Law Schools Escalate Their Focus on Digital Skills

Coding, data analytics and device integration give students the tools to become more efficient lawyers.

by Eli Zimmerman

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The law industry is using innovative test design and new technology curricula in law schools to make their graduates more effective employees.

Research shows law firms benefit greatly from digital integration. Law firms can use technology to increase project delivery by **63 percent** and decrease legal and compliance risk by **43 percent**, according to a 2018 Gartner report.

However, only **19 percent** of legal teams fall into this category, creating a need for future law school students to be technically savvy by the time they graduate.

Law School Entrance Exam Moves Exclusively Online

Reflecting that shift, the Law School Admission Council, which organizes and distributes the Law School Admission Test, will be offering the test exclusively on Microsoft Surface Go tablets starting in July 2019.

The transition is meant to speed up the digital transformation of a profession that has started to fall behind other industries, according to LSAC officials.

"Legal education and the legal profession need to keep pace with technological advancements," said Kellye Testy, president and CEO of LSAC.

Using Microsoft Surface Go devices will also **improve test accessibility**, said Troy Lowry, senior vice president of technology products and CIO at LSAC.
The initial set of tools built into the **devices include screen readers and icon magnifiers**, which let applicants adjust the view to make sure they can read and understand questions.
Microsoft and LSAC will be working together to build more accessibility features in the future as well, said Lowry.

Law Schools Teach Real-World Implications of Digital Transformation

At innovative law schools, professors are **using real-world examples to show students how attorneys can integrate** technology into their practices.
At the [Hofstra University Maurice A. Deane School of Law](#), students are using [Apple iPad devices](#) in mock trials to access case files and present evidence, *Newsday* [reports](#).

Through the TrialPad application, students can organize their arguments and zoom in on images of evidence when questioning witnesses.

"What we're trying to do is give our students an opportunity to explore not just where the practice of law is now, but where it's headed," said Courtney Selby, a Hofstra professor, associate dean for information services and director of the college's Law Library. "We're trying to **give them the opportunity to see a little bit into the future** of their own professional lives."

Coding and Data Analytics Skills Make Law Students More Efficient

At the [Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center](#), students are learning to construct automated information systems to collect client information.
With these coding skills, students can reduce the time it takes to conduct client assessments.

Similarly, students at the [University of Kansas School of Law](#) had the opportunity to take the institution's first legal analytics course at the end of last year, [Legaltech News reports](#).
Participants learned to use **analytics programs and artificial intelligence** to complete work in a fraction of the time it usually takes.

For example, students analyzed contracts using AI programs to find errors and areas for improvement across various legal jurisdictions. In another exercise, students learned to **use data programs to draft nondisclosure agreements** in less than half an hour.
By learning analytics models, students will graduate with the skills to make them more effective — and more employable — professionals.

"As advancing technology and massive data sets **enable lawyers to answer complex legal questions with greater speed and efficiency**, courses like Legal Analytics will help KU Law students be better advocates for tomorrow's clients and more competitive for tomorrow's jobs," Stephen Mazza, dean of the University of Kansas School of Law, tells Legaltech News.

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