Legaltech news

Tech Digest: 5 Legal Technology Experts on the Biggest Trends to Watch

Talking the mix of cybersecurity and productivity, technology planning for M&A compliance, and more.

By Chris DiMarco

The news and trends driving the legal technology space evolve quickly, and, as a result, keeping abreast of the latest developments can be a difficult prospect. A single case, technological advancement or cresting trend has the capacity to disrupt not only the way law is practiced, but also the effectiveness of tools developed to support it. While predicting the next big shake-up is a bit of a guessing game, no group is better prepared to give context to the space than the attorneys, vendors and analysts that live at the crossroads of technology and law.

Legaltech News' Techology Digest brings together the voices of these professionals, offering an uneditorialized view into their top-of-mind thoughts and concerns. Our goal is to give deeper context to the industry, coloring our original content with the (sometimes conflicting) voices of those with boots on the ground.

1. Greater Security and Productivity Go Hand-in-Hand

"Most law firms handle a staggering volume of documents every day – many of which contain confidential information related to a client matter or legal case. With the threat of cybersecurity breaches becoming only more serious and the penalties for non-compliance with security mandates more severe, organizations must gain control of their document workflows to prevent data leaks and the consequential damaged credibility and hefty fines. But strengthening security does not necessarily have to result in extra work for your employees; all technology you employ should work in harmony and enhance, not hinder, productivity. Security should be built into existing workflows, allowing employees to seamlessly access and

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share information according to company policy. Document management systems and managed print services, for example, integrate legal workflows to help firms streamline processes and increase productivity without the risk of flawed security. When workflows work well, your employees work better. "

—*Chris Strammiello, vice president of global alliances & strategic marketing, Nuance Communications*

2. E-Discovery on Demand

"As more corporations and law firms internalize their electronic discovery operations, they often seek a

more flexible solution for hardware and software. Legal professionals like the control that self-service brings, but they do not want to invest in hardware, software or IT infrastructure. They do not want to worry about many of the issues that IT teams deal with – software upgrades, backups and security – but they do want to have access to state-of-the-art technology when they need it. All that is feeding the on-demand e-discovery trend, also known as managed services. Under such a model, law firms and corporations are able to scale up as necessary and pay for what they use without investing in a complete infrastructure. In fact, there are two separate models in play. Platform-as-a-service is hosted on behalf of a law firm or service provider as a dedicated environment for each client. Software-as-a-service is a hosted, shared environment that enables self-service e-discovery, with no hardware or IT support necessary and limited administration access. Either model allows corporations and law firms to take control of discovery quickly without a large upfront investment.”

—Arestotle Thapa, CEO, Venio Systems

3. The Financial Crisis' Impact on the Legal Industry

“The financial crisis of 2008 significantly changed how legal services are managed by Corporate America, and it will not change back to how it had been. Before 2008, legal departments were more willing to be hands off in their management of their outside counsel. Now, legal departments are actively involved and interested in the ways in which legal services are packaged and delivered. Law firms who are better able to tailor their services to deliver value as newly defined by their clients will be at an advantage over those who cannot or will not. What law firms ought to focus on to differentiate themselves and be better attuned to the new value proposition is an integrated approach to their matters focusing on effective budgeting, case management and efficiency while balancing cost, risk and value in their clients' interests. Law firms can do this through technology, training and education, but unless they ensure their attorneys are bought in, there is no technology or training that will do it for them.”

—Steve Berrent, president and CEO, eMag Solutions

4. Owning Legal Technology

“An important new role has been added to IT departments: ownership of legal technology and processes, along with the responsibility for legal liability in an IT context. Too few organizations hold regular conversations addressing the intersection of IT and legal. GCs need to partner with IT before a security incident occurs to identify specific risks and collaborate on appropriate processes and technology strategies that will effectively mitigate company liability. Legal departments need to be constantly aware of IT operations and infrastructure in order to identify potential blind spots that create risk to the organization. GCs should be engaged in any discussions regarding companywide technology planning and procurement initiatives. For their part, CIOs need to thoroughly understand the legal implication of a cyber-breach and position the GC to mitigate. By encouraging dialogue and process creation, organizations can cultivate an environment that fosters purposeful collaboration between legal and IT to efficiently mitigate, respond and remediate risks.”

—Dave Deppe, president, UnitedLex Corporation

5. Technology Planning for M&A Compliance

“The first half of 2015 has seen the most M&A activity since 2007, a trend likely to continue through year-end. For a deal subject to the Hart-Scott-Rodino Act that elicits extended review, responding to a request for additional information, commonly called a second request, can be considerably more challenging than in the past, given the exponentially growing amount of information in corporations today. The emphasis on rapid response and substantial compliance requires a well-thought, seamless game plan and a team including counsel and a discovery provider with extensive second request experience. Critical factors in the plan include communication and project management guiding workflow processes that are supported by the appropriate technology. The right team using all the available tools can nimbly and effectively get the deal across the goal line.”

—Oral Pottinger, director, Huron Legal

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