



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR LAWYERS - The What, Why and How**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Imagine that the new solo lawyer who just sublet space in your suite confided that she hadn't joined a single bar association or trade association and had no intention of doing so. Or that she didn't have a web site or a blog or even a listing in a lawyer directory like Martindale Hubbell and had no plans to go online. You'd probably wonder privately how this lawyer was ever going to build a successful practice.

Well, that's my same reaction to those lawyers who ignore or turn up their nose at social networking tools. As I'll discuss in this e-book, today's social networking tools let lawyers capture many of the same benefits as joining a bar association, setting up a website and paying for listings in a costly lawyer directory - all for free!

Even more importantly, the legal profession, ordinarily late to the party, is rapidly adapting and integrating social networking functions into traditional business models. Consider the following trends:

\*An ABA Survey of 2810 young lawyers, completed in April 2008, showed that 56 percent of respondents rated social networking as an important tool. [Source: ABA Section of Science and Technology, [www.abanet.org/scitech/socialnetworkingsurveysummary.pdf](http://www.abanet.org/scitech/socialnetworkingsurveysummary.pdf)].

\*A July 2008 survey of 650 attorneys commissioned by LEXIS/Nexis reveals that almost 50 percent of attorneys are members of online social networks and over 40 percent of attorneys believe professional networking has the potential to change the business and practice of law over the next five years. [Source: Martindale Hubbell, <http://tinyurl.com/58cmvs>]

\*In June 2008, venerable lawyers directory Martindale Hubbell struck a deal with LinkedIn whereby MH profiles will now include an icon linking directly to a lawyer's LinkedIn Listing. [Source: Martindale Hubbell, <http://tinyurl.com/5va94f>]



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

\*Increasingly, consumers who have grown up using the Internet are turning to search engines like Google to locate lawyers online. More and more, consumers expect their attorneys to have a robust online presence.

In this e-book we'll explore the WHAT, the WHY and the HOW of social networking.

In Part I, we'll offer a quick summary of the history of social networking and Web 2.0, describe various categories of social networking tools and identify those that make the most sense for your law practice.

In Part II, we'll make the case for why today's lawyers must make social networking tools an integral part of their business development portfolio.

In Part III, we'll show how lawyers can create online profiles or share documents using social networking tools. We'll also briefly cover best practices on writing an online profile, using tags and keywords to maximize SEO (search engine visibility) and discuss some of the ethical considerations that may apply to lawyers' social networking activities.

The Appendix includes screen shots of various social networking sites as well as a list of powerful verbs and adjectives to use in creating your profile.

This e-book is intended to briefly introduce lawyers to certain social networking tools and set out the basics for creating profiles. If you are interested in more advanced uses, or require more assistance in setting up a profile, please contact me at [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or 202-297-6100 for information on online or in-person group tutorials.



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

## I. WHAT IS SOCIAL NETWORKING?

### A. Definition and History of Social Networking

Once upon a time, the Internet was flat. The early versions of the law firm website (or indeed, any business website) functioned as little more than glorified, online version of a hard copy brochures, characterized by static content and few substantive resources. Adding web content through file transfer protocols was a cumbersome task, thus deterring frequent updates. And while site visitors could seek more information through email or include a link to a website at their page, otherwise, Web 1.0 offered few opportunities for interaction or information sharing.

Enter Web 2.0, a trend in technology and web design that “enhances creativity, information sharing and notably, collaboration among users.” Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_2.0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0). Web 2.0 technology substantially facilitates the process for posting, customizing and updating online content, and offers various applications for users to comment on posts, interact with others and form online communities. The newer breed of Web 2.0 tools are characterized by (a) a high degree of user-friendliness and ease of use and (b) exceptionally professional looking product.

### B. Familiar Examples of Social Networking Tools

Even before the full emergence of the modern generation of social networking tools such as LinkedIn or Facebook, lawyers had opportunities to connect and converse with each other through the Internet. Below, you’ll find a list of online tools that facilitate interaction and collaboration, and which many of you may already be using. We mention these tools here because they play an important role in business development; however, they are not the focus of this e-book.

--**Listserve/email groups** – an online group where communication takes place by email, dedicated to discussion of a particular topic. Many listserves are a great place to bounce ideas around, and meet potential contacts or colleagues



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

to refer cases to, or collaborate with. You can also create your own listserve or email group using tools like GoogleGroups or YahooGroups.

**-Message Boards** – Instead of delivering communication to users via emails, discussion boards enable users to post comments at an online bulletin board. Some users like discussion boards because they allow for easy searches of past conversation threads; others do not like the added level of time involved in having to visit the board to post or view posts, instead of having messages come directly through email.

**--Wikis** – A wiki is a website where users can add information. Wikipedia is the best known example of a wiki; it's an online encyclopedia where registered users can create pages and edit or supplement existing entries. Law firms might use wikis (public or private) to collaborate on documents within the firm or with other attorneys or to create a database of information on cases, as does the SCOTUS Blog Wiki ([www.scotusblog.com](http://www.scotusblog.com))

**--Blogs** – Blogs are essentially a frequently updated website where the blog owner can easily generate and produce content. Readers can visit a blog site or subscribe to the "feed" from the blog by email, so that they are notified of postings in their email box. Blogs are interactive in that users can post comments and often generate discussion at the blog. (Popular blogs like Volokh Conspiracy, [www.volokh.com](http://www.volokh.com) or Above the Law, [www.abovethelaw.com](http://www.abovethelaw.com) frequently attract vociferous discussion and debate). In fact, one reason that some of the best blogs help build relationships is that a blog post offers a way to start a conversation.

## C. New Generation of Web 2.0 Social Networking Tools

### 1. History of Social Networking Sites

Web 2.0 social networking sites took root with sites like MySpace.com and Facebook.com which were popularized by high school and college students. As these students have grown up and moved into the work force, these sites have evolved from playing a purely social function to supporting professional needs.



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

At the same time, many older professionals are taking a cue from their younger employees or even their children – and are beginning to recognize the value that these social networking sites can offer. Also driving the social networking trend are factors such as the globalization of law practice, which necessitates communication online, the increased number of consumers who rely on the Internet to locate lawyers and the adaptation, albeit slow, of telecommuting that has helped lawyers recognize the business value of online applications.

