Meta's Threads: A Primer for Lawyers

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Threads—a new offering from Meta—has recently surged in the social media realm. With over 100 million users already signed up (and counting!), Threads has surpassed ChatGPT as the fastest-growing online platform and emerged as a Twitter rival.

As many lawyers know, social media provides enormous potential for law firms seeking to expand their online presence. Below, we'll explain how Threads works and how law firms can leverage this new platform to further their online impact.

What is Meta's Threads?

Meta's Threads launched in the UK on July 6, 2023, allowing Instagram users to share text-driven updates and communicate with other users.

This new platform sounds similar to Twitter, right? So, what sets the two apart?

The most apparent difference is the character limits. On Twitter, your posts are limited to 280 characters or less, after which you'll need to post successive comments. On Threads, the character limit is 500 characters.

Threads accounts also connect to users' existing Instagram accounts (for example, if you already have an Instagram account, there is no need to create a new Threads account). In contrast, Twitter requires that new users create a Twitter account prior to posting Tweets. To that end, joining Threads is a relatively straightforward process—and it is even easier if you or your firm are already using Instagram.

Other differences between Threads and Twitter currently include:

- Free verification system (users do not have to pay for "Verified" status on Threads)
- No paywalls (on Twitter, you'll have to pay to access certain features)
- Posting content (Threads users can attach up to 10 photos or videos to their posts, while Twitter users are limited to four items per post)

Remember that Threads is currently in its "initial" version, meaning that more features—and changes—are likely in progress.

Meta's Threads vs. Twitter

Threads arrives at a compelling time—namely, after Twitter owner Elon Musk's announcement that unverified accounts would be limited to reading 600 Tweets per day. This announcement follows a tumultuous period for the microblogging app, due to ongoing concerns regarding Twitter's ownership and the future of the platform.

Twitter has acknowledged Meta's Threads—and responded by threatening to bring litigation against Meta for misappropriating trade secrets and intellectual property. While we are yet to see the outcome of this potential litigation, it seems that the new app's popularity is ruffling Twitter's feathers.

Why lawyers should take note of Meta's Threads

Like any emerging social media platform or tool, expanding your law firm's social media presence can help educate the public about what your firm offers and generate client interest to your firm. With an increasing number of prospective clients looking for law firms online, having a strong social media presence as part of your firm's marketing plan can help expand your reach with clients.

Also, it never hurts to get ahead of the pack. If you're in the UK, by joining Threads now (via Instagram), you can claim your username and ensure others don't get to it first (especially if you want to market your firm with a more competitive handle, such as, "[name of city]lawyer").

And, if you're already on Instagram, you can easily transfer your Instagram username and profile details so your username stays consistent across different platforms.

Regardless of the extent to which you end up using the platform, view this simple step as an investment in your future social media strategy.

Getting started with Meta's Threads—for lawyers

If you are a UK user and you are already using Instagram, you can easily get started with Threads with a click. All you have to do is log in to Instagram. From there, you can choose to follow your Instagram contacts, find other accounts to follow, and start posting Threads!

What can lawyers use Meta's Threads for?

Much like Twitter for lawyers, Threads offers lawyers a great opportunity to engage with fellow legal professionals and promote their services. On this microblogging platform, lawyers can:

- Increase their firm's online presence;
- Stay updated on the latest legal news; and
- Connect with and learn from other legal professionals.

Is Meta's Threads available in the EU?

It's worth highlighting that although Threads is now available for users in more than 100 countries—including the UK—there are some significant exceptions.

While Threads officially launched for UK users on July 6, 2023, the app is currently unavailable in the European Union, which has stringent regulatory and privacy policies in place (such as the EU's Digital Markets Act) that Threads may not yet comply with.

Social Media and ethics for Lawyers

While all types of businesses—including law firms—benefit from social media marketing, lawyers must remain mindful of their ethical obligations and the specific considerations applicable to their use of social media. Be sure to know and abide by any and all relevant rules and professional standards regarding social media use that apply to you and your jurisdiction.

First and foremost, ensure that you position yourself carefully. You should actively avoid posting any information that others could interpret as legal guidance (or take the initiative to add a disclaimer in your public profile or Threads, explicitly stating that your posts should not be interpreted as legal counsel). Guide anyone who contacts you (whether current or prospective clients) to appropriate channels for their legal questions. By doing this, you can actively prevent communication loss and prevent prospective clients from misunderstanding the nature of your relationship.

Lastly—and this is a given—do not share anything on social media that could breach your obligations regarding client confidentiality.

Developing a comprehensive law firm social media policy can help firms define their expectations regarding responsible social media usage.

Conclusions on Meta's Threads

Is Threads the next game-changer for your law firm's social media strategy? With over 100 million subscribers in less than one week of launching, this new social media platform seems poised to make an impact on the social media world and rival Twitter's well-established hold on microblogging.

Venturing into new social media territory can be overwhelming—especially when you already have enough on your plate! However, joining new social media platforms requires minimal effort and can yield results in terms of increasing your firm's visibility when used responsibly.

Social media provides endless opportunities to publish pertinent, engaging, and valuable content from your law firm. Furthermore, by establishing your firm on new social media platforms, you never know who you may attract to your firm.

However, as with any social media platform, it's crucial to remember your obligations to the profession and your clients as you work to ensure a positive online reputation for your firm. If you haven't already done so, consider creating a law firm social media policy to ensure your team is in agreement regarding appropriate social media conduct.

Also, take into account that Meta's Threads is not available in the EU currently, which has strict regulatory policies that Threads may not yet be meeting. And, as mentioned above, the threat of impending litigation between Twitter and Threads could have implications for the platform in the future.

Ultimately, social media is a valuable resource for lawyers—but a strong website is the foundation of any firm's marketing strategy. And, with Clio Grow's Website builder, it's never been easier to establish a polished and professional website.

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