

Legal Tech Link

Connecting the Legal Technology Ecosystem

David Curle, Director, Market Intelligence, Thomson Reuters | Roland Vogl, Executive Director, The Stanford Center for Legal Informatics

Interview: Alex Smith on a product development approach to legal innovation Innovation Manager and Head of Innovation Hub, Reed Smith

Alex Smith heads up a physical and virtual program of client-centric idea-generation and rethinking of legal service design at global law firm Reed Smith. Based in London, he manages activities in the Innovation Hub, Reed Smith's unique space for co-creation with clients using service design and innovation techniques. He then looks at using this insight to generate new concepts for changes to delivery of legal services, new legal products, and delivery of more collaborative experiences leveraging Reed Smith's legal and business services resources. Alex has two decades of experience interacting with lawyers in law firms and in-house teams to design new products and technologies, primarily as Innovation & New Product Lead at LexisNexis®.



Legal Tech Link met with Alex Smith in conjunction with the [Legal Geek Conference](#) in London, where he spoke of the importance of using blended solutions and finding best-in-breed solutions for each legal task.

You have a product development background from your time at LexisNexis. How does that inform your work now?

At LexisNexis, I started in content and then I moved over to product development and worked on new product development and platform innovations. We were always tied to user needs, so I carried out our customer discovery program there, with a few other peers. So we did thousands of interviews. GCs, judges, lawyers, global to solo law firms in the UK, and liaised with a global programme.

Reed Smith had a new kind of role available. They were asking, "What does innovation mean? We need to spend more time with our clients. We need to make it about co-creation and understanding, rather than necessarily about tech."

So how does that product development perspective work across a law firm?

You can't just walk in from a LexisNexis or a Thomson Reuters and say, "You have to run the business with product managers, and you have to run it agile, and you're going to need this." Because that language just doesn't necessarily resonate in a law firm. So a lot of this year I've been finding my way around the firm, finding the dynamic with key influencers and a lot of stakeholder management. But also selling the approach and running proof of concepts. So running proof of concepts on service design by getting one or two clients and actually then showing the benefit, and getting the client to talk about how they enjoyed the experience and how that's helped understand themselves or drive opportunities, or whatever it might be that comes out of it.

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Interview, continued ...

I don't see innovation as technology. You can hook people with different strands of what you're doing around innovation. Service improvement doesn't necessarily need to involve technology. So if you're looking at a service improvement area, and that matters to the partner or whoever in that team, that's what they get. If it's about a partner who's really into client engagement and is a massive relationship person with the client, adding to that relationship's key. If you're on the technology side, there are people who are obviously interested in technology and areas where they need to use technology for certain things, so we engage people there.

We've done two or three services design pieces with clients. So these are clients looking at their legal operations and efficiency, and just spent time with them going through the basics of services design. Mapping things out, understanding their strategy, understanding how they work with their stakeholders, and facilitate that conversation. We give them pointers on how to utilize certain technologies that we are very embedded with, such as collaboration and document automation tools, etc. And we tell them, "Well, don't let this fail, like most of these things have, because you get things wrong at the start. Here are the lessons learned, and how to go, and let's look at your process."

Another learning for me has been that, if you're in a global law firm, different things matter in different jurisdictions. It's all contextual to the situation. We might think in the UK – because it's quite mature and we've been at this whole efficiency thing for a while – "Document automation's boring" or "Maybe let's just do it. Everyone does it. It's part of what we do." But if you go to another market that's never been disrupted by that approach, you suddenly see, "Well actually, that's quite innovative in that market." And so you have to adapt to the different jurisdictions we deal with – I deal with people in the Far East, and obviously the U.S. In the U.S., I had to understand litigation and what's going on in litigation, which I'd probably not done when I was at Lexis. So you just learn a lot and you kind of have to put it in context because you can't just come out with an edict saying, "This is cool technology and this is not cool technology."

Where do you think the biggest returns are for your efforts?

How does the firm find the value in what you do?

There's a lot of things that need to be done to make the entire client experience better. And so a lot of the work that our practice innovation team has done for a long, long time is trying to make the whole process with our clients slick, and use things like automation and collaboration to really improve the experience. (See the [Legal Executive Institute's interview](#) with Reed Smith's Director of Practice Innovation, David Pulice.) So to me, that's the most important thing to get right, because then what a place like this offers is great legal advice and all those things which can't be underestimated. Especially given the kind of client base and what they do. So I'd say that's the main concentration.

I think what we're getting to by bringing in a product-management-based approach – we use the business model canvas to look at all the aspects that come to making a product – is that at a certain point we will be able to say what's the value of the new things that come on. So whether they become part of how do we deliver legal service, or they are add-ons, we will make calls on what those are and spend more time understanding the value of those ideas. Especially in the UK market, there are a lot of value-adds added to the service delivery. So because we're taking the product approach, we will identify those opportunities and then we will look at how we deliver those.

