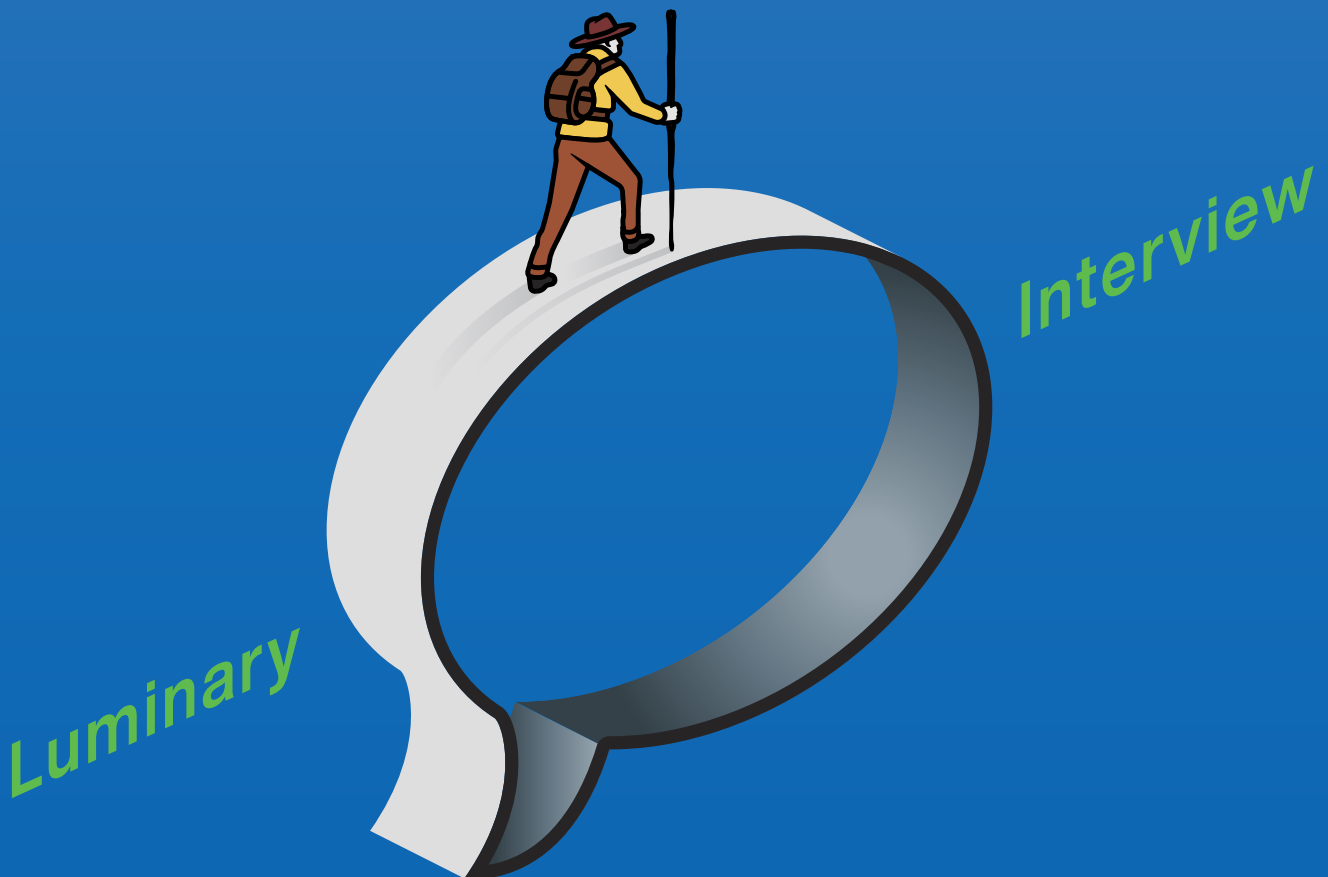


Uptime Legal Aims to Disrupt the Legal Document Management Market

The Inside Story Behind LexWorkplace

By Neil J. Squillante | April 21, 2020



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT TRILEMMA

Law firms currently face a trilemma when it comes to document management.

Legacy products have essential features such as matter-centric organization of documents and email, check-in/out, automatic OCR, and document profiles and tags. However, these products are expensive to maintain, offer limited remote access, and suffer from ancient user interfaces.

Meanwhile, cloud-based practice management systems lack advanced features, offering only document management “lite.” Similarly, sync services like Box Dropbox, and Google

Drive don’t scale beyond solo practices.