## 2. Types of Social Networking Sites

From lawyers' perspective, social networking sites can be divided into two categories: (1) those intended for purely professional use; (2) those that are more social in nature, but also offer ancillary business development functions and (3) those that foster and promote community. We discuss each below:

### a. Professional Social Networking Sites

There are actually two types of professional social networking sites for lawyers: the first category focuses on profile creation while the second enables lawyers to share and upload work product:

#### i. Profiles

**LinkedIn.com** – Essentially, allows users to build a resume-cum-website on line and invite others to “connect” to a network. Linked In users can also provide and solicit testimonials from colleagues. MartindaleHubell recently inked a deal with LinkedIn and will link to LinkedIn profiles as part of the MH listing.

**Avvo.com** – Sometimes maligned by lawyers because of its controversial ratings system, Avvo nonetheless is another site that allows users to list their experience, past cases, client and colleague endorsements. Avvo will generate a numerical ranking based on these factors, as well as bar disciplinary records.



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

## ii. Document Sharing

**JD Supra.com** Allows users to set up a profile and upload documents, client newsletters and other materials for sharing with other lawyers.

**Docstoc.com, Scribd.com** – Similar document uploading site, but for all professionals.

### b. “Social” Social Networking Sites

“Social” social networking sites are analogous to business development activities like golf, ballgames or a wine tasting: both are enjoyable, non-law related activities that enable lawyers to get to know each other on a personal level and in so doing, help to determine whether they can work well together.

**Facebook.com** Originally established as a way for college students nationwide to get to know each other, now Facebook helps lawyers learn more about the person behind the suit. Facebook lets lawyers post information about family and favorite movies, upcoming business development events – and also includes applications to exchange online gifts and greetings or play games like Scrabble or Sudoku.

**MySpace.com** – Best known for its niche among younger folks and the entertainment world, users on MySpace can set up profiles that include links to their favorite music and video. Many lawyers who practice entertainment law or target younger clients find MySpace a productive social networking tool.

**Secondlife.com** – A three dimensional online world created by its Avatar residents. Second Life can be more complicated to navigate because users must create and learn to manipulate an online alter-ego known as an Avatar. However, a few lawyers have set up virtual law offices on Second Life, while others represent clients in the real-world disputes that can grow out of virtual transactions.



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

### c. Community Sites

While all social networking tools build community to some degree, some sites focus on the community component more than others.

**Legalonramp.com** – An invitation only community for corporate counsel and lawyers to share information. Reminiscent of counsel connect, Legal Onramp may give access to corporate GCs.

**Ning.com** – Can use to set up a community of other lawyers, with built in discussion board, events calendar, email list.

**Twitter.com** - A “microblog” which allows users to post 140 character messages in response to the question “what are you doing now?” Many users often post about recent blog posts or newstories, so Twitter offers a way to interact and get a sense of how others spend their day while also learning about new information. You can also use the “sumimize” tool in Twitter to search for quick updates on a particular topic (see Appendix example).

**Recommendations:** You simply won’t have time to set up all of these social networking tools. I recommend that you experiment with at least one in each category, skipping the purely social sites entirely unless they are geared towards your target clients or you enjoy the more purely social aspects of online networking.

## II. WHY SOCIAL NETWORKING?

Below, we set out two categories of reasons -- the first reactive (everyone else is doing it), the second proactive (imagine the possibilities...) -- why lawyers should adopt social networking tools.

### A. Reactive: Lawyers and Clients Are Using Social Networking Tools NOW!

As discussed in the executive summary, lawyers and potential clients are using social networking tools now. Martindale Hubbell has integrated LinkedIn with its lawyer directory service and lawyers – from consumers to corporate GCs



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

are turning to the web to locate lawyers and check references. If you are not actively exploring the social networking opportunities, then you will fall behind the trend and potentially lose out on opportunities.

In addition, today's clients want Internet savvy lawyers. They recognize that lawyers who harness technology are poised to deliver far better value than those who don't. Social networking tools show that you know enough to stay on the cutting edge – and send a tacit message that you are also ahead of the curve when it comes to your legal skills.

Still, the fact that “everyone else is doing” it isn't a good enough reason to adopt social networking in and of itself. As discussed in the next section, there are other proactive, powerful reasons for taking advantage of social networking tools and making them an integral component of your business development portfolio.

## **B. The 3 R's of Building a Law Practice: Relationships, Referrals and Reputation (as well as a 4<sup>th</sup> R- Replacement)**

Just as reading, writing and 'rithmetic form the foundation of a sound childhood education, another type of “3 Rs” -- relationships, referrals and reputation – serve as the building blocks of a successful law practice. There's no faster way to build relationships, referrals or reputation than through social networking tools. They help you share what you've done in the past as well as what you're doing on an ongoing basis going forward.

**Relationships:** Social networking tools are interactive. They highlight commonality through information you post and invite conversation. (Hey, didn't know you worked at that firm; Wow, had no idea you played soccer, Gee, I did moot court back in law school too).

Sites like LinkedIn allow you to leverage existing relationships by connecting with people who know someone you know. Sites like LinkedIn and Avvo also foster relationships because they allow you to give testimonials to others. What better way to solidify a relationship than to reach out and compliment someone?



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

**Referrals:** Social networking sites yield direct and indirect referrals:

**Direct** – Social networking sites help attain incredible SEO (search engine visibility) for FREE! Clients can find you. Also, listing information and testimonials makes it much easier for colleagues to refer you cases.

**Indirect** Increased visibility will help reporters find you and get your name in print, which can lead to referrals. A recent e-marketing survey showed that 30 percent of reporters locate industry experts online through blogs and web searches). Sites like JDSupra and Docstoc let you post documents, so you may come to mind when someone is asked to recommend a lawyer for a project.

**Reputation** – Social networking sites let you establish a reputation as an expert and enhance your reputation with testimonials from others.

**Replacement** – Social networking tools can either replace, or at least supplement many of your existing online marketing tools. For example, if you can't afford a website or aren't yet ready to commit to setting up a blog, you can still use a LinkedIn or Avvo site to create and maintain an online presence and communicate much of the information that you would on a website, such as your bio, past accomplishments and office location. Likewise, sites like JD Supra or Docstoc let you upload documents – from past client newsletters to briefs – to show your workproduct to clients or make information readily accessible.

Social networking tools can also replace, or again, supplement some of your other marketing methods such as cold calling. LinkedIn helps you identify leads and find common ground, thus enabling you to convert a previous cold call into a “warm” call.

