

BRITISH  
LEGAL  
TECHNOLOGY  
FORUM  
**2016**

# CONFERENCE REPORT

**8th March 2016**

The Old Billingsgate • London



— *An Event* —  
BY  
 NetLawMedia

# Overview

Netlaw Media's 'British Legal Technology Forum 2016' delivered a comprehensive evaluation of the legal IT community and discussed the current and future predictions for the legal technology market.

Over 50 expert speakers from in-house legal departments, academics and legal IT suppliers presented across three content driven stages held at The Old Billingsgate in London. In addition, the 2016 event showcased 84 suppliers of legal and commercial technology which exhibited a wide range of cutting edge technology and solutions.

A popular topic of discussion throughout the event was process improvement, often assisted by the deployment of new technology. In the vendor community a number of providers were actively promoting their workflow enhancement solutions. The 2016 event showcased just how quickly ideas which were previously regarded as far-reaching, such as Artificial Intelligence or Big Data, could be transformed into a wide range of tangible products and services, and then adopted by the legal profession. Some of the products being demonstrated at the British Legal Technology Forum 2016 may well prove to be transformational, while others may simply mean that law firms can be more efficient, or more profitable.

As Europe's largest legal technology conference and exhibition, the event delivered a series of main stage keynote presentations including Professor Daniel Martin Katz, who suggested that the legal technology sector could learn from innovations in the financial technology sector. Event chairman and Keynote speaker Professor Richard Susskind evaluated the pace of change in the legal IT sector and concluded that it has not yet reached a "tipping point" of rapid change. Professor Viktor Mayer-Schönberger of Oxford University captured the audience in a closing keynote presentation surrounding Big Data, 'Data is always just a shadow of reality - not reality itself.'

**The British Legal Technology Forum will return to London on Tuesday 14th March 2017.**



# The panel discussions revealed

Are we experiencing an evolution or a revolution in the use of legal technology? That was a recurrent topic of debate at the British Legal Technology Forum, held recently in London

**K**icking off the main session, Professor Richard Susskind posed a question to the audience, which he invited them to feed back to him throughout the course of the day: was the deployment of new technology in the legal sector a 'slow burn' affair, or was it reaching a 'tipping point' resulting in rapid change?

In reality, across the day's numerous speeches, panel discussions and vendor presentations (see page 12), evidence could be found for both scenarios. On the one hand, several discussions focused on the current or potential usage of legal artificial intelligence (AI) and big data, or a combination of the two – both technologies have the power to disrupt the nature of existing legal practice. On the other hand, many of the discussions focused on more niche, incremental efficiency improvements to the delivery of legal practice bought about by technological innovation.

## The technology paradox

For law firm managers wishing to deliver incremental efficiency and performance improvements within their firms, a panel session on the 'technology paradox' gave them much food for thought. Session chair Neil Renfrew from Athenian explained that the legal profession is inherently risk-averse and reactive, yet lawyers often put their support teams under great pressure to 'do something' and 'innovate'. As Oz Benamram, chief knowledge officer of White & Case, pointed out, innovation typically requires experimentation – and most experiments fail.

'If you're a young successful IT professional, where would you go to work? In a start-up company, where you get rewarded for being innovative? Or in a law firm, where you'll lose your job if you try to move too fast?' he asked.

More positively, various panel members offered examples of a practical, bottom-up, approach to legal practice innovation, designed to

overcome this paradox. For example, Luigi Salzano, IT project director at Myhomemove, explained how his practice had recently launched an innovation forum, 'a structure for teasing ideas out of the business and nurturing the good ones'. The best ideas were then submitted to an innovations board, which had the power to fund the most promising ones.

Stuart Whittle, information services and operations director at Weightmans, then shared his alternative approach to ensuring partnership buy-in for innovation – he works alongside a non-fee earning partner who assists him in championing change within his firm. He now has eight or nine plans for 'good change, sensible change', that he had a budget to explore further. Indeed, he said, buy-in for innovation had been so successful within his practice that he now had more demand for innovation than it was possible for him to implement.