How has your approach to evaluating technologies or working with outside tech providers changed?

Well, since I worked on the other side, on the vendor side, I understand the dynamics. So I understand what's going on with a legal tech start-up, but I also know that larger players are doing a lot of experiments which are very, very interesting. They aren't just throwing products out and going, "Here's something new," because they're part of their product development piece. So what I've been doing is looking at the use cases that we have, and then thinking what technology would I need to solve that. And also then spending a lot of time with both start-ups and the major players, asking "Well, what's your road map? What's coming? Because I need to solve this." And then I consider, well, how do these things fit together?

And then it's not just me; Lucy Dillon [Reed Smith's Chief Knowledge Officer] has championed AI and document analysis for many years before me, and run pilots before I joined. Our development team are amazing. We have a data scientist who's a Ph.D. in AI stuff. So he does stuff. We've got the practice innovation team under David Pulice, that has been around for a long time and is very, very established in that legal engineering side. So it's not just me. When we evaluate something they are all involved; we have the practice innovation team who are delivering a service, we have the tech guys who are pulling it to pieces, we have Lucy who's looking at what tools do we need to have to develop the knowledge and process-based strategy.

Being on the other side now – I call it poacher turned gamekeeper – I know how things are going and realize that what this start-up over here is doing is probably being developed somewhere else. We can say "Let's play the long game," because ultimately if we go with the software and we want to embed it globally, it's not just going to be switched on overnight. There's a lot of stuff to work through. And that includes adoption; how do we train? How do we adopt messaging in a large organization? As I knew from being back in the corporate life, it's difficult. And it's all about change management.

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What is your approach to that change management piece? Because it seems to be a pretty big hurdle in this industry.

I know this from doing the customer discovery back at LexisNexis, and seeing lots of different law firms: Implementations can often be quite bad. And so the user experience remains, to me, the thing that will make people use things. People go to what they know. They'll browse the documents if search isn't great. And they'll know where the documents are and how to do it. But you need to make things really, really slick. And so that's something I tried to work with. It's not "What does the tech do?" It's what are the four or five use cases that really, really matter when someone goes to the intranet, the knowledge system, the search box, or whatever it might be.

That's what we need to focus on. We need to make this meet those few use cases. Not another hundred use cases, which actually don't matter that much." So getting the product and getting the implementation right is key. And then there's a lot of messaging that goes on, and then communication. And then just thinking through which offices to launch in, and how to roll it out, and which practice groups. So a firm is like any organization around change management.

What do you think the future will look like for your organization?

My goal would be to give lawyers a lot more data, and a lot more actionable data. I like and enjoy the AI stuff because I understand how it works, and I've done some of that stuff in the past. But I know it's going to take a long time to do. I know it's going to take training and years to get right. And what I think everyone's jumped over from a few years ago is big data, and actually utilizing actionable data in analytics and data visualization. I think, to be frank, when lawyers see that and see how things can be related, and an insight in data, that's going to help them immeasurably. And I think lawyers will see the opportunity in data, and analysis of data, because they're looking at things like risk. They're looking at connections, suspicious connections, what's in documents, etc.

I like the way the AI conversation is going, because it leads to a data-driven lawyer approach. I like the data-driven idea, because the actual reality of it is that we don't necessarily deal in black letter law every moment of our lives. We probably spend more of our time looking at clients' data, what's in it, what's the problem, etc. And I think that's the real opportunity for us. And I think that's the game changer which changes how we advise and how we actually understand, "Well, what's the problem? How do we solve it?" And slowly I think we'll become more predictive about things going wrong before they go wrong, as opposed to reacting when it's gone wrong.

If you look at other industries, the biggest areas are big data and risk. As the Internet of Things happens, and the more we use social media and chat apps, that's going to be where the issues are. So understanding all the data sources coming in is key. And you're still going to have to do curation of data. You're still going to have use systems. They're going to get cleverer. But I genuinely think you have to understand your data models, and where data is, and how it's going.

We've been working really hard on thinking about the next generation of lawyer. So we're looking at things like innovation interns and people and data problems. There are really interesting places in the UK like Ulster University's Legal Innovation Centre led by Catrina Denvir. They're looking at data analytics and understanding the legal problems through data. So we're looking at what's the background of these people, and we need potentially law graduates in the future to be less arts-based. And so we're sponsoring an event around STEM students and telling them, "We're going to need people who understand data and analytics."

