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## Banner & Witcoff lawyers create an app

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Two lawyers for Banner & Witcoff Ltd. have launched an iPhone application that they say allows full search access to U.S. patents and trademarks, federal court rules, local patent rules, and links to all the patent offices in the world.

Called "Banner & Witcoff's IP Lawyer," it's available free through the iTunes store or through [www.bannerwitcoff.com/iplawyer/](http://www.bannerwitcoff.com/iplawyer/).

"Frankly, we thought it would be a useful tool on the road," said Ross A. Dannenberg, 38, who developed the app along with Timothy C. Meece, 41. Both are shareholders at the firm.

"Oftentimes when attorneys go to court or the patent office, they don't want to take their computer with them, or they can't," Dannenberg said. "It's still nice to get access to patent and trademark information if you need it" through their iPhone app.

"On top of that, it's good marketing," Dannenberg added.

"People who are involved with intellectual property," both clients and lawyers, "tend to be tech savvy," Meece said, "and they tend to use sophisticated smartphones like this."

Based on an Internet search, only a handful of law firms have iPhone apps. These include Arnold & Porter LLP, based in Washington, D.C.; Morrison & Foerster LLP, based in San Francisco; and a small firm, Jason S. Turchin, a Florida plaintiff's personal injury attorney.

"I've looked at other law firm apps, and most are contact information for attorneys

and the law firm's blog," Dannenberg said, or they are attempts to put a law firm website into the iPhone.

"I haven't found one that provides a tool independent of the law firm," he said.

In Meece's admittedly biased view, other law firm apps are "like signing up for spam."

The two call their own iPhone application "a mobile resource for inventors and attorneys ... small business owners and anyone interested in being able to quickly search for intellectual property information."

Among the features of "Banner & Witcoff's IP Lawyer," according to these two creators and their law firm, are these:

- Ability to search U.S. patents by key word, patent number, assignee (owner), and "many other patent fields";
- Ability to download patent text and images to the iPhone;
- Full search access to trademarks;
- An up-to-date library of Patent Local Rules for U.S. district courts throughout the country, also the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, and Federal Rules of Evidence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure.

The document library also contains "the entire Patent Act, the entire Trademark Act, and the entire Copyright Act ... formatted specifically for the iPhone," Dannenberg said.

He said their document library is available through this iPhone app "even if there is no data connection" if someone cannot link to the Internet.

The document library is "resident on the device," he said.

Meece pointed out that trying to link to these same legal document resources through websites could result in long downloads in Adobe Acrobat formatted for 8 1/2 by 11 inches — difficult to read on an iPhone and difficult to search.

Moreover, the two lawyers pledge to update these federal rules as they change.

To search patents and trademarks through this iPhone app, the user needs a data connection, Dannenberg said, "and we provide the relevant links." For instance, the app links directly to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for text and to Google Patents for images.

Meece said iPhone apps are available for some of these individual features.

"The light kind of dawned on us that, 'Boy, wouldn't it be great if there was one iPhone application that incorporated everything,' he said.

"Our app is one-stop shopping."

Asked if their app leaves out users of other smartphones, such as Androids and BlackBerrys, Dannenberg said, "This is a new innovation, a law firm developing a tool as opposed to just a marketing app.

"We wanted to do one platform to see how receptive the market is going to be. We're considering developing a version for other devices based on how this one is received."

According to Ted Miller, a spokesman for Apple, the company does not have a count of apps for law firms. Miller did say, "We currently have over 225,000 apps in the App Store and over 5 billion app downloads."