Social networking tools also let you partly replace expensive SEO (search engine visibility) services. As discussed in the next section, by making strategic use of tags and keywords in your online profiles, you can elevate your visibility in search engines. Again, you may find that even with this added boost that you still need professional SEO services, but if those services fall outside of your



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

existing budget, social networking provide a good start for increasing your find-ability.

### III. SOCIAL NETWORKING - HOW

So, let's get started and learn a bit more about how to set up a social networking site. Obviously, a static e-book can't walk you through the entire process, but it can effectively provide best practices for getting started. In the Appendix, you'll find screen shots of various social networking sites, as well as a slightly more detailed "anatomy" of some of the features of a LinkedIn site.

#### A. Basic Basic's

**Registration** - All of the social networking sites discussed require you to register and enter user information. You may want to come up with an easy to use username and secure password that you can use at all of these sites.

**Photo** - Most sites offer the option of including a photo. I strongly recommend including a photo for several reasons. First, a photo gives a site a more personal touch and shows that you took added care in developing a profile. A photo also serves a practical purpose; it lets people whom you've met offline identify you if you ever have the opportunity to meet in person.

In terms of selecting photos, use a professional photo for sites like LinkedIn or Avvo. Stores like Target and Sears offer low cost, digital photos suitable for business, and with the increased quality of today's digital cameras, you may even be able to have a friend or spouse take a photo that will suffice for an online social networking profile.

For more social oriented sites, use a more casual photo that conveys the relaxed or friendly side of your personality. Obviously, even your casual photos should be in good taste; needless to say, avoid shots where you're inebriated, scantily or provocatively dressed or posed in a compromising position.

**Complete the Basics** - Of course, the more information you include in your profile, the better. But if you can't complete your profile all at once, be sure



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

to include basics such as name, address, location, website or blog (if you have one), previous employment and your undergraduate and law schools.

**Social Etiquette** – The same social etiquette rules apply to social networking sites as to listserves, email and other online communication. In general:

Don't ever link to people you don't know;

Don't link to people for the sake of gathering links – it's annoying to them!

Don't set up social networking groups and spam them;

Don't spam your email box with invitations to join your group;

Don't spam other users

Don't give testimonials for the sole purpose of obtaining reciprocal testimonials or offer testimonials about aspects of the lawyer's work that you're not familiar with.

## **B. Best Practices**

### **1. Use Tag Words/Keywords In Social Networking Sites**

To greatly simplify, tag words or keywords are basically those words or phrases associated with your or the services that you provide and that users are most likely to employ to search for a similar service online. For example, a family law attorney in Texas might select "Texas family law attorney" or "family lawyer in Texas" as a descriptive keyword phrase to include in an online profile. Or a lawyer who uploads a sample non-disclosure document to JD Supra might tag the document with his name and descriptive terms like "California NDA."

Tag word and keyword selection can be an involved process, but here are a couple of basic tips to get you started:



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

1. Try Google tools like  
<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal> (will give tips/ideas  
on possible keywords), Google Suggest -  
<http://www.google.com/webhp?complete=1> (you type, it suggests words),  
Google Trends - <http://www.google.com/trends> (gives information on  
frequency that terms are used).

2. Run some searches yourself using certain terms and see where your  
existing website comes up in the rankings as compared to the competition.  
Review competitors' sites to get an idea of the words and phrases that they use to  
generate their positioning.

3. Learn more about SEO (search engine visibility) at sites like -  
[www.seobook.com](http://www.seobook.com). Even if you hire an SEO expert at some point, it doesn't hurt  
to educate yourself on the process.

## **2. Use Powerful, Active Words and Phrases to Create Your Profile**

Design a profile that captivates users by sharing your personal  
philosophy and telling them what you've accomplished. Use powerful, active  
words and phrases. Review other profiles for ideas, and feel free to use the  
active words and phrases in the attached Appendix.

## **3. Use Your Profile Links**

As more people link to your profiles, you will increase traffic. Make it  
easy for others to find profile links by using them in your email signature, at  
your website, etc...e.g. <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/1/144/324> (my linked  
in Public Profile) Carolyn Elefant - <http://twitter.com/carolynelefant> regularly.

## **4. Proof and Spell Check**

Carefully proof the grammar and spelling in your profile. The best feature  
of most social networking tools is that you can easily change any mistakes.



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

### C. Legal Ethics

As a general matter, the effectiveness of social networking systems depends upon the integrity of the community members who support those sites. When users include false information in their profiles or upload documents that they haven't written or spam other users, they erode the trust and community spirit at the heart of social networking systems.

As lawyers, we have an added responsibility in using social networking tools that goes beyond the community norms. We must also abide by rules of professional conduct and ethics in our interaction with other lawyers and members of the public.

To date, we have not identified any state boards of professional responsibility that have issued a formal ruling or guidance on the ethics of lawyer participation in, or use of social networks. In my view, the bars have taken the right approach by allowing social networking uses to evolve organically, rather than stepping in prematurely to regulate them. Nevertheless, to ensure that bars keep their hands off social networking tools, we lawyers should take proactive steps to police ourselves and use these tools in an ethical and professional manner. In this regard, here are some considerations:

**--Treat social networking sites as part of a category of lawyer listings or information databases rather than a form of pure lawyer advertising** – To date, bars have spared social networking sites from close scrutiny for two reasons. First, the bars have bigger fish to fry (Source: Law Technology News, <http://www.law.com/jsp/legaltechnology/pubArticleLT.jsp?id=1194257030032>). Second, as yet, most bars do not consider social networking sites advertising (Law Technology News - <http://www.law.com/jsp/legaltechnology/pubArticleLT.jsp?id=1202421836389>) either because the sites list purely biographic information or (in the case of JD Supra or document services) are more similar to published articles that are viewed as educational rather than promotional. If lawyers continue to use social networking sites as tools to connect with lawyers, build referrals and share



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

information with the public rather than as blatant solicitations, not only will these sites serve a more meaningful function, but they will be insulated from invasive bar regulation.

I also believe that MartindaleHubbell's recent incorporation of LinkedIn will go a long way towards protecting lawyer websites from bar scrutiny. MH is a respected bar publication and regulators have never challenged the ethics of MH listings. By bringing a site like LinkedIn within its purview, MH may have done lawyers the bigger favor of providing protection-by-association.

