINE ADVOCACY	NO
33	YES	ENVIRONMENTAL PAGE	NO
34	YES	MEMORIAM TO SOMEONE	YES
35	NO	WHAT'S NEW LINK	NO
36	YES	DOCUMENT TRANSFER INFO.	YES
37	YES		YES
38	YES	RADIO SHOW	YES
39	YES		NO
40	NO	BULLETIN BOARD	NO

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Conclusions**

#### **A. Advertisements**

Of the 40 law firms, 14 had an advertisement for their Web site designer on their home page. Two had an advertisement for Netscape, a search engine. One had an advertisement for the graphic designer of the site. One had an advertisement for Microsoft, and one had an advertisement for Martindale-Hubbell. In all, 42.5% of the home pages advertised for something other than the law firm.

#### **B. Animation/Audio**

Only two law firm home pages had animated graphics. Law firm number 26 had a spinning globe. Law firm number 31 had an envelope that smiled and changed to the mailing address when clicked. Two law firms numbered 16 and 35 had an audio welcome if clicked. Only five percent included audio and five percent included animation. A small percentage of law firms home pages change their appearance each time they were visited. Photographs or colors may change. This was not noted in this study as a variable.

#### **C. Attorney Biographies**

A study by the National Law Journal cited in this paper revealed that attorney biographies received the most hits from browsers on a home page. Thirty-two of the 40 home pages studied, representing 80 percent, had a link to attorney biographies.

#### D. Awards

Law firms 32 and 34 had awards posted on their home page. These awards were displayed like a person wearing a blue ribbon or a school paper with a star on it. Law firm number 32 had a “Best of the Web Award” given by legal.online. It states that it won the award for “best medium firm site honors.” Law firm number 34 had a “NetGuide Gold Site” Award. Both sites were appealing in the opinion of this researcher. Site number 34 was especially clear and neat. Site number 32 was colorful and fun to look at. Criterion for these awards is unknown in this study. The opportunity for these and other awards is also unknown.

#### E. Bullets

Bullets may be a design element reserved for brochures and newsletters. Only 17.5 percent, or seven out of 40, used bullets. Other graphical means for listing data seem to be used on home pages. Home pages are much more creative than traditional printed educational pieces. This may be due to the fact that printing costs for extra colors and graphics are not an issue, as pointed out in Chapter 1.

#### F. Client Lists or References

Only seven of the law firms provided a link to references or client lists. This may be due to confidentiality issues. Permission may be needed to post that type of information.

#### G. Colors

Every home page used at least two colors in their design. Twelve were full color pages, meaning they used more than four colors. Three of these 12 used full color photographs on their home pages. Six home pages used 4 colors. Eight home pages used three colors. Fourteen home pages used only two colors.

#### H. Contact Information

This variable was searching for a non-electronic means of contacting the firm which includes mailing address and phone number. Surprisingly, only 18 sites had this contact information. Less than half of the law firms studied realize that not everyone has access to

e-mail or electronic information. This may indicate that 55 percent of the law firms want to be contacted by e-mail. Also, it is possible that the Web site designer is out of touch with “traditional” means of communication. The browser would have to work to contact the law firm by telephone or mail. This is similar to a billboard, it simply advertises to the audience.

#### I. Copyright

Exactly 50 percent of the Web sites were copyrighted. It would be interesting to see if this is predominate in this study due to the fact that these are legal web sites. Would other industries be so likely to copyright their material? There were two law firms in this study which specialize in intellectual property law. Interestingly, one had a copyright and one did not.

#### J. Disclaimer

Lawyers use disclaimers frequently and advise clients to use them as well. Some sites had disclaimers as mandated by the state in which they practice. Some had multiple disclaimers and some very general ones. Law firm number 28 had a disclaimer as the home page which would only allow access to the Web site if an “agree” button was clicked after the disclaimer was read. Considering the ethical issues surrounding Web sites potentially hindering attorney-client privilege, access to Web sites by browsers in states other than where lawyers are licensed to practice, and potential employment opportunity issues discussed in Chapter One, it is surprising that only 12 of the home pages would include disclaimers.

