

Clemente J. Vivanco, esq., LL.M.
cjb@vivancoyvivanco.com
www.vivancoyvivanco.com

Reality check on LegalTech – what works and what doesn't: THE WAY I SEE IT

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools and technology are critically changing the law profession in ways that are forcing lawyers to radically transform their mindset. However, at the end of this transformation era, lawyers, armed with different skills, will still be needed.

In medieval times kings and lords had knights who were in charge of protecting them and their belongings. Knights were noble, audacious, intelligent and above all they were loyal to their masters. In modern times, businesspeople and companies have lawyers who, in different ways, have the same responsibilities as knights had in the past. Now, in a world where technology is so vital in our day to day, lawyers have to re-evaluate their role in order to take advantage of the new available tools.

We constantly hear that AI and technology threaten the survival of the law profession. However, what we are currently seeing is no different from what has happened before in the last century. When lawyers were able to communicate between them and with clients through a phone line, when they had access to enormous databases with case law, and finally when they were able to use internet-based tools, they had to adapt to new realities that improved the way they provided services to their clients. One can say that, if the law profession came out stronger after all those changes, history will repeat itself once again. However, things are different this time because AI systems through their algorithms replace actual human beings in tasks like research, probability calculation, litigation strategy and others.

Some law firms invest heavily in R & D. There are very interesting cases that show how firms are trying to take advantage of new AI tools. Big immigration law firms have developed IT systems that based on algorithms allows case workers to put assignees information on a software and the system itself, without the assistance of lawyers, comes out with the list of requirements, timeline and immigration options. Company Registrars worldwide are developing on-line options that anybody can use to create corporations in a user friendly process that takes minutes. IP is another area of the law practice that is becoming more accessible to non-lawyers through the use of technology. Intellectual property offices around the world encourage people to file for the registration of trademarks directly and without the assistance of lawyers. Moreover, on-line services like *UnitedLex*, *Elevate* are also valid alternatives for legal needs.

Some *type* of lawyers will disappear due to the disruptive technology because they will not be ready to take advantage of the new tools. On the other hand, other *type* of lawyers will be visionary enough to come out stronger and will play a very important role in the marketplace and business environment. AI and new technologies are not threatening the profession; they are merely providing tools so lawyers can evolve. Legal services provided by lawyers will not loose space in the legal market, however, not traditional providers will develop their own space and will increase the market size. Human-lawyers, are those professionals who will be able to evolve in what the profession requires, using AI and the new technology tools, whereas traditional lawyers are those who feel threaten by these new tools and who will see their practice shrink.

Legal services provided by human-lawyers will compete in certain areas with non-traditional legal services providers. But only human-lawyers will still fulfill other areas. The result will be a much bigger legal market that will ultimately benefit clients.

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