

# Chicago Daily Law Bulletin®

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## Six free Google services that can give your solo practice a boost

To compete in today's legal marketplace, sole practitioners need to be tech-savvy.

Securing a free Google account is a step in the right direction. Here are a few of the online giant's no-cost, lawyer-friendly services that can make your practice more nimble and secure.

### Voice calls, video conferencing, texting from any device

As attorneys move away from traditional landline phone service, Google Voice is a nifty alternative that retains many benefits of a traditional system, while offering the portability of a smartphone.

Navigate to [voice.google.com](http://voice.google.com) and choose your free virtual phone number. Most popular area codes are available, including 312 and other Chicago-area numbers. (If your requested area code is not available, keep trying — new numbers come online every day.)

Once you install the Google Voice app on your smartphone, tablet and desktop, calls can be placed and received through the data connection on any of those devices.

If you want to keep your office line, you can still forward the office number to Google Voice and answer calls from any device. Better yet, all voicemail messages are transcribed automatically and forwarded by e-mail or text as desired.

Texting also works with Google Voice, which allows you to send messages from your computer, instead of pecking away on those tiny simulated keyboard keys on your smartphone.

All voice messages, texts and call histories are synced across all of your devices and backed up online, so your communications are safe if you lose or replace any device.

Finally, consider installing the Google Hangouts app for additional features. Hangouts works with your Google Voice number and

can be used for video conference calls, phone calls, voicemails and texts from a user-friendly platform.

### Remotely access your office desktop from any device

If you have ever gone to court or a deposition without crucial information from your computer, or left for the day without that draft brief, Google's Chrome Remote Desktop feature can save the day.

Using your Chrome web browser, install the Chrome Remote Desktop extension from the Chrome store, choose a secure password and set it up on your host (office) PC or Mac. Once you run the corresponding app on your tablet, smartphone and home computer, the office computer can be accessed from anywhere.

With the ability to remotely access programs, edit documents, forward them to your current device, and even view video, you will have 24/7 access to your vital office data.

### Automated internet search results

For those who regularly monitor the web for new developments in a particular area, Google's Alerts service can make the process pain free. Proceed to [google.com/alerts](http://google.com/alerts), set up your search — for instance, "Illinois Supreme Court Rules + amendments" — and you will receive

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periodic e-mails with links to your automated search results.

You can schedule the search results to be sent in real time, daily or weekly. Add as many different searches as desired.

Using the Alerts feature is a good way to stay current in your

### SOLE SPEAK

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practice area or keep tabs on friends and colleagues. Let Google do the heavy lifting and stay on the cutting edge.

### Online translations

Google Translate does not support professional language translations, but the free service can be useful in a variety of settings.

If you come across a document in discovery and need a quick translation, for example, go to [translate.google.com](http://translate.google.com). Paste the text from your document, or upload it, and receive the English version instantly. Or convert from English to any other language as desired.

entering the website address.

Finally, in a pinch, you can even communicate with clients or witnesses, by exchanging written questions and answers through the online interface.

### Free online case law, journals

Google Scholar cannot fully replace your paid research subscription, but the service includes an impressive volume of cases. At [scholar.google.com](http://scholar.google.com) you will have access to published opinions of state appellate courts going back to 1950, federal district, appellate, tax and bankruptcy courts from 1923, and virtually all U.S. Supreme Court cases.

If your basic search retrieves too many cases, click the arrow in the upper right side of the page to use advanced search settings.

Move over to the articles database and peruse a vast number of law journal articles and other periodicals.

### Remotely locate, lock, erase your smartphone

Smartphone security is always a concern for lawyers. Google's Android Device Manager can provide a measure of comfort.

Just sign into your Google account on your phone and install the Android Device Manager app. If your phone is lost but is still turned on, you can access and control the device. Log into your Google account from any computer, proceed to [google.com/android/devicemanager](http://google.com/android/devicemanager) and get a location that is accurate within 75 feet.

You can also remotely ring your phone, lock out any users, set a new screen lock password and place a recovery message on the locked screen with your contact information.

As a final security measure, you can remotely erase the phone's data.

In sum, if you have not yet considered these free tech-goodies, open a Google account and take them for a spin. They can give your practice a lift.