

Episode 89: Summary

Episode name: Evolution or Revolution? Correcting Haphazard Use of Technology and the Shape of Things to Come

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What area(s) of law does this episode consider?

Generative AI and the importance of understanding machine learning

Why is this topic relevant?

Generative AI - and machine learning more generally - are fast becoming crucial tools in the legal industry, transforming the way lawyers practice law. The zeitgeist is, of course, ChatGPT - but OpenAI's gregarious creation is far from the only game in town.

Today, generative AI can create content such as text, images, and even certain legal documents. And, in future, it has immense potential to assist lawyers with tasks such as drafting contracts, analyzing large volumes of data, and conducting legal research.

As the legal technology landscape becomes increasingly complex and data-driven, the ability to leverage machine learning tools like generative AI becomes essential for lawyers and law firms to deliver efficient and accurate legal services.

What are the main points?

- The legal profession has a reputation for being resistant to technological adoption, but the pandemic forced many firms to adopt remote working technology.
- It's important for law firms to get the most out of their existing technology before adopting new tools.
- Common barriers to adoption of technology in law firms include legacy systems and individual resistance to change.
- It's important to consider how technology can add value for law firm clients and to focus on incremental innovation rather than overwhelming lawyers with new tools.
- There is a perception that expensive technology tools are only worthwhile for large firms, but they work with both large and small firms.
- While big law firms have access to more powerful and specialised tools, small firms can make use of enterprise business tools like Airtable.
- While there are misconceptions about what large language models like ChatGPT can do, lawyers should be familiarising themselves with these tools.
- Generative AI, such as ChatGPT, can be used for various purposes in the legal industry, including identifying client interests and generating strategic ideas to attract more website visitors.
- It can also be used to summarise large documents or generate first drafts of legal documents with different tones or styles.

- Lawyers should also start recording their processes and systems in order to train these models down the line.
- However, there are limitations and ethical considerations around the use of generative AI, such as confidentiality and privilege issues and carbon footprint.
- Despite these concerns, generative AI has the potential to improve access to justice by removing barriers to accessing legal information.
- Ignoring AI is not the right approach; and universities are partnering with law firms or law tech companies to re-engineer how legal services are delivered.

What are the practical takeaways?

- The traditional way of delivering legal services has caused a failure where a segment of the public cannot access legal services, resulting in unhappy lawyers.
- It is essential to measure the right things in order to set up for success when adopting new ways of working or technology.
- Law schools should consider teaching basic usage of AI technologies as it will become a foundational skill for success in legal practice.
- Students need to be given tools to think about how legal services can be delivered more cost-effectively while maintaining quality.
- To stay updated on developments in legal technology and generative AI follow experts like Liz Chase, Raymond Sun, as well as Josh Kubiki's newsletter Brainyacts.