

# Five tips to help you create clearer, smarter text-tables in Word (full-size table on next page)

This page shows a miniature, annotated version of the finished table. For more details:

- watch a video on how to create and format this table (click the first link below)
- see the full-sized table on the next page (same table but with no annotation).

You can create and format a table like this in two ways:

- **Manually:** You'll find a very detailed (15 minute) video tutorial here (print this file out first):

<http://www.onethreefour.co.uk/2009/02/08/text-table-tip/>

- **With a bespoke Word template:** Much easier as all the twiddly bits of formatting are done for you. It only takes a few minutes to create a table like this with an automated Word template.

Find out more about bespoke automated Word-templates here:

<http://www.onethreefour.co.uk/formats-and-tools/>

**1 Remove all vertical rules**

Word's default table-style will give your table vertical *and* horizontal rules.

This chops the table into little boxes, so you can't easily tell whether to read down or across. Kill vertical rules.

**2 Use bold-text headings in the left column**

Western people read from left to right, so start each row with a subheading to show what the row-topic is.

**3 Tints: pale for column headings, dark for dividers**

Not every table needs to be broken down into sections, but it's a useful technique.

Use pale tints, or no tints at all, for column headings. Then dark tints for divider-rows will stand out (at least 50% black with white text).

**4 Rules that sub-divide a row don't go all the way**

You may need to divide a row to show two sub-topics.

Use a rule as shown, and:  
– stop rule at second column ('merge cells' in table toolbar)  
– use a paler/thinner rule.

**5 Give your table a headline (not a label) and an intro**

A *label* would say 'concerns with blog project'. The *headline* tells you what the message of the table is.

An intro won't always work, but they'll help you get your message across.

Blog project for employment team

**Five practical concerns that are easy to address**

Fee-earners' and knowledge lawyers' main concerns are with the practicalities of launching and maintaining the site.

Project issue	Details	Solution
<b>Concerns with the very idea of a blog site</b>		
<b>1. Concerns that website won't be secure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that an external website won't be secure...</li> <li>• ...and that IT may veto the project</li> <li>• Concern that anyone can leave a comment for all the world to see.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only have content on site that you would, or have, put on the public site</li> <li>• Keep 'comments' function on blog-posts turned off, show a 'send a comment' email-link instead</li> <li>• Nuclear option: if IT make a really big fuss we can host blog site at secure-hosting firm (adds circa £7K p.a.)</li> </ul>
<b>Concerns with practicalities of developing and launching blog site</b>		
<b>2. Time required to learn new software</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lawyers always reluctant to learn new software</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give two or three lawyers a go on the site software...</li> <li>• ...film and screen-record the meeting and show recording to doubters</li> </ul>
<b>3. Volume of content required to launch a convincing site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received wisdom that sites need a critical-mass of content in order to launch...</li> <li>• ...Concern that it will take a lot of effort to create a lot of new content for launch of the blog site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider a train-a-trainer approach</li> <li>• Get blog-firm to make a set of video tutorials and put on intranet</li> <li>• Create mock-up to show how much of current content can be used on new site</li> <li>• Cost option of getting third-party to do cut-and-paste work to move content to new site</li> </ul>
<b>4. Design/layout mock-ups on previous projects were confusing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mock-ups need real copy or people can't understand them</li> <li>• On previous projects designers have shown Latin text mock-ups...</li> <li>• ...it always prompts jokes and causes confusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only use real-text in all mock-ups</li> <li>• Use recent content wherever possible</li> </ul>
<b>Concerns that maintaining the blog site will be a lot of work</b>		
<b>5. Risk that there won't be enough blog updates (a 'tumbleweed' site)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that blog site will need a lot of maintenance.</li> <li>• One team member very vocal that site will need to be updated every day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show that many legal and accounting sites are only updated every week or so...</li> <li>• ...remind team that clients are busy (they won't check the blog every day)</li> </ul>



# Full-size version of text-table on the previous page

This text-table\* sets out the common concerns that law firms have about blog-site projects, and the solutions to those concerns (see the right-hand column).

\*We put this table together as part of a tutorial on Word text-tables. You'll find the video tutorial here: <http://www.onethreefour.co.uk/2009/02/08/text-table-tip/>

Blog project for employment team

## Five practical concerns with law firm blog-sites: all are easy to address

Project issue	Details	Solution
<b>Concerns with the very idea of a blog site</b>		
<b>1. Blog-site won't be secure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that an external website won't be secure...</li> <li>• ...and that IT may veto the project.</li> <li>• Concern that anyone can leave a comment for all the world to see.</li> </ul>	<p>Blog-sites are no more or less secure than the firm's public site, so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only have content on site that you would, or have, put on the public site.</li> <li>• Keep 'comments' function on blog-posts turned off, show a 'send a comment' email-link instead.</li> <li>• Nuclear option: if IT make a really big fuss we can host blog site at secure-hosting firm (adds circa £7K p.a.).</li> </ul>
<b>Concerns with practicalities of developing and launching blog site</b>		
<b>2. Time required to learn new software</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lawyers always reluctant to learn new software.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firm does not have right skills in-house to do training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give two or three lawyers a go on the site software...</li> <li>• ...film and screen-record the meeting and show recording to doubters.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider a train-a-trainer approach.</li> <li>• Get blog-firm to make a set of video tutorials and put on intranet.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Volume of content required to launch a convincing site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received wisdom that sites need a critical-mass of content in order to launch...</li> <li>• ...Concern that it will take a lot of effort to create a lot of new content for launch of the blog site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create mock-up to show how much of current content can be used on new site.</li> <li>• Cost option of getting third-party to do cut-and-paste work to move content to new site.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Design/layout mock-ups on previous projects were confusing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mock-ups need real copy or people can't understand them.</li> <li>• On previous projects designers have shown Latin text mock-ups...</li> <li>• ...it always prompts jokes and causes confusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only use real-text in all mock-ups.</li> <li>• Use recent content wherever possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Concerns that maintaining the blog site will be a lot of work</b>		
<b>5. Risk that there won't be enough blog updates (a 'tumbleweed' site)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that blog site will need a lot of maintenance.</li> <li>• One team member very vocal that site will need to be updated every day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show that some legal and accounting sites are only updated every week or so...</li> <li>• ...remind team that clients are busy (they won't check the blog every day).</li> </ul>