



# LJN'S LEGAL TECH

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## Practical Advice for Effectively Managing Your Mobile Resources

By Justin B. Hectus

Dealing with the deployment of mobile devices can add stress to already over-extended IT professionals and budgets. Check out these tips from our mobile deployment experience. Hopefully, they will help you keep the headaches to a minimum.

• **Financing and Accounting.** 53% of firms replace PDAs “as they break,” which could be anywhere from six months to four years (*ILTA’s 2006 Technology Survey — Aggregate Answer from All Firms Responding*). We pay \$5/month for a third-party insurance plan that replaces one device per user per year (after a \$50 deductible) if the device is lost or stolen. This has been a better than break-even proposition for us, and more importantly, it keeps fluctuations in our monthly expense to a minimum. Also, we purchase devices (rather than leasing) and, if the phone doesn’t last the full five years during which it would normally be depreciated, it can be fully depreciated in the year of disposal. Talk with your CFO to determine what accounting method would be the best fit for your firm. Hopefully, the IRS will amend the rules in the near future to more properly reflect the realistic lifespan of these devices.

• **Support and Standardization.** Designate an internal expert, rather than handling mobile device issues as a standard Help Desk ticket. Dealing with multiple carriers and devices can make troubleshooting a time-consuming endeavor, and filtering the support requests through one person will help to identify common pitfalls and streamline support. Also, problems often occur late at night, so training end users to troubleshoot simple problems by following a few basic steps will save you from frantic midnight calls. Last, standardizing on one device (according to the 2006 ILTA Technology Survey, 56% of firms support only one model of PDA), or at least one platform, is critical to keeping support impact to a minimum. My firm has pushed the envelope with regard to device, operating system and carrier flexibility, but we maintain standardization through Good Mobile Messaging, winner in the Mobile and Wireless category of the MExchange.org 2007 Reader’s Choice Awards ([www.msexchange.org/news/MExchange-Readers-Choice-Award-Mobility-Wireless-Good-Mobile-Messaging-Jan07.html](http://www.msexchange.org/news/MExchange-Readers-Choice-Award-Mobility-Wireless-Good-Mobile-Messaging-Jan07.html)).

• **Monitoring.** Make sure that you have the ability to monitor device status remotely. My firm uses a portal, available through Good, that provides status information on the device, the carrier and the current coverage that is extremely helpful when troubleshooting problems.

• **Control and Security.** It’s easy to get overzealous in this area, but a surprising number of firms don’t take the most basic steps (according to the 2006 ILTA Technology Survey, 52% of firms do not require passwords on their PDAs). A password policy is an absolute must, and my firm also has the ability to remotely disable and delete all data on a device. Neither of these features significantly impacts the users on a day-to-day basis, but both represent prudent steps to keep client data secure. If the idea of replacing a \$300 device scares you, imagine the cost of losing a client’s confidence because potentially sensitive data has left your control.

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