LEXWORKPLACE OFFERS THE BEST OF ALL WORLDS

LexWorkplace is the only cloud-based document management system for law firms built this century. It mirrors the legacy products in terms of features while offering the anywhere access and modern interface today’s law firms expect.

None of the legacy companies offer implementation, training, or support services, instead relying on resellers. By contrast, Uptime Legal Systems provides first-party support and training for LexWorkplace.

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Dennis Dimka, founder and CEO of [Uptime Legal Systems](#), has a history of identifying seismic shifts in legal technology several years before everyone else does. This sixth sense (shift sense?) has catapulted Uptime into the Inc. 5000 every year since 2014 (the 5,000 fastest growing private companies).

This first occurred in 2007 when Dimka, then a legal technology consultant, predicted that law firms would embrace what we now call the “cloud.” Dimka felt that law firms had more to gain from the cloud than other businesses but also special requirements such as data privacy. Dimka launched [Uptime Practice](#), which has become a leading private cloud hosting service for law firms.

More recently, Dimka observed a need for a new cloud document management system (DMS), built using technologies that didn’t exist until recently. This time he had some help from law firm customers who bemoaned the dearth of legal document management products compared to other software categories such as legal billing and practice management.

In late 2019, Uptime announced [LexWorkplace](#) — a cloud DMS that runs in any web browser. It’s the only cloud DMS for the legal industry that has shipped this century (NetDocuments launched in 1998). With some firms already using LexWorkplace and the launch imminent, we invited Dimka to take us behind the scenes.

Relatively few DMS products exist that cater to the legal industry but those that do have been around for many years and have many customers. Why did you build LexWorkplace?

DENNIS DIMKA



Legacy, premise-based DMS applications haven’t evolved much since their inception, but the needs of lawyers have. These Dinosaur

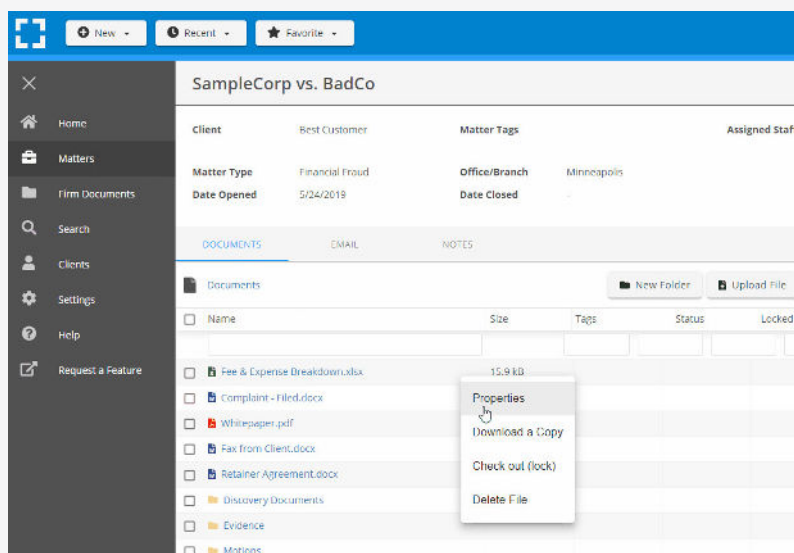


Figure 1. LexWorkplace organizes documents and email by matter with advanced data protection tools such as check-in/out and versioning.

DMS products leave much to be desired. Specifically, they:

- Tend to be complex, clunky, and unwieldy — not a good combination.
- Have cluttered and confusing interfaces, which makes them difficult to learn, use, and thoroughly adopt throughout a firm.
- Are expensive to buy, implement, and maintain because they require significant server infrastructure.
- Offer little or no remote access. Instead, most legacy products today offer only a faux-cloud option such as hosting the software on their own servers in a limited, clumsy capacity.

The price puts these legacy DMS products beyond the reach of many small and midsize law firms, while the poor user experience is off-putting even if they were affordable.

We think modern law firms deserve something better.

I need to ask you about the elephant in the document management room — the cloud storage services, especially Box, Dropbox, Google Drive, and OneDrive. How do these factor into your calculus?

DENNIS DIMKA

Basic cloud storage services like those allow you to (1) create synced folders and (2) put stuff into those folders. And that's about the extent of it. For solo and very small law practices with a couple of employees who can follow rules about where to file documents, this basic online file storage might be all they need.

