

## CHAPTER 10 ILLUSTRATION

Part of Black, White & Greene's marketing budget for the year was dedicated to developing the firm's website. Robert directed Tricia to begin the process. Tricia called a number of website design firms and obtained estimates. She chose Web Page Design, Inc. The firm's consultant, Jim Parks, owner of Web Page Design, Inc., determined that the first step was to obtain a domain name for the firm. He said that the domain name blackwhitegreene.com was available, so he registered it. When he received confirmation of the registration, he proceeded to develop the site.

After consultation with Tricia and the attorneys in the firm, it was decided that the website would contain the following information:

- The firm's brochure
- A biography of the attorneys, including their pictures
- The firm's practice areas
- A list of news items about the firm and its cases
- An e-mail link
- A blawg of business topics of interest to the business community
- The firm's newsletter

Jim worked with Sandra to post the firm's newsletter and obtained all the information needed for the site. In a month, the website was completed, and it looked great. It contained a picture of the outside of the firm's building and a map showing directions to get to the firm. The firm brochure described the history of the firm and listed the attorneys in the firm. The name of each attorney linked to that attorney's biographical information, which showed a current picture of him or her, the date he or she graduated from law school, and his or her area of expertise. It also listed each attorney's professional accomplish-

ments. Each page of biographical information contained a link to that attorney's e-mail address so that the attorney could be contacted directly.

Since Grant's expertise was tax, the site's blawg focused on tax issues and discussed recent changes in tax law.

Robert, the managing partner, was concerned about the ethical implications of the website. He was concerned about potential problems with communications being unsecured and potential solicitation accusations. After researching the state's ethical rules concerning websites, he decided that the site should contain a disclaimer. He called Jim and had the following disclaimer put on the site:

This website is intended to supply general information to the public. It is not intended to be advertising, solicitation, or provide legal advice. The legal information provided at this site is general and not specific. The reader should not assume that the legal information at this site applies to his or her specific situation without consulting competent counsel in his or her state. We cannot guarantee the accuracy of information contained on websites to which this site is linked. We do not intend the links on this website to be referrals or endorsements of any kind. This website is not an invitation for an attorney-client relationship. We do not wish to represent anyone from another state unless the party has a valid claim in this state. We do not guarantee that the e-mail to the firm will be secure. Do not send confidential or sensitive information over this e-mail system.

The website was posted to the Web. Tricia directed that the firm's website address, <<http://www.blackwhitegreene.com>>, be inserted on the firm's stationery and business cards. Tricia could now concentrate on the next technology upgrade for the firm: an intranet.

Tricia called TrialNet, a company that installs intranets for law firms, and hired them to install an intranet for the firm. TrialNet obtained intranet groupware that linked everyone's computer with the firm's server. When it was completed, the firm's employees had direct access to the firm's server. The intranet contained the firm's client list, calendar, brief bank, law library resources, Internet, policy manual, time and billing program, newsletter and marketing materials, and management forms, such as

check requests, new client matter sheets, and personal leave requests. Each practice area had its own area for access to information and materials that pertain only to that specific practice area.

Everyone at the firm was extremely pleased with the intranet. They commented that it saved them a lot of time. Everything they needed was at their fingertips, and the intranet was easy to use. When all employees learned to use the intranet effectively, Tricia noticed that the firm's billing increased. Tricia credited the increase in profitability to the intranet because it increased employees' productivity.

It was a policy of the firm that employees check their e-mail daily. One day, Patrizia noticed that she had received three e-mails from the same person—someone called sexymale@aol.com. She read the first e-mail message. It said that he was surfing the Internet and saw her picture on the firm's website. He told her that he thought she was beautiful and wanted to meet her. The other two e-mails relayed the same message. Patrizia was amused but did not respond.

Each day that Patrizia checked her e-mail, there was at least three e-mails from sexymale. Each day, the e-mails from sexymale became more intense. Sexymale professed his undying love and affection for Patrizia and was very anxious to meet her. He pleaded with her to meet him and respond to his e-mail.

Patrizia decided to respond to let him know that she was not interested in meeting him and had no intention of continuing a communication with him. Her response was nice but straightforward.

Sexymale would not accept Patrizia's rejection. He threatened to come to the office to meet her regardless of her disinterest. His e-mails became more frequent and threatening. Patrizia became concerned. "Who is this nut?" she thought to herself.

Sexymale's e-mails began to flood Patrizia's e-mail box with sexually graphic material. Since the firm's website contained a map, sexymale could easily find his way to the office. Patrizia was frightened. She called the police and alerted the firm of the problem.

The police came out to the firm and took a police report. Patrizia told police detective Ryan, "I am frightened that this person may be stalking me. What can you do to protect me?"

"Do you have reason to believe that he is stalking you?" asked detective Ryan.

“No, but he knows where I work. He even has a map to the office from our website,” said Patrizia.

Detective Ryan responded, “We can’t do much without more evidence of actual stalking. We don’t know who this guy is or where he lives. He may live in Timbuktu for all we know. If he is from another state, the matter is out of our jurisdiction. We will assign an investigator to the problem and do what we can to get him to stop. The investigator assigned to these types of cases gets hundreds of e-mail-related complaints a week. We just don’t have the resources to thoroughly investigate them all.”

When detective Ryan left, Patrizia submitted a complaint to America Online, sexymale’s ISP. America Online said that it would investigate the matter but that the only thing it can do is give the perpetrator’s identity to the police and cancel the person’s account.

Tricia quickly installed an e-mail filter that blocked all e-mails from sexymale@aol.com. The e-mail filter program automatically sends a responding e-mail to sexymale that Patrizia does not accept e-mail from his address and to immediately cease sending further e-mails to her. The firm also installed a security system at the receptionist’s desk that will alert police of an unauthorized visitor. The door between the reception area and the rest of the offices was kept locked and opened only to those authorized to get through.

Tricia called Jim Parks at Web Page Design and instructed him to take the attorneys’ pictures off of the website immediately. She also told him to remove the map. Patrizia also took security precautions. She made sure that she was escorted out of the office by one of the other attorneys each evening and that her husband drove her to work each day. The atmosphere in the firm was tense.

Two weeks later, Patrizia received a telephone call from the police investigator assigned to her case. He told her that sexymale was a fifteen-year-old boy who lived in California with no criminal record. He said that he posed no threat to her or the firm. The investigator referred the case to juvenile authorities in California for further action. Patrizia was relieved. She e-mailed everyone in the firm about the update. Everyone in the firm was glad that the crisis was over and that the firm could get back to normal.