

## Connecting real-time with Queen's Park

**Addison Cameron-Huff, Law '12**  
ontariomonitor.ca

## OntarioMonitor



Addison Cameron-Huff was sitting in his Securities Regulation course at Queen's one day when the idea for his online business came to him. "One of my instructors, Vanessa Grant (Law '95, a partner at McCarthy Tetrault LLP), was talking about the difficulty of finding out about changes in legislation that affect your practice. I investigated and discovered there was, in fact, no way of getting alerts when laws and regulations were changed."

So, in his third year of law school, he started an online political portal, **ontariomonitor.ca**, that tracks political processes at the Ontario legislature. "Clients choose key words, and whenever those words are mentioned in Hansard, new bills, regulations, the environment registry or new proclamations, they get an email alert within a few minutes of it going public."

It pays off. He cites one client who'd been dealing with a ministry issue for several months and had a meeting coming up. "An hour before the gathering, the ministry published the regulation the firm had been following. So they got the Monitor alert on their BlackBerry and were on top of the meeting."

Like Brian Hunt, Cameron-Huff had already established himself as a technowizard before studying law. In 2008, he worked on Ralph Nader's presidential campaign, creating a fundraising platform credited with tripling online donations. He'd won four programming competitions for building a web service from scratch in 24 hours. Even his articles had a techno-flair. His articling job included a secondment to Research in Motion as one of RIM's first articling students.

Originally his website was created for the legal profession, but Cameron-Huff says trade associations and unions are now his main customers. That's because his legal education helped him determine which aspects to include in the website, he says. "You have to understand the laws to determine which information is useful."

He, too, cites Professor Art Cockfield, for whom he has built a website, as "great to bounce ideas off." Right now, he owns Summerhill Design, a web development portfolio site, and plans to start his own law firm. "I'm going to practise technology law, contracts, privacy, online defamation, anything with a technology angle to it."

## Two sites link lawyers and potential clients

Both Jeff Fung and Shane Coblin felt they could best help the legal profession and the public by developing websites that connected the two. Fung's site offers a unique way for clients to find lawyers, while Coblin's acts as matchmaker for the two.

**Jeff Fung, Law '08**  
mylawbid.com

Anyone who's ever complained about the cost of hiring a lawyer is going to enjoy logging onto MyLawBid.com. Founder Jeffrey Fung first stumbled upon the idea when he and his wife, Vanessa Lam, Law '08, were planning to buy a condominium. Realizing none of their friends practised real estate law, they resorted to online searches and friends' referrals. Now his site offers potential clients not only a place to locate a lawyer, but also a chance to have lawyers bid for their business.

As Fung explains, "People can put their legal issue out there and have lawyers compete to handle it. Ideally, connecting on this platform saves *both* users time and money."

His Queen's experience deserves some credit, he says. During his term as LSS President in 2007-08, it was proposing to the University Senate that the LLB degree designation be changed to JD that helped ignite his initiative and leadership. "In launching MyLawBid, I had to bring together different stakeholders in the legal industry to make it happen."

The site, launched in 2011, gives lawyers different membership levels. On average there are 4,500 visits a month to the website. "For a niche website like this in Canada, I think that's a lot."

Some lawyers have reservations, Fung admits, "feeling people may not understand the value behind legal services and why lawyers' rates vary. My response: If you charge for premium legal services you need to explain to people why you're better."

Overall, though, he says his site is making both clients and lawyers happy.