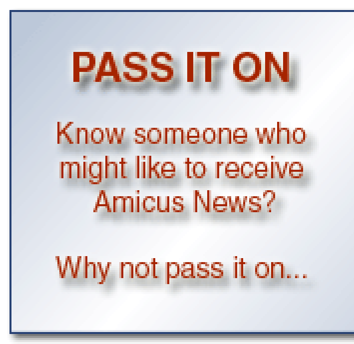
Amicus ATTORNEY

Amicus News

December 2006
Volume 4 Issue 6

Happy Holidays



What's New at Amicus

HAPPY HOLIDAYS *from all of us at Gavel & Gown Software Inc.*

HOLIDAY 2006 SCHEDULE

It's that time of year again and the holiday season is upon us. In order to assist you over the holidays, we are providing you with the changes to our Hours of Operation for Technical Support. Unless noted, all other days will have standard business hours of operation.

Friday December 22, 2006
- 8:30 am to 5:00 pm ET

Monday December 25, 2006
- CLOSED

Tuesday December 26, 2006
- 9:00 am - 5:00 pm ET

Wednesday December 27 & Thursday December 28, 2006
- 8:30 am to 6:00 PM ET

Friday December 29, 2006
- 8:30 am to 5:00 PM ET

Monday January 1, 2007
- CLOSED

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Save $50 off Amicus Accounting in December!

Purchase Amicus Accounting by December 29, 2006 and SAVE $50 off each license!

Order your Amicus Accounting today for only $199 / license.
Click here for more information

Three ways to order:

1. Call us today at 800-472-2289
2. Fill out and fax back this order form
3. Contact your local Amicus Certified Consultant

Amicus Attorney 7 - Service Pack 2 is NOW available!

Amicus Attorney 7 SP2 is now available for download from our InstallShield Update Service website. This Release contains not only over 150 fixes, but includes further performance improvements, new File brad views for Events, the ability to generate documents from the Search Results, support for HotDocs 2006, Server optimization, remote update, Palm and Outlook enhancements, and more!

Amicus Attorney 7 - SP2 Release Notes

See this month's Spotlight On for further Feature Details!

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You Have to Try This!

RPost(R) Registered E-mail Passes Bar!

Bar associations nationwide are endorsing and marketing RPost® to members for legal proof of e-mail delivery, content and official time stamp of electronic communications. Check out the article *RPost Registered E-mail Service Passes Bar* found near the bottom of this link.

Gavel & Gown Software Inc. has partnered with RPost® to offer Registered E-mail® services to Amicus customers. Buy any Service Pack of RPost® Registered E-mail® and get the same size Service Pack absolutely FREE on your first order! Click here for details

If you are like most other e-mail users, you probably store your messages in your "Inbox" and "Sent Items" folders. Did you know that any e-mail saved in these folders provides no proof of what you sent or what was received? Not only can the recipient of your message say they never received the e-mail, they can also alter the content of the e-mail with just two mouse clicks!

RPost's Registered E-mail® service provides legal and verifiable evidence of the content and time any e-mail has been sent and received by anyone anywhere in the world.

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Legal Tips

To Transform Your Practice, Provide Value, not Time
by Edward Poll, J.D., M.B.A., CMC

One of the best-known quotes defining our profession is attributed to Abraham Lincoln: "A lawyer's time and advice are his stock in trade." Lincoln was a successful lawyer, but I suggest that his point has been somewhat distorted, especially during the past 40 or so years. Lawyers don't really sell time; we sell a service. Our goal should be to provide value: advice that means solutions to our clients.

Without our clients we have no reason to exist as lawyers. Our profession would be obsolete. We must find out not only what our clients need, but also what they want. We must communicate with them at their level of understanding. We must find out how they best receive information and then provide it to them in a way they can understand.

Losing Our Way

It seems so fundamental a principle, yet in recent decades our profession lost the connection between the value we provide and what we charge. Until well into the post-World War II era, legal fees were based not only on time spent, but also the nature of the service, the result achieved, and the amount at stake. Charging an appropriate legal fee was a matter of professional judgment. That changed in the mid-1960s when clients began demanding detailed billing statements and lawyers used time records as a management tool to seek greater efficiencies. Today, most lawyers are paid by the hour - almost in the same way as an hourly laborer. Our billings are "features" lists: this is what I did, this is the time I worked and this is what you owe me. That approach breeds dissatisfaction among clients, because it doesn't address value and benefits - the worth, as opposed to the cost, of the service.