But we find once a law firm grows to 5 or more total people (attorneys and support staff), they outgrow basic cloud storage, and need a more sophisticated product. Specifically, they need the traditional DMS feature set — full-text search,

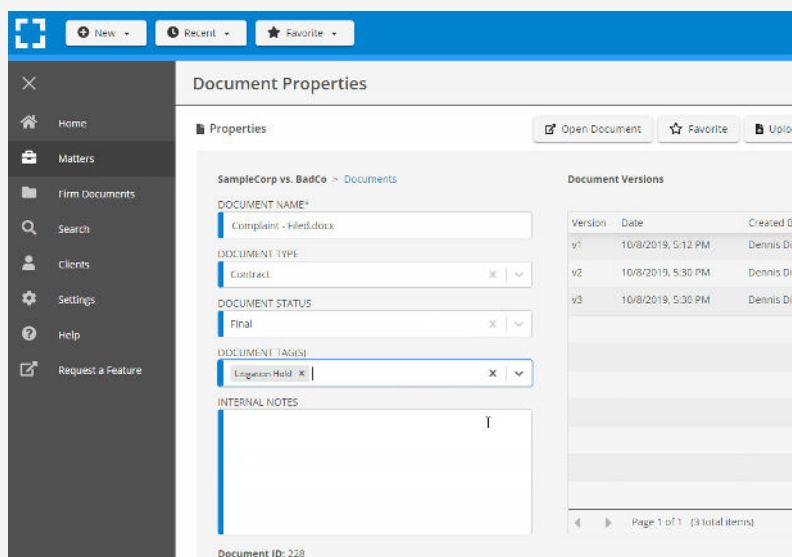


Figure 2. Document profiles and tags in LexWorkplace enable everyone in your firm to categorize documents so that colleagues can more easily find them in the future.

OCR, document tagging and profiling, version management, email management, Outlook integration, document check-out, matter-centric organization, and so-forth (see Figures 1, 2, and 3).

To give you one example, we often talk to attorneys who start their own firm after working in a large law firm where they grew accustomed to the rich toolset of a legacy DMS. However, they want modern software for their own firm.

Legacy, premise-based DMS applications haven't evolved much since their inception, but the needs of lawyers have. These Dinosaur DMS products leave much to be desired.

— Dennis Dimka

We built LexWorkplace for the law firms that need software with the capabilities of legacy DMS software, but with the ease-of-use and sensibilities of today's modern, cloud-based software.

I suspect that few DMS products exist because so many practice management systems include a “lite” DMS. What's your take on this?

DENNIS DIMKA

Practice management software is great at managing a firm's contacts, calendars, time and billing. Many practice management platforms also provide very basic file storage or document linking capabilities (DMS “lite,” as you say). This is something akin to a built-in Dropbox. This limited functionality may suffice for some law firms, but many firms need a more robust platform for their documents and email.

What often happens is that law firms see “document management” listed as a feature for a particular practice management application. Only after purchase do they realize it's not a full-fledged DMS with all of the capabilities and tools that usually accompany that moniker.

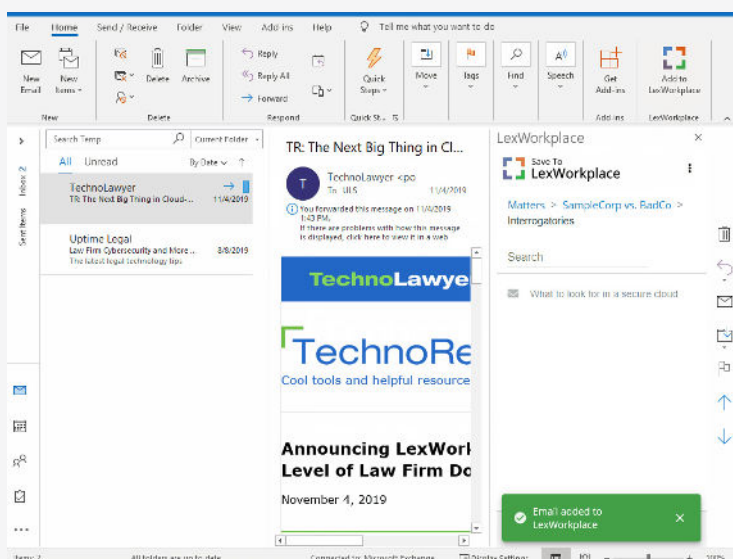


Figure 3.
The LexWorkplace add-in for Microsoft Outlook places a button on the Ribbon for one-click filing of email messages to the corresponding matter.

These law firms are often disappointed when they discover that the “document management” in their practice management solution is little more than basic online file storage. For these law firms, LexWorkplace is a terrific complement to their otherwise capable practice management system.

