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Communications Committee to focus on technology

Technology.

That's going to be a major focus of the Bar's Communications Committee, and Chair **Ray Abadin** gave two concrete examples at the Board of Governors January 30 meeting in Tallahassee.

Abadin told the board the committee has voted to begin an upgrade of the highly used "[Find a Lawyer](#)" feature on the Bar's Web site: floridabar.org.

One change will be to help consumers find a lawyer even if they don't know the correct spelling of the lawyer's name. Abadin likened that to the "Did you mean?" feature on search engines like Google that helps users when they misspell a word or name by suggesting alternative spellings.

The other change will be to expand the ways users can search for lawyers. Currently, the search engine allows for searches by name, attorney number, and city.

Abadin said an expanded search function will allow potential clients to search using any information an attorney has posted in his or her expanded profile on the Bar's Web site. That would allow searching using parameters such as practice areas, languages spoken, and/or law schools attended, he said.

The second example dealt with the backup materials that board members receive for the bi-monthly meetings. It normally runs several hundred printed pages and is bulky to tote around.

Abadin noted that for this meeting, board members were also provided with "jump drives," devices about a half-inch by two inches that plug into the laptop computers that many board members routinely carry. The drive's 1 gigabyte memory is several times what's needed to hold the digital copies of the backup materials.

President-elect Designate Mayanne Downs noted other significant advantages, including that the drives can significantly cut the \$25,000 annual expense of printing board materials. She added, though, that the digital version can use improvements, such as allowing bookmarking of items, linking items to a calendar, and other improvements.



"It may well be more convenient and easier to access" when improvements are made, she said.

Abadin invited suggestions.

"Find out what you don't like about it and let us know," he said.

Abadin reported to the board that the use of the Bar's Web site is at an all-time high, and growing, including greater use by Bar members. Last year, 42,628 Bar members used the site to pay Bar fees, a four-fold increase from 2007. And 25,073 Bar members have used the expanded profile available in the "Find a Lawyer" section to provide more information about themselves to potential clients.

Also, in 2007-08, there were 118,708,966 hits on the site, Abadin said.

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