Choosing Our Model

The best model for our profession, and the best path to personal satisfaction in one's practice, is to get paid for the real value and expertise you bring to the client. Earlier this year a lead article in the American Bar Journal observed that the "strategic lawyer" is what clients are looking for; and this kind of lawyer is not easy to find. The strategic lawyer is the counselor, the type of lawyer that used to be the standard of the legal profession, and that law schools need to start developing again. Such lawyers provide the best services at the least cost to benefit the clients they serve.

Defining Our Value

"Good service," "value" and "solutions" shouldn't be vague buzzwords. All lawyers, solo practitioners and members of mega firms alike, can structure what they do to consistently encourage a high client perception of value. Basic elements of that include:

- Establish a return phone call policy. Return or have an assistant return clients' phone calls within two to four hours.
- Know your clients' concerns and understand their business.
- Create a client-friendly office environment. Have informative literature in the waiting room, and make sure it's available in languages that reflect your clients' primary languages.
- Prepare your clients for interactive events such as negotiation sessions, depositions, and testimony so they know what to expect and are prepared for what might happen. Incorporate a wide range of possibilities so that clients are not shocked if the outcome, over which you have no control, is different from what they had hoped.
- Never make promises you can't keep. Particularly with a new initiative, consider limiting yourself to consistent, well-planned effort on one project only, at least until expectations of value and service are defined by both parties.
- Regularly ask clients for feedback about whether they are pleased with your services. This feedback should be focused on their satisfaction with the service provided, rather than on the results achieved.

Changing Our Value Mix

Such value-added elements will let you generate billing statements that are easy to understand and that clearly list actions taken on the client's behalf while relating them to the time it took to realize that value. These billing statements will be more meaningful to the client, and will go beyond a mere laundry list of tasks performed.

However, even if we are providing and documenting value, all of us know that price pressures can lead clients, particularly corporate ones, to ask for lower billing rates. Value billing does not remove the pressure from clients on fees. The advantage of charging for value, however, is that, rather than lowering our price, we are in a position to take value/services off the table in order to deliver a lower price to the client. In effect, when the client wants a reduced price, we can unbundle the services to accomplish that objective. You are charging a different price for a different group of tasks and functions.

In other words, for X dollars, you will do this and for "Y" dollars you will do that less "abc." While "abc" may not be important, the client gets the message that you're adjusting the price to fit the appropriate level based on the service to be delivered. For example, consider the components of an hourly fee. If returned phone calls within 2 hours are part of your regular hourly rate, take that response time off the table if you lower your hourly rate in response to your client's request. Tell the client that your response time will be 24, or even 48, hours. The point will be clear: you're not lowering your price; you're changing the value composition of what the client is buying.

Raising Our Fee

Turn to the positive. Although lawyers are often uncomfortable about raising their rates, you can soften the blow of a fee increase by adding value to your service. In other words, do more things that cost less than the increase. If you handle estate planning, for example, you could add financial planning as a service, either as part of the fee package or for a designated added fee. Sometimes, showing that you provide better-than-excellent service is all you need to justify a fee increase. For example, consider packaging final documents in an attractive folder and hand delivering them to the client. This improved presentation adds only pennies to your costs, but it will be perceived as an example of your caring for and nurturing the client. Faster turnaround from engagement to completion is another way of adding value and exceeding expectations.

Controlling Our Practice

Lawyers, who charge for the concept of value, and not strictly for time, ultimately have more control over their practice. Often, when I coach attorneys who are dissatisfied in their practice, it's soon apparent that their real dissatisfaction is with measuring their days in six or 10-minute increments and losing focus on the essence of their skills. Lawyers work hard, spending many hours in their efforts to meet clients' needs and objectives. It's much better to say that our time is measured in value (investment) rather than cost (expense).

Compliments of:
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About the Author:
Edward Poll, J.D., M.B.A., CMC, advises law firms and their leaders on practice management, business development, and financial matters. He is a nationally-recognized practical guide to profit. His advice has benefited national, regional, and local law firms. Ed is unique in that he has long-term experience in both business and law. Ed has practiced law for 25 years, was the CEO and COO of several manufacturing businesses, and has been a consultant to small and large law firms for 15 years.

