

# The Federal Lawyer In Cyberia

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## Cyberian Solutions Abound

I am currently working on a case for which collaboration is essential. We all know that Microsoft Word™ is the name of the game for document creation. But when two or more lawyers—or a lawyer and a client—need to collaborate on a document, Word is not the word that comes to mind. In this instance, it is Google Docs™ that leads the field. But, as those who have tried Google Docs will attest, it is hardly the industry standard—and trying to actually write something in a Google Docs document without considerable practice is asking for trouble and frustration.

Well, what if the best collaborative tool could be melded into the best document creation tool? Now it can be. Enter OffiSync®—a product that ties Word documents to Google Docs when collaboration is key. OffiSync ([www.offisync.com](http://www.offisync.com)) allows a Cyberian lawyer to work comfortably within the flexibility, familiarity, and feature-rich environment of Microsoft Office™ while fully synchronizing with others within Google Docs. OffiSync respects a lawyer's need for privacy too by enabling lawyers to require permissions for viewing and editing documents.



For lawyers who need to share more than just the occasional document, they can also link OffiSync to Google Sites, an extranet-like solution that has more flexibility than Google Docs has. For example, Google Sites offers virtual file cabinets that lawyers can designate for specific matters and can attach the same security settings to each document stored in that cabinet.

OffiSync works with Microsoft Office 2003 and with Office 2007 and is available in two versions. OffiSync Standard is free, but lacks, among other things, Google Sites integration. OffiSync Premium is available for \$12 per license per year, or for a one-time fee of \$30. You can learn more about OffiSync at the company's Web site, where the differences between the free product and the paid version are made quite clear.

Once you go through a simple downloading process, OffiSync will automatically add a toolbar to your Microsoft Word, Excel™, and PowerPoint™ toolbars with its available features. (The features are the same across these three products.) Using the OffiSync toolbar, a lawyer can open files from Google Docs and can save files to Google Docs. Lawyers can then manage their own Google Docs folder structure and also can search for files within Google Docs. In addition, they can manage user rights among collaborators and add or delete new collaborators.

When changes are made to a document, all those who are collaborating will automatically be sent an

e-mail notifying them of the changes. OffiSync is very intuitive and is easy to use. It plainly simplifies life for lawyers who use both Microsoft Office and Google Docs. And, in its simpler version, it is free. On the other hand, the simplicity of Google Docs limits OffiSync as a robust document management and collaboration tool, and the latter lacks the full search features of Google Docs. However, OffiSync is definitely worth a test drive.

### Other Interesting Cyberian Solutions

I have long touted the advantages of [www.support.com](http://www.support.com). If you're not working in a government agency and you're not in a midsize to large firm, you need the 24/7 online support that support.com offers. Period. However, before you connect with this site, there are two other sites you might want to visit. One is [www.pdfgeni.com](http://www.pdfgeni.com)—a search engine dedicated to finding and indexing PDF files scattered all over Cyberia. The site can be very useful if you are attempting to retrieve an out-of-date instructional manual. It can also help turn up obscure academic documents.

If [www.pdfgeni.com](http://www.pdfgeni.com) doesn't solve your problem, and you are not yet convinced that [www.support.com](http://www.support.com) is the answer, then you probably recognize that you are in for "tech support hell," where you're in a cue waiting to talk to a real person while a slightly robotic-sounding recorded voice tells you over and over just how important your call is to them. Eventually you are connected to a "technician," who is obviously located on the other side of the world and almost surely knows less about troubleshooting your specific problem than you do. (Does the following question sound familiar? "Are you sure your power cord is fully connected to the wall socket?") Nevertheless, the "technician" has you at a disadvantage because the Touch-Tone™ labyrinth that has led you to that point has left you frenzied or exhausted.

Well, your troubles may diminish somewhat if you first visit [www.gethuman.com](http://www.gethuman.com). As of this writing, the developers have catalogued how to get to a human at 1,580 companies in the least amount of time, and they have listed the average waiting time for each connection. The site provides helpful, site-specific hints like "at each prompt, say the word 'agent' to help you navigate voicemail mazes." The listings at the site do not include only technical support sites but also other types of service companies, like airlines.

If you need to prepare a PowerPoint presentation and you (and your audience, perhaps) are dreading "the same old same old," try [www.prezi.com](http://www.prezi.com). Prezi is not truly software, it is more in the "software as a service" mode. It

makes it possible to design presentations online.