I also really enjoy connecting with the innovation labs in our client base as well, and looking at the best practice in those areas. The banking industry has innovation labs; the insurance industry has innovation labs. And they have some amazing things going on there and a lot of similar thought about their industries. It's often those labs that are trying to solve "How do we deliver banking service?" Or an insurance service, or whatever sector it is. And in doing that, they have to think about, "Where does the contract come in?" And so you have to consider that maybe legal is going to be innovated not by legal; it's going to be innovated in a banking app, or it's going to be innovated by the industries we serve. So there's a risk of a kind of bubble called legal tech, that just misses change because someone over in another sector just devised how to do the next big thing. And obviously that's a great advantage of having lawyers in our sectors, because they are advising in those industries, but you need to make them see the connections between what we do and what's going on elsewhere.

Legal Tech Events Calendar

February 2018

Association of Legal Technologists (ALT) – ctrl alt delete

February 11-13, 2018, Scottsdale, AZ

Following an open letter to ILTA in which he accused the board of a “trend towards commercialism” and queried whether the body has lost its way, Rick Hellers, president & CEO of nQueue and a founding member of ILTA, is leading the launch of the Association of Legal Technologists (ALT) backed by a high-profile group that includes former ILTA senior board members Catherine Reilly and Judi Flournoy. ALT, which Hellers says is being launched to fill a void in and “reboot” the legal tech networking scene, is to be held at the Scottsdale Camelback Resort, Arizona, where ILTA’s predecessors VSLUG and LAWNET first began.

[Info & Register Here >](#)

Global Legal Hackathon

February 23-25, 2018, Worldwide

The Global Legal Hackathon engages law schools, law firms and in-house departments, legal technology companies, governments, and service providers to the legal industry – across the globe. It will bring together the thinkers, doers, and practitioners in law in support of a unified vision: rapid development of solutions to improve the legal industry, worldwide. A growing number of major city hosts are joining this legal innovation movement. Organizations are invited to host a branch of this event in their cities or partner with other organizations to co-host.

[Info & Register Here >](#)

March 2018

ABA Techshow

March 7-10, 2018, Chicago

This annual event, organized by the Law Practice Division of the ABA, has its own vibe. It tends to be targeted to ordinary practitioners, many of them from smaller firms, and not to legal technology specialists.

[Info & Register Here >](#)

April 2018

CodeX FutureLaw 2018

April 5, 2018, Stanford University

This will be CodeX's sixth annual conference focusing on how technology is changing the legal profession and the law itself. It is one of the most closely followed events and always contains a good mix of cutting-edge research and legal tech start-ups, many of them coming out of the fertile scene at Stanford’s CodeX Center, and industry leaders working on the challenges of integrating technology and innovation into the legacy legal industry.

[Info & Register Here >](#)

Lexpo: The Legal Innovation Event

April 16-17, 2018, Amsterdam

Now in its third year, this is one of the leading legal tech events in continental Europe. This year’s conference will revolve around four themes: Business Intelligence and Data Science; Dynamic Knowledge Management; The Legal Blockchain; and Legal Project Management.

[Info & Register Here >](#)

CLOC Annual Corporate Legal Operations Institute

April 22-25, 2018, Las Vegas

The Corporate Legal Operations Consortium has emerged as one of the leading voices for an operations perspective on law, and represents the strength and influence that the buy-side of the market now has. CLOC Institute is the largest gathering of corporate legal professionals in the world focused on optimizing the delivery of legal services to businesses.

[Info & Register Here >](#)

Events Reports

Legal Tech & Innovation Come of Age in London

Report from the *Legal Geek Conference*, an annual legal technology conference in London, which shows signs of a maturing legal technology market.

How will we know when legal technology is starting to leave behind the hype and exaggerated promises that seem to have characterized the space since it first started to really take off several years ago?

Here are some things to look for:

- 1 The conversation becomes more about innovation generally, not just tech.
- 2 The focus is on customers and their problems, not on the specific solutions offered by technology vendors.
- 3 Most importantly, the conversation centers on collaboration and partnership, not disruption and obsolescence.

Believe it or not, there is a high-energy legal tech scene that features all of those signs of a growing maturity in the market. It's in London, and it's drawing adherents from the rest of Europe and the rest of the world. On October 17, that scene was focused on Legal Geek, the legal tech community and its annual conference by the same name that went down in Shoreditch, the East London neighborhood that has served as London's answer to Silicon Valley.

Legal Geek, led by the peripatetic Jimmy Vestbirk, follows the TED talk model and juices it up with a high-energy vibe and what seems to be a pretty close-knit community of legal tech start-ups, complemented with just enough forward thinkers from the established industry to give it some credibility. More than 40 legal tech start-ups were available in a "start-up alley" for connections and demos, and most of those were represented in a report published jointly this year by Legal Geek and Thomson Reuters: "Movers and Shakers: UK Lawtech Start-ups."