## Legal AI

Meanwhile, in another panel focusing on artificial intelligence and the law, Riverview Law CEO Karl Chapman revealed that his company has a dedicated research and development (R&D) function, employing 16 people in the UK and a further five in the US. For Chapman, such a heavy investment in R&D is essential because his company is attempting to 'productise' its entire offering, as part of its quest to be 'tech-led' rather than merely tech enabled. And, looking back on developments to date, Chapman observed that the key initial focus of this process had been to productise the process – that is, matter workflow – rather than the legal advice work itself. The rationale for this investment focus was that it created the foundation for everything that followed. In practical terms, this meant his practice automatically triaged its matter workflow to ensure that 'the right people worked at the right matters at the right time'. Additionally, his company invested in technology that allows contracts to be self-generated 'not just to version one, but maybe to versions two and three, depending on what comes back from the other side.'

Chapman's comments about the need to devote substantial resources in relation to internal process improvement were also broadly endorsed by a subsequent panel discussion on the 'business of law via strategic IT investment.' Here, Clyde & Co's global chief information officer, Chris White, said firms' 'engine rooms' were under real pressure to run as efficiently as possible – be that in relation to embracing case management or e-discovery technology. One of the problems with existing processes, he said, was that lawyers often spend too much of their time doing non-legal work, 'not because they want to do it, but because it needs to get done.'

‘  
lawyers often  
spend too  
much of their  
time doing  
non-legal work

Meanwhile, at the same debate, Daniel Pollick, director of business transformation and chief information officer at DLA, observed that, in general, lawyers and law firms were quite good at embracing what he described as 'tactical tech' – technology intended to help lawyers perform specific tasks, such as communicating more efficiently, or managing documents better. In terms of emerging technologies, Pollick said that lawyers were unlikely to feel threatened by software solutions which could machine-read thousands of contracts and automatically extract key terms – because the technology's value in improving lawyers' efficiency was clearly understood. Where innovation became more challenging to implement was where new technology was intended to change business processes because such innovation often requires cultural change.

Offering an in-house perspective on this topic, Gareth Tipton, group director, ethics and compliance and COO for legal, governance and compliance, explained to the BTLF audience how his company has used technology and process improvement in conjunction with each other. Now, he said, all internal requests for legal work in his company passes through an electronic 'front door', in preference for internal clients liaising with in-house lawyers directly. By funneling new matters in this way, he explained, legal tasks could be allocated to the most appropriate resource to undertake that work, including panel law firms, legal process outsourcers (LPOs), alternative providers or – for the most complex, mission critical work – the in-house legal team.



13

Netlaw Media's 13th  
sold out Law Event  
in succession



## Threat versus reward

With regards to implementing new technology within law firms, Andrew Woolfson, director of knowledge management at RPC and Trevor Comyn, director of knowledge, learning and development at Mills & Reeve, gave an entertaining presentation on the 'neuroscience of change', which attempted to explain why many lawyers fear change. In essence, the primitive part of the human brain is programmed to scan for threats and rewards – and is far more attuned to detecting threats than rewards. Unhelpfully, this primitive part of the human brain is also able to react far more rapidly – and indeed slow down the functioning of – the cerebral cortex, which is responsible for higher brain functions. The outcome of this brain wiring, the pair explained, is that a person's immediate reaction to the prospect of change is more likely to perceive it as a threat, rather than appreciate – using the rational part of their brain – that the proposed change might be beneficial.

The pair then explained that, by understanding how the human brain is wired to react to proposed change means it is possible, with the right communications and engagement strategy, to alter how those changes are perceived. To illustrate this point, Woolfson and Comyn used the SCARF model of threats and rewards devised by David Rock in relation to a fictionalised implementation of a new centralised billing system. By systematically explaining the six specific components of SCARF, relating to perceived threats to status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness (being part of the in-crowd) and fairness, they showed how the perceptions of threats prompted by this legal practice innovation might be redirected as a perceived reward.