I mentioned above your ability to anticipate trends. What trends exist within legal document management that LexWorkplace addresses?

DENNIS DIMKA

A trend we’ve seen is the rise of Mac-only law firms as well as hybrid (PC and Mac) law firm environments. But the legacy DMS products cater only to Windows. Their only option for Mac-using law firms is the use of clunky virtualization software.

When we set out to build LexWorkplace, we developed it from the ground up to be completely and natively compatible with Windows and Macs (see Figure 4). This is possible using modern development tools. By contrast, the archaic development platforms underpinning the legacy applications make cross-platform compatibility impossible.



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Another trend we’ve long witnessed is the passing-the-buck mentality of DMS software and OCR.

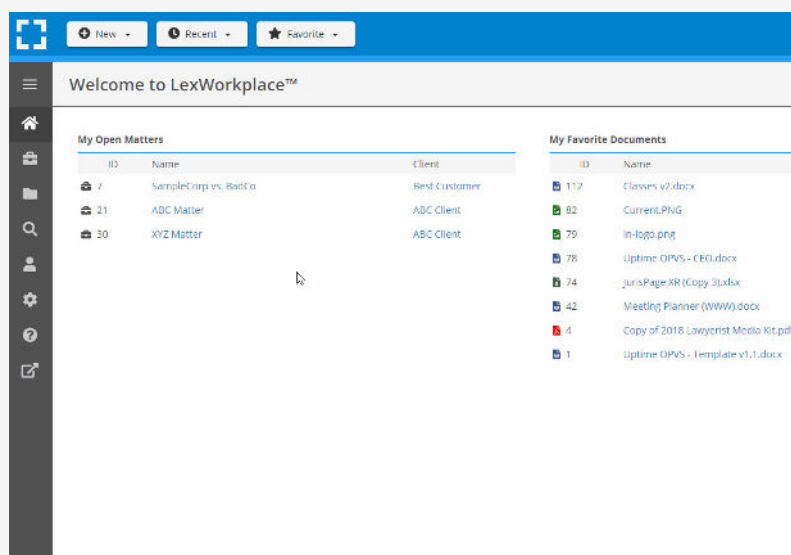


Figure 4. LexWorkplace runs in your web browser on Macs and PCs. Here the dashboard lists your open matters and favorite documents for fast access.

OCR is important because without it you won't find scanned documents in the DMS when you search for them.

Most legacy products don't provide integrated OCR, and instead encourage you to implement third-party OCR software with which their DMS integrates to some degree. We think OCR should be part of a DMS and seamless, so we built it right into LexWorkplace.

What is the most shocking thing you learned during the development and launch of LexWorkplace?

DENNIS DIMKA

One thing that's always shocked me about legal document management software is that none of the legacy companies in this space provide the implementation, data migration, or training service necessary to actually *use* their software. Instead, they'll refer you to a local consultant (reseller) who may or may not be well-suited to help a law firm implement the software.

From our perspective, it creates a real accountability problem when the company that creates the software doesn't take ownership of the customer's journey into that software. This isn't just a theoretical problem. We've worked with many law firms that have traveled down this path and have a poor experience within this framework. Botched migrations, insufficient training, and a lack of as-needed software support are just a few of the tribulations that law firms that have gone down this path have shared with us.

We aim to solve that problem by taking point on all planning, migration and user training necessary to get the most from our software. We're accountable for the entire lifecycle of every client — and we like it that way!



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— Dennis Dimka



Meet Dennis Dimka

Dennis Dimka is the CEO and founder of [Uptime Legal Systems](#), North America's leading provider of technology, cloud and marketing services to law firms. Under Dennis' leadership, Uptime Legal has grown organically and through acquisitions to become the nationally-recognized legal technology company it is today. Uptime Legal continues to innovate and disrupt the legal technology space, most recently with [LexWorkplace](#), and has been named to the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing private for the past six consecutive years. Dennis was also an Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year finalist.



Meet Neil J. Squillante

Neil J. Squillante is the founder and publisher of [TechnoLawyer](#), an award-winning network of free email newsletters for lawyers and law office administrators. Many consider TechnoLawyer newsletters the only ones they need. A Fastcase 50 award winner, Neil has a long track record of inventing successful advertising and publishing technologies and related best practices. Previously, Neil practiced commercial litigation at Am Law 100 firm Willkie Farr & Gallagher. He received his J.D. from UCLA School of Law and his B.A. from Duke University. At UCLA, Neil served as a Managing Editor of UCLA Law Review.



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