

Technology Corner

David Lederman

Overview of parenting coordination platforms:

This edition of Technology corner reviews several platforms available to parents. Each platform is different. Reviewing these applications reminds me of the adage, there is no free lunch. None of these programs are “non-profit,” however their cost structures vary significantly.

www.Ourfamilywizard.com

This review starts with OurFamilyWizard (“OFW”), in part because this is the tool-of-choice for my firm, and, in part, because I’ve ranked it first, in terms of ease-of-use utility. It has an iPad application that this writer uses on a regular basis. Clients can use OFW as their primary or sole communication tool with the other parent. For the practitioner, OFW provides draft order language. Clients can communicate through their computers or mobile devices. OFW features a family calendar function that can include the parenting schedule, and all child related events (school activities, holidays, doctors appointments, etc.). Schedule modifications can also be requested through OFW, and calendars and messages can be printed. All entries into the OFW system are non-modifiable. It contains an information bank so that parents can share, securely, all information about their child, including, doctor’s information, medical records, even photos. Clients can invite their attorneys and other professional to have access to OFW. For clients, or their attorneys, concerned about the tone of the emails, OFW offers a tone meter as part of its premium package. According to the OurFamilyWizard website “The ToneMeter™ helps parties identify and flag emotionally charged sentences within the messages you write on OFW. An optional add-on, ToneMeter™ is as intuitive as spell-check and goes beyond sentiment to gauge words and phrases against eight levels of connotative feeling. This allows you to make real-time adjustments to the overall tone of your messages prior to sending.” Fees for OFW range from \$100 to \$120 a year based on the type of package chosen. OurFamilyWizard sponsors many local bar activities as well as the Association of Certified Family Law Specialists (ACFLS).



David Lederman is the Immediate Past Chair of the State Bar of California Family Law Section (FLEXCOM). He also served as the Contra Costa County Family Law Section President (and is its current Legislative Director). A Certified Specialist in Family Law since 2001, he is the current Association of Certified Family Law Specialists’ Technology Director. Mr. Lederman is a frequent speaker and writer on family law and technology issues and speaks Mandarin.

<http://coparently.com>

Coparently is similar to OFW and is similarly intuitive. However, it does not have a “ToneMeter” option, note the “Info Bank.” Coparently is a reasonable alternative to OFW and is similarly priced. Coparently is based in Vancouver and does not appear to actively market in California.

www.Talkingparents.com

Talking Parents is close to free. It is simply a communication tool. You can view your messages and if you need to print your message for court, they charge obtaining records either per PDF or for a monthly subscription amount of \$4.99. Printed records can be generated at a cost off \$19 plus \$0.19 a page. If you only need the communication component, this is a reasonable, low (ish) cost option.

www.propercomm.com

www.propercomm.com is also just a communication tool. It charges to send, but, apparently, not to receive, texts and emails. According to its website, it has a tone auditor that will revise messages to eliminate what may be considered harassment, but will not censor actual threats. Propercomm.com charges by selling tokens. The initial token packet costs \$200 (each token = \$1) and additional tokens can be purchased in \$20 increments. They charge by character for text messages and by the word for emails. According to their website, emails cost 5 tokens for 1 to 70 words, with larger emails costing more, a 351 to 420 word email costing \$30. Text messages cost 1 token for 1 to 70 characters and 5 tokens for 281 to 350 characters. The “fine print” says that words in the subject line count against the word count as does all of the words on an email chain.

There are other platforms, such as coparenter.com that appear to still be in their beta (testing) phase. New platforms and options can develop rapidly. As they mature, I will attempt to discuss them in this column.