Elsewhere in the conference hall, Bruna Pellicci, global head of IT at Ashurst, also focused on internal reactions to technology-driven change,

‘’

**There is an aspiration by many that the tipping point is now upon us**

in light of her own experience of leading numerous transformational IT projects within her firm. Often, she explained, it was IT personnel that were the first to enter an existing function prior to its reorganisation, and therefore were likely to face significant hostility from those working in that function. And, while the IT function might be excited about the project being undertaken, she said it was important for IT personnel to appreciate that some of the people they would be dealing with might not have a job at the end of the project. 'Don't be surprised if [they] aren't as excited about the project as you,' she said.

Her advice on how to deal with this challenge involved three key elements: firstly, ensure you know exactly what you're trying to achieve before you go into the function; secondly, you must be willing to explain to those affected what you are doing, 'even if they're not in the game plan'; and thirdly, 'You need to come through it as quickly as possible.'

Rounding off the day's proceedings, Professor Susskind returned to the question he posed at the start of the event: whether we had reached a tipping point of change bought about by new legal technology, or merely a continuation of the existing slow burn. Based on informal feedback he'd received during the day, both in person and via Twitter, he concluded that the legal technology sector was divided on this issue. Although there was an aspiration by many that the tipping point was now upon us, he said, there was also a substantial well of – often justifiable – cynicism regarding the pace of current change.

'As with so many of his observations, Bill Gates's comments that less happens in two years than you might think, but more happens in ten, might well prove to be correct in the legal sector,' he concluded.



# The keynote sessions

The legal sector can learn much from finance technology, said Professor Katz in his keynote speech, while Professor Richard Susskind and Daniel Susskind argued that technology is beginning to undermine legal firms' very existence

Technologies embraced by the finance industry over the past three decades could be adapted for use in the legal sector, Professor Daniel Martin Katz told the assembled BLTF audience in the first keynote presentation of the day. Professor Katz, who teaches entrepreneurial lawyering at Chicago-Kent College of Law in the US, was named by the American Bar Association Journal as one of the profession's leading 'legal rebels', who are attempting to change the nature of the sector.

The financial technology (fintech) sector has invested large amounts of money in new technology, including artificial intelligence and data-driven systems, Professor Katz explained, because there's a clear financial incentive for doing so — marginal improvements in performance can directly boost profits. 'When you talk to traders, they don't do what lawyers tend to do — cross their arms and say they're "sceptical". Instead, they say, "You mean, I have the opportunity to make more money? Yeah, I'm available for that."

In the legal space, the rationale for the equivalent fintech is not so much about marginal performance improvement, but that it can be deployed to help clients assess and price risk more precisely than is currently possible, reduce information asymmetries and improve legal compliance.



”

**Being able to predict the outcome of Supreme Court cases could allow investors to buy, in advance**

How might fintech help clients assess and price legal risk? One example offered by Professor Katz relates to the outcomes of certain US Supreme Court decisions, which have the power to materially affect the share prices of the companies involved – such as the 2013 decision to deny Myriad Genetics a patent over aspects of the human genome, which promoted a 20 per cent shift in its share price in just two days. Research conducted by Professor Katz and others has suggested that, over a 15-year period, US Supreme Court decisions have impacted on the share price of publicly traded companies to the tune of US\$140 billion.

Being able to predict the outcome of Supreme Court cases could allow investors to buy, in advance, securities or options that are likely to be affected by those cases. Innovations such as FantasySCOTUS – which Professor Katz was involved in – have already begun to predict US Supreme Court decisions with a reasonable degree of accuracy. FantasySCOTUS, he explained, uses a mixture of expert reviews, crowdsourcing and algorithms to achieve this objective. This ensemble-based approach to predicting is generally more effective than relying on single sources of predictive judgment, such as expert opinions or algorithms, alone.



Elsewhere, Professor Katz suggested that there's a real need for those involved in litigation finance to move away from what he described as 'impressionistic' decision-making regarding which cases to fund. Instead, the market should move to a more rigorous, intelligence-based approach, similar to that already adopted by insurance underwriters. At present, some litigation funders are enjoying 'outsized returns' on their investments, he said, simply because the market is under-developed and competition modest. However, as the market becomes more competitive and margins are squeezed, 'If you don't have a real model [to guide your decision-making], you're going to blow up,' he said.

