

## AMICUS CURIOUS

# One attorney, seven blogs

## Rosenfeld juggles law practice, social media and still putting family first

BY JAMIE LOO  
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For an attorney who maintains seven websites, Jonathan Alan Rosenfeld insists he's not a tech-savvy guy.

"I'm not someone who has any computer training. I don't know programming. I don't want to really know coding," Rosenfeld said.

It all started with a desire to help people looking for legal information on the web. From that first blog on nursing home issues, Rosenfeld now maintains several websites and is part of an active community of attorneys on social media.

The founder of Rosenfeld Injury Lawyers, he said he first got into social media about seven years ago.

As he was researching cases and looking up information, many legal blogs were coming up in the search results. Rosenfeld said he has never been a big fan of legal writing and much of what he read was boring or so theoretical that issues were not explained well. He saw a disconnect between what potential clients may be interested in and what lawyers were posting.

"I always thought if you're going to explain a case to someone who is a non-lawyer, you have to be able to explain it to them in a way that they're going to be able to appreciate it," he said. "I don't mean talking down to them and oversimplifying it, I just mean giving the information to them in a way that they can digest it."

Rosenfeld had a fairly extensive nursing home practice at the time, so he decided to start a nursing home blog. One of his primary goals was to write engaging posts in a

would want to read.

Along with information on legal issues such as nursing home negligence, Rosenfeld also wrote about topics such as how to choose a nursing home, Medicare and questions to ask to ensure a loved one is receiving proper care.

He later developed similar websites on child-injury law and bicycle injuries. He then expanded to web sites in a frequently-asked-questions on bedsores, cerebral palsy and hip replacement devices made by Stryker, which issued a voluntary recall of such items in 2012.

"We really try to make these sites not just legal sites for someone who is looking for an attorney but for someone who is just seeking information out," he said. "They may be researching their child's condition and we want to give them access to some of the best resources out there."

On his bike blog, Rosenfeld said, he also posts news such as information on organized bicycle rides, or an article on the newest technology for locking a bike.

When he first started, Rosenfeld said he wrote and curated the majority of the content. The three other attorneys and four support staff at his firm now pitch in regularly with blog posts and ideas. Without any web development skills, Rosenfeld said publishing tools such as WordPress allow anyone to maintain a blog.

To promote the blogs, Rosenfeld posted links on social media, which gradually drew him into Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+. Rosenfeld began to meet and develop relationships with other attorneys and non-lawyers such as



Jonathan Alan Rosenfeld

professionals interested in these issues.

Rosenfeld now participates in a weekly live video chat on Google+ with other attorneys, where they discuss different legal topics and share information.

If he has a question on a topic he is unfamiliar with or is contacted by a someone living in another state who needs a referral, Rosenfeld said he now has an entire network of attorneys to turn to.

"It's interesting to me and it's cool to see that there are lawyers from Maryland, there are lawyers from California, New York — really, all over the country — who are able to, with the use of technology ... have a meeting as though you're going out for coffee with a colleague across the street," Rosenfeld said.

The Google+ sessions connected Rosenfeld to people such as Anthony Castelli, a personal-injury attorney in Cincinnati who he has collaborated on personal-injury law informational videos for YouTube and Google+.

Castelli said he has learned a lot about nursing home issues through Rosenfeld's blog.

"He is an elegant writer and presenter of content," he said. "It's very easy to read what he writes and is very inviting to read."

Castelli and Rosenfeld are both part of the Circle of Legal Trust, a small group of attorneys who mentor and assist other lawyers with developing best practices for search engine optimization and other issues for law firms online. They're meeting in Las Vegas this

Rosenfeld said the personal relationships are one of the surprising aspects of social media.

"If you would've asked me five years ago if I would fly to Las Vegas, meet with 10 people who I've never met in person before — who I just met and exchanged ideas with and communicated with online and in video — I'd probably laugh," Rosenfeld said.

Chicago attorney Gerald J. Bekkerman, who has worked on cases with Rosenfeld, said he is very personable and knows how to put clients at ease.

Personal-injury clients have a lot of questions, Bekkerman said, and Rosenfeld's depth of knowledge that he has cultivated through both experience and social media enables him to provide answers quickly. Bekkerman said not many attorneys can take their expertise and write with the authority and accessibility that Rosenfeld does, let alone publish it on the web.

Rosenfeld, 39, grew up in Glencoe and studied journalism at Lehigh University, where he was also a competitive middle distance freestyle and butterfly-stroke swimmer. He went to law school at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law and graduated in 1999.

In a given day, he spends about 30 minutes on social media in the morning and checks it once during the day and in the evening. Although he works on the blogs a little in his spare time, he said family time is much more important.

"Family to me has to be a priority, because if you get so caught up with your professional life you lose touch with what's important," he said.

Rosenfeld works out of a suburban office a few days a week to be close to his wife, 6-year-old son and 2-year-old daughter. He said he enjoys cooking with his family, collecting wine and still swims three or four days a week.

Attorneys interested in social media, Rosenfeld said, should think about what they want to get out of the experience and be realistic about expectations.

"People don't really interact with an attorney until a circumstance arises where they need legal input or information, so in that respect you're never going to develop following like a sports team or brand because it's a different industry, it's a different demographic," Rosenfeld said.

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People who have come across Rosenfeld's work have contacted him about legal advice, he said.

Posts that he wrote five or six years ago still elicit comments and notes from readers.

"So someone at a law firm who may not be seeing any instantaneous results today, I think they have to be prepared to sort

of view this as something that's not just here to stay, but something that is going to be an emerging part of life and an emerging part of how the Web works," he said.

Rosenfeld's blogs can be found at

rosenfeldinjurylawyers.com;  
nursinghomesabuseblog.com;  
childinjurylaws.com; cerebral-  
palsy-faq.com; bedsorefaq.com;  
chicagobikeinjurylawyers.com; and  
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