Although legal tech is certainly catching on globally, what stood out in the London scene were again, the signs of a maturing market as described above. Here are just a few examples taken from the agenda, which consisted of more than 50 speakers:

A year's progress – Richard Tromans of Artificial Lawyer led off an early session with a review of the past year. His talk centered on four major legal tech stories, all of which center around collaboration and partnership: i) Slaughter and May's partnership with and investment in new artificial intelligence-based provider, Luminance; ii) the acquisition of AI player RAVN by iManage, effectively bringing AI tools to a wider user base; iii) the integration of Kira Systems' contract review platform with several alternative legal services providers (ALSPs) such as Axiom, Deloitte and Cognia; and iv) a global first, the expansion of contract

management solutions provider Seal Software into Egypt. All were signs of the deeper integration of legal tech into the legal industry itself, and of a broadening geographic range.

Tromans also offered up some stats that belie the idea that AI in legal is hype. He found that the 30 top law UK law firms are now using or piloting some form of AI, and all 100 of the top firms are using, piloting, or considering it.

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Avocado toast: Winning the prize for best props, Noah Waisberg of Kira and Rick Seabrook of Neota Logic brought a toaster, an avocado, and a loaf of bread on stage to construct a metaphor of bricolage, the bringing together of diverse things to create something new. Just as avocado and toast coming together has led to a trendy growth in avocado toast sales, so does the combination of purpose-built legal tech solutions into legal tech solutions into new, valuable combinations represent something of a trend. Exhibit A: The Allens law firm leveraged solutions from expert systems provider Neota Logic, contract review platform Kira, and cloud-based software provider HighQ in order to build its Real Estate Due Diligence App, REDDA. Waisberg and Seabrook also mentioned Akerman's Data Breach Advisor, built through collaboration between the firm and Neota Logic, with content provided by Thomson Reuters Legal Managed Services business.



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Events Reports, continued ...

More blended solutions: Similarly, Reed Smith's innovation leader Alex Smith spoke of the importance of using blended solutions and finding best-in-breed solutions for each task. The idea of "owning the desktop" is out, as legal organizations now have access to a variety of vendor-provided point solutions that can be reconfigured and combined into their own solutions.

An ecosystem approach: Jonathan Patterson of DWF Ventures, a wholly owned research and development company for the DWF firm, works with clients to find solutions that involve technology or ALSPs. Patterson described an "ecosystem approach" in which not all resources provided to clients need to be "on the payroll" – the firm works with a network of other consultants and providers such as document automation and workflow consultant BAMLegal to find the best solution.

Running with the big dogs: Jim Leason of Thomson Reuters discussed the many ways that larger legacy players like Thomson Reuters are learning to engage with smaller start-ups. In the past, there have been periods where the large legacy providers' engagement was limited to simply acquiring smaller players. These days, however, there are any number of ways for start-ups to engage, including through a global network of laboratories where Thomson Reuters works with customers, tech companies and universities to find new solutions.

Even the regulators and associations are getting into

the act: Crispin Passmore from the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), the UK legal industry's regulatory body, presented its SRA Innovate initiative, which among other things seeks to encourage innovation that might otherwise be outside the regulatory comfort zone. He spoke of less prescriptive, "client-centric" regulation, supporting new business models and a competitive legal services market. Not to be outdone, Peter Nussey, director of Innovation at the Law Society – which was one of the major sponsors of the Legal Geek Conference, along with Freshfields and Thomson Reuters – announced that the Society was partnering with the Seeders crowdfunding platform to encourage investment in legal tech, including by people in legal services careers who might otherwise be shut out of traditional venture capital investment opportunities. It's hard to imagine North American regulators and bar associations showing that level of commitment to innovation that could prove competitive with the legacy profession.

In short – for all the shenanigans and high-fiving offered by Legal Geek and its hangers-on – there are real signs of a maturing legal tech market coming out of London. Legal innovation is not a zero-sum game, with the gains of disruptive newcomers necessarily coming at the expense of legacy firms and tech providers. This more mature environment is one in which all of the players can learn to get along and succeed together by doing what they each do best.

Legal Tech Start-Up Focus

Avvo acquired by Internet Brands

Avvo, a legal directory that made its name by providing lawyers ratings along with basic practice and specialization information about lawyers, has been acquired by Internet Brands. Internet Brands is a multi-industry network of marketing sites that has developed a strong legal portfolio through acquisitions. In recent years Internet Brands also acquired Nolo, Martindale-Hubbell, and Total Attorneys. Avvo claims 300,000 active attorney users, and offers attorney profiles, Q&A forums and other legal content, and on-demand fixed-fee legal services from member attorneys.

