



The Internet is critical in the selection of an attorney.

Word-of-mouth isn't the only way people are finding reputable legal professionals these days. Most clients consider online resources essential in the gathering of information on legal service providers. In fact, a Yahoo! study conducted in April 2008 confirms that **62% of clients use the Internet prior to selecting a lawyer or attorney.** Clients spend an average of 8 hours performing online research to get details about their legal situation and options, and 80% choose their attorney within one week, often out of the need for immediacy.

Yahoo! Study details

- 300 participants
- Sought help from a legal professional within the past 6 months
- Interviews occurred between April - May 2008
- Key findings are highlighted in this report

Search engines play an important role in the attorney-selection process.

Search engines are particularly valuable for this sort of research, as they enable people to find information quickly. Clients are equally as likely to use a search engine in the research process (36%) as they are to use the phone book—representing a shift in the way clients had previously accessed information on attorneys. People using a search engine are highly likely to enter the type of attorney they are seeking, which presents a major opportunity for attorneys of a particular specialty to market their services to potential clients.

Types of Keywords Entered into Search Engines	
Type of attorney or attorney sought	85%
City and/or zip code	57%
General category keywords	37%
Specific business name	23%

Attorney-related searches cover a variety of specialties.

The majority of clients searching for attorneys are interested in someone who specializes in estate and probate, marital related issues, and accidents. For most searchers, it's their first time looking for a legal professional, and they have a limited knowledge of the legal landscape.

Top 10 Specialties Searched For	
Estate and Probate	25%
Child Support/Custody	13%
Auto-Related Accidents	12%
Marriage and Divorce	12%
Real Estate	11%
Bankruptcy	8%
Personal Injury	8%
Business Law	7%
Criminal Law	7%
Traffic Violations	6%

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Websites can improve clients' perceptions and drive business connections.

Business-focused websites present a unique opportunity to educate clients on service offerings—and influence their opinions. Attorneys who have websites improve their clients' perceptions and trust in their services.

Impact a Website Had on Clients	
Improved my perception of the attorney	40%
Increased my trust in the attorney	23%
Answered all of my questions, fully informative	20%
Sealed my decision—I chose the attorney after seeing their site	20%
Was an unappealing site, so I decided against the attorney	10%
Didn't have a site, so I decided against the attorney	10%

Of those clients who visit legal professionals' websites during their research, 70% ultimately choose a provider who has a site. And 67% rely on search engines to find those attorneys' sites in the first place. Additionally, given the large reliance on recommendations in this market, a website acts as a great place to post client reviews and testimonials.

Expanding online presence increases potential for client consideration.

Online users are more likely to contact multiple attorneys—creating a larger consideration set. This not only affects initial client contacts but also future recommendations, which are critical to legal professionals' success.

As the number of Internet users continues to grow, increasing online presence—via a website and/or advertising in search results—will greatly increase attorneys' potential for consideration and future recommendations.

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