



An interview with Clay Rankin, Inventor/Chief Development Officer of Cognito Legal Workflow Software

Q: Why did you invent Cognito?

A: When I retired from my big law firm and entered solo practice a few years ago, I had a rare opportunity to start over with a clean slate after decades of computer-assisted law practice. What I saw was not a work-friendly sight. Multiple programs, built for different purposes, created and saved information in separate private and insulated compartments. File directories, emails, contacts, document drafting tools, and web browsers competed for my attention. Doing a single task could easily require three or more separate tools. Finding needed information I knew existed somewhere was made a lot harder because it was scattered helter-skelter.

After unsuccessfully searching for a software silver bullet that could eliminate these problems I decided to try programming a unique new solution. There had to be an easier way to provide all the typical tools needed to do a piece of work from start to finish; to store and find all the various types of information gathered and created in doing each task; to reuse similarly completed work; to share all work details with others working on the same task.

The result is Cognito.

Q: How does Cognito work?

A: All work starts with the Task List where you prioritize your work for today. Then dive in and start working on your first task. Go to the Details for the selected task and add details that record your work - notes, lists, ideas, emails, phone calls, documents, web sites, quotes and summaries, drafts of text for insertion into new documents. As others work on the same task they add to the same list; so all participants see work others are doing in real time. Use the Points outliner to organize details as needed. If the Task includes building a new document, add a new draft to the list by opening the Document Editor. Insert organized details into the new draft with drag and drop. Finalize and save your task work by marking the task as complete.

