

BOWMAN & BROOKE LLP USES BRIEFCATCH TO Ride Waves of Civil Cases During Pandemic



As COVID-19 swept across the country, courthouses were forced to shut their doors. To maintain access to justice, federal, state, and municipal court systems moved swiftly to digitize processes and accommodate remote proceedings. By March 2020, all 50 states and Washington, D.C. began adopting statewide and local rules to govern digital operations, shifting civil court business online in two areas: moving to virtual hearings and digitizing practical tasks that litigants must complete before a hearing – such as preparing and tendering court documents.

The move to technology has made it much easier for litigants to file cases in bulk, leading to a surge in new cases and adding to a nationwide backlog of cases that already existed before the pandemic. The surge in cases has hit trial firms exceptionally hard, forcing civil defense attorneys to find new workflows and new technology tools to work faster and more efficiently.

One such firm, Bowman and Brooke LLP, is actively meeting the challenge with fresh thinking and care-

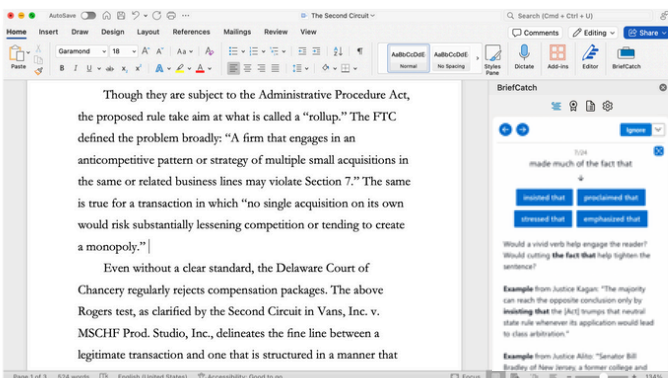
fully selected technology. A nationally recognized law firm with one of the largest product liability practices in the country, the firm was recently ranked by Chambers USA for the twelfth consecutive year in the Nationwide Product Liability & Mass Tort category, which cited the firm's "dedicated product liability defense firm, fielding a deep trial bench" (2021).

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Like many firms, Bowman and Brooke has leveraged new technology to respond to the recent surge in cases. "We're constantly working to increase our efficiency," says Chris Austin, the firm's director of information governance. "With the wave of civil cases, firms have really had to look at the way they bring cases to court."

While the focus for many firms has been on developing better processes related to e-filing and virtual proceedings, for Bowman and Brooke, the latest tech evolution has also meant looking for more efficient and effective ways to write briefs.

"As the number-one civil defense firm in the country, Bowman and Brooke has some of the smartest attorneys. But no matter how smart you are, it takes technology to keep up with technology," said Austin. "Saving time writing briefs and contracts using AI



makes our attorneys highly productive, gives them focus, helps them hit their deadlines, and it saves clients money.”

To help meet this essential requirement, the firm has standardized on using BriefCatch, a Microsoft Word add-in that offers editing suggestions to writers in real-time as they work. BriefCatch not only catches common mistakes but also provides feedback on the readability and flow of an entire document. It even generates a tailored customer report and a quality score.

Incorporating 11,000+ explanations and examples from top lawyers and judges, BriefCatch is based on the work of legal writing coach Ross Guberman. He has conducted thousands of writing and editing workshops worldwide for firms, agencies, and courts. Guberman is also the author of bestselling books and was chosen as the judiciary’s choice to train new federal judges. Ross is also a former lawyer at a top firm and a former law school adjunct professor.

“Efficient writing is really at the heart of lawyer and firm success,” says Guberman. “BriefCatch features the latest in natural language processing, machine learning, and artificial intelligence to help make writing that much easier. We mine this data to fine-tune both our editing rules and our BriefCatch scoring system, which lets lawyers compare their drafts with the writing of such luminaries as Paul Clement, Elena Kagan, and Antonin Scalia.”

Since it is a technology for lawyers built by lawyers, BriefCatch is simple yet effective at providing in-app guidance. Amanda Heitz, a partner at Bowman and Brooke, is an enthusiastic proponent. “Effective and efficient legal writing is one of my top practice priorities,” she says. “BriefCatch is one of my favorite

tools because it makes me a better writer and helps me train junior attorneys to be better writers, all while saving clients money. In seconds, BriefCatch can perform a strong first-round edit that would take me an hour or more to perform by hand, pointing out everything from mechanical inconsistencies (e.g., you capitalized “Plaintiff “ here but not here) to suggesting ways to clarify and simplify writing.”

Heitz points out that BriefCatch is teaching her to write better initial drafts. “Over time, I have internalized common BriefCatch edits to make my first draft a stronger draft. Now, before associates submit any written work product to me for review, I tell them that they must run BriefCatch and revise their work until each of their scores is green. This way, I can devote my time (and the client resources that come along with it) to reviewing and refining substantive legal arguments.”

“Bowman and Brooke uses sophisticated technology at nearly all stages of litigation, including artificial intelligent research systems and powerful legal analytics,” said Austin. “BriefCatch takes the timeless craft of legal writing and not only makes it more efficient but simultaneously improves the quality. It gives intelligent suggestions, such as using stronger language to drive home a point or softening the language to keep it simple. These subtle writing articulations can often be the overriding factor for an attorney. Because BriefCatch reduces a lot of the stress and time writing briefs, our attorneys can focus on the case itself instead of worrying about their writing.”

Using BriefCatch is just another example of Bowman and Brooke doing their best to bring their best to court every day.

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