Spotlight On ...

Powerful Search Capabilities in Amicus Attorney 7

Amicus Attorney 7 Service Pack 2 has just recently been released. Many new features, performance improvements and fixes have been added to the program. You'll find a complete summary in the release notes.

The Search capability in Amicus Attorney 7 has been greatly enhanced. Now you can search across information in all modules. In previous versions of Amicus Attorney you were limited to searches on specific modules. For instance, in the Files module you could search for details about files. In the Contact module, you could search on specifics of Contacts. With the new search function in Amicus Attorney 7, you can search across all modules. You can run a search that looks for Events, Contacts or Files all at the same time. Maybe you wrote a note about dog bites, but can't remember if it was a phone message or phone call. No problem, you can find it quickly with the search function.

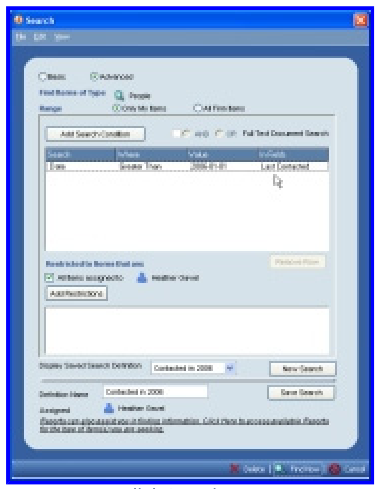
The results of your search are easy to read and you can further refine your results as displayed. For example, if the results show a Contact, then you can double click to view the Contact, or use the many right-click options to open or edit, or to create a phone call, an e-mail, schedule an event, print details, generate a document, add to favorites or even delete.

Search capability in Service Pack 2 now allows you to generate documents from Search results that include only Files or People. This allows for powerful searches across all of your Files and Contacts, and since document generation is so flexible, you can create powerful documents tailored to your needs.

Holiday Letters have never been easier.

Want to send a holiday letter to all of the People you deal with on a regular basis? No problem.

Create a search on Contacts that looks for the last contact date of greater than Jan 1 2006. From the results, highlight the Contacts you want included and then click Generate Document. Select the appropriate template, and your letters are done.



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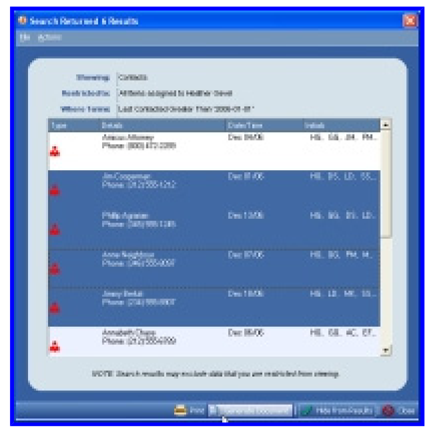

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FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions

Questions:
Questions: As managing partner there are times when I need to see all Firm Files and all Firm Contacts. How do I do this without being assigned to each and every File and Contact?

Answer:
By default, Firm Members (and Administrators) only have access to the Files and Contacts that they are assigned to. This means that your File Index will only contain the files that you are working on. For practical purposes, this makes sense in that you don't have to sort through all of the Files and Contacts that your fellow firm members are working on. This is also for security purposes, to control who has access to your Files.

There may be certain instances when a Firm Member would need to see all of the Files that are being worked on in the Firm. A managing partner may need to see details of a File, but not want to be added as a Firm Member who is working on the file. In this case, an Amicus Administrator can grant additional permissions to a Firm Member so that they can see two Index views, one for their own information, and one for all firm information.

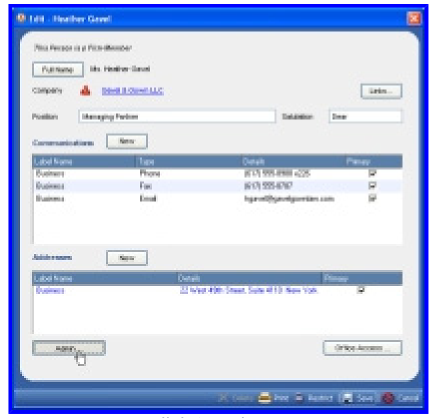
Premium Edition

The Premium Edition features security profiles for additional control over how Amicus Attorney can be used by specific users. You can control the access rights of individual users or groups of users at a detailed level, by assigning different Security Profiles to them. A Profile specifies which particular areas of Amicus Attorney can be viewed, and which particular actions can be carried out. For Premium Edition users, the ability to view Firm Files and Contacts is set with Security Profiles.