Moving onto the compliance possibilities offered by fintech, Professor Katz pointed out that developments in 'anomaly detection' technology – which is already heavily used in the banking sector to detect fraud – could be used more widely in the legal space. At present, it is mainly used in the legal market in relation to eDiscovery, but the underlying technology could be extended to encompass near real-time compliance monitoring. 'A lot of the things that you're now doing after the fact in discovery are the kinds of things you should be trying to look for in close-to-real time via anomaly detection,' he said.

He also pointed out that many employees continue to provide self-incriminating information in work emails, which it's not possible to detect and act upon. 'If you write the word "defeat" within five words of "airbag", that's a compliance issue,' he said. 'That's version 1.0 [of near real-time compliance monitoring].'

Of course, Professor Katz acknowledged that trying to move the legal market away from its singular reliance on 'experts' to a more technology-assisted, fintech future would be a challenge. The more successful lawyers are, the more 'rigid' they tend to become. Moreover, the technical expertise required to fully exploit the possibilities of fintech is often very different to that of the conventional lawyer of a liberal arts heritage. However, if lawyers are willing to accept that much of the innovation that's potentially applicable to the legal sector is currently taking place outside the legal space, this will allow them to recognise see the world as it might be, outside of their conservative 'filter bubble'.

## The Susskind prediction

Professor Katz's keynote session offered a largely optimistic vision of the future for lawyers – if they're prepared to embrace the new market possibilities offered by fintech. By contrast, the second keynote of the day offered a rather more downbeat long-term outlook – that technology is now beginning to undermine the very justification for the profession's continued existence: its role as gatekeepers of specialist knowledge from which practical advice is given to clients.

Kicking off a father and son keynote presentation based on their jointly authored book, *The Future Of The Professions: How Technology Will Transform The Work Of Human Experts*, Daniel Susskind, a lecturer at Balliol College, Oxford, began by outlining two futures for the profession. In one version, he said, all professions would evolve in a reassuring manner. They would become more efficient versions of their current selves, by continuing to embrace advances in technology: doctors would talk to patients via Skype, architects would use computer-aided design to design more complicated buildings, and teachers would draw on online materials for use in their classrooms.

However, in the second future scenario, the professions would evolve very differently, as 'increasingly able systems and machines' gradually take on more and more of the tasks traditionally associated with them. In the medium term, both futures would develop in parallel. But, in the longer term, the second future would dominate because it would become better than the first.

Developing this downbeat assessment further, Daniel's father, Professor Richard Susskind, then outlined the likely long-term impact of this transition between the profession's two futures. In the medium term, he said, the traditional professions wouldn't witness unemployment 'but redeployment' – although this transition phase wouldn't last. In essence, many redeployed legal roles, such as process analysts or knowledge engineers, are helping to develop their own computer-aided replacements. By the 2030s and 2040s, therefore, 'We find it very hard to avoid the conclusion that there'll be a steady decline in the need for human professions. New tasks may emerge [as this transformation takes place], but it's likely that machines will take on these tasks, too.'

Another key prediction made by Susskind senior relates to the manner in which he expects legal expertise to be generated and

delivered. At present, he explained, sustained efforts are being made to standardise and systemise legal services, with a view to delivering them externally via an online, subscription-based, business model. However, this isn't the only new technology driven business model to emerge, he said. Other players in the legal market, including governments and the voluntary sector, are also investing in standardising and systematising legal knowledge – which is then given away online for free.

More radically, legal expertise is now also being 'crowdsourced' via non-expert users of legal services – in essence, the Wikipedia of law is now being [organically] created. Professor Susskind called this latter approach to legal knowledge building and sharing a 'commons' approach, because 'no big organisation, neither private nor public, controls the data.' Both of these alternative business models arguably undermine the legal profession's ability to generate profits from its expert knowledge.

