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## THE WEB'S RATE-A-LAWYER



Finding and vetting a good lawyer can be a challenge. To make the process more consumer-friendly, Mark Britton, a former general counsel at Expedia.com, is trying to tear a page from the travel Web site's playbook in creating his year-old site, *avvo.com*. *Avvo* (from the Italian word for lawyer, *avvocato*) rates lawyers on a scale from 1 to 10 by scrutinizing their professional and disciplinary histories. The free service uses that data to create profiles that can include client reviews and peer endorsements.

Britton, a lawyer for 16 years—he rates an 8.2 on the site—hopes to offer more transparency and better guidance than

a popular resource for many consumers: the Yellow Pages. For the growing number of Americans grappling with foreclosures, bankruptcies, and other legal woes, *Avvo* has a forum where consumers can anonymously ask legal questions and get personalized answers from real lawyers (though without attorney-client privilege).

So far, *Avvo* profiles lawyers in only 18 mostly large states and the District of Columbia. And a good number of listings may be too bare-bones to be much help.

Even so, the site has already ruffled a few feathers. Days after it launched, a listed lawyer filed a suit challenging the rating system. The judge threw out the case. —*Tara Kalwarski*