

Future Lawyer Week 5.0: the legaltech startups defining the market

Future Lawyer Week returned for its fifth UK iteration between the 18th-20th May, hosted by Cosmonauts. Across three days, hundreds of private practice, in-house, and litigation lawyers met in central London to discuss legaltech trends and to listen to those on the frontline of legaltech development.

Lawyers and law firms are often mischaracterised as being reticent to technological adoption. Outsiders view the profession as traditional, staid, and, more importantly, risk averse. The antonyms to those descriptions could be used to define the startup world.

Yet, those who spoke at Future Lawyer Week, from practising lawyers to legaltech operatives, rejected the initial accusation, pointing instead toward a culture within law firms of adopting the technology that would offer the most effective and efficient service to the client.

A common refrain across the event was that lawyers are 'work rich, time poor'. If technology can rebalance the relationship between work and time, adoption is a no-brainer.

That being said, success of deployment was said to be predicated on the software's ease of use. Hearty discussion was had on the need for developers

to design software that was as intuitive to operate as possible. Lawyers and law firms are not reticent to technological adoption, though they may be averse to technology the value of which is not immediately apparent.

Below you can find five of the most exciting legaltech offerings currently on the market.

DISCO

Document review is an area of tech development that has very clearly aided lawyers, saving hours of time spent sifting through paper documents and folders.

DISCO believes that “the future of legal practice is powered by intuitive, lawyer-driven technology”. Aiding this transformation, DISCO offers a plethora of tech services that can “address [...] critical business challenges”, to quote their CEO Kiwi Camara.

Including a cloud-native Ediscovery SaaS solution, a document review service that is 60% faster than the industry average, and a case builder that automates “everything that’s low-value, redundant, and siloed”.

HENCHMAN

Henchman are a Belgian company that are saving lawyers time during contract creation, disrupting knowledge silos, and enabling lawyers to become data-driven.

By building a database of preexisting legal contracts and documents, Henchman’s software can suggest clauses to the lawyer who is drafting the latest contract.

This can help a lawyer who needs inspiration for the wording of a specific clause, or help to repurpose entire clauses. Henchman also allows lawyers to search for specific precedent clauses and definitions for use in the latest contract.

Speaking to founder Jorn Vanysacker, he said that “we founded Henchman with the mission to assist lawyers in excelling in high-value tasks. Specifically, drafting and negotiating complex and bespoke contracts, such as SPAs.”

BETTY BLOCKS

Fittingly, *Betty Blocks* founder and CEO, Chris Obdam, delivered a talk on 'How to Become a Future-Proof Legal Firm' on the opening day of FLW 5.0.

His SaaS company empowers lawyers to build applications that maximise the power of data, and automate workflows, through an intuitive no-code/low-code platform.

Powered by Reynen Court, a platform to help legal professional maintain cloud-based applications, Betty Blocks is simplifying the adoption of new technology in international law firms.

HENCE.AI

Hence.AI was founded to empower in-house legal teams to get more value from their relationships with external lawyers.

A UK and Rwanda-based startup, Hence are making a relationship intelligence platform that maps associations, allows for real time feedback, and aggregates in house experience.

Delivering a talk on 'The Geopolitics of Selecting Lawyers', Hence co-founder Sean West explained how the software can be used by in-house counsel teams to ensure the external counsel they select align with corporate values such as diversity and ESG.

LITIGATE

Litigate sells itself on its numbers: in one case study, Litigate software offered 90% time-saving capabilities, rebalancing the work/time relationship.

An AI-powered litigation lifecycle platform, Litigate automates tasks and supercharges data analysis to organise and classify documents in any litigation case. Litigate's software can quite radically redefine the litigation case management process, enabling lawyers to spend more time on the legal argument, and less time searching through documents and folders.

Reducing the time spent completing manual and administrative tasks means firms can offer a more cost-efficient service to the client in a way that is more meaningful to the lawyer.

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