Source: [LawSites](#)

Legal ChatBot Start-up DoNotPay: \$1M

Legal chatbot provider DoNotPay has received \$1.1 million in seed funding from Andreessen Horowitz. The company started with a successful chatbot to challenge parking tickets and is seen as on the vanguard of many consumer-oriented applications for chatbot technology. The funding will be used to tackle more complicated areas of the law by the legal bot, including divorce, immigration, small claims, property tax, and more corporate takedowns.

Source: [Artificial Lawyer](#)

Integreon acquires litigation management software start-up Allegory Law

Allegory provides litigation management software that allows Integreon to grow in the discovery space and provide an end-to-end solution that manages the entire litigation workflow, not just discovery phases. Witness statements, depositions, written discovery, pleadings, hearing transcripts, court rulings, and documents are all managed and analyzed in context in a single and collaborative platform accessible by law firms and corporate counsel. Allegory founder Alma Asay will stay on as Innovation Officer, taking on a broader role than just managing Allegory.

Source: [Legaltech news](#)

Nick Brestoff, Intraspexion

By Monica Bay

Fellow, CodeX (The Stanford Center for Legal Informatics)

A version of this article originally appeared in the CodeX Blog

Meet **Nick Brestoff**, 69, the founder and CEO of Intraspexion, which prevents litigation via artificial intelligence. Brestoff incorporated the company in August 2015. He presented his start-up at the CodeX meeting on June 8, 2017.

What problem does your start-up address?

Intraspexion addresses the painful problem that bedevils corporate legal departments: the frequency and cost of litigation. Intraspexion provides an early warning of specific types of possible litigation to in-house legal staff. Then they can conduct an investigation and advise executives – and they can nip the risk in the bud.

We surface risks by using “Deep Learning” (DL), a form of artificial intelligence. DL is the street name for a multi-layered neural network, a subset of AI. DL enables a computer to “learn” by training with examples. We use Google’s open-source version of its DL algorithm, “TensorFlow.”

Our system learns the patterns of specific types of lawsuits from hundreds (or thousands) of examples of each type of case. The examples consist of factual allegations, which we currently extract from the federal litigation database, PACER.

For each type of lawsuit (for example: employment discrimination), we build a DL model. We pass the unstructured text in company emails and other documents through each DL model and report to company-designated users. The output is easy to understand. The system is surfacing an email that is related to the training set, and so may be risky, along with a score indicating to what degree. This near real-time early warning gives a user a chance to investigate and avoid the risks before they have to manage the lawsuits.

Is Intraspexion currently on the market?

We’re currently walking up slowly to the starting gate. In September 2017 we graduated from the Enron Email Dataset to company-level data, and, at about the same time, received a marketing study from North State Consulting. We’re exploring different ways to go to market.

What inspired you to pursue this start-up? My law professor at U.S.C., Louis M. Brown, was the “father of preventive law.” The highest calling for an attorney is to see what went wrong, handle the mess, but then advise the client how to prevent the next lawsuit. Brown spoke to the engineer in me.

How did you come up with the company name?

Intraspexion enables counsel to be “introspective” about the company’s own “intranet.” I added the “x” in place of the “ct” to help with the trademarking process.

Do you have patents?

We have a patent “family” of seven Deep Learning patents. The core patent is for “Using Classified Text and Deep Learning Algorithms to Identify Risk and Provide Early Warning.” U.S. Pat. No. 9,552,548, which issued on January 24, 2017. The last of our “family” issued on September 12, 2017.

Do you have funding yet?

Because each of our co-founders joined Intraspexion for a share of equity, we have not needed outside investors. I cover the out-of-pocket costs.

What is your biggest challenge re: the start-up?

The members of the team fit Intraspexion into their lives when they can. They are attorneys or engineers, and aren’t skilled in marketing or selling a software product.

What do you need now? In six months? In a year?

Now: We need to decide between the different strategic partners who have expressed interest in Intraspexion’s prevention mission. Do we go with a giant chip maker, a giant e-discovery firm, a small start-up with a similar vision or a company that specializes in launching tech companies with their funding and marketing and sales expertise?

Six months: We need to complete the integration process and start working with the “early adopters.” One year: Once we show customer results, I would anticipate that we’ll need to scale out by adding more use cases and customers – and hope that journalists will continue to write about Intraspexion.

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The Future of Law Schools: Law School Innovation, Lawyer Recruitment & the Legal Industry supply chain

The importance of law schools to the interconnectedness of the various components of the legal services industry was analyzed in depth at the Legal Executive Institute's recent conference, The Future of Law Schools. Indeed, the tension between innovation in the legal curriculum, on the one hand, and the difficulties of integrating those changes with the legacy legal market and its myriad players, on the other, were themes that ran through the entire conference.

That tension was most vividly on display in the final session of the day, titled "A Law School Performance Report Card: A Conversation about Education, Rankings, and What Matters in Entry-Level Hiring." The session was moderated by William D. Henderson, Professor of Law & Stephen F. Burns Chair on the Legal Profession at the Indiana University Maurer School of Law.