Not only is Prezi a radical departure from the ubiquitous and often yawn-producing traditional presentation software produced by Microsoft, but Prezi also literally changes how you create presentations. Prezi is more—no pun intended—“out of the box” than in the box. You don’t create individual slides, you create nonlinear presentations and then you zoom in and out of a sort of map that contains all your information. (For that reason, some critics have said that a Prezi presentation can be dizzying, but it can also be transformative and exhilarating.) When it comes to results, Prezi is actually fairly similar to pptPlex™, which is produced by Microsoft Labs (which offers a somewhat similar type of functionality within PowerPoint), but pptPlex is software embedded within PowerPoint. (Go to [www.officelabs.com/projects/pptPlex/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.officelabs.com/projects/pptPlex/Pages/default.aspx).)

It’s difficult to explain how to use either software in conceptualizing a presentation, but neither is particularly difficult to use. The best way to learn how to use either of these products is to view the example presentations that are on the products’ Web sites and then just dig in. Both sites have helpful example videos that will help you create your own nonlinear presentations the first time you try.

Prezi and pptPlex presentations are less plodding

and methodical, so the more thoughtful behind-the-scenes planning for each presentation definitely takes some getting used to, but after a bit of practice you will find that the user interfaces are quite intuitive and you’ll soon get the hang of how to go about it. Your resulting presentations are guaranteed to be distinctly different from those of your peers. (Prezi comes in two basic flavors. One is free and the other, with more features and more adaptability and storage capability, can be purchased for a fee; pptPlex is a free download.)

## Conclusion

There are many interesting solutions to common problems available in Cyberia, if you know where to look. I hope I have pointed you to a few that will solve problems you have encountered. See you next month in Cyberia. **TFL**

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## INSIGHT *continued from page 9*

taken some action with respect to that intangible asset.

The Delaware case of *In re Caremark Int’l Inc. Derivative Litig.*<sup>4</sup> created the duty of oversight for directors, opening up directors to greater risk of liability for not overseeing the internal systems the company uses for managing assets. In this case, the court noted that an ongoing employee training program that teaches them about those assets is one way to relieve a director of liability. Similarly, ongoing ex ante facta IP due diligence is one way that directors can ensure that they remain completely informed with regard to a company’s IP assets and the risks involved. Obtaining complete information before making any significant business judgments is the only way directors can shield themselves from liability. Therefore, because IP assets are so easily misunderstood, conducting IP due diligence ex ante facta should be an exercise for every corporation.

### Preparing for the Decade of the Intangible Assets

As the category of intangible assets, including intellectual property, sheds its skin as a cost center requiring ex post facto treatment, this portion of corporate value gains momentum as a formidable asset class joining other such assets on balance sheets and in the decision-making processes that take place in corporate boardrooms. As a result, heightened investment and regulatory expectations accompany this label. Private practitioners who specialize in IP law are beginning to anticipate the shift by offering strategic IP management services; some have

even changed their appellation to “IP strategist.” In addition, as the position of chief intellectual property officer within a corporation gains visibility and importance, law schools are beginning to offer IP management classes and programs (such as the new master’s degree program in IP Management and Markets at Chicago-Kent College of Law). Therefore, as the legal profession prepares for the reallocation of client needs, the real onus to help company management understand the importance of ongoing ex ante facta IP due diligence in the new decade has been placed on lawyers. **TFL**

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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Mergermarket Group, M&A Insights: Spotlight on Intellectual Property Rights, 2008, available at [www.mergemarket.com/pdf/Intellectual\\_Property.pdf](http://www.mergemarket.com/pdf/Intellectual_Property.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>*BMW Wrests Rolls-Royce Name Away from VW*, N.Y. TIMES (Jul 29, 1998), available at [www.nytimes.com/1998/07/29/news/29iht-rolls.t.html?pagewanted=2](http://www.nytimes.com/1998/07/29/news/29iht-rolls.t.html?pagewanted=2).

<sup>3</sup>*Cincom Systems Inc. v. Novelis Corp.*, 581 F.3d 431 (6th Cir. 2009).

<sup>4</sup>*In re Caremark Int’l Inc. Derivative Litig.*, 698 A.2d 959 (Del. Ch. 1996) (approved by *Stone v. Ritter* in 2006).