



DIGITISING ACCESS TO JUSTICE: LEGAL TECHNOLOGY

Abstract

Despite their initial reluctance to adopt technology, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced legal professionals to use legal technology solutions to continue serving their clients. As the law has started catching up with technology, the benefits of legal technology are becoming evident. In addition to making legal professionals' work more cost and time-efficient, accurate and transparent, legal tech has also made it possible for the general public to access justice. Legal technology is bringing about a digital revolution that digitises access to justice and transforms the modern legal landscape.



Long hours, manual processes and lawyers poring over numerous documents for research, due diligence, and paperwork have always been the defining characteristics of the legal system, making access to justice a long, drawn-out process.

The Covid-19 pandemic, however, has forced legal professionals to consider automating various legal functions, despite many resisting the change. And with the introduction of solutions such as automation, artificial intelligence,

and machine learning, the possibility of automating clerical, research, or discovery work has become real. Legal tech, as a result, is freeing up time and resources for core aspects of legal practice.

What is legal technology?

Historically, legal technology only included the technology that law firms used to help with practice management, accounting and billing, document management, and administration. However, over the last decade, the meaning of legal tech has evolved and expanded to encompass solutions that make access to justice easier, connecting the general public with lawyers, legal advice, and other legal

services for a quick resolution of their legal problems.

As technology makes access to legal services and justice easier, the legal technology market is growing, with a revenue of **\$29.8 billion** worldwide in 2022. The legal technology consulting and startup market is set to grow at a CAGR of **3.7%** from **\$5.4 billion** in 2021 to **\$6.7 billion** in 2027. The relationship

between technology and law, however, is like the hare and the tortoise, with the legal ecosystem trying to catch up to the ever-evolving technological ecosystem. With the fourth industrial revolution around the corner, it is imperative for law firms and legal professionals to understand and leverage the emerging legal tech trends and solutions to digitise access to justice.

Classifying legal tech

To understand how legal tech is revolutionising the modern legal system and digitalizing access to justice, it is critical to understand how you can classify different technology solutions for various legal services and tasks.

The three principal types of legal technology are:

- **Enablers:** These technology solutions digitise the legal data for ease of access and analysis by other legal tech solutions.

- **Support process solutions:** These solutions focus on support tasks in the legal ecosystem, such as administration, business development, accounting, human resource management, document management, and case management.

- **Substantive law technology:** These solutions focus on actual case analysis and litigations to offer basic and advanced support or commoditised law solutions.

A further nine-fold classification of legal technologies, based on the specific legal services they support, include:

- Legal marketplace
- Document automation
- Practice management
- Legal research
- Legal education
- Online dispute resolution
- e-Discovery
- Analytics
- Compliance

Each of these solutions and tools has a different utility. But they have the common goal of making legal services and justice more accessible for all involved parties. Legal tech can help law professionals save time and costs, improve accuracy, facilitate easy collaboration, and ensure transparency. On the other hand, law students can benefit from solutions like legal research and basic drafting to improve their practical skills. And

for the clients of legal services, legal technology has made legal services more affordable, accessible and easy to use while digitalizing their access to justice for increased convenience.

Some of the common examples of legal technology solutions today are:

- **Cloud-based databases:** Cloud-based databases or document management solutions have become popular as remote work has become a norm. These solutions offer anytime, anywhere access to necessary data, many incorporating aspects of cybersecurity to protect sensitive information, making it easier for law professionals to access the documents on the go and collaborate with others.

- **Legal chatbots:** Legal chatbots leverage artificial intelligence and machine learning solutions to improve the customer service aspect of the legal ecosystem. This legal tech plays a key role in improving client information by responding to their queries promptly or directing them to the concerned department for further assistance.

- **Document review software:** Document review solutions leverage artificial intelligence models to analyse and review the documents in a firm's database. These tools can quickly scan documents, correspondences, client files and communication spanning years, discarding irrelevant information to give actionable insights to the legal team.

- **e-Discovery tools:** The discovery process comprises collecting, processing and sorting through large amounts of data to find the relevant information. e-Discovery tools automate this process to make it more time and cost-efficient for the legal teams.

- **Documentation automation technology:** Document automation allows lawyers to streamline process-driven tasks and documentation, such as generating

standard documentation, drafting template contracts or reviewing contracts.

- **Legal transcription:** A large part of a lawyer's work comprises conversations, meetings, and conferences covering important topics they must document. Legal transcription solutions automate the documentation process with the help of speech recognition technology and can even work in real-time to document the meeting as it progresses.

- **Legal conferencing software:** As the world shifted online during the pandemic, court proceedings also had to move online through video conferencing solutions. Additionally, dedicated legal conferencing solutions, integrating video conferencing and document management solutions, have made it easier for legal teams to create a virtual office environment and collaborate effectively.