The bulk of the session was a dialogue, led by Henderson, that featured three law firm recruiting officers and an operations director of a large corporate legal department:

- David Cambria, Global Director of Operations for Law, Compliance and Government Relations at the Archer Daniels Midland Co.
- Ari A. Katz, Chief Recruiting Officer at Womble Bond Dickinson
- Kay Nash, Chief Talent Officer at Wiley Rein
- Natasha Zech, Director of Attorney Recruiting, Diversity and Development at Williams & Connolly

Progress in the curriculum

Earlier sessions in the day had provided a taste of the wide range of innovations underway at many law schools, despite the legal academy's recent bad press about declining enrollments and job prospects, and its reputation for conservatism and unwillingness to change.

There were examples of multidisciplinary teaching, "semester in practice" programs, "professional identity" skills training, innovative cross-disciplinary certificate programs, distance-education programs, collaborations with start-up businesses, and an entire panel focusing on innovation in teaching the skills at the crossroads of legal and technology.

And yet, despite having some of the best examples of innovative programming in the legal academy on hand, there was still plenty of grumbling about the limitations that traditional hiring practices – and, not least, their reliance on the tyranny of law school ranking systems and the perceived hierarchy of schools – place on innovation.

Gaps in the supply chain

Cambria of ADM brought a legal operations perspective to the conversation. He was frank about his needs when working with law firms.

He described his panel of firms and what ADM looks for: Firms with "practice wisdom" that are "operationally aware" of the client's business. That means, among other things, looking at all the resources a firm brings to the table, including back-office operations and non-JD skill sets, he said.

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... law firms have to figure out how to change hiring processes to integrate and compensate people with a wider range of skills ...
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When looking at a firm, Cambria explained he wasn't interested in "suspender-snapping" about grades and the law school pedigrees of its lawyers. It's mostly about how the work will be delivered – and, by the way, he said that one of the top five outside organizations ADM works with is not a law firm at all, but one of the Big 4 accounting and audit firms.

In fact, Cambria said he spends a lot of time looking at the "machinery" he can put his problem into at a given firm to get a business result. "Where are their people and lawyers who think more broadly about not just the law, but the application of the law?" he asked. "Don't tell me what I should do, tell me how I should do it in the context of the business. I need to know how to operationalize the answers."

With regard to firm staff with wider skills such as data analysis or process management, Cambria was fairly blunt. Law firms say those skills are important, he noted, but they don't give the people with those skills much positional influence – many are still relegated to the back office. That is very frustrating, he added, especially when firms' hiring models just replicate the skill sets that firms have always hired for. If they want to really change, law firms have to figure out how to change hiring processes to integrate and compensate people with a wider range of skills, Cambria said.

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Academic Focus, continued ...

Old habits die hard

One of the barriers to a more flexible hiring approach is the entrenched on-campus interview (OCI) hiring cycle. That cycle favors the traditional students – firms and students evaluate each other all at once at a single point in the year, largely on traditional criteria. Wiley Rein's Nash noted that the need for lawyers with some of the nontraditional technology and process skills is more sporadic. It also tends to be project-driven and can pop up at any time, which makes it hard for those students and firms to find each other, because the recruitment necessarily takes place outside of the OCI cycle, she said.

These were eye-opening exchanges. For law schools, it's a frustrating situation, because for all the innovative programs focused on new skills and technology, there is still a talent supply chain that favors traditional lawyers trained in the traditional theoretical curriculum, evaluated by traditional measures such as grades. And law school rankings continue to favor the same top schools.

A law school that wants to innovate and develop new talents and capabilities is, to some extent, caught in the crossfire between a buy-side that's ready for it, and a sell-side that's not quite there yet.

Other articles about the Future of the Law School conference:

[The Future of Law Schools: Law Schools Shaking Up Curriculum to Focus on Technology, Panel Says](#)

[The Future of Law Schools: How Best to Train the 21st Century Lawyer](#)

Readings

Demystifying AI: A legal professional's 7-step guide through the noise

This white paper is a good primer on the scope and possibilities for Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the legal industry. It starts with some definitions and examples of where AI has already taken root, in our everyday lives and in the legal industry. It concludes with seven key lessons from the industry's current experience with AI that will help practitioners and leaders in legal services organizations keep on top of developments.

Source: [White paper](#)

7 ways blockchain will change the legal industry forever

Just as Artificial Intelligence isn't a single technology or a single application, blockchain technology's effects will be widespread and will have many intersections with the legal industry. This article documents seven areas where blockchain will affect legal transactions of various kinds and the practice of law itself.

