# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DAVID M. SCHRAVER

# Serving the Profession Through Technology

**T**e all know that the legal profession is changing rapidly, and one of the forces driving that change is technology. As attorneys, sometimes we think of technology as a blessing; sometimes as a curse. But it is a fact of life - in both our personal and professional lives. Whatever our comfort level may be as consumers or users, we need to understand the changes, opportunities and challenges that technology presents.

One of the key priorities in our Association's strategic plan is to use technology to communicate more effectively with members and prospective members, and increase the overall value of membership in the Association. Since the strategic plan was adopted in 2011, we have hired a new Chief Technology Officer, Dave Adkins. Our Electronic Communications Committee, under co-chairs Mark Gorgos (Coughlin & Gerhart) and Gail Johnston (Cahill Gordon & Reindel), has been actively working with Dave and our Information Services Department to implement the plan. We have made significant investments in technology, and I would like to share these developments with you

#### **New Website Design**

This fall, we will unveil a new and completely redesigned NYSBA website. The Electronic Communications Committee was instrumental in guiding the new website design, which will offer a clean, intuitive interface and improved navigation - every part of the NYSBA website will be accessible from the home page. The new home page will feature a display area near

the top of the page to promote events, alert users to crisis response initiatives (such as last year's response to Superstorm Sandy), and highlight NYSBA's products, programs and services. The site will feature a new "Members Only" area that will gather all members-only benefits and resources under one heading to make it easier to take full advantage of NYSBA membership. Another area on the home page, called "By Members, For Members," will link to a collection of substantive contributions of members such as reports, blog posts and articles from many publications. In addition, the new website will automatically recognize the device being used to access the site and provide an optimized view for that phone, tablet or web browser.

#### **Content Management System**

The new website will feature a new content management system (CMS) - the software that allows the creation, modification and publication of various types of content such as web pages and documents. The new CMS offers an entirely new shopping cart experience for those who purchase products or register for programs or events online, helping to connect users with other products and events that might be of interest. It will also include an online calendar that will provide filters to view CLE, Section or all NYSBA events, in addition to the standard grid or list view.

# **Private Online Professional Communities**

A private online professional community is an interactive online space



designed to encourage engagement and participation from a defined group of users (e.g., organized by practice area, geography, or other affinity group). These communities offer opportunities for discussion, connection and collaboration, and foster deeper relationships and a greater sense of belonging among members. They will enable the Association to move beyond listserves and create a longterm searchable knowledge database. Users will be able to sign up for email updates and customize the frequency with which they are received. The communities will be private, focused and secure; and there will be a mobile app for tablets and smartphones.

#### **eLAP Update**

In March, a new electronic Lawyer Assistance Program website - or eLAP - debuted. The site features self-help readings on a variety of topics ranging from substance abuse and depression to wellness and time management. No login is required to access the materials, and access to confidential and anonymous individual counseling is available through the use of a special email address on the site.

DAVID M. SCHRAVER can be reached at dschraver@nysba.org.

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#### **Electronic Publishing**

Moving forward, we are investigating various electronic publishing solutions to provide e-book versions of legal reference and monograph titles, as well as e-versions of newsletters, journals and other publications. We are looking into such options as electronic delivery via a web browser on your desktop, mobile-friendly formats and delivery through an app that will collect publications on a virtual bookshelf for offline viewing.

# **Continuing Legal Education**

The use of technology continues to be central to the Association's delivery of excellent continuing legal education (CLE) programming to attorneys throughout New York State and beyond. Through videoconferencing, live webcasts, and an extensive digital media library of recorded CLE products, our Committee on Continuing Legal Education and the CLE Department provide high-quality educational resources in multiple convenient and user-friendly formats. In June, we were pleased to learn that the CLE Department was the recipient of the Association for Continuing Legal Education's 2013 Award of Professional Excellence in the Public Interest, in recognition of the program "Providing Legal Assistance to Persons Affected by Superstorm Sandy." That program was coordinated by the CLE and Pro Bono Departments in the weeks following the storm and drew more than 2,000 participants, most of whom viewed the program as a live webcast from our website.

I hope you will find all of these developments exciting, interesting and valuable to your practice and your membership in the New York State Bar Association. Please feel free to share your thoughts and experiences with