OCCUPATIONAL ALERT

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Occupation	Technology Trends in the Legal Field
Update:	The issues surrounding electronic discovery are so compelling that the ABA has established a Legal Technology Resource Center to assist its members to secure the latest information. In January 2007 approximately 10,000 attendees showed up for the Legal Tech conference in New York to learn more about the previous month's updated Federal Rules of Civil Procedure governing the recovery of electronic information. Indeed, many legal professionals have commented that they anticipate the strength of IT knowledge as being one of the deciding factors in the ongoing hiring of Litigation Support Managers. Security and Disaster Recovery are also hot button issues that may lead to more outsourcing to specialized technology firms, since most law firms do not have sufficient IT staff to handle the technical and public relations problems that arise once security is breached and confidential information is exposed. According to Dennis Kennedy, who writes extensively on technology issues for law firms, new trends in collaborative tools and toolboxes are likely to be a major focus going forward. He notes that today's documents are often shared with several people working on the same document, which requires a whole new set of technology skills from how to designate which is the original document to how to handle metadata and other hidden data - Metadata reveals revisions and comments that have proved compromising in e-discovery, making some major headlines in 2006. The law firms/legal practitioners that seize the opportunity to upgrade their technology skills are expected to garner a significant competitive advantage. Likewise attorneys and paralegals who have been out on disability for any length of time, should strongly consider beefing up their technology skills if they want to be considered viable candidates in the new marketplace.
Select References	American Bar Association, Legal Technology Resource Center Dennis Kennedy, LLRX February 2007, "Seven Legal Technology Trends for 2007: Widening the Digital Divide in Law Practice Dennis Kennedy, Discovery Resources.org January 2006, Mining the Value from Metadata