#### K. E-Mail Link

Twenty-eight of the home pages had an e-mail link. It is interesting to note that 10 of the home pages without an e-mail link also did not have contact information (variable H) predominantly on the home page. These two variables may be buried in their Web sites.

#### L. Employment Opportunities

Fourteen of the 40 home pages had a link to employment opportunities at the firm. Of these 14 law firms, four had one to 50 practitioners in the firm, three had 51 to 100 practitioners and seven had over 200 practitioners. The larger firms must always be looking for new employees.

#### M. Fonts

The use of fonts in home pages seem to follow the traditional rule of layout and design regarding not using multiple fonts in a printed piece. Fifteen used only one font. Nineteen used two fonts, six used three fonts.

#### N. Hit Indicator

Though Webmasters may have a way to count how many hits they have had on their site, some Web sites post this number. Only four legal home pages in this study post their hit indicator. Law firm numbered 30 had as many hits as 22,486.

#### O. Illustrations

Twenty-one of the home pages studied used illustrations. Some of the home pages without illustrations were as appealing as those with illustrations if the design was clean and attractive.

#### P. Legibility

Legibility of these sites was rated by the researcher and the researchers assistant. This variable rating is subjective but based on the ease of reading the contents of the home page. The home pages were rated poor, fair, good and excellent. Four rate poor, six rated fair, 21 rated good and nine rated excellent. Of the 10 that rated poor or fair, 40 percent had advertisements for their site designer on the home page. Of the 30 that rated good or excellent, 36 percent advertised their site designer on their home page. Only five of the 40 home pages have external links to their Web site designer. Four of the good rated sites had links to their site designer. One of the fair rated sites had a link to the designer.

#### Q. Links: External

Twenty-four of the home pages had links to other Web sites on the Internet. This may be used as a public service or as a reciprocal gesture among law firms and legal resource providers. Five had links to the site designer. Three of those five had the site designer as their only link. It is due to these links that the word “Web” is an appropriate description.

#### R. Links: Internal

All but Law firm number two had at least one internal link. Law firm number two had no links, six practitioners, a very plain, basic home page rated fair for legibility. The most links, 30, were in the law firm home page numbered 21. The breakdown of the remaining home pages was as follows: seven had one to five links; 15 had six to 10 links; eight had 11 to 15 links; four had 16 to 20 links; three had 21 to 25 links; and two had 26 to 30 links.

#### S. Logo

Nearly 68 percent, of the home pages included a logo. Lawyer’s typically do not use logos on their letterhead or printed promotional pieces. Therefore, the frequency of logos on a Web site may be attributable to the medium and Web site designers creating logos for this purpose. Lawyers don’t advertise as much as other industries, historically, and the names are usually long and made up of partner’s names which may change over time. These newly created logos may begin to emerge on other promotional material.

#### T. Newsletter Link

A newsletter link was also ranked high in studies asking what browsers like to see on Web sites. Seventeen of the law firms in this study had a link to a newsletter from their home page. Such a link requires frequent updates and may be avoided due to that fact. Also, some law firms may not have an existing external newsletter.

#### U. Number of Practitioners

This study found the first 40 New Jersey Law firms with Web sites through the Martindale-Hubbell Web site. This study represents mostly law firms having between one and 100 practitioners. This may be due to the fact that more law firms of that size exist, or more are on the Martindale-Hubbell law directory, or the World Wide Web in general. The breakdown of the number of practitioners in the sample studied were as follows: 26 had between one and 100 practitioners; 10 had between 101 and 300 practitioners; four had 301 or more practitioners; two of the smallest law firms had one practitioner each. The largest had 850 practitioners followed by a firm with 460. What was determined from studying this variable needs to be noted. The quality, legibility and information contained in the home page did not depend on the size of the law firm. Some of the small firms had extensive information. Some of the large firms had very little information. It is not easy to determine the size or quality of the law firm simply by examining the home page belonging to that firm. However, there were few exceptions to that observation. Firms large and small successfully maintain quality Web sites with appealing home pages.

