

## **Time Matters**

DataTXT Corporation

Managing the practice of law is a challenging goal that includes case management, docket control and calendaring, and client communications. Time Matters software successfully addresses these various service-oriented tasks so that the practice of law may be effectively emulated on a personal computer or notebook.

Time Matters is organized into an underlying database comprising four types of information: contacts, cases, events, and tasks. The manner in which this database stores information may be seen by considering the fundamental activity of law practice: performance of services relative to one or more cases for one or more clients. In Time Matters, legal services are stored as events — appointments corresponding to court appearances, conferences, depositions, trips, etc. — and to-dos — return telephone call, prepare a pleading, forward an engagement letter, etc. Contacts consist of information pertaining to clients, attorneys, judges, vendors, friends, etc. Cases consist of information pertaining to the matters populating a docket. The key to effectively computerizing law practice, however, is to track these events, todos, contacts, and cases on a relational basis.

In the real world, all information about a client and the client's cases are contained in physical files. Depending upon the nature and size of the practice, the physical files may be interrelated alphabetically by client or matter-title, numerically by docket number, visually by color-code, etc. Similarly, Time Matters enables these interrelationships to be inherently captured in its underlying database. As in the real world, in Time Matters, clients do not exist without associated cases and, contrariwise, cases do not exist without associated clients.

Tracking and monitoring tasks to be performed and events to be scheduled are presented in the context of a calendar. An early-warning system is provided for signaling important deadlines for delivering services and for attending appointments and other events; ticklers are the norm and concomitant alarms may be easily invoked. Instead of taking notes on pads or scraps of paper, notes may be electronically recorded in real-time during telephone and office conferences, or any other activity.

Time Matters is designed to afford maximum flexibility to accommodate a diversity of law practice nuances. Accordingly, a practitioner may easily adapt the plethora of built-in functions and features to properly emulate a particular law practice. Almost every on-screen field may be modified to suit specific needs. Fields may be changed simply by right-clicking while the pointer is located in an on-screen area. Fields may be defined as text, numeric, date, time, checkbox, phone, money, social security number, e-mail, fax, and Web. Thus, fields that are defined to store phone or social security number are automatically properly formatted when data is input. Fields that contain phone number may be established to automatically dial; fax or e-mail fields may automatically send messages by integrating with fax and e-mail software, respectively.

Time Matters aggregates information into an array of clusters or groups of fields. Similar to venturing into a restaurant having an extensive menu, viewing a Time Matters screen may seem like a daunting adventure. But, by focusing upon each field-cluster individually and becoming aware of the cluster-numbering scheme, navigating through and across these fields becomes second nature. Several levels of security may be invoked both on an individual computer and across a network. Scheduling and calendaring of events and tasks for a group or team of lawyers and support staff may be easily achieved across the network from a single work-station. Time Matters also synchronizes with the Palm Organizer and other

hand-held devices.

A neat automation feature of Time Matters is its capability to define chained events and things-to-do for a specific type of case. For instance, when a collection case is established, the predictable chain of events — starting with preparing the original petition through trial — may be defined in addition to the pleadings that are needed at each stage of the chain. Then, when an early event in the chain is reset to a later date, all of the later, chained dates are automatically changed accordingly. The built-in date calculator asks how to handle special dates, holidays, and weekends, and also avoids common errors associated with figuring return dates and trial-related deadlines.

Time Matters includes functions for conflict-checking and for making database backups. Even though the database is constructed from concrete, and hardly ever fails even in view of the frailty of Microsoft Windows platforms, backups are recommended. Thus, Time Matters' unique synergy of functionality, adaptability and customizability, and intuitive operation provide a powerful tool for both computerizing and automating many aspects of the practice of law — and, at a modest price to boot.