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Mandatory Annual Member Report Due April 1, 2012

All Manitoba lawyers who practised law in 2011 must file an Annual Report on their 2011 continuing professional development activities by April 1, 2012 (Law Society Rules Division 8.1 - Professional Development). See [2011 Requirements](#) for further information on this obligation. The report also addresses Law Corporation renewals (for those who have them), but no longer contains the Annual Trust Account Report Exemption Declaration. All lawyers who have provided the Law Society with a business email address should have received an email notification containing instructions for completion of their personalized online report, including login information, user ID and password. For further information see the [Notice](#) on the Law Society website.

Best Legal Blogs in Canada

The [2011 CLawBies](#), the Canadian Law Blog awards, were announced last month. The Clwbies were started in 2006 by Stem Legal to highlight blogs published by the Canadian legal industry. Stem also maintains an open directory of [Canadian law blogs](#), which can be browsed by practice area, province, industry area or latest additions. Slaw uses the directory in its Canadian Law Blogs [search engine](#), which does custom searches of Canadian blogs.

The Social Media Bandwagon

The intersection of law practice and social media is a dominant theme in practice management literature and other media these days. Here are some of the latest entries:

- The January/February 2012 edition of ABA's [Law Practice](#) magazine is subtitled The Social Media Issue, and it contains a wealth of information on how lawyers should engage with the four main tools, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and blogs. Also included are articles on why and how law firms should develop social media policies and on how firms can protect themselves from online threats to their reputation, regardless of where they originate.
- Two posts on the Flowtown blog provide helpful information for those new to the world of social media: the [Social Media Cheat Sheet](#) is a chart setting out the pros and cons of six social media platforms and giving simple instructions on how to use them; and [The 6 Best Social Media Platforms for Your Business](#) breaks down the stats on each platform and suggests how best to use them.
- [How Google Plus Is Shaking Up Social Media and Why It Matters](#) is a Slaw article which delves into how Google searches are affected by the incorporation of results from Google's own social media product, Google +, and why law firms need to know this.
- And if you want to know how to customize and control your social media accounts and make them all work together, the Slaw article [If This, Then That: Simple Media Programming](#) suggests using [ifttt](#).
- Finally, [Mitigating the Legal Risks of Using Social Media](#) is a detailed article on evaluating the risks of social media use.

Disaster Planning for Law Firms

Although it's been almost seven years since Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, it continues to [make the news](#) and it is still [used to teach lawyers](#) about disaster preparedness. The American Bar Association Committee on Disaster Response & Preparedness website contains many useful resources on disaster planning, including the 44 page guide [Surviving a Disaster](#). The guide sets out a step by step approach to creating a business continuity plan, a written document that describes how your firm intends to carry out critical business processes in the event of a disaster. It can be adapted to suit solo, small, or large firm needs.

Fraud Scams Escalate

January saw a massive spike in fraud scams against law firms around the world according to practicePRO director [Dan Pinnington](#). While many of the reported frauds are familiar, several new fact scenarios have emerged, including a particularly widespread scam involving lease agreements. The [AvoidAClaim blog](#) does a great job of documenting these scams, publishing the names of perpetrators, their emails, and the fake documentation they used in support of the scam. They also publish lists of the names associated with each different type of fraud.

CBA Practice Link

The Canadian Bar Association's [PracticeLink](#) website contains a wealth of material on law practice management for all types of law firms and lawyers. You can stay on top of new publications as they are posted by subscribing to the site's [RSS newsfeed](#). Recent publications include:

- [Getting ahead](#) - this article identifies strategies for planning career advancement;
- [Redefining Law Firm Management: Where 'The Rubber Meets the Road'](#) - which discusses how technology is reshaping management practice and client expectations;
- [Two Can Play This Game: The Trend Toward Having Co-Managing Partners](#) - why shared leadership is becoming more common as fewer lawyers want to be full-time managers;
- [How to Successfully Build Pro Bono Work Into Your Practice](#) - an overview of pro bono opportunities in Canada and why it's good for all of us;
- [Succession planning - Valuing Ownership Shares of a First-Generation Law Firm](#) - discusses how to apply the business valuation technique to the job of valuing a law firm.

Create Hyperlinks In Your Documents

[CanLII](#) has added a new [hyperlinking tool](#) to its website which automatically creates caselaw and legislation links in uploaded documents. Where CanLII does not have the full text of a decision online it will offer an alternative citation. The tool is powered by [Lexum's LexHub](#), which creates the hyperlinks within CanLII's decisions.

2012 Forecast

[What's Hot and What's Not in the Legal Profession](#), a yearly report on what's going on in the legal profession by a practice management consultant, identifies which practice areas, geographic markets, and marketing and business developments are currently "hot" and are expected to remain so in 2012. It also discusses the impact of other trends such as non-lawyer competition and deregulation on law firm management.

Minding Your Manners

A recent [Lawyers Weekly article](#) stresses the importance of lawyer etiquette, suggesting that bad manners damage not only the individual's opportunities for advancement but also the law firm's image. The most egregious examples of bad manners involve traditional (in-person) etiquette breaches, but instant communication has created many more opportunities to transgress. If you've ever regretted sending a hastily-composed email, consider installing [ToneCheck](#), a free add-on that claims to rate the emotional tone of your emails. It's described in more detail in the article [Tone rangers: Be certain that your e-mails do not offend, inveigle or obfuscate](#), from the Massachusetts Bar Association e-Journal.

Downtown Daycare to Open Soon

Manitoba Bar Association members who are interested in full or part time downtown day care will want to attend the February 24, 2012 [information session](#) on Kids & Company, a child care centre opening this spring. The MBA has taken out a membership in the centre to provide members with a six-month guarantee of a child care spot. RSVP to the MBA at 927-1211 or by email at [sections@cba-mb.ca](#).

CBA Webinar on Trends in Practice Management

The CBA's Legal Profession Assistance Conference (LPAC), the Canadian Lawyers Insurance Association (CLIA) and the National Law Practice Management and Technology Section are co-presenting the online webinar [Trends in Law Practice Management - Calculating the Risks](#) on February 28, 2012. Panelists Nicole Garton-Jones and David Bilinsky will review the risks and benefits of cloud computing, online legal services and unbundling of legal services in this 90 minute online program.

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