Turning to the issue of legal AI, Professor Susskind suggested it's a 'fallacy' to assume that the technology will need to replicate the thinking and thought processes of human experts in order to outperform them. The rise of what he calls 'high performing unthinking machines' isn't dependent on them being smart in a manner similar to humans; instead, the 'brute force' of their computing power, coupled with their ability to process vast amounts of data, often makes them better than humans at predicting legal outcomes, or spotting patterns or correlations, he said.



Looking to the future, Professor Susskind offered six alternative models for delivering legal services, which he suggested will ultimately emerge to supplant the existing legal profession:

1. The 'network expert' – essentially a traditional expert lawyer, albeit one working within a non-partnership based, low overheads, governance structure.
2. The 'para professional' – legal services delivered by persons who aren't full-scale professionals, but could nevertheless draw on technologies and systems to perform at the level of a human expert.
3. The 'knowledge engineering model' – a rules-based, decision tree-based approach to delivering legal services, typically delivered online.
4. A variance of the crowdsourced, 'commons' approach previously described, in which non-expert users of legal services come together online to develop and share practical solutions to common legal problems.
5. The 'embedded systems model', which mandates legal compliance by rendering it impossible to perform tasks in a manner not legally permissible. This was described by Professor Susskind as being akin to playing Solitaire on a computer, rather than with traditional playing cards. 'If you try to put a red five on a red six, the system flips the card back onto the pile,' he said.
6. Computer-driven AI, where legal expertise is generated via pattern matching using big data in a manner which outperforms the predictions of human experts.

Arguably, the most significant element of Professor Susskind's six legal alternatives is that only three substantially rely on humans on a day-to-day basis to deliver their core service. Even more alarmingly, just one model – the network expert – assumes that legal services would be delivered via an actual human expert.

Concluding his presentation, Susskind senior warned that law firms shouldn't take comfort that their peers aren't embracing change. 'The competition that will kill lawyers doesn't look like lawyers. It'll be the Amazon.com of the legal world, a major accountancy firm or legal publisher, or perhaps a legal start-up that no-one takes seriously,' he said.

# The brave new world of big data

Professor Mayer-Schönberger delivers the final keynote speech, unveiling the amazing possibilities – and limitations – of big data for firms. Report by Richard Parnham

Several sessions throughout the day touched on big data and its possible applications in the legal sector. And, to round off the day's proceedings, Viktor Mayer-Schönberger, professor of internet governance and regulation at the Oxford Internet Institute, offered a wider perspective on the subject, illustrating novel uses of big data across a range of industries. Many of his examples showed how big data could be used to improve existing services, boost revenues, or support diversification into new markets.

## Improve services

As an example of how big data can be used to improve an existing service, Professor Mayer-Schönberger spoke of Duolingo, a free online tool for learning a new language. This company, he explained, collects data indicating the processes by which the website's clients learn their new language. The data also reveals the precise point at which a significant percentage of its Spanish-speaking clients abandon their studies while attempting to learn English. Thus, Duolingo was able to reconfigure the manner in which it delivered its service – even though it hadn't initially sought to use the data for that particular purpose. In the legal sector, this poses an intriguing question – what data might firms' IT systems already hold, which might be re-used to improve the client experience?



To further illustrate how existing data may be reused to extract maximum value from it, Professor Mayer-Schönberger offered the BLTF audience numerous examples from across a range of industries, such as the automated meteorological reports produced by commercial aircraft being used to improve weather forecasts, and wearable tech fitness data being used to better understand how humans react during earthquakes. But, the professor's key take-home message on facilitating inventive data reuse was clear: where possible, data should be routinely collected, even if it has no clear value in the short term. Without data collection, inventive reuse simply isn't possible.

## Explore new markets

Big data can also be used to extend a company's offering into related markets, while at the same time improving the reliability of the company's core product. Here, Professor Mayer-Schönberger looked to the aero engine manufacturer, Rolls-Royce. Thanks the vast amount of data the company collects via sensors embedded in its jet engines, Rolls-Royce is now able to predict with a high degree of accuracy when a particular component in a particular jet engine is likely to fail. This discovery has allowed the company to offer its clients both a 'predictive maintenance' service – fixing components on the ground before problems occur – and fixed-fee maintenance contracts, which now account for more than 50 per cent of Rolls-Royce's revenues – a substantial diversification away from its core manufacturing base.

