New Roles for Librarians in Teaching Law Practice Technology

Perspectives from a law firm librarian

Allison C. Reeve Davis
Technology in Law Firms

- Document Automation
- CRM/Timekeeping
- Case/Matter Management Systems
- E-Discovery and preservation
- Records Management
- E-billing
- Litigation and Matter Analytics

But don’t forget about!

- Microsoft Office Suite
- Outlook email and calendar
- Online legal research
- Cloud computing
Who needs to know?
Skills of Tech Competent Attorneys

• Evaluation
• Functionality

• Security
• The Cutting Edge
Client Requirements

- Security
- ROI
- Efficiency
- Tech cost vs. billable hour

Strategic Partners
Supporting the Practitioner

- Skill assessment
- Training
- Re-training at point-of-need
- Administrative support and expertise

- Back to basics
- Law student perspective
- Approaches to learning technology
Teaching Law Practice Technology

The Role Librarians Can Play

John Edwards
Drake University Law Library
Teaching Law Practice Technology

Five Points to Cover:
1) Why tech needs to be taught
2) Why librarians should teach tech
3) What tech classes are being taught
4) What is covered in a couple of those classes
5) What steps you might take to teach a tech class
Teaching Tech: How Legal Education Coursework Is Changing in Today’s Digital Era

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By Natasha Chan Tan, InCloudCounsel | October 01, 2019 at 07:00 AM

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Students starting law school this fall will graduate into an industry that’s very different from the one of generations past. Gone are the days when practicing law meant spending hours behind an imposing wooden desk in an office overflowing with paper.

While it may have started as little more than the latest buzzword, “legal tech” has integrated itself firmly into the mainstream and is now part and parcel of everyday legal practice.
Teaching Tech: How Legal Education Coursework Is Changing in Today’s Digital Era

To succeed as lawyers, law students will need to understand the disruptive technologies that form the basis of today’s tech-enabled legal solutions, including AI, machine learning, and natural language processing. These technologies underlie the innovations that today’s law students will be dealing with on a daily basis as lawyers, such as digitalization, blockchain in the legal service delivery model, and cybersecurity.

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Finally, law schools will need to arm students for the future by teaching them how to understand and leverage data analytics. In a world where clients are demanding increased efficiency and lower cost, process optimization and quantitative decision-making are critical to legal success. Legal pedagogy has historically focused more on the litigation side of legal practice, but many of today’s law students will be engaging in transactional work.

37 States Have Adopted the Duty of Technology Competence

In 2012, something happened that I called a sea change in the legal profession: The American Bar Association formally approved a change to the Model Rules of Professional Conduct to make clear that lawyers have a duty to be competent not only in the law and its practice, but also in technology.

More specifically, the ABA’s House of Delegates voted to amend Comment 8 to Model Rule 1.1, which pertains to competence, to read as follows:

**Maintaining Competence**

To maintain the requisite knowledge and skill, a lawyer should keep abreast of changes in the law and its practice, *including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology*, engage in continuing study and education and comply with all continuing legal education requirements to which the lawyer is subject. (Emphasis added.)

https://www.lawsitesblog.com/tech-competence
Why should law librarians be involved in teaching tech?

Especially when the list of tasks seems to be growing and staff size at many schools has been shrinking.

Not all deans and faculties realize what law librarians do, or what they can do. Teaching is another opportunity to demonstrate what we can do – and do well.

If you don’t toot your own horn, don’t complain there’s no music. -- Guy Kawasaki

How many of you have had to ask the Yirka question: What should we stop doing in order to address higher priority initiatives?

Carl A. Yirka, The Yirka Question and Yirka’s Answer: What should law libraries stop doing in order to address higher priority initiatives?, AALL Spectrum, July 1, 2008, at 28. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=1371773 (Article of the Year Award Winner)
What kinds of tech courses are being taught?

• Teaching Technology to Law Students Special Interest Group includes a SYLLABUS COMMONS with courses such as:
  – Law Practice Technology[ies]
  – Entrepreneurial Lawyering
  – Technology & the Practice of Law
  – Legal Analytics
  – Legal Practice Tech Skills
  – Legal Tech Competency
  – Cryptocurrencies, Blockchain Technologies & the Law
What is being taught in tech courses?

• **Law Practice Technology (Fordham)**
  – Marketing and Social Media
  – Cybersecurity/Client Confidentiality
  – Competitive Intelligence
  – Microsoft Word
  – Law Office Management
  – Legal Analytics
  – eDiscovery
  – Courtroom Technology
  – Mobile Legal Technology
What is being taught in tech courses?

• Law Practice Technology (Fordham - continued)
  – Artificial Intelligence in Legal Research
  – Blockchain and Cryptocurrency
What is being taught in tech courses?

• **Law Practice Technologies (UNC)**
  – Legal Research Databases & AI
  – Basic Coding and Web Design
  – Collaborative Lawyering
  – Legal Tech Assessment
  – Microsoft Word Styles
  – Adobe Creative Cloud, e-filing & redaction
  – Cloud storage
  – Encryption
  – Practice Management software
What is being taught in tech courses?

• Law Practice Technologies (UNC - continued)
  – Document automation
  – Security and Technology
  – Social Media
  – Discovery
  – E-Discovery
  – Litigation Technologies
  – Legal Analytics
Who is teaching these tech courses?

Law Librarians!

How can you pursue teaching a tech course?

- See what tech curricular gaps your school has
- Assess your skills and aptitude to help fill those gaps
- Discuss with your director/supervisor your potential interest in teaching a tech course
- Have some preliminary discussions with the Associate Dean, Curriculum chair, or someone familiar with the process for approval
How can you pursue teaching a tech course?

• Engage colleagues who also may have an interest and consider whether team teaching would be advantageous
• Review Syllabi
• Consider how teaching might work into your schedule, keeping your director/supervisor in the loop as well as colleagues who could be impacted
• Develop a course proposal (if the class has not been taught before)
• Follow the prescribed process to secure approval (for the class and) to teach the class
Considerations

• **Timing**
  • Could this be an interim or summer course or would it be better taught during the school year? Could it be a series of brown bags?

• **Format**
  • Could some (or all?) of the course be taught online?

• **Workload**
  • Not only for you but your colleagues. Consider how teaching might work into your schedule, keeping your director/supervisor in the loop as well as colleagues who could be impacted

• **Benefits**
  • What impact could teaching have on your status? If you don’t currently have a faculty title could an instructional title be added?
“It's time to take a shot.”
Appendix of Legal Practice Technology

Research platforms
Big 3 plus
Document automation
Intranets
Client extranets
Alerts
BYOD
CRM/Timekeeping
Case/Matter Management Systems
e-Discovery
Records Management/DMS
Litigation analytics
eBilling
Communications
Toolkits
Clouds
IP
More!

Additional Resources


ABA Model Rule 1.1: Competence, Comment 8.


The Lawyerist (lawyerist.com/technology)

Teaching Technology to Law Students Special Interest Group - Syllabi Commons (https://techforlawstudents.classcaster.net/syllabi-commons)