

## TWLF NEWS & VIEWS

The Official Newsletter of The Weinreb Law Firm, PLLC

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## CLE Rebooted

In this quarter's newsletter, Elan E. Weinreb, Esq., Managing Member of The Weinreb Law Firm, PLLC, reflects upon his recent experience in creating his first hour-long CLE presentation, "[The Telemachian Law Practice](#)", an expansion of the [Summer 2014 edition of TWLF News & Views](#).

## Taking the Reins

After over a decade of attending continuing legal education ("CLE") presentations as a participant, I decided in April of this year to don the lecturer's hat. Having led study groups in law school, coached high school and college debate teams, and served as a mock trial judge at Columbia University tournaments, I figured this would be a piece of cake.

At first, everything progressed smoothly. I happened to find a wonderful CLE provider-partner—the [National Academy of Continuing Legal Education](#)—and a most helpful and knowledgeable representative of that organization—Mr. Simcha Dornbush—via a CLE networking event that I attended at the end of 2014.



I also had a presentation topic in mind—solo and small firm practitioners' use of powerful and cost-effective technology to enhance their practices and compete with mid-size and large firms—that I had explored twice previously: first, in the form of the [Summer 2014 edition of TWLF News & Views](#), and second, in an oral presentation that I gave in October 2014 to the [New York County Lawyers' Association](#) Solo and Small Firm Practice Networking Roundtable group on the use of [FreeFileSync](#), a program that facilitates data replication and synchronization.



To give some "spice" to this topic, I took a stroll down memory lane to high school English, in which I studied—albeit briefly—Homer's *The Odyssey*. In that epic can be found the character Telemachus, whose literary life as a warrior—including his participation in the epic's bloody conclusion—and embodiment of the virtues of flexibility, mobility, and versatility both served to make the technical portions of the presentation a bit easier to swallow. All in all, I was off to a good start.

## The Power of PowerPoint and Audacity



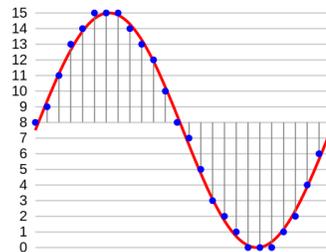
And then came a wall to surmount. Because the presentation was technical in nature and geared to practitioners of all technological backgrounds—from newbie to techie—it was not enough just to bring a literary character like Telemachus along for the ride as a sidekick. I also needed some persuasive firepower in the form of visual aids—devices for actively showing the technology that I planned to discuss and not just lecture about same. Ironically, in deciding to give a technical CLE presentation, I had created for myself a technical issue: how to best integrate verbal concepts with visual concepts so that each set of concepts would support the other.

After a couple of days of thought and research, I found a way to climb the wall: a combination of Microsoft's [PowerPoint 2013](#) and [Audacity](#), a free multi-track audio editor and recorder. Having used PowerPoint previously in college and at trial to deliver live presentations, I knew that it was possible to set up individual slides with animations of screenshots, other images, audio, and video clips.

What I did not know then was that the file format which PowerPoint utilizes—\*.pptx—is actually a glorified archive-type file (basically, a \*.zip file) that allows for the insertion of audio files corresponding to animations presented in individual slides that are recorded and saved in the Advanced Audio Coding (a/k/a \*.aac) format.

Here's where Audacity entered the picture: the program provided for the easy creation and recording of \*.aac files corresponding to each prepared PowerPoint slide (provided that a microphone such as one found in a headset that I have was attached to the computer running the program).

By first: (a) gathering all visual material found in a single PowerPoint slide ("slide visual material" or "SVM") to be discussed; (b) recording audio relevant to that slide in Audacity and writing down the exact time intervals in which the SVM should be introduced as animations; (c) recording in PowerPoint a silent block of time totaling the



time of the Audacity-recorded audio, during which I would activate animations via mouse or keyboard that introduced the SVM into the slide; and then (d) using [7Zip](#) to transplant the Audacity-recorded audio into the "media" subdirectory of the PowerPoint \*.pptx file, I was able to successfully merge the visual with the verbal—to integrate SVM with informative audio into one powerful educational package.

## “The Power of PowerPoint . . .” — *cont. from Page 2*

Throughout the process, not only did I have full control over what was presented in my CLE presentation but exactly when and how it was presented. To paraphrase the opening introductory sequence of [The Outer Limits](#), a famous 1960s science fiction television series, I had control over the “horizontal and the vertical”—which is exactly the position I wanted to be in to effectively discuss the technical aspects of my topic.

## Back to the Future



The rest is now history: after some minor audio editing, “[The Telemachian Law Practice](#)” became a reality in the form of a MPEG-4 video file that I exported from PowerPoint and provided to Mr. Dornbush on a USB flash drive on a Wednesday afternoon in late May of this year. We negotiated a licensing agreement, and he posted the presentation on the World Wide Web less than twenty-four hours later.

All of the hard work—from planning to production—was done in the comfort of my office. And with my presentation now accessible via the Internet, its audience was, is, and will be as wide as cyberspace and can attend on its schedule at any time of day or night.

While the modern-day technology used for creating CLE (as well as CME and CPE) presentations has certainly come a long way since yesteryear, it still goes without say that the basic, time-tested steps of establishing a core presentation theme and general outline of presentation content are still required. Even if today you have robots at your disposal capable of building something like the Taj Mahal, they are only as good as the plans of their architect. But once such plans have been laid and they start construction, it’s a marvelous ride to the future of CLE . . . and beyond.

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