Professor Mayer-Schönberger turned to the BLTF audience and asked: 'Isn't [prediction] something that you, the legal profession could get into? Helping your clients to not only get themselves out of a mess, but actually preventing the mess from happening? With better predictions, that might be possible – and give you a whole different role to what some of you are doing today.'

‘’  
**Big data can be used to extend a company’s offering into related markets.**



## Beware big data

Big data is an excellent tool for enabling humans to make sense of certain behaviours, but is problematic when they try to stretch it beyond what it has revealed – when attempts are made to deduce the ‘why’ from data which only showed the ‘what’. Professor Mayer-Schönberger pointed out that while this tendency is entirely natural since the human brain is programmed to try to make sense of the world around it, attempting to deduce causes and effects from simple correlations is risky and can result in the wrong conclusions being drawn.

To illustrate why organisations should avoid ‘chasing the unicorn’ of why, and instead be content to act on findings relating to what, Professor Mayer-Schönberger outlined the bizarre customer behaviour at US branches of Walmart, as revealed by big data analysis. When a storm was forecast in a given location, he said, big data analysis revealed that customers tended to rush to their local Walmart store to buy torches and batteries – and strawberry flavoured Pop Tarts. Ultimately, Walmart decided that it was more important to react to this finding by giving their customers what they wanted when a storm was approaching – easy-to-find Pop Tarts – rather than trying to discover why this particular food item was so popular at that time.

‘  
Data is always  
just a shadow  
of reality - not  
reality itself.

For law firms struggling to make sense of their clients’ collective behaviours, there’s an obvious lesson to be learned here. Perhaps it’s less important to understand why clients behave in certain ways, and more useful to simply predict what those behaviours might be, before resourcing the firm and individual matters accordingly.

Professor Mayer-Schönberger concluded that big data will allow humanity to understand the world better, and help improve the decision-making process across a wider variety of industry sectors. Nevertheless, he also expressed a desire to ‘carve out a space for the human, the irrational, the imagination and the creative’ – even to act in defiance of what big data says on certain occasions. Finally, he reiterated that big data’s limitations should also be appreciated.

‘The data is always just a shadow of reality – not reality itself. It will always be a little bit imperfect; a little bit incomplete,’ he said. ‘Therefore it beholds us to walk into the thrilling world of big data with quite a bit of humility and quite a bit of humanity.’



A "must-go" for anyone involved in LegalTech in Europe! Brilliant speakers, state-of-the-art exhibitors, amazing participants, outstanding venue... it is always worth the trip!

Marketing & Comms Director,  
Yingke Adarve Law Firm



## BRITISH LEGAL TECHNOLOGY FORUM **2016**



I would highly recommend any of Netlaw Medias events, they are very well organised and extremely successful from an exhibitor point of view. I have never had anything but fantastic service from their team! Well done.

Business Development Manager, Slicedbread



The British Legal Technology Forum 2016 was a great event, with well chosen topics and good quality speakers. As an Event Partner, we worked closely together with theNetlaw Media team and we feel that this event enabled us to gain more visibility, promote our solutions, as well as bring our thought leaders in front of the right audience.

EMEA Marketing Executive, Masergy Communications



# Vendor overview: new products, new market entrants – and nitrogen frozen ice cream

Legal AI and big data were hot topics in several BLTF discussions and, helpfully, among the 80 vendors exhibiting at the event, several were promoting real-world solutions based on these technologies. Here, the focal point for proceedings was the Aderant demonstration stage, which played host to 15 vendor presentations throughout the day.

In the AI space, Peter Wallqvist of RAVN Systems explained to the BLTF audience how his company's 'applied cognitive engine' is able to locate important information within documents, rather than simply identify

documents which may be of interest to lawyers – for example, when conducting a due diligence exercise. This means that much of the work previously undertaken by fee earners during a typical due diligence could be augmented, if not entirely replaced, by the company's technology.