#### V. Office Location

All of the law firms had an office in New Jersey as was a requirement of this study. Many had multiple locations. This information may or may not have been determined from the home page. The research for this variable may have extended into the Web site to obtain the number of practitioners. Sixteen law firms had offices only in New Jersey. Generally, the larger the number of practitioners, the more office locations the firm had. There were exceptions to that statement such as, law firm number 18 with 300 practitioners had an office in New Jersey only. Law firm number 20 had 350 practitioners and only one office location in New Jersey. Law firm number 19 had 29 practitioners and seven office locations in the United States and offices internationally. Law firm number 15 had 57 practitioners and office locations in seven states. Office location, like number of practitioners had no bearing on the quality of the law firms home page or Web site.



#### W. Photographs

Seven of the 40 home pages studied contained photographs. Four of these used only 1 photograph. Law firm number six was a firm using one photograph which changed with each visit to the home page. Law firm number three used three photographs. Law firm number nine used a photograph as the background art for the home page. Law firm number 25 used eight photographs on its home page. Photographs, like illustrations, were not a popular variable found in this study.

#### X. Practice Specialty

Practice specialty was included as a variable in order to make comparisons. There are a wide variety of practice areas included in this study and the presence of a Web site does not relate to the practice area of the firm. Whether or not the firms site appeared more “corporate” or “serious” looking or more “fun” or “casual” looking did not directly depend on the practice areas of the firm.

#### Y. Professional Articles

The presence of professional articles was determined as an important feature sought out by browsers according to the National Law Journal study cited in Chapter One. Sixteen of the law firms had a link to professional articles from their home page. The number of practitioners in the firm did not have an influence on whether or not a link to professional articles was present. The law firms with professional articles had the following number of practitioners: 1, 4, 10, 16, 22, 41, 54, 57, 75, 85, 167, 200, 240, 240, 300 and 850.

#### Z. Purpose or Intent

Thirty-five percent of law firms clearly stated the purpose or intent of their Web site. This may or may not be in conjunction with a disclaimer. Of the 14 with a statement of purpose or intent, eight also had disclaimers within their Web site. Three firms which did not state the purpose or intent had disclaimers contained in their Web site.

#### AA. Table of Contents

Thirty-one of the home pages had a table of contents for their Web sites. The home pages without tables of contents simply had links in their text to click on. The sites without tables of contents generally contained less information than the ones containing tables of contents. The following nine Law firms had no tables of contents. Law firm number two had no links internally or externally. Law firm number five had three internal links and no external links. Law firm number seven had one internal link and no external links. Law firm number 12 had nine internal links and contained external links. Law firm 16 had one internal link and no external links. Law firm number 28 had one internal link and no external links. Law firm number 31 had five internal links and external links as well. Law firm numbered 35 had the most links with 13 internally and external links. Law firm numbered 40 had 12 internal links and external links.

#### AB. Unique Features

The law firms in this study had many common variables but some had very unique features. This variable was added to show the creativity and uniqueness some home pages possess. Thirty-three home pages in this study had a feature that was not included in the variables of this study.

Law firm number one had an announcement page. Law firm number two had a message to let browsers know that there were people on staff who spoke Spanish, as did law firm number 13. Law firm number three had a virtual building tour link. Law firm number four had a link to its annual report which was a variable that surprising was unique to this firm. Law firm number six had a photograph that changed with each visit to the home page. Law firm number eight had a guest book for visitors to the site to “sign” as did law firm number 22. Law firm number nine had an informational link to noteworthy cases. Law firm number 12 had a site map of the law firm. Law firms number 14, 23 and 29 had an upcoming events calendar link. Law firms number 15 and 40 had a bulletin board for browsers to post information. Law firm number 16 had a link to personal photos of this single practitioner skiing, on his motorcycle and on his boat. Law firm number 17 had a link to news and events. Law firm number 18 had links to potentially helpful government agencies. Law firm number 19 had a link to significant cases. Law firm number 20 had a

