



Cybersecurity and Remote Lawyering – Ethical Duty of Technology Competence

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1



Introduction

Professionals of all kinds have been forced to adapt to working remotely. For lawyers, this means using technology effectively but also in compliance with legal and ethical obligations towards clients and their information.

- Novel and accelerated uses of videoconference and document sharing/hosting technology
- Ethical duties of competence and confidentiality
- Security and privacy requirements
- Practical considerations
- Platforms: Zoom, Teams, Dropbox, Google Drive and others

2



Use Cases

Many applications already common in certain practice areas, often with tech-savvy corporate clients, are becoming more widespread

- Videoconference with clients and opposing counsel or parties
- Transaction diligence data rooms
- Esignature and contract negotiation platforms
- Slack, Teams, and other internal collaboration

3



Use Cases

Others are more novel

- Mediation and arbitration (AAA-ICDR Virtual Hearing Guide for Zoom)
- Hearings: According to the Office of Court Administration, Texas courts held more than 10,000 hearings via Zoom from March 30 - April 10
- Texas Supreme Court hearing oral argument via Zoom
- Current OCA guidance (effective June 1 and after) instructs courts to “use all reasonable efforts to conduct proceedings remotely”

<https://blog.texasbar.com/2020/04/articles/coronavirus/texas-courts-held-over-10000-remote-hearings-in-past-2-weeks-oca-estimates/>

<https://go.adr.org/rs/294-SFS->

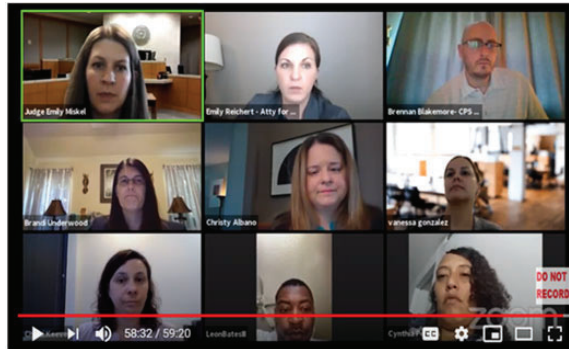
[516/images/AAA269_AAA%20Virtual%20Hearing%20Guide%20for%20Arbitrators%20and%20Parties%20Utilizing%20Zoom.pdf](https://go.adr.org/rs/294-SFS-516/images/AAA269_AAA%20Virtual%20Hearing%20Guide%20for%20Arbitrators%20and%20Parties%20Utilizing%20Zoom.pdf)

4

Use Cases

Even jury trials

- On May 18, the 470th District Court of Collin County heard jury selection via Zoom in what is believed to be the first remote jury trial in the U.S.



• <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-courts-texas/texas-prepares-for-a-pandemic-first-a-jury-trial-by-zoom-idUSKBN22U1FE>
michaelbest.com

5

5

Applicable Requirements

Ethical Requirements - what does it mean for attorneys working remotely?

- Ethical Duty of Technology Competence (Rule 1.01)
- General Duty of Confidentiality to Clients (Rule 1.05)

TEXAS DISCIPLINARY RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(Including Amendments Effective May 1, 2018, June 1, 2018 and February 26, 2019)

6

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[First Friday Ethics \(December 2021\)](#)

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