Source: [TechRadar](#)

How to Spot a Machine Learning Opportunity, Even If You Aren't a Data Scientist

"Having an intuition for how machine learning algorithms work – even in the most general sense – is becoming an important business skill." Fully understanding machine learning is not necessary to spot applications for it in any industry. This piece provides some guidance on spotting machine learning opportunities.

Source: [Harvard Business Review](#)

Legal Tech in Practice: Supply Chain

By Kate Bally

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When I joined Practical Law® as a Labor & Employment attorney, the Mergers & Acquisition editors descended on me with questions about employment tax. I sheepishly admitted I had no clue about tax because that fell squarely to the Exec Comp and Benefits folks. Even lawyers have misconceptions about what other lawyers do for a living. It is no surprise that legal tech developers face a similar challenge creating products that resonate across practice areas. Clarifying distinct legal challenges can help inform development of quality legal technology. In my last article, I examined the world I know best: Labor & Employment. In this installment, I move further afield into Supply Chain. Supply Chain, simply put, is the process of ensuring that goods or services move effectively from manufacturer to end user.

To help understand the unique technology challenges of this legal community, I interviewed a panel of experts:

- Sarah L. Brew, Partner, Faegre Baker Daniels, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Emily M. Gerritz, Counsel, McGuireWoods LLP, Tysons, Virginia
- **Daniel W. Linna Jr.**, Professor, Michigan State University College of Law, East Lansing, Michigan
- Huu Nguyen, Partner, Squire Patton Boggs, New York, New York
- Sarah K. Rathke, Partner, Squire Patton Boggs, Cleveland, Ohio

Artificial intelligence

Artificial Intelligence cannot be easily defined, but possibilities include enhanced legal search (for example, Westlaw® Answers, Research Recommendations, and Folder Analysis in Westlaw, or newer providers such as ROSS Intelligence) and streamlined due diligence and contract review (for example, Kira Systems). Are these kinds of tech solutions useful in the supply chain world? Our experts see potential for AI solutions, particularly those that aid in M&A or effectively filter legal data.

Sarah Rathke notes that Kira could add value when supply chain issues overlap with M&A due diligence. Acquiring companies often find working through supply chain issues can be disastrous since obligations and performance levels may be unclear until after the deal is done. Caselaw assistance tools are less helpful since supply chain is generally governed by the Uniform Commercial Code or United Nations Convention on Contracts, and existing technologies like Westlaw meet those needs. Emily Gerritz agrees that solutions like Kira could be useful in M&A, as in post-merger restructuring, but legal research tools are less compelling.

Sarah Brew's practice is focused on food. When her team researches food recalls, they often run into unrelated concepts like recalling medical devices or even memories. To the extent AI solutions could effectively screen out these alternative meanings, they could prove useful. Most software falls short, but perhaps machine learning could move the needle.

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According to Daniel Linna, legal tech is best when it improves processes and creates opportunities for lawyers not to have to reinvent the wheel. AI tech solutions like Kira and ROSS, he notes, do exactly that. Huu Nguyen, on the other hand, was not sold on either AI tech option. He finds tools like Kira are good for extracting and summarizing information, but provide little help in predicting and analyzing. He envisioned an AI tool that might modify contracts along the lines of basic quantities or locations, but more nuanced information like warranty terms would not be suitable for an AI solution.

Automated Contracts

Supply chain is contract-intensive, so perhaps a contract automation tool holds particular promise. For example, Clause.io creates dynamic contracts based on real-world data input, and a company called Legalese drafts legal contracts in the way computer programmers create software. Thomson Reuters Contract Express™ uses intuitive questionnaire technology for fast and accurate document drafting and enables firms to offer innovative client-facing services. The Supply Chain panel finds benefits in this tech solution in the form of competitive pricing, contract updates, and contract work by nonlawyers.

Already familiar with procurement process software, SAP Ariba, Gerritz sees the utility in contract automation. She points to the fast-changing protocols in data privacy as an example of how contract automation tools could make updating contracts easier. Contract drafting tools (and review tools like Kira) might also help curtail the natural conflict between salespeople's interest in closing the deal and legal's interest in creating optimal contract terms.

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Rathke imagined that solutions like Legalese would help bigger firms offer competitive pricing for contract creation. The consistency promoted by contract automation tools could be helpful, but might also alienate clients with unique needs and expectations. The food world in which Brew practices is very specialized, and she echoed similar sentiments. Presumably, first-generation contract automation tools would be based on boilerplate clauses, and legal tech limited to boilerplate would not be a game changer for her.

Nguyen and Rathke could see significant potential for tools like Clause.io for their clients involved in purchasing, but less so for lawyers. Nguyen noted that for agreements with limited legal risk, like purchase orders, automated contracts are a sensible solution. However, for contracts requiring difficult judgment calls about liability, software will not suffice.