Because bars do not view social networking sites as advertising, it is my view that those regulations triggered by an advertising classification – such as disclaimers or a ban on testimonials – would not apply. This is just my opinion, however and is not intended as legal advice. If you have concerns or doubts about whether a social networking profile is subject to regulation as advertising in a jurisdiction where you practice, you should consult with Bar Counsel.

**--Use of accurate information** – As a general matter, most bars prohibit lawyers from making false or misleading communication to the public. Thus, in creating profiles, lawyers should include accurate information about past employment and accomplishments. Lawyers should also refrain from giving testimonials or recommendations about others that, for example, suggest that the lawyer is personally familiar with a colleague's work when he or she is not.

Thus, a lawyer who knows a colleague through a list serve only should not say "Joe Smith is an excellent corporate lawyer, whose negotiation skills are unmatched in the community." Rather, a more appropriate testimonial might be "I know Joe Smith through an online listserv but I have never met him or worked with him personally. However, based on his postings and some of the advice that he's offered online, in my view, he has a good understanding of the basics of corporate law."

**--Testimonials** - Though some bar associations do not permit testimonials in lawyer advertising, I believe that some differences apply here. First, clients and colleagues post testimonials at Linked In or Avvo profiles rather than the lawyers themselves.



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

Second, even though bar associations may prohibit testimonials from clients regarding results of a case, at the same time, they permit testimonials from colleagues, judges, friends and family members so long as the testimonials are not misleading.

Finally, clients and colleagues post testimonials, not lawyers. While bars may have the ability to regulate a *lawyer's speech* when it comes to advertising, I have serious doubt that the bar's authority extends to non-lawyers who seek to express opinions about a lawyers' service.

Again, this analysis also represents my own opinion; please consult with bar counsel or limit your use of testimonials or you have any reservations.

**Linking to Ratings** – Some jurisdictions prohibit lawyers from linking to their inclusion in publications like *Super Lawyers* – though many have changed their position. Likewise, the Florida Bar's Standing Committee on Advertising addressed the issue of Avvo ratings, and voted to prohibit Florida lawyers from using their ratings in their advertising, but the committee reconsidered the matter and reversed itself in April. Source: Law Technology News, <http://www.law.com/jsp/legaltechnology/pubArticleLT.jsp?id=1202421836389>  
) You may want to seek guidance on whether you can use your Avvo rating in advertising in your jurisdiction.

**Bottom Line:** We're all on the same page here. Social networking tools depend upon the integrity and trust of the community. Social networking could not offer the value and power that it does if users did not employ these tools in an honest, dignified fashion. So long as we lawyers use social networking tools as a way to build relationships, referrals and reputation, by definition, our use will comport with our existing professional ethics obligations.



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Social networking tools are here to stay. Today, they still remain in their nascence; many of us have yet to see or experience the enormous potential that these tools offer us to build our law practice and form online communities that at some point, can convert into robust offline business relationships and personal friendships.

In the next section, you'll find two Appendices. The first contains powerful words for use in preparation of your online profile, while the second series contains screen shots of various social networking tools, with some specific guidance and detail on Linked In features.

**Beginning in September, I will be offering online tutorials on creating social networking tools, as well as in-person, turnkey workshops for bar associations and law firms. Here's what a few participants have had to say about the first introductory workshop offered in July 2008:**

*--Carolyn helps bring you into the online world as a means for finding clients. Getting on Linked-In is a sine qua non for being taken seriously professionally.*

*--Great program for someone to get up to speed quickly on social networks from A to Z.*

*--Enjoyed the ability to network with other participants in the room as well as great descriptions of web tools. Instructor answered all questions well, participants were very happy.*

**If you've downloaded this book, you are already on the mailing list to receive information about the online programs as well as the in-house workshops. If you'd like more information right away, please call me at 202-297-6100 or email me at [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com).**



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

## APPENDIX

### POWER WORDS TO USE IN CREATING PROFILES

Determined  
Hard-working  
Diligent  
Trustworthy  
Team-player  
Motivated  
Reliable  
Self-starter  
Loyal  
Studios  
Attentive  
Conscientious  
Industrious  
Persistent  
Dynamic  
Energetic  
Enterprising  
Enthusiastic  
Aggressive  
Consistent  
Organized  
Professional  
Methodical  
Skillful  
Passionate

accomplished	arranged	
achieved	advised	assembled
acquired	analyzed	assisted
adapted	appraised	audited
adjusted	approved	augmented
administered	authored	



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

budgeted	built	briefed
Calculated	conceived	coordinated
catalogued	conceptualized	
challenged	conducted	corrected
closed	consolidated	corresponded
coached	constructed	counseled
compared	consulted	created
compiled	cultivated	curried
completed	controlled	crafted
composed	convinced	catapulted

## D

detected	discovered
decreased	determined
delegated	developed
delivered	devised
diagnosed	distributed
designed	drafted
directed	

## E

edited	enhanced	examined
elicited	enlarged	exceeded
eliminated	established	executed
empowered	expanded	explained
engineered	evaluated	envisioned

## F

formulated  
founded



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

## G

gathered          generated          garnered

## H

headed          hired

## I

identified	initiated	interpreted
ignited	innovated	interviewed
implemented	inspected	invented
improved	installed	inventoried
increased	instituted	
influenced	instructed	

## J

Justified

## L

lectured	lobbied	logged
led	learned	listed

## M

maintained	mediated	motivated
managed	modified	marshalled
monitored		

## N

Negotiated          negated



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

## O

obtained	ordered	overhauled
operated	organized	

## P

patented	prepared	programmed
performed	presented	promoted
persuaded	presided	proposed
placed	processed	provided
planned	produced	purchased
posted	proved	proofed
pushed		

## Q

quantified	qualified	quieted
------------	-----------	---------

## R

recognized	reorganized	researched
recommended	repaired	restored
reconciled	replaced	reviewed
reduced	reported	revised
referred	represented	
regulated	rescued	

## S

scheduled	sold	suggested
screened	solved	supervised
selected	steered	supplied
served	streamlined	systematized
simplified	studied	saved
spearheaded		



Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant, [www.carolynelefant.com](http://www.carolynelefant.com)  
Creator, MyShingle.com (2002); Author, Solo by Choice: How to Be the Lawyer You  
Always Wanted to Be (Decision Books 2008). Contact at: [elefant@myshingle.com](mailto:elefant@myshingle.com) or  
202-297-6100. Copyright Carolyn Elefant. Do not reproduce without permission.

