



Conference tech talk turns to Kindles 'n bits

computer notes from the road

by WILMA MELOT

The recent OPA Mid-Winter Convention was one of the best I have attended. It's always a good time to talk with the members and even do a little troubleshooting on the side.

There were several good ideas bouncing around but one of the coolest things I saw was a Kindle. A whazit, you say? A Kindle. It's Amazon's new wireless, portable reading device with instant access to books, blogs – and newspapers.

Think of the Kindle as an electronic tablet that delivers the newspaper each morning and allows you to read the news in the font size you desire.

Kindle is about the size of a paperback, although a little thinner, with a full keyboard.

Before you tell me you don't like to read on the computer, let me assure you that this isn't your normal computer screen. There's no glare, which means no eye strain. And remember, you can control the font size.



You subscribe to your favorite newspaper or book from Amazon. There's even free book samples that allow you to download and read first chapters before you decide to buy.

There's no monthly wireless bills, service plans or commitments – it's all inclusive so you simply buy and read.

Kindle uses the same 3G network as advanced cell phones and delivers content on Amazon's own wireless delivery system, Whispernet.

Kevin Slimp, a newspaper industry trainer, reviewed the Kindle on his site at www.kevinslimp.com.

Slimp said he liked some things about the Kindle and didn't like others.

The Kindle is the kind of thing that will take off or never be heard from again in about a year. But the point is that it's new technology we should be looking at and figuring out if we need to use it.

You just might be uploading your newspaper to the Kindle in the next few years.



Another discussion I found myself in at the convention was how to backup servers. Naturally this conversation led to the

new time machine software that comes with Apple OSX 10.5 Leopard.

This software lets you backup your server and then forget about it. It keeps an hourly backup of your files and will continue to backup as long as you have hard drive space.

If the hair on the back of your neck is standing up, you need to unplug your computer.

I did some research and found that people using it are very pleased with the way it works.

This isn't the same as a RAID mirror backup of your computer, but if you want to take a backup off site when storms are looming on the horizon, this is the ticket.

(Note: If you only have one drive, burn your files to CD/DVDs – especially special sections and other special projects you want to store for the future or to work from again. Even big external hard drives crash – and spring storms are on their way.)



Another topic on the minds of convention goers was the fact that Mac OS9 no longer runs the Internet very well. Nearly everyone needs at least one OSX machine

or a Windows machine with XP or Vista to download ads.

We also discussed how PageMaker is no longer able to handle the new PDF ads coming from the Internet. This forces production to open PDFs in Photoshop and turn them into TIFF files – not always with the best results. The pressure is increasing for both PC and Macintosh platforms to upgrade their software.

If you do break down and get a new machine, you're going to wonder how you ever put out a newspaper on the old equipment.

I didn't think I could still be impressed by a speed increase but there's no comparison when you go from a 400MHz to a 2.6GHz computer.



By the way, Apple just released some new laptops. Several people at the convention were talking about how convenient it would be to have one.

A good laptop can unchain employees from their desks. Just imagine – you could take a vacation and still get your work done!

Although new laptops are sturdier than their previous counterparts, you still need to take good care of them. And if you need more persuasion, laptops hold their value longer.

False light, false claim?

By MICHAEL MINNIS, OPA ATTORNEY



During oral argument on March 6, the Florida Supreme Court was urged not to recognize the privacy tort known as "false light."

"False light" is a relatively new tort. It was created not by a statute, but by a judicial decision in 1980.

The Oklahoma Supreme Court said a person has a right to recover damages caused when someone "gives publicity... that places the other before the public in a false light" if the false light "would be highly offensive to a reasonable person" and the publisher knew or recklessly disregarded the false light.

Recognizing this new tort resulted in, among other things, giving plaintiffs an alternative theory for imposing liability on publishers and a way to avoid the libel statute of limitations.

In Oklahoma, the statute of limitations for libel is one year.

However, the Court of Appeals has held that "false light" should be governed by the two-year statute of limitations as an un-enumerated tort.

The "false light" tort has an ambiguous history in the Florida courts. The Florida

courts have mentioned the false light tort in dicta but have never affirmed a false light judgment.

A defendant is now urging the Florida Supreme Court to specifically refuse recognition of this tort.

Amici for the defendant urge rejection "because false light claims are almost entirely duplicative of defamation and other torts and threaten to kill far more speech – including factually accurate and non-defamatory speech... [and] it creates unnecessary and unwarranted tension with the First Amendment."

The Amici also argued that the tort lacks clarity that "threatens to interfere on a daily basis with the publication of non-defamatory (and factually accurate) news and information."

Quoting from the New York Times case, the news media said "[w]hatever is added to the field of libel is taken from the field of free debate."

The decision of the Florida Court will have no direct impact on Oklahoma. However, should Florida reject the tort, the Oklahoma Supreme Court might someday conclude that it should not have recognized the "false light" tort.

Commerce mayor treads on open meeting law

Despite being cautioned by legal counsel, the mayor of Commerce willfully violated the Open Meeting Act on Feb. 19, according to The Tri-State Tribune in Picher.

Using an agenda item titled "Discussion regarding the trailer at B and Vine," Mayor Kenneth DuBoise publicly criticized a city employee and pushed the issue into a discussion of a non-agenda personnel matter.

The Open Meeting Act requires that a governing body hold the discussions and actions of a public meeting within the guides of its posted agenda.

DuBoise was cautioned by city attorney Erik Johnson throughout the meeting.

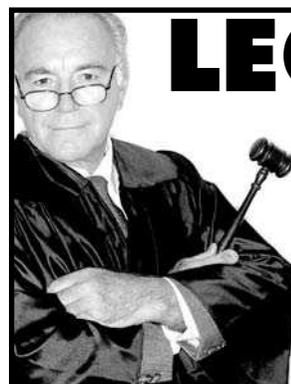
During the meeting, DuBoise asked an officer to remove a member of the public

who asked a question from the floor, accused a council member of illegally sitting on the council and alleged that he had been cursed by the public works director at the direction of councilman Bob Crawford.

After being advised by Johnson that he was in violation of the Open Meeting Act, DuBoise chastised council members for not being familiar with the open meeting law.

When the confrontations continued, Johnson announced that the council was reaching a place of "constitutional crisis, which the council does not need."

Johnson counseled DuBoise behind a closed door following the meeting, but declined to comment publicly on the nature of the discussion.



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