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TechnoFeature: Me and My Briefcase: The Technology I Use as a Girl on the Go

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(This article is a TechnoLawyer Exclusive.)

No Internet at the hotel? No problem! Although not nearly a vacation, traveling for business can feel just as stress-free if you plan ahead for such techno-disasters. In this article, legal technology trainer Adriana Linares shares the contents of her travel bag and how each item keeps her sane while away. Learn traveling tips and tricks from someone always on the go — and always connected. This article contains 1,718 words.

INTRODUCTION

As a contracted trainer, I'm always on the road jetting from one law firm to another. Like the law firms I visit, no two trips are ever the same. And of course, nothing is ever guaranteed. I always pack and prepare fully confident that I am going to (1) lose something, (2) forget something, or (3) not have something I thought I would have (like an Internet connection at my hotel).

GOT MILCK?

I went to college at Stetson University, in the small town of Deland, Florida. We had to drive at least 25 miles to get to a

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"respectable" bar or club. Five or six girls would corral into one car, all dressed up and ready to go. Inevitably and much to the chagrin of the rest, one of them would always forget their money, dorm key, or ID (the fake one, of course) — any of which would cause a problem either on arrival to the club or back at the dorm. Tired of the drama, we came up with an acronym to help everyone remember the critical items needed to assure a trouble-free and fun night: Money, ID, Lipstick, and Keys. No one was allowed into the car without a MILK check. Back then, we didn't carry cell phones, so today I still use that silly acronym but with a tweak to include my ever-important cell phone: MILCK.

Nothing trumps the importance of my cell phone — a Treo 650. Aside from acting as my phone and contact and calendar manager, it also serves as a powerful information provider when traveling. I have listed below some useful travel tools on my Treo. Have a Windows device or a regular cell phone? Many of these tools will work for you too or you should find something comparable on the Internet.

Directory Assistant

This FREE (we love free stuff!) business and residential phone and address look-up tool enables you to dial the number directly from the search results and even add the entry as a permanent contact to your address book (Palm OS Only). [Directory Assistant](#)

Intrepidsoft's Area Code and Country Code Look Up

I have the free demo version and it has never failed in identifying the area code I needed (Palm OS only). [Intrepidsoft's Area Code and Country Code Look Up](#)

Vindigo

A wonderful tool for locating restaurants, bars, movie times, landmarks, and more, Vindigo can look up venues based on your location. For example, you may want to see only Chinese restaurants within walking distance from the corner of Broadway and 50th (Palm and Pocket PC/Windows Mobile). [Vindigo](#)

Air Travel

Many airlines today offer tools that install flight schedules or will send you up-to-the-minute flight alerts. Flight alerts are delivered as text messages to your Treo, Blackberry, or regular phone. Make sure to poke around on their Web sites when you book your travel. Here are a few to take a look at

- [Delta](#)
- [American](#)

- [Continental](#)

PDANet

I also have a program called PDANet that enables me to use my phone as a modem for my laptop. Obviously, this is not an ideal connection but it has certainly saved me when I had no other way to get on the Internet. [PDANet](#)

THE DATE PHONE

I have a second/back up phone that I jokingly refer to as my Date Phone. It's a small flip phone that I use when my Treo is just too bulky to take out. Ladies will certainly understand the need to carry a small handbag to a cocktail party or to the theatre. Well, it's so small, that I throw it into my briefcase as a back up should I lose my Treo or should it ... I can hardly even type it ... should it ... die. Most cell phone service providers offer a family plan or a second phone at a reasonable price. For \$9.99 a month I like the peace of mind it offers.

MORE THAN A MUSIC PLAYER

I have a [30GB iPod](#) that serves as the wingman (wingthing?) to my Treo. Off the shelf, an iPod is configured to work mostly with iTunes, enabling you to synchronize music and videos. But it does so much more. You can use your iPod much like a gigantic floppy disk (remember those?) to carry all your files around with you. Did you know that you can also use your iPod to store your calendar and contacts from Outlook? Yes, I most certainly use my iPod to listen to music and to watch videos. But I also use it to carry all the files from My Documents and to synchronize Outlook calendar and contacts (good news when I leave that Treo in the pocket of the seat in front of me). Below you'll find some resources that will help you make the most of your iPod:

- [Use your iPod as a storage device.](#)
- [Sync Outlook contacts to iPod with iTunes for Windows.](#)
- [Sync Outlook calendar to iPod with iTunes for Windows.](#)

Keep a couple of things in mind: you don't need to buy any third-party tools to accomplish any of the tasks listed above and iPods are a one way street. They only sync information from your computer to the iPod. You cannot add information directly to the iPod and then expect to send it back to your computer.

LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS AND TAKE ONLY PICTURES

Although more for fun than for business, I always bring my camera along. I recently bought a new camera with two main features in mind. First, I wanted one powered by regular AA batteries as opposed to one that required a charger or a cradle. It's less to carry and I can always buy AA batteries anywhere. Second, I wanted one with a standard memory card that I could

pop into a card-reader, my laptop, and especially into my Treo.

I opted for the [Samsung Digimax A503](#) — it had everything I wanted and didn't cost much — \$125. It has many cool features and capabilities like on-camera cropping, light filters, and some really entertaining "fun frames." I can take the SD card out, pop it into my Treo and e-mail pictures right away. Imagine going on a site visit and being able to send your secretary the pictures back instantly without a laptop.

THE LONG HAUL

For longer trips — where I just can't do it all with my Treo. I lug a laptop with me. I have two — an older but still amazing [IBM ThinkPad](#) and a small [Acer TravelMate](#). I usually take the tablet with me because it's small, light, and easy to tote around. Although it lacks a CD/DVD drive, which keeps it so small and lightweight, I haven't really found that to cause a problem. I can always watch movies on my iPod and use either the iPod or a thumb drive to move files around. [Thumb drives](#) (a.k.a. flash drives, jump drives) are so cheap and so small these days that I always have at least four scattered around my luggage.

INTERNET CONNECTION ANYONE?

One of the best things I ever purchased is a [Netgear portable wireless router](#). Although I cannot think of the last time I was in a hotel without high-speed Internet I can tell you the last time that connection was wireless: never. Sometimes I like to sit on the bed or in the armchair as opposed to the desk. This used to require bringing an extra long Ethernet cable (which I still do for back up). With this router, that's no longer an issue. The wireless router is small and easy to use — it enables me to roam out to my balcony or luxuriate in the tub while still being able to tap away on my laptop. It also comes in handy during board meetings. I was in a hotel conference room last week with ten others. Rather than each of us paying the \$9.95 for a connection, only one of us did, then we used my router to give everyone else access.

BAR SOAP AND WIRES

Bar soap — especially in a public place — really frightens me. I do not like bar soap. So I carry a bottle of Purell Hand Sanitizer in my Prada. Another thing I do not like and especially do not like to carry around are cables, connectors, and wires. All of the tech toys I've mentioned above require power sources. Enter the [Igo Everywhere Power Adapter](#). They make an all-in-one power source that works with various devices by way of their special adapter tips. For example, if you own a Treo 650, you would purchase the [Igo Tip A43](#) but if you have a Blackberry you need the [Igo Tip A29](#) and if you have an iPod, you need the [Igo Tip A61](#).

DRESSING UP AND DRESSING DOWN

So, where does it all go and how do you make it look good? Get rid of that briefcase your father used to carry and lose the ugly silicon case for your

iPod. Find a funky, chic, and cool laptop bag on this [Squidoo site](#) or get something just as cool for your iPod [here](#).

Having little to do with technology but everything to do with being a germophobe, I feel obligated to tell you what I sleep in. Like bar soap, hotel beds scare me. So I travel with and sleep in my [DreamSack](#). It's a silk sleeping bag that provides what I call The Germ Barrier between me and the foreign sheets. I don't sleep without it (and yes, they make an extra large one for two!).

CONCLUSION: THE END OF THE ROAD

Going on the road these days can certainly seem like a hassle. But if you plan ahead, not only can you have a successful trip, but you can travel light and keep yourself entertained with all of today's powerful pocket-sized gadgets.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adriana Linares of [LawTech Partners](#) is a legal technology trainer based in Orlando, Florida. Adriana spent many years in the technology departments of two of Florida's largest law firms. She was charged with establishing firm-wide training programs and leading technology initiatives. Today, Adriana travels the country delivering "tech therapy" sessions to firms of all shapes and sizes. Using her practical and personal approach to technology she helps law offices make the most of their technology investments. Throughout the year, she can be found speaking at conferences on topics such as successful training techniques, law office software, mobility, and gadgets. She writes regularly for leading legal magazines and Web sites and hosts an advice column on her blog, [I Heart Tech](#).

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