He also explained how RAVN's 'governance' solution uses a rules-based analysis to evaluate individual contract clauses and highlights when those clauses appear to deviate from corporate norms. This solution, he suggested, could both shorten and improve the contract drafting process.

Elsewhere in the AI-assisted technology market, Steve Soar from Darktrace revealed how his company's 'enterprise immune system' uses machine learning to detect anomalies on clients' computer networks, which might indicate a cyber security threat. Darktrace's approach differs from other cyber security providers, he explained, which either focus on 'building an ever higher wall around your network', or using rules or signatures to protect against known risks.

'Our system does not predefine what "bad" looks like,' Soar told the assembled audience. By learning about network behavioural norms and monitoring for variations from those norms, Darktrace's analytics technology is able to identify the greatest likely risks to a network at any given time.

Derek Schutz from Aderant demonstrated Spotlight Analytics, the company's new big data business intelligence tool for law firms.

This tool, based around 200 pre-defined KPIs, provides 'the right information to the right people in the right format'. And, illustrating the extent to which Spotlight Analytics can be customised, Schulz explained that it's even possible to alter the nature of the business information presented to specific users at specific times of the year, depending on the organisation's strategic focus in that time period.

Elsewhere in the legal analytics space, Barry Talbot of Informance explained how his company has partnered with the Qlik Analytics Platform to help legal practices make data-assisted decisions by drawing on multiple data sources found within firms' existing IT systems. He explained that law firms often begin their analytics journey by looking at their key financial metrics, such as lockup, work in progress or debtor days.

But, it's possible to use Informance to aid other decision-making processes within a law firm, such as HR matters. HR issues benefiting from such data-driven analysis include absence, leave and secondment tracking, workforce diversity ratios, salary gap evaluations – even predicting future staffing requirements.

Within the more mainstream legal technology market, several long-established vendors were exhibiting at the BLTF, promoting the latest iterations of their existing solutions. Following its acquisition by BT in 2013, and its subsequent multi-million investment by its new owner, Tikit opted to showcase Carpe Diem Next Generation, the latest version of its widely used timekeeping solution.

Elsewhere in the conference hall, iManage marked their recent management buyout from HP by promoting a suite of rebranded solutions: Work, formerly Worksite; Share, latterly known as Linksite; Insight, formerly Universal Search; and Govern, formerly Worksite Records Manager.

Making its debut at the event was BaseNet, based in Amsterdam. BaseNet's one-stop-shop, cloud-based, legal practice management offering includes both a document and customer relationship management solution, a time and billing recording facility, an accounting package, email, plus a calendar and task reminder service.

HP's recent iManage spin-off saw a reduction in the company's direct presence in the legal technology space. Nevertheless, it continues to promote itself within the legal IT market. HP's Kenneth Fyfe and Daniel Smith demonstrated an offering which might be of interest to legal IT managers struggling with the security challenges posed by the 'bring your own device' (BYOD) phenomenon.

HP's solution is elegant in its simplicity: reduce the number of supported devices that lawyers would typically use for work, while streamlining the number of operating systems those devices run on. The first solution presented was the HP Elite x2, a combined tablet and laptop, while the second, the HP Elite x3, was a mobile phone that doubles as a fully-fledged PC when attached to a docking station.

The final Aderant demonstration stage presentation of the day, delivered by Richard Palmer of Fifosys and Joshua Lambert from Datto, delivered a dramatic end to proceedings: the pair froze a server live on stage using liquid nitrogen. Although the demonstration was lighthearted, it made an important point: data storage technology can – and often does – fail. Addressing this challenge, Fifosys' cloud solution backs up firm data and applications in real time and can be fully restored in moments.

Indeed, having restored the server's data in just six seconds using a web-based interface, Lambert revealed another role for the liquid nitrogen used in the demonstration – preserving vanilla, salted caramel and mango ice cream, which was available from the company's exhibition stand.

