



By Richard K.  
Leefe

## Getting Up to Speed in the Digital World

**W**e are living in an era of technology that can pass us by if we do not give it the attention it deserves. For our younger lawyers — who have, quite likely, never experienced a rotary dial telephone, never entered a phone booth and put a coin in the pay slot, never cooked a meal without pressing buttons on a microwave oven, never typed documents on a manual or electric typewriter, never used carbon paper to make copies, never dealt with

slick copies, and never driven to federal court to face the automatic rejection of pleadings you spent days typing because you did not comply with an obscure rule you never heard of — this new digital era is not a problem.

But, no matter how you look at it, all of us now live and practice law in this new digital world. It is time now to accept that technology is not going to stop and wait on law practitioners who may choose not to keep up with the advances.

The federal courts have gone to only-digital filing and the federal system no longer maintains paper copies of pleadings.

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Board of Governors decided to move forward with online-only voting, in effect now for the past two election cycles.

Another new online procedure is being launched this year. Members should be prepared for it. Payment of LSBA dues, payment of the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board assessment and filing of the Attorney Registration Statement will be handled online. Members will soon receive a postcard with information on the process. Members will be able to make payments online with a credit card. Payments also will be accepted by ACH check.

This is the world we now live in and it is not going to turn back.

Recognizing that some LSBA members may not have Internet access or may not have the ability or desire to use a computer, the LSBA will allow (by specific request only) the option of using the old method of paper payment notices and form. The LSBA will absorb the cost of this method this year to allow members to meet their payment and filing obligations.

However, this may not last long.

For those who may not agree with these

online procedures, be assured that the decision to move forward did not come without considerable thought and considerable discussion to offer a "window" for members to learn. One major factor in the decision to go digital is the savings it will bring in the cost of paper copies, stamps, envelopes, storage, etc.

Speed of communications and monetary savings have driven the move and it is here. The bimonthly "Bar Briefs" is now distributed online-only. Notices, alerts and other email from the LSBA are e-blasted via the Internet. Members who are not online may not get the notices and information needed in a timely manner.

The Bar leadership does agree that one LSBA member benefit should remain in the paper world — the bimonthly *Louisiana Bar Journal* will continue to be mailed to every member of the LSBA. But the online LSBA offerings are speeding ahead.

The LSBA is now on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Google+.

Fastcase, the online legal research service, is still offered free to LSBA members, offering a great economic advantage. (The LSBA pays the annual fee to Fastcase for the service to be offered at no charge to members.)

In increasing numbers, MCLE programs are being offered online, expanding the variety of subjects and allowing members to earn credits at their convenience on their own computers. Members are allowed up to four hours of electronically assisted CLE credit per year.

The LSBA's website (redesigned last year) is a treasure trove of news, notices, services and other information for every LSBA member. A review of the website's usage records indicates that the Member Directory is the most used page on the site.

Via that web page, members can search for other LSBA members and access contact information.

Also on the website, members can review the latest Bar news, access Fastcase, check on upcoming CLE programs, review the founding and controlling documents of the LSBA, read profiles on members of the Bar's leadership, check on Bar committees, learn of discounts on rental cars, hotels and other member vendor benefits, read previous issues of the *Louisiana Bar Journal* and "Bar Briefs," and on and on.

Members help pay for the services. Members should use them. The website is a wonderful tool and contains more information than one can imagine. Members with smart phones can access all of this, plus Fastcase, at their fingertips.

The leadership of the LSBA's Senior Lawyers Division is aware of the concerns of some older attorneys and has asked for help from the Young Lawyers Division in educating the older crowd to deal with these technologies. Taking advantage of this education will greatly benefit all senior lawyers and they are encouraged to attend the seminars proposed by the Senior Lawyers Division and learn. It will help in the long run.

Learning to use the Internet and email (I am showing my age by not naming more) can seem overwhelming to some, but it just starts with an effort to learn a few basics. More knowledge will come with practice. I believe members will find the experience invigorating and it will open a world far beyond expectations.

Get involved in the digital world. It offers access to worlds of information.

If you dig in your heels and refuse to begin the process of using online sources, you are doing yourself a great disservice. We have all heard numerous rationalizations of why some do not want to learn to use the digital/online world. For those who have learned and are using it, you know of what I speak. To those who haven't and will not learn, the world is going to leave you behind. Stay with us and practice law in this new and wonderful world of instant information and access. You will be better off for it.



# Attorney Registration and Fee Payment Moving Online for FY 2014/2015

The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) is pleased to announce that, effective with the 2014/2015 fiscal year, it will move to an Internet-based model for the collection of LSBA dues and Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board (LADB) assessments, as well as for filing the Attorney Registration Statement. This new collection method will allow payment of fees either by an ACH electronic check or credit card, enabling members to make filings 24/7, even when the Bar Center is closed or if mail service is disrupted due to inclement weather.

"This change will facilitate efficiencies related to online filing while still providing assistance and guidance from LSBA staff members," said LSBA President Richard K. Leefe. "This new system is another step forward in our ongoing efforts to utilize technology to create easier access for Louisiana lawyers."

Filing electronically should be a quick and simple process, utilizing the online member accounts that participants have relied on for years to register for CLE seminars and to access Fastcase. If an attorney has not yet set up a member account, one can easily be created at: [www.lsba.org/Members/memberacct.aspx](http://www.lsba.org/Members/memberacct.aspx). This webpage also allows members to edit their existing accounts and to reset a lost or forgotten account password.

After member data is confirmed but before the payment/filing process begins, members will be advised that they also need to go to [www.LADB.org](http://www.LADB.org) to complete the Louisiana Supreme Court Trust Account Disclosure and Overdraft Notification Authorization Form and will be asked to confirm that they understand this requirement.

The collection schedule will be the same as in prior years. An initial notice will be mailed in mid-May in the form of a 4x6 postcard, which will provide

instructions to go online to [www.LSBA.org](http://www.LSBA.org) to complete the registration process, and also go online to [www.LADB.org](http://www.LADB.org) to complete the Trust Account Form.

Once the Attorney Registration Statement has been electronically filed (including any necessary changes and/or updates) and payments have been made, an email confirmation will be sent. The filing and payment deadline will remain July 1. The LSBA will continue to mail delinquency and ineligibility notices to those who fail to meet the deadlines.

Members who elect to pay by electronic check will continue to pay the following fees:

- ▶ LSBA dues (practicing more than three years): \$200;
- ▶ LSBA dues (practicing three years or less): \$80;
- ▶ LADB assessment (practicing more than three years): \$235; and
- ▶ LADB assessment (practicing three years or less): \$170.

However, processing fees of 3% plus a .20 transaction fee will be passed along to those choosing to pay by credit card. Total amounts including credit card processing fees are as follows:

- ▶ LSBA dues (practicing more than three years): \$206.20;
- ▶ LSBA dues (practicing three years or less): \$82.60;
- ▶ LADB assessment (practicing more than three years): \$242.25; and
- ▶ LADB assessment (practicing three years or less): \$175.30.

Although the LSBA anticipates a smooth transition, Bar staff members will be available to answer questions and provide assistance to members. All questions and concerns should be directed to:

- ▶ Email — [processing@LSBA.org](mailto:processing@LSBA.org)
- ▶ Telephone — (504)566-1600 or (800)421-LSBA; ask for Payment Processing.