## T

taught	tracked	transcribed
tested	trained	translated
traced		

## U

updated	utilized
---------	----------

## W

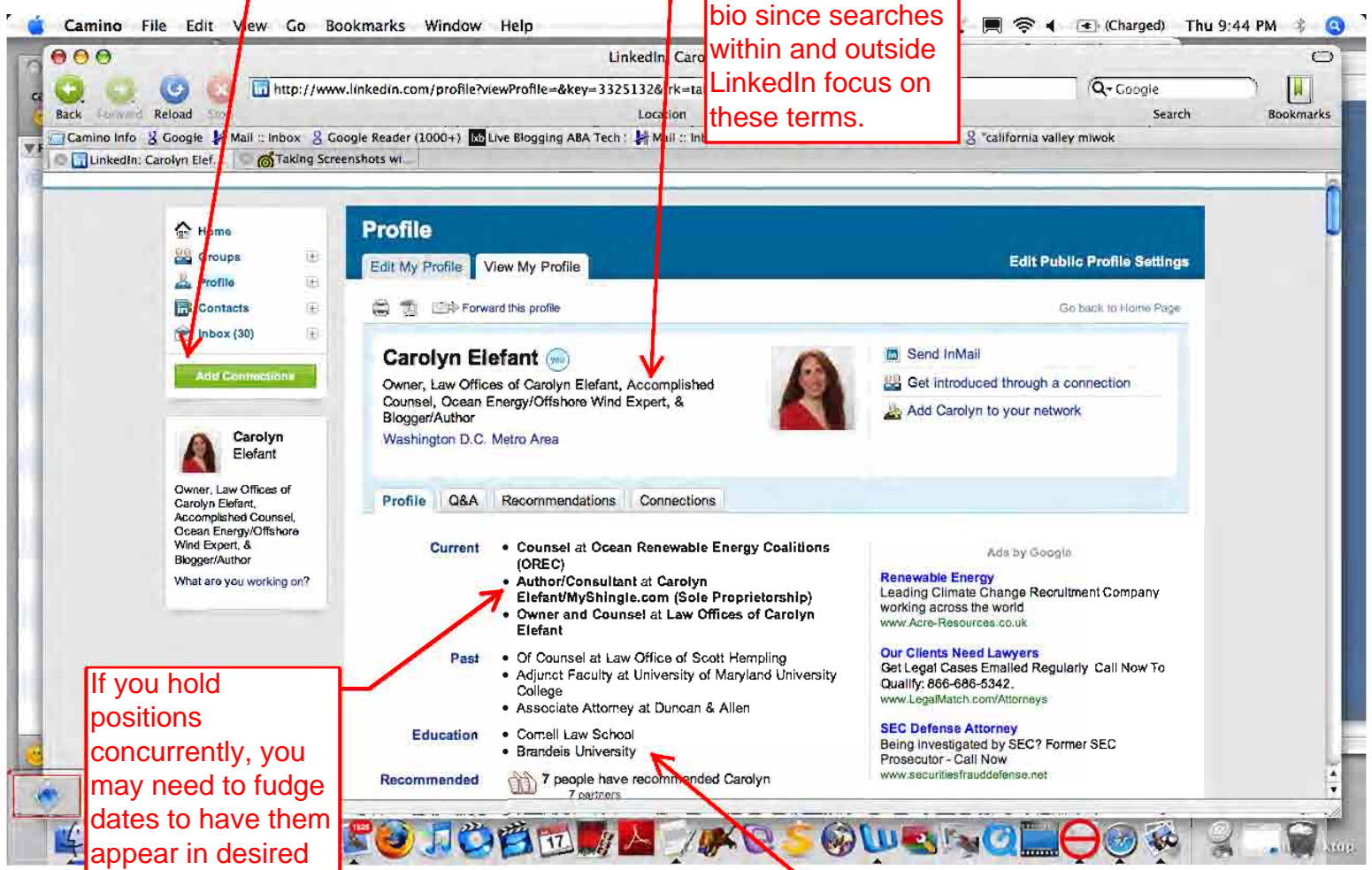
won	wrote
-----	-------

Click here to invite your contacts to connect with (or "link") to you.

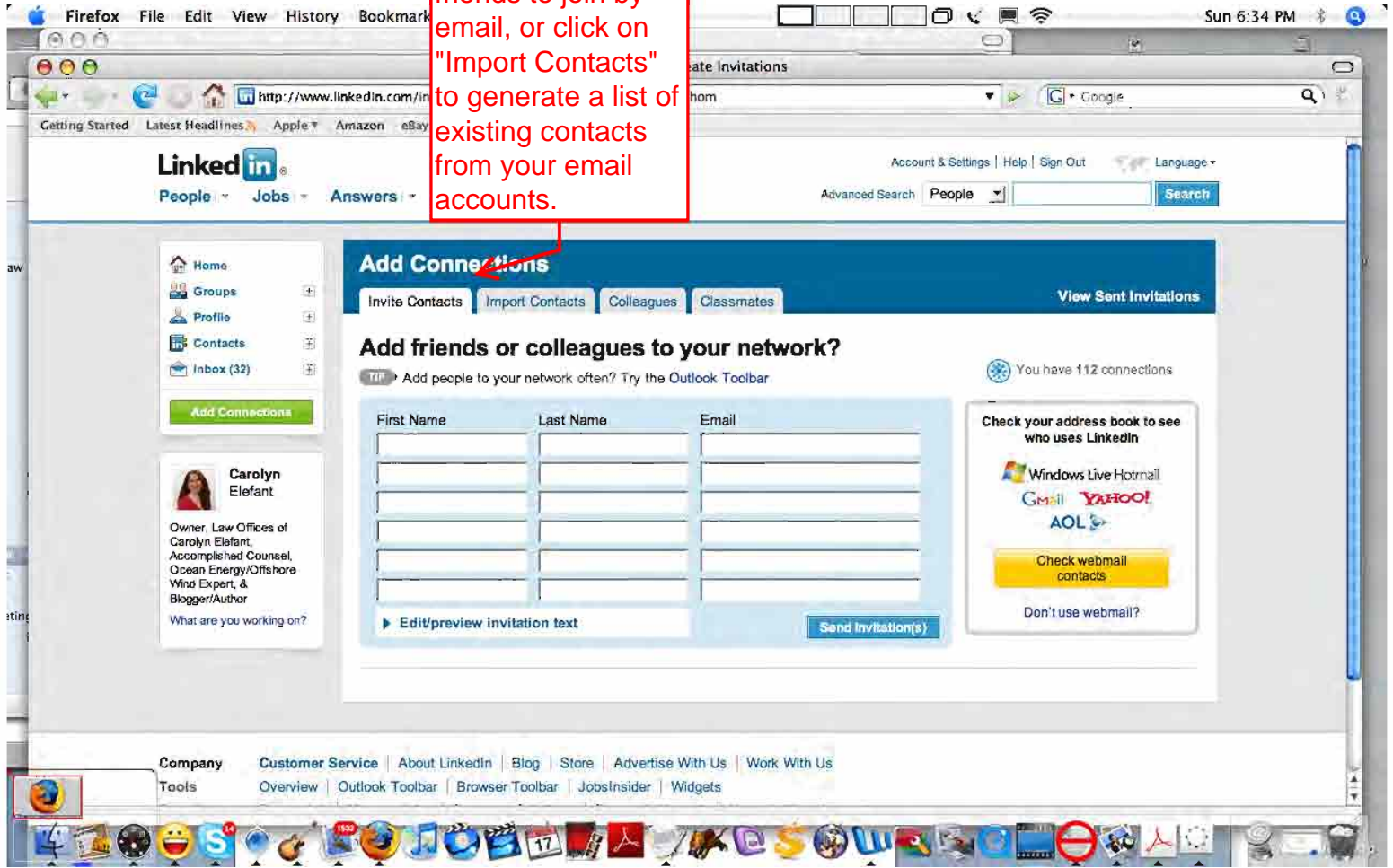
Very important include tag words and keywords in this section of the bio since searches within and outside LinkedIn focus on these terms.