- **Legal research:** Research is an integral part of the legal proceeding, allowing lawyers to identify precedence and legal principles surrounding the issue. Legal research tools have made this time-consuming process time and cost-efficient to provide accurate, relevant and actionable insights for the legal team.

- **Legal analytics:** Legal analytics is an emerging trend in legal technology consulting, allowing legal teams to extract valuable insights from the data available. For example, predictive judicial analytics or attorney analytics can offer insights into how a judge or an attorney will handle certain matters, allowing legal teams to define their litigation strategy.

- **Blockchain solutions:** Blockchain technology is revolutionising many industries by introducing a tamper-proof distributed databases. In the legal ecosystem, smart contracts utilise blockchain solutions to ensure compliance with contract terms and eliminate the potential for fraud.

Emerging legal tech trends

As the law continues to follow technology, Gartner has identified five trends that can drive the legal technology investment and transformation efforts for many corporations and legal firms.

- **Investment in legal tech will increase threefold by 2025:** As the benefits of technology in the legal ecosystem has become evident, corporate legal departments and major law firms will increase their legal tech investments threefold to continue leveraging modern tech solutions and make legal services more time and cost-efficient.

- **Non-lawyer staff (or tech) will replace 20% of the generalist lawyers by 2024:** As legal tech can automate many process-oriented or repetitive tasks, many legal

institutions will decide to replace generalist lawyers with non-lawyer staff or legal technology consultants.

- **Corporations and law firms will automate 50% of their workload by 2024:** Leveraging many legal tech tools and solutions, corporate legal departments and law firms will be able to automate a large part of their workload, allowing the legal teams to focus their resources on core and expertise-critical tasks.

- **Corporate legal departments may capture only 30% of potential benefits from their contract lifecycle management investments by 2025:** One of the greatest challenges in legal tech adoption and normalisation will be managing unrealistic stakeholder expectations regarding the

technology investment payback period. Additionally, although technology has great potential to help legal teams, legal leaders must focus on finding and adopting well-suited solutions, or they may risk losing their technology investment.

- **Non-specialist technology providers will capture at least 25% budget for corporate legal applications by 2025:** Specialist technology vendors dominate the legal tech market currently. But as the demand for legal compliance and transformation increases, non-specialist legal technology consultants and providers will have more appeal because of their higher utility and ease of integration.



How is legal technology shaping the future of justice?

Despite the initial resistance and slow adoption, technology solutions have made their mark on the legal industry, highlighting the benefits of leveraging legal tech software and tools. Some of the key benefits of adopting legal tech, which was impossible in traditional legal functions, include:

- **Increased geographical reach:** With legal tech, law firms can now go global to attract a wider client pool and clients can benefit from the commoditization of legal services.
- **Better transparency:** Transparency had been missing from traditional legal functions, leaving clients to blindly trust their legal team. With legal technology, clients now have a clear idea of their case progress and other pertinent information, making modern law firms more customer-centric and transparent.
- **Better use of resources:** With automation solutions, law firms can free up their personnel from repetitive tasks and redeploy them towards more complex tasks that have a higher impact on client outcomes.
- **Faster processing and time management:** The right technology is faster and more efficient than humans. And with solutions like automation, artificial intelligence or machine learning, the research, document processing or analysis tasks that took hours, if not days, now take just a few minutes.
- **Fewer errors:** Legal tech removes the potential for human error from many of the legal functions, allowing law firms to save expenses and time on identifying and rectifying errors.

Close to 70% of the customers prefer legal tech solutions, such as legal chatbots, over traditional services. Law firms must evolve and transform to embrace digital transformation. This benefits both law firms and clients, digitising access to justice and making it more accessible to the general public.



Conclusion

Despite resistance from legal professionals, legal tech is bringing about [digital transformation in the modern legal ecosystem](#), digitising access to justice. With benefits like time and cost efficiency, improved transparency, increased reach, better use of resources and more

accurate actionable insights, both legal professionals and clients now prefer legal tech over traditional legal functions. As a result, law firms and corporate legal departments are increasing their legal tech investment and relying on legal technology consulting services for better

client outcomes. With the most appropriate tool for their needs, legal professionals have much to gain from embracing legal tech and being part of the digital transformation that makes legal services and justice more accessible to the general public.

* For organizations on the digital transformation journey, agility is key in responding to a rapidly changing technology and business landscape. Now more than ever, it is crucial to deliver and exceed on organizational expectations with a robust digital mindset backed by innovation. Enabling businesses to sense, learn, respond, and evolve like a living organism, will be imperative for business excellence going forward. A comprehensive, yet modular suite of services is doing exactly that. Equipping **organizations with intuitive decision-making** automatically at scale, actionable insights based on real-time solutions, anytime/anywhere experience, and in-depth data visibility across functions leading to hyper-productivity, [Live Enterprise](#) is building connected organizations that are innovating collaboratively for the future.

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