Judicial Ethics Quiz

Technology has impacted judicial ethics by creating opportunities for new ethical challenges and providing new forums for well-known ethical issues to emerge. Because of these new challenges, some judges are concerned that ethical restrictions mean that technology use is not an option. However, most jurisdictions have found that technology should not be withheld from judges. In fact, the American Bar Association has found that electronic social media, one of the most popular forms of technology today, “can be beneficial to judges to prevent them from being thought of as isolated or out of touch” and can be a “valuable tool for public outreach” by judges.

This quiz is an opportunity for judges and court personnel to test knowledge of the intersection of technology and judicial ethics.

Using Online Spaces

1. I really love cat videos, my grandchildren, and seeing pictures of my “friends” from high school. Can I use social media?

2. In addition to sitting on the bench, I teach a law class and do some other smaller projects. LinkedIn helps me stay connected. Can I use professional networking sites like LinkedIn?

3. I live in a small community. I like to participate in community activities and share reviews on Yelp and TripAdvisor. Am I allowed to contribute to websites like Yelp and TripAdvisor?
4. I am looking for the love of my life and it seems that for most people that person lives online. Am I allowed to use dating sites?

5. I have a blog that reviews new tech and gadgets. I love sharing my opinions and ideas online. I have a thousand people who regularly read my blog. Am I allowed to blog?

Non-Case Related Communications

6. I believe judges should be engaged in society, can I share my thoughts online about the news of the day?

7. Can I privately share my thoughts online with my family and friends?

Case Related Communications

8. There is so much information available on Twitter. I swear Twitter knows about things before they even happen. Am I allowed to use Twitter or other social media to learn information about cases that I am involved with?

9. The internet includes accurate and inaccurate information. Sometimes I see incorrect information about my cases online. I am really worried that people will believe this incorrect information. Can I post something online to clarify the information about my cases?
10. Attorneys and litigants use online spaces to share their thoughts about cases and about my performance. Can I anonymously share my thoughts about my cases and performance?

Online Interactions with Attorney’s and Litigants

11. I currently work as a judge, but I have not always been a judge. I used to just be an attorney. For better or worse, some of my best friends are attorneys. Do I have to get rid of all of my friends online?

12. I love playing games online. Before I was on the bench, I used to play online with an attorney who now appears before me. We are no longer friends online. Do I have to tell all litigants that I have previously communicated with an attorney on the case via social media or other electronic methods?

13. I forgot that I was friends online with an attorney. That attorney just appeared before me in court. Do I have to recuse myself from the case?

14. I use social media and feel inclined to respond to all who reach out to me. Can I respond if a current or future litigant reaches out to me?

15. Must a judge recuse themselves if they receive a social media message from a victim’s first-degree relative that contains substantive discussion of the case?
Politics & Fundraising Online

16. We elect judges in my jurisdiction and it is impossible to get elected without an online presence. Am I allowed to engage in political activities online for my candidacy?

17. I help to organize fundraising activities for a local non-profit. Can I set up a social media page called “Judge [Your name]’s fundraising page” in order to help raise funds?

18. Can a judicial candidate establish a Facebook page to request that individuals sign a petition to permit the candidate to qualify without paying a fee otherwise required by law?

19. I help to organize fundraising activities for a local non-profit. Can I set up a social media page called “Judge [Your name]’s fundraising page” in order to help raise funds?

20. Can somebody I work with, like my law clerk, help me set up a social media page to raise funds for a local non-profit organization?

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