



Legalweek 2020 In New York Was Outstanding

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8500 PROFESSIONALS FROM ACROSS THE LEGAL SERVICE ECOSYSTEM CAME TOGETHER FOR A WEEK OF LEARNING, SHARING, AND NETWORKING

I participated in Legalweek 2020 in New York last week, co-chairing the Legal Business Strategy Program with **Gina Passarella**, Editor in Chief of the American Lawyer. It was an exceptional experience.

Here is my report:

The World's Most Comprehensive Legal Technology Event

What began as “LegalTech,” the world’s largest and longest running legal technology trade show, has grown to become the world’s largest and most comprehensive event for the exploration of how everyone in law can benefit from the power of legal technology.

More than 8500 professionals participated in the three day event this year. They included representatives across the entire legal services ecosystem: law firms, corporate law departments, alternative legal service providers, legal technology companies, judges, regulators, consultants, academics, and journalists. Within

each of these categories, the attendees reflected the diverse array of roles and perspectives engaged in law and technology today.

The event proceeded on three tracks: Legal Business Strategy (focused on the evolution of legal service delivery); Legal CIO (focused on the management of legal technology in legal service) and LegalTech (focused on developments in legal technology). Each track offered informative and actionable educational sessions led by leading professionals engaged in cutting edge facets of the intersection of law and technology.

By virtue of its scale and the diversity of its participants, the event offered a truly unparalleled opportunity to “network,” to connect with others in the legal technology world in a setting that fosters meaningful conversation about the issues challenging and stimulating all of us.

And the event continues to offer a massive exhibit hall in which participants can learn about legal technology products and services first hand.

Focused, Expert, and Pragmatic Educational Sessions

The educational sessions were led by professionals who are directly engaged in the work of integrating technology into the law. In the examples I share below, I list the session leaders for illustration.

The sessions were designed to generate candid discussion of the specifics at work, to be practical, and to permit meaningful interaction between the audience and the session leaders.

Here are some examples:

- ***Regulatory Reform:*** Several states are considering changes in the rules governing the practice of law that would permit (1) a more diverse range of

professionals to participate in legal service delivery and (2) more people, including technology professionals, legal operations



Regulatory Reform Participants

professionals, and outside investors, to share in the profits of a law firm. The states that are furthest along on these reforms are Utah, Arizona, and California. In this session Arizona Supreme Court Vice Chief Justice, **Ann Timmer**, and Utah Supreme Court Justice, **Deno Himonas**, and **Andrew Arruda**, a member of the California ATILS Commission, discussed what they are doing and why, and explored the potential impact of the reforms. It was a unique opportunity to hear directly from the regulators as the process is underway on these hugely important reforms. (This session also benefited enormously from an overview of the issues motivating the reform movement from the renowned expert on the subject, Professor **Rebecca Sandefur**.)

- **Data Analytics:** *Data analytics has the potential to revolutionize the way legal service is delivered. That said, integrating data*



Data Analytics Session

*analytics into the legal service delivery model is complicated and challenging. In this session the **Mark Smolik**, the imaginative General Counsel of DHL Supply Chain Americas, **Karl Harris**, the CEO of Lex Machina, the groundbreaking data analytics company, and **Jae Um**, the Director of Pricing Strategy at Baker McKenzie, shared their knowledge, experiences, and recommendations, in a candid and pragmatic discussion. The audience heard concrete examples of how data analytics creates visibility into knowledge to be found in enterprise data, real world experiences dealing with the impediments to adoption, and guidance on how to bring clients and practitioners together to collaborate in making progress.*

- **Robotic Process Automation:** *In one of my favorite sessions this year, three law firm directors of research and knowledge management, **Cynthia Brown** of Littler, **Michelle Dewey** of BakerHostetler, and **Jennifer Mendez** of Ogletree Deakins, gave the audience a roadmap on how to use modern robotic technology to facilitate access to firm knowledge. In a clear and plain english way, they demonstrated how firms can create user friendly “bots,” that practitioners will actually use, permitting knowledge management to come alive.*

The Sophisticated and Affirmative Outlook of the Professionals Who Participated

Throughout Legalweek I was struck by the outlook of the participants. They were sophisticated, both in law and technology. More significant, they were affirmative, exhibiting an experienced-based view that the legal technology, and modern process design, are making real progress on modernizing the way legal services are delivered.



Change Management Session

In a session on change management, for example, the audience enthusiastically engaged in the discussion and shared examples of ways they are leading change. As the discussion proceeded it was clear that the participants *believed* they were going to succeed in achieving the change that legal service needs. The session was led by **Bill Garcia**, Chief Practice Innovation Officer at Thompson Hine, **Michelle deStefano**, the Founder and Director of *Law Without Walls*, and **Ari Kaplan**, the prominent author and legal industry analyst.

Similarly, in a closing session entitled “Modernizing the Delivery of Legal Services,” we conducted an open and wide ranging discussion with a large group of Legalweek participants about the prospects for meaningful modernization. We examined issues from the superficial to the fundamental, including the core elements of the legal service business model. The command the participants had of the underlying dynamics that are at work, both in holding law back and in potentially enabling its modernization, was encouraging. So too was their sense

that they are making progress and are on their way to even more. This session was led by **Gina Passarella**, **Bruce MacEwen** and Janet **Stanton**, of Adam Smith Esq., and **Lucy Bassli**, founder of InnoLegal Services.

These experiences left me with an enhanced optimism about the pace at which we may make the changes we need to make.

“Everyone Is here!”

That is a refrain I heard over and over during the week. It did indeed feel like everyone involved in the intersection of law and technology was in attendance. What you really noticed was that you saw people you had heard of or read about and now had a chance to meet.

There is nothing quite like Legalweek. It was illuminating and fun to be part of it this year. I plan to engage even more fully next year. I hope I will see you there.

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