

My Working iVacation

By Victoria L. Herring

The topic of this issue is the greening of your law practice, and from a Mac perspective there is quite a bit to talk about, such as Apple's emphasis on being an environmentally friendly company (for more, see www.apple.com/environment). But then I had a real-life experience in "making do" and conserving resources, and I thought I'd share that.

I am sitting here in Valletta, Malta, on a trip with my husband, Mark (also a lawyer, though with a large firm), having done what I could to cut down on all the "stuff" I invariably pack. Rather than bring a laptop, for instance, I packed an AirPort Express, my iPad (my spouse brought his also), the usual cables and converters, and my iPhone 4. This might sound like a lot, but Mark had some work to do, and being a solo, I need to be reachable "just in case," even though I had made arrangements.

The first test came as Mark received papers he needed to read and edit while we were waiting for our flight overseas. He could read them on his BlackBerry, but because they were multiple pages of pleadings, being able to read them on his iPad was so much simpler. So he forwarded them to his iPad e-mail account (earlier we had set one up via Gmail for just such a contingency). On the iPad they arrived as MS Word documents, and the next question he had for me was how best to open and read them.

There are quite a number of iPad apps—many of them free—for this purpose. A handy resource to review them is Mashable (<http://mashable.com>), which has numerous articles compiling just this sort of information. Ultimately, Mark chose to go with GoodReader (www.goodiware.com/goodreader.html). He was able to read his papers just fine—and in a much better format than the teeny-tiny type on his BlackBerry.

Next came his query about how to edit these pages of material. I checked with Mashable and found quite a few free apps, but it just seemed easier to buy the \$9.99 Apple app Pages, which can open Word documents fairly seamlessly (of course, there's the usual formatting issues). Documents can be transferred or shared not only to Pages but also in portable document format (PDF) or Microsoft Word format, either via computer connection,

Victoria L. Herring practices in Des Moines, Iowa, in an office that has used only Apple/Macs since the early 1980s. She may be reached at vlh@herringlaw.com.



Valletta, Malta, around Grand Harbour; photo by Victoria L. Herring

e-mail, or online sharing. So we downloaded Pages just in time, got on the plane, and he was able to work on the documents, making edits and revisions, and then e-mail them back to his secretary as Word documents.

After a few days of travel, both Mark and I had been able to check in with our offices and handle minor issues via e-mail while still enjoying our trip. Besides these work-related activities, I had been taking quite a number of pictures and videos with my iPhone 4. Unfortunately, in our lodging we were only able to connect one device, so we couldn't shift from Mark's iPad to writing and sending via my iPad or iPhone. I'm too cheap to activate data roaming overseas, but I could have in a pinch. Instead, we found a work-around. The iPad Camera Connection Kit provided me a USB entryway to Mark's iPad; I used it to move photos off my iPhone to his iPad and e-mail them from there. (The only thing that I really miss in the iPad is a USB port for a zip or thumb drive. I understand this may be an option on the next version of the device. If it is, I will upgrade.)

Tonight Mark asked if we'd be close to a place where he could fax his time sheets to his secretary. I suggested asking a friend of mine here in Malta, with whom we're to have lunch tomorrow. Then I realized we might not even need that. I suggested we try taking pictures of his time sheets with my iPhone 4 and e-mailing them to his secretary. We took the pics and sent them off in the evening here (it was only 11:00 am in Iowa). Back came word from the secretary that the images worked perfectly. It makes sense—what is a fax, after all, but the scanning of a document into data to be sent over a telephone connection? Taking a picture of the time sheets with my iPhone's digital camera served the same function.

It's been a great trip. Sure, it would have been more relaxing if neither Mark nor I had to do any work, but knowing that we could stay connected to our offices and handle any emergencies that arose—using a minimal collection of lightweight gadgets that we would have brought along anyway—provided us peace of mind. And that's the best thing of all to bring when you're traveling. **GPSOLO**