Online legal guidance

The bread and butter of legal tech, products like Westlaw, Lexis®, Practical Law, and others are well known. The Labor & Employment audience in my last piece was most enthusiastic about these offerings, but would the same hold true for Supply Chain? The answer depends on each attorney’s focus.

Although he has his own templates, Nguyen found Practical Law particularly useful as a starting point to help meet client expectations for efficiency and risk management. What is vital to him is that legal tools incorporate up-to-date law given that high-risk situations demand top-quality legal research. Gerritz found Practical Law to be a good resource for contract drafting as well. Linna, reiterating his call to avoid reinventing the wheel, stressed the need for the kind of quality templates these products can offer.

Refining search and filtering functions would make these traditional tools more useful, according to Brew. For example, although she works in food and beverage, she is not interested in food and beverage patent challenges. Effective legal research tools should weed out unwanted content.

Blockchain

It was not intuitive to most of the Labor & Employment experts that blockchain technology presented great opportunity, but could time-stamped records shared across a network and verified by that network have more potential within a supply chain? Surprisingly, the answer was no.

The Supply Chain experts were decidedly unenthusiastic about blockchain. Linna bemoaned that in this area, there were too many solutions searching for a problem. Nguyen and Rathke had significant reservations about the claims that blockchain could not be hacked. Although it may have utility on the food manufacturing side, according to Brew, she did not see the potential on the legal side. Clients are struggling to determine if it is a useful or necessary technology, according to Rathke, and so far, they are finding that it’s

not. Gerritz described blockchain as “the new buzzword,” but has not seen a truly useful blockchain technology product. Although some of the experts could see effective use case scenarios for blockchain for their clients, they all had trouble envisioning a future product that would make a meaningful difference on the legal side.

Legal outsourcing

Another staple of corporate legal practice, third parties offering legal outsourcing were made more common in the Internet age. The specifics vary across providers, but the legal outsourcers are companies providing affordable legal workers to tackle discrete projects. The experts saw the value in legal outsourcing generally, particularly for document review in a climate where clients are focused on cost cutting, but they stressed the need for oversight by experienced professionals.

According to Rathke, larger and more affordable outsourced teams can be useful in early stages of litigation where the question is along the lines of “does the blue cog work,” but “blue cog” is sometimes referred to using other terms. Tools like Kira have the potential to learn those various terms and eliminate the need for lower-level document combing, but in the interim, outsourcing presents a functional solution. It is difficult for clients not to see the appeal, Gerritz notes, of having a team of lawyers conduct time-consuming work while you are sleeping and for cheaper.

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Alexa/Amazon® Echo

More and more American households depend on Alexa to keep track of their grocery lists and tell their kids a funny joke, but can it also add value for legal professionals working in supply chain? Most of the opportunities identified by the experts were administrative or nonlegal.

Rathke imagined using Alexa as an assistant for support staff, including the possibility of pulling basic data about a pending case. Brew could see potential for calendaring, note-taking, or ordering office supplies. She also suggested more advanced functions like reminders to follow up in the future on specific points or notifications about shared client connections within a firm. Linna felt that focusing on Alexa unduly diverted us from focusing on refining legal processes and empowering lawyers to make better decisions.

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Gerritz had clever suggestions for slightly more robust legal possibilities. Perhaps Alexa could answer questions about what the UCC said on specific issues, how much time was left on a designated contract, or did that contract auto-renew? Even more helpful would be notifications about significant contract circumstances or indications that responsible parties to a contract received that notification.

Legal analytics

Ravel and other companies have used big data to predict judicial rulings or suggest useful case citations. Judicial analytics were thought to be quite useful by the Labor & Employment audience, but caselaw heat mapping was thought to be less so. What would the Supply Chain audience have to say? For many of our experts, legal analytics was not a compelling tech solution.

Neither Gerritz nor Nguyen saw any significant potential for these tools within their practice. Unsurprisingly, because of her litigation focus, Rathke found the judicial offering more interesting, noting that although her practice had fewer political overtones than, for example,

discrimination or sexual harassment claims, there were judges with a greater or lesser tendency to grant summary judgment. The caselaw heat map holds less promise in her practice since there is a lot of consistency across 49 U.S. jurisdictions in UCC interpretation. Brew could see some potential in the caselaw tools as a fail-safe to ensure that she and her team have considered all important cases and concepts.

Conclusion

Linna is right to critique solutions looking for problems, and good legal tech cannot simply speak to a hypothetical lawyer with hypothetical concerns. Listening to Supply Chain experts, we learn that although automated contracts may hold a good deal of promise, blockchain technology may not live up to the hype. In addition, creative suggestions about Alexa and AI help legal tech providers pivot in the right direction, even if only with respect to administrative functions. Talking to the experts gives us one additional set of tools to create meaningful change through technology in the practice of law.

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