If you hold positions concurrently, you may need to fudge dates to have them appear in desired order in your public bio.

Include undergrad, graduate and law school since Linked In lets users search by school.

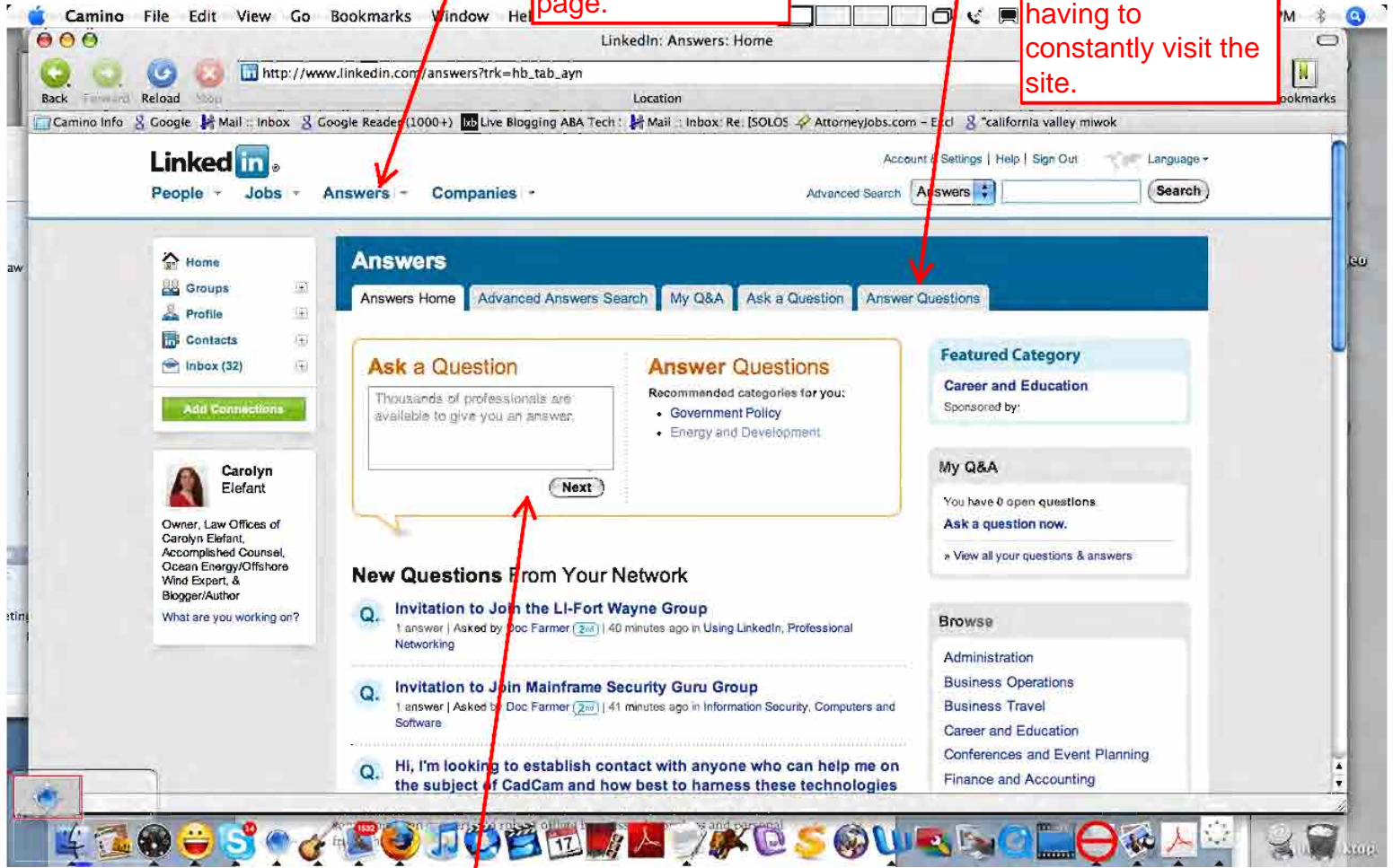


To get to this page, click on the "Add Connections" tool bar. You can invite friends to join by email, or click on "Import Contacts" to generate a list of existing contacts from your email accounts.



The Answers button is on the top menu of each Linked In page and will take you to this page.

This bar lets you choose from categories of questions to answer and to subscribe to the RSS of questions asked rather than having to constantly visit the site.



Use these features to ask questions or answer pre-selected questions based on your profile description.