link to available seminars and products offered by the law firm. Law firm number 21 had a map locator of offices. The browser could click on a region of the map for information about the office servicing that region. Law firm number 24 had an online claim form for interested browsers to fill in. Law firm number 25 had a feedback page so browsers can post their information and lawyers can give feedback to determine if there is a potential case. Law firm number 27 had a very unique and interesting feature. The home page contained a link to a trivia game for browsers to play. This could potentially keep browsers coming back for answers and for new challenges. Law firm number 28 had a unique home page in this study. This home page was the only one that was entirely a disclaimer and the browser could not enter the Web site until they clicked a button that indicated they read and agreed to the terms of the disclaimer. Law firm number 30 had its own internal search engine whereby browsers could type in a key word to search through that Web site or related sites for the information indicated. Law firm number 31 had a link titled, special links. Law firm number 32 had an icon on their home page indicating that it advocates free speech online and it is affiliated with a group supporting this cause. Law firm number 33 had a link to an environmental page. Law firm number 34 had a dedication on their home page to the memory of someone. Law firm number 35 had a link to “what’s new.” Law firm number 36 had a link to document transfer information to assist the browser in downloading information contained in that Web site. Law firm number 38 had a link to information regarding the law firm’s radio show.

#### AC. Update Indicator

Seventeen of the 40 home pages studied contained an indicator which informed the site visitor of the date when the Web site was last updated. This could be helpful to the visitor since it indicates the timeliness of the information contained in the site.

## **Recommendations**

This section contains recommendations for further study. This content analysis provides a springboard for further study. Since the World Wide Web is a new world for advertisers of businesses and services, and it changes every minute, the opportunity to study every aspect of this electronic communications technology seems endless at this time.

Any one of the variables used in this study can be further evaluated. Any number of variables can be used to make determinations about law firms if more information is gathered on the effectiveness of securing clients via the Web site.

Future study can be done on the law firms represented in this study and the 40 variables studied to see how they change over time. The assumption being that they will modify the sites as studies and results emerge to determine what is effective and what is not.

Studies can be done on the purpose of Web sites. Do they exist to educate or motivate, to change attitudes or opinions, to secure clients, to provide a public service, or to simply post information like a billboard?

Further study is required to determine the effectiveness of home pages in engaging the browser to enter the Web site. An approach to take is to survey the browsers. The Webmasters can also be surveyed to make a comparison to the browsers results.

Additional study may determine the effectiveness of the home page or Web site in obtaining clients, communicating a message, providing the browser with information, educating the browser, calling the browser to action.

Further study is required to determine the importance of any of the variables that were used in this study.

Geographical comparisons can be made of the effectiveness of Web sites in different states or regions. A study could determine if Web sites belonging to Law firms in metropolitan areas receive more attention or hits than those in smaller communities. Web sites can also be compared region to region throughout the United States. There could be a significant difference in Web sites belonging to law firms or other businesses located in the south-west when compared to law firms or other businesses in the north-east.

The effectiveness of Web sites throughout different industries could be compared and contrasted. Would a computer programming company have a more successful Web site than a day care center?

The effectiveness of the use of photographs in the selection process for clients choosing an attorney could be studied.

The effectiveness of the general look or feel of a legal Web site in securing particular kinds of clients could be studied. Will a playful, colorful, fun Web site deter certain clients and appeal to another kind of client?

A demographic study could be done on the audience which secures business with a law firm after initial introduction to the firm via the firm's Web site.

Entire Web sites could be analyzed for content.

A study could be done comparing and contrasting Web sites that are built and maintained by paid staff or built and maintained by an outside site designer and Webmaster.

Traditional phone or mail surveys can be done to the law firms represented in this study to determine the attitudes of the lawyers on staff to the Web site and its effectiveness.

Almost any study of layout and design that has been performed on printed communication can be applied to Web sites.

The cost of developing and maintaining Web sites can be studied to determine if they are worth having and maintaining.

The absence of a Web site can be noted in certain industries. Will not having a Web site in the year 2000 affect the public's opinion of a company or industry?

Research could be done to determine the most effective reading level for a Web site.

Research can be done on the effectiveness of law firms using disclaimers on their Web sites in avoiding law suits.

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