



### If This Then That (IFTTT) For Lawyers

By Christopher B. Hopkins

Lawyers love Apple devices and social media. But we're also a bit fearful of our beloved technology. According to a recent Florida Bar study, we are more fixated on "keeping up with new technology" than we are worried about "new developments in law." Most Florida lawyers have an iPhone (63%), many of us have an iPad (42%), and we flock to social media: 50% are on Facebook, nearly 40% on LinkedIn, and 12% are on Twitter (Instagram was frequently written in as "other"). The legal profession's techy-ness sounds efficient, if not fun, but there is a catch: we fret over new technology just as much as we are concerned about meeting our clients' expectations.

This article will introduce you to "If This, Then That," an iPhone app that allows you to get value from your mobile device and social media without "checking in" constantly -- thus reducing your internet-induced stress. The concept of "IFTTT" comes from a line of computer code: IF *this* happens, THEN the app will do *that*. In short, you can have IFTTT monitor the internet and, through a series of triggers, it will take action when something important happens. Someone has tagged you in a Facebook photo? IFTTT will download the photo for you. Is it going to rain tomorrow? It will send you a text. Your favorite law firm or company just listed a job opening on LinkedIn? You'll be the first to know. It can even help you find your lost iPhone. Thus, you spend less time checking multiple internet sites so you can focus your stress back on... client expectations.

IFTTT requires no computer coding or technical know-how. It is controlled through two-step "Recipes" concocted by clicking icons to create your own internet bots. The easiest way to get started is to use other people's Recipes so you can see IFTTT in action. In about five minutes, you will be playfully clicking your way to an automated internet experience.

First, download the app and create an account. Second, you need to permit IFTTT access to your iPhone photos, Gmail, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other services you use (have confidence: IFTTT has been around for years and there has been no major security issues).

In the app, tap the mortar-and-pestle icon to brew up a new Recipe. On the next screen, hit the eyeglasses icon to browse existing Recipes using categories such as featured, trending, and favorites. On the Recipes page, tap the cog wheel in the bottom right corner. The third option, Channels, allows you to tell IFTTT which internet services you use -- these Channels are the ingredients to your Recipes. It may sound confusing, but sign up for a few basics like Date & Time, Email, Facebook, LinkedIn, OpenTable, SMS, and Weather.

Let's start with Facebook. On IFTTT's Recipes page, hit the eyeglasses icon and then tap Search. Type in "Facebook photos" to find Recipes on how to manage Facebook photos. You can "Save Facebook photos you're tagged in to iOS photos" or even save those photos to your Google Drive. Below are more interactive Recipes.

\* Facebook & Twitter: Anything you write on Twitter with the tag "#FB" will be posted on Facebook (or vice versa). Going back to the Florida Bar study, 31% of lawyers use social media for marketing. This Recipe avoids opening multiple accounts to post the same message.

\* Facebook & Twitter #2: Anything you post to either site will be logged in a spreadsheet on Google Drive so you can keep a running log. Again, a good way to track your posts and ad campaigns.

\* Instagram: If [person] posts a new photo, IFTTT will send you an email. If you maintain an Instagram account to monitor your teenager, this Recipe is for you.

\* Instagram #2: If you post a photo to Instagram, it will send also it out on Twitter or Facebook.

\* Save Email Attachments to Google Drive: Set IFTTT to download all email attachments to a folder in Google Drive -- or set the trigger so that IFTTT will save PDF attachments in a folder if you put "#receipts" in title of an email you send to yourself. This is useful during long road trips in order to have your reimbursements organized when you return.

\* Contacts: Your iPhone contacts will be imported to a Google spreadsheet on Google Drive for easy searching and backup.

\* LinkedIn: If [law firm / company] has a new job opening, IFTTT will notify you via email.

\* Weather: If it is going to rain tomorrow in [location], it will send you a text. Or have IFTTT send you the weather report via SMS each morning.

\* Take out the trash: Push a reminder to take out the trash every week at a specific time.

\* Lost phone: If you have lost your phone, send yourself an email with #lostphone in the title. IFTTT will call your phone to help you find it.

\* Open Table: If you make a dinner reservation on Open Table, IFTTT will automatically add it as an appointment on your calendar.

\* Netflix: When Netflix adds new movies, IFTTT can send you an email with the title and description.

\* Foursquare: IFTTT will take your check-ins and log them on a Google spreadsheet on Google Drive.

\* Birthdays: If there is a birthday on your calendar tomorrow, set IFTTT to either send you a reminder. Better still, have IFTTT automatically send a nice birthday message to that person on Facebook.

\* POTUS / Congress: Set IFTTT to email you when the President signs a new law or Congress schedules a vote on a bill.

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