Camino File Edit View Go Bookmarks Window Help (Charged) Thu 9:49 PM

Carolyn Elefant - detailed lawyer profile with ratings and reviews, bar disciplinary sanctions, law school and legal awards - Avvo.com

http://www.avvo.com/attorneys/20036-dc-carolyn-elefant-888937.html

Back Forward Reload Stop Location Search Bookmarks

Camino Info Google Mail :: Inbox Google Reader (1000+) Live Blogging ABA Tech Mail :: Inbox: Re: [SOLOS AttorneyJobs.com - Excl california valley miwok Carolyn Elefant - deta... Taking Screenshots wL...

**Avvo** Beta  
Ratings. Guidance. The Right Lawyer.

**featured**  
Earn points by answering and become a featured contributor

**Lawyer Search** **Answers** **Legal Guides** **For Lawyers** **Worked with a lawyer? Write a Lawyer Review Profile | Account | Sign out**

**Carolyn Elefant**

**Overview** Experience Recognition About Me Endorsements Reviews **Edit Profile**

**Avvo Rating** **10.0** **Superb**

**Read my personal message**

**Reviews**  
1 review  
Are you a former client? Write a review

**Endorsed by 6 lawyers**  
(See all endorsements)  
Lawyers: Endorse this attorney.

**Return to search results**  
**Start new search**  
**Add to your list**

**View lawyer's profile**  
**Display this Avvo Rating on your website**

**Recent Changes**  
about 21 hours ago  
You were endorsed by D. Todd Smith.  
1 day ago  
You were endorsed by John Peter Page.

**Experience** ●●●●●  
**Industry Recognition** ●●●●●  
**Professional Conduct** ●●●●●

Find out more about the Avvo Rating **Display this Avvo Rating on your website.**

**License & Disciplinary Sanctions**

**20 years** since Carolyn Elefant was first licensed to practice law in NY. See details.

We have not found any disciplinary sanctions for this lawyer.

**Legal Practice Areas**

**Share this profile**

1717 K St Nw Ste 800  
Washington, DC 20036

Camino File Edit View Go Bookmarks Window Help

Carolyn Elefant - detailed lawyer profile with ratings and reviews, bar discipli...


http://www.avvo.com/attorneys/20036-dc-carolyn-elfant-888937/recognition.html

Location Search Bookmarks

Camino Info Google Mail :: Inbox Google Reader (1000+) Live Blogging ABA Tech Mail :: Inbox: Re: SOLOS AttorneyJobs.com - Excl california valley miwok Carolyn Elefant - detal... Taking Screenshots wi...


Overview Experience Recognition About Me Endorsements Reviews Edit Profile

Read my personal message



Share this profile

1717 K St Nw Ste 600  
Washington, DC 20036



See larger map and get driving directions

**Awards**

Award Name	Granting Organization	Date
Featured on cover of Washington Legal Times	Washington Legal Times/ALM publications	2008
ABA Top 100 Law Blawg	American Bar Association	2007
Ocean Energy Pioneer Award	Energy Oceans Conference	2007
Featured In Maryland Daily Record	Maryland Daily Record	2007
Featured In ABA Journal on small law practice	American Bar Association	2004

[See all 7 awards](#)

**Associations**

Position	Association Name	Duration
Law Practice Management Steering Committee	DC Bar	2006-2008
of counsel	Ocean Renewable Energy Association	2005-2008
Member	Energy Bar Association	1994-2008

**Publications**

Article	Publication	Date
Solo by Choice - book	Solo by Choice: How to Be The Lawyer You Always Wanted To Be	2008
<a href="#">The Accidental Practice</a>	Small Firm Business	2006
Don't Copy That Brief (can legal briefs be copyrighted?)	Legal Times Intellectual Property Magazine	2001
<a href="#">How Much Should You...?</a>	Washington Legal Times	2001

Return to search results  
Start new search  
Add to your list

Carolyn Elefant  
Avvo Rating  
10.0/10  
Superb

View lawyer's profile  
Display this Avvo Rating on your website

**Recent Changes**  
about 21 hours ago

- You were endorsed by D. Todd Smith.

1 day ago

- You were endorsed by John Peter Page.

2 days ago

- You were endorsed by Dennis Andrew Chert.
- You endorsed David J. Abeshouse.
- You endorsed Lisa Michelle Solomon.

Your Network includes lawyers that have endorsed you or that you have endorsed.

Add this feed to your RSS

Camino File Edit View Go Bookmarks Window Help

JD Supra Profile: Carolyn Elefant - Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant - Washington,...

http://www.jdsupra.com/profile/carolynelefant

Back Forward Reload Stop

Location Search

Camino Info Google Mail :: Inbox Google Reader (1000+) Live Blogging ABA Tech Mail :: Inbox: Re: SOLOS AttorneyJobs.com - Excl \*california valley miwok

JD Supra Profile: Carol... Taking Screenshots wi...

carolyn.elefa Available


Friends

bruce\_israe

HOME SEARCH DOCUMENTS POST DOCUMENTS HOT DOCS PROFILES RESOURCES

Email This Report Problem Print-Friendly SHARE

## Carolyn Elefant



**Carolyn Elefant, Principal Attorney**  
**Law Offices of Carolyn Elefant**  
 1629 K Street N.W. Ste. 300  
 Washington, DC 20036, United States

202-297-6100  
 305-675-8075  
 Email: *currently unlisted*  
 Website: *currently unlisted*

Profile Documents

**AREAS OF PRACTICE**

- Administrative Law
- Appellate Practice
- Civil Rights
- Energy & Utilities
- Litigation

**LATEST POSTED DOCS**

[Testimony on HR 545Z- CZMA - OREC testimony](#)

**Practice/Organization Description**  
 Energy regulatory, appellate, civil rights and litigation


**Bar Admissions**  
 New York, Maryland, Washington D.C.

**Education**  
 Brandeis University, BA 1985; Cornell Law School JD 1988

**Professional Associations & Memberships**  
 Energy Bar Association, Ocean Renewable Energy Coalition,

THIS PROFILE MAY CONSTITUTE ATTORNEY ADVERTISING. PRIOR RESULTS DO NOT GUARANTEE A SIMILAR OUTCOME. ANY CORRESPONDENCE WITH THIS PROFILE HOLDER DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CLIENT/ATTORNEY RELATIONSHIP. NEITHER THE CONTENT ON THIS PROFILE NOR TRANSMISSIONS BETWEEN YOU AND THE

Transferring data from s7.addthis.com...