Changing a user's Security Profile (only accessible to Administrators)

- Click the "**Admin ...**" button at the bottom left in the New User or Person Edit dialog (see image at right).
- In the **Administration Profile** dialog that appears several options will be available (see 2nd image at right).
- From the drop-down menu that appears under **Security Profile**, select a profile. By default the security profile called 'Partner' that ships with new installations of Amicus Attorney will have the ability to view other Firm Member Files.
- Changes will not appear until the next time the Firm Member logs back in.
- Firm Members with Administrator rights can be given access to modifying security profiles. You may find that you wish to add or modify some of the profiles that came with Amicus Attorney 7 Premium Edition.

NOTE: The Administration profile allows you to fill out many more details about a Firm Member. For the purposes of granting rights to view Firm Files and People, only the Security Profile needs to me changed.



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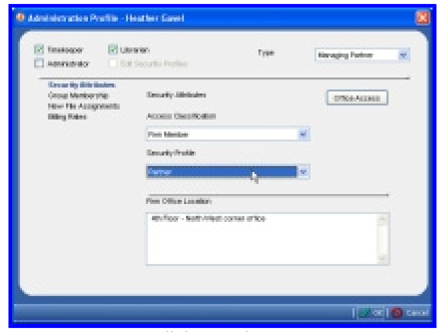

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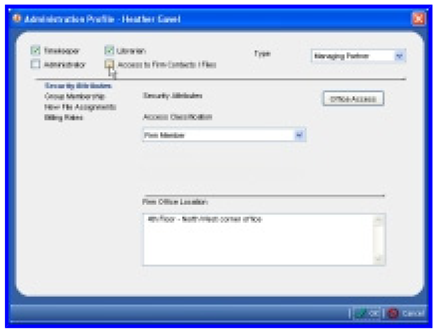
For Standard Edition

Changing a user's profile (only accessible to Administrators)

- Click the "**Admin ...**" button at the bottom left in the New User or Person Edit dialog.
- The Administration Profile dialog appears.
- Check off option at the top for "Access to Firm Contacts / Files"
- Firm Contacts and Firm Files options will appear in the People Index and Files Index, and will be accessible via Select dialogs and Searches. For security purposes, granting this right causes a Sticky message to be sent, notifying any other Firm Members who have this designation.
- Changes will not appear until the next time the Firm Member logs back in.



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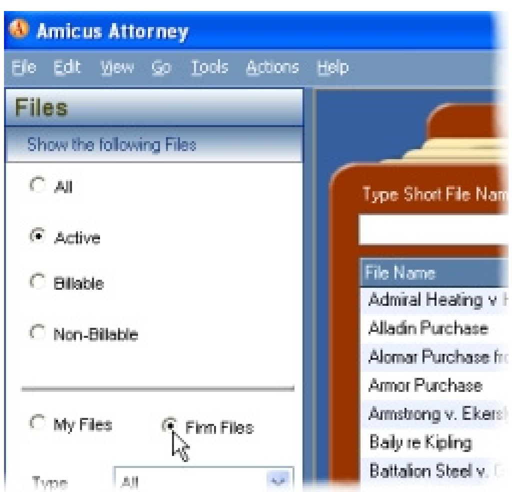

File Index
Notice the new option for Firm Files

People Index
Notice the new option for Firm Contacts

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Events

Date	Event	Location	To be Attended by
January 12-13,	Chicago Bar Association Practice Management & Legal Technology		HMU Consulting

2007	Conference	Chicago, IL	www.hmuconsulting.com
January 29-31, 2007	Legal Tech New York	New York, NY	Gavel & Gown Software Inc. www.amicusattorney.com
March 22-23, 2007	ABA Techshow	Chicago, IL	Gavel & Gown Software Inc. www.amicusattorney.com

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