

PUBLICATIONS

Background

The long-anticipated “paperless society” may or may not eventually become a reality, but state and local bar associations – depending upon their financial resources and technological capacity – are working to ensure that none of their members are left out of the communications loop. The advent of e-mail and related technologies, along with the growing technological sophistication of younger members of the legal profession, has resulted in a significant change in communications operations of bar organizations. Led by the American Bar Association and other pioneering entities – such as the State Bar of Michigan – a growing number of bar associations now offer one or more electronic versions of publications that had previously been offered only in the traditional printed manner. Likewise, the relative simplicity and timeliness of this new distribution mechanism has led many organizations to develop newsletters that are only available electronically.

One of the few things outpacing the growth of membership in The Missouri Bar has been the emergence of technology as a means of instantaneous communication. Indeed, surveys indicate that members of the legal profession mirror the general public in terms of their increasing reliance on technology for communication and the delivery of information. With that in mind, The Missouri Bar has taken the lead in ensuring that its members – regardless of their degree of technical sophistication – have ready access to the information they need to meet the challenges of a modern legal practice.

Missouri Bar Activities

Reflective of its goal to facilitate communication with members in all corners of the state (and around the globe), The Missouri Bar has in recent years undertaken a series of steps that have radically altered the way in which important information is conveyed to busy lawyers. A key element of this undertaking is ensuring that information is delivered to each member in the form preferred by that member.

For example, in 2001 The Missouri Bar established a “members only” section on its website (www.mobar.org). Utilizing their bar number and the personal identification number (PIN) found on their Missouri Bar membership card, lawyers may perform a variety of functions – including selecting delivery options for various publications. Indeed, members may choose the manner in which four regularly appearing bar publications – *The Missouri Bar Bulletin*, *The Young Lawyer*, *The Legislative Digest* and *The Courts Bulletin* – are provided to them. By making selections via the “members only” portion of the website, lawyers may choose to receive:

- The traditional full printed version;
- A short printed summary of each issue’s content that directs readers to the bar’s website for the full text of each item; or
- An e-mail notice containing a direct link to the text of the publication on the bar’s website.

The “members only” portion of the web site also gives lawyers the opportunity to alter their own membership information, join committees and sections, join a listserv addressing a particular area of law, and much more.

Because of its value as a reference tool and its status as the official publication of The Missouri Bar, all members of The Missouri Bar continue to receive *The Journal of The Missouri Bar* in the traditional printed manner (although each issue is also available in a searchable database on the bar’s website). The *Journal* features substantive articles on timely legal issues, along with regular columns addressing such important areas as the latest court decisions and tax issues. Notices of Supreme Court rule changes, upcoming meetings, continuing legal education programs and more may also be found in each issue.

Lawyers are kept abreast of news about state bar activities and programs through *The Missouri Bar Bulletin*. Also published six times each year, the *Bulletin* features articles and notices about actions of the Board of Governors, new committee initiatives, the efforts of local bar organizations, meetings, new programs and services, and much more. Each issue also contains an insert featuring law practice management information.

Meanwhile, the latest court decisions are summarized monthly in *The Courts Bulletin*. A group of volunteer lawyers, all authorities in their respective subject areas, prepare the case summaries. *The Courts Bulletin* is made available to all Missouri Bar members, at no charge, upon request.

Lawyers under the age of 36, as well as those lawyers admitted within the past three years regardless of age, are served by *The Young Lawyer*, the newsletter of The Missouri Bar Young Lawyers’ Section. This publication provides articles on meetings, activities, educational programs and other news of particular interest to young and new members of the legal profession.

Bar members are kept abreast of the progress of bar-sponsored legislation, as well as other legislative matters of interest, through *The Legislative Digest*. Published twice each year – once during the legislative session and again following its conclusion – *The Legislative Digest* is sent to all members of The Missouri Bar.

In late 2001, members gained a valuable new service with the creation of *ESQ.*, a weekly electronic newsletter. Sent each Friday to those whose e-mail addresses are on record with The Missouri Bar, *ESQ.* continues to draw rave reviews from busy lawyers who appreciate the timely manner in which information is made available to them. Each issue includes every hand down issued during the week by the Supreme Court of Missouri and the Missouri Court of Appeals. Each case is summarized and listed under a pertinent heading, with links to the full hand downs. Every issue of *ESQ.* also includes a news release from a government agency or official, practice tips, background articles on various issues affecting the practice of law, news about the state’s legal services programs, law school alumni news, and a listing of upcoming MoBarCLE programs.

Several other Missouri Bar committees and sections also regularly publish newsletters to keep their memberships aware of developments in selected areas of the law. And Missouri Bar members receive many special mailings throughout the year, including advance meeting registration notices, committee sign-up materials, and more. Increasingly, these items are being simultaneously added to the state bar’s website, facilitating online registration.