Camino File Edit View Go Bookmarks Window Help

Caroyn Elefant - docstoc

http://www.docstoc.com/profile/carolynelefant

docstoc BETA find and share professional documents

carolynelefant | logout settings | (10) inbox

home profile docsters request blogs upload search all docs search

all docs legal business financial technology educational creative BUZZ

my blog

FERC Fights

rate: 0

posted: 4/1/2008

tags: Carolyn Elefant, ferc, appeals

my documents

my documents

downloaded

uploaded

fulfilled requests

carolynelefant

Update profile profile completeness 95%

name: Carolyn Elefant

title: Principal Attorney

occupation: lawyer

company: LOCE

web address: www.fercfights.com

Industry: Renewables & Environment

Undergraduate: Brandeis University - Politics (1985)

Graduate: Cornell Law School - JD (1988)

city: Washington D.C.

postal code: 20036

country: United States

gender: Female

date joined: 3/24/2008

my profile stats

rank: na (view ranks)

docs: 19

views: 1833

download: 4

my docs rating: 0 (0)

reviews: 0

profile visits: 349

Add LinkedIn Profile

Add Facebook Profile

search my docs: [input] go

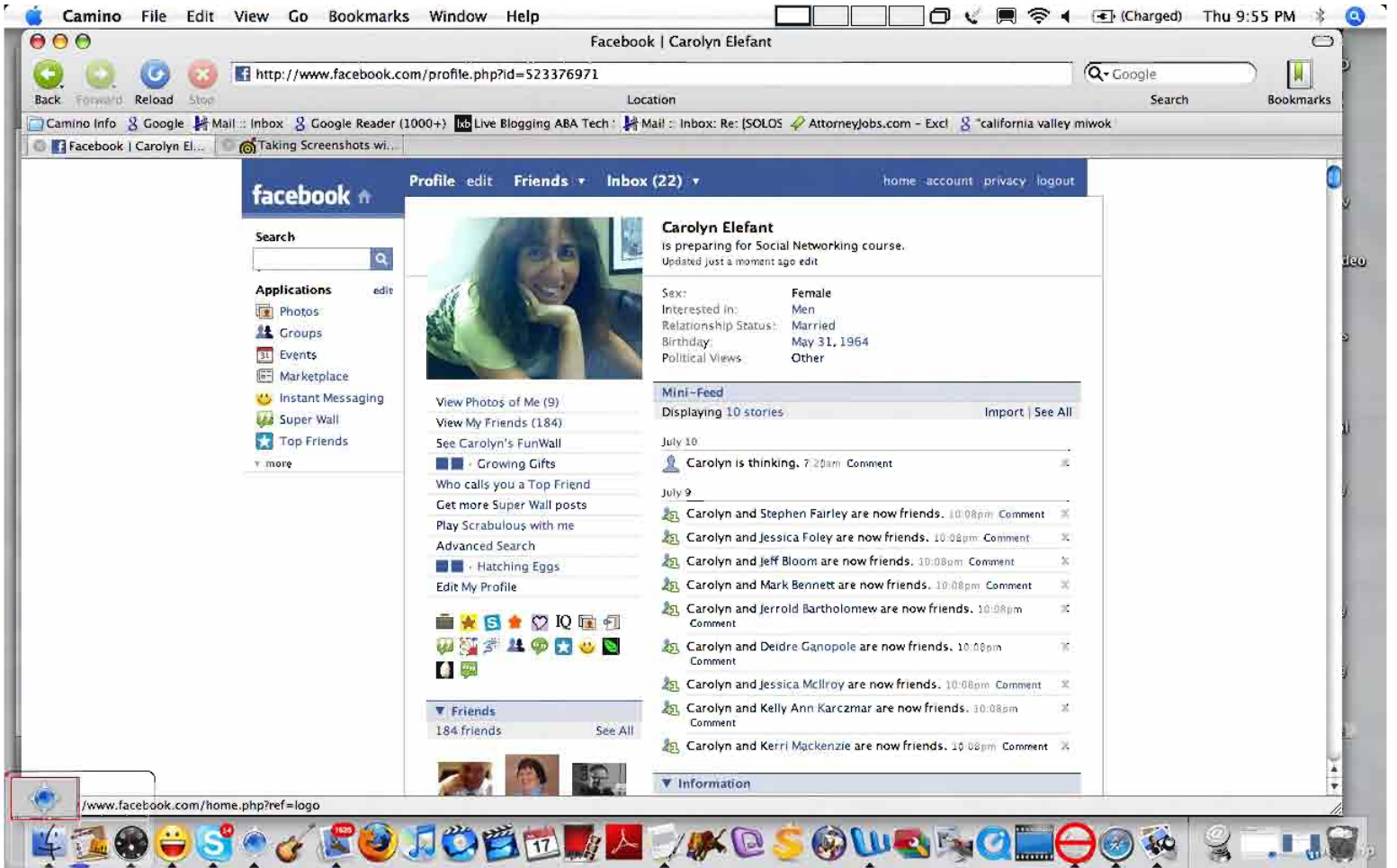
Prev 1 / 3 Next

morganstanley

shared by: carolynelefant on 07/11/2008 | rated: 0 | views: 33 | downloads: 0 | comments: 0

Categories: legal

Private



facebook

Profile edit Friends ▾ Inbox (22) ▾ home account privacy logout

Search

Applications edit

- Photos
- Groups
- Events
- Marketplace
- Instant Messaging
- Super Wall
- Top Friends
- more



Carolyn Elefant

is preparing for Social Networking course. Updated just a moment ago edit

Sex: Female  
 Interested in: Men  
 Relationship Status: Married  
 Birthday: May 31, 1964  
 Political Views: Other

Mini-Feed

Displaying 10 stories Import | See All

July 10

Carolyn is thinking. 7:20am Comment

July 9

Carolyn and Stephen Fairley are now friends. 10:08pm Comment

Carolyn and Jessica Foley are now friends. 10:08pm Comment

Carolyn and Jeff Bloom are now friends. 10:08pm Comment

Carolyn and Mark Bennett are now friends. 10:08pm Comment

Carolyn and Jerrold Bartholomew are now friends. 10:08pm Comment

Carolyn and Deidre Ganopole are now friends. 10:08pm Comment

Carolyn and Jessica McIlroy are now friends. 10:08pm Comment

Carolyn and Kelly Ann Karczmar are now friends. 10:08pm Comment

Carolyn and Kerri Mackenzie are now friends. 10:08pm Comment

Information

Friends 184 friends See All



/www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=logo





