Law Careers and Tech

[Richard Susskind's](#) book "**Tomorrows Lawyers**" predicts a world of online courts, AI-based global legal business, liberalized markets, commoditization and outsourcing, internet-based simulated practice, and new legal jobs.

In other words it describes just how much technology is having a profound impact on the legal world including AI and blockchain in legal practice, corporate governance and disruptive tech for clients, cyberlaw, technoethics and the internet of things. The new ways a law firm manages its working practices and the way it understands and therefore supports the technology related businesses of its clients is opening up new roles for graduates. For students interested in the connections between law and technology our Careers Consultant *David Ainscough* highlights **four ways** which may be exciting career paths to follow.

Technology focussed Training Contracts.

Clifford Chance is the law firm which has gone furthest to recruit students of any discipline onto a training contract programme, called [IGNITE,](#) which incorporates technology based experience. There are monthly training sessions for IGNITE trainees with internal and external speakers; a personal budget to spend on courses and training to support IGNITE projects; IGNITE socials to connect trainees to the wider team; and IGNITE Champions who are people in the firm offering active support. During the application process Clifford Chance looks for tangible evidence of an engagement with technology alongside an interest in corporate law.

Don't forget, in doing your research, check whether a rotational seat in a technology practice area is something that forms part of the training contract. Secondments to technology client firms can sometimes also be part of the trainee experience. **Gowling WLG**, for example, offers an innovation and legal tech seat whereby trainees can spend six months between the firm's innovation team and on secondment to Avail – an AI start up with a focus on real estate. Experience in the seat includes building apps and automating documents using coding, and advising legal teams on AI review projects. It also comprises product development such as leading pilots and testing new legal technology products, and training legal teams on technology tools. **Addleshaw Goddard** and **DWF** both offer a six month tech seat to their trainees.

Qualifying with law firms that specialise in technology based clients.

If your interest in technology hasn't gone so far as trying your hand at programming, joining a student society such as Cambridge University Entrepreneurs, or having had work experience in a legal start up, and yet nevertheless you are excited by working with tech based clients then a conventional training contract with a specific group of law firms may be the way to proceed. A quick look at firms focussed on telecoms, media and technology using, for example, the **Legal 500** is a great starting point for your target applications list. And **Legal Cheek** recently surveyed over 2,000 junior lawyers about their own law firms technology capabilities to arrive at this list of the top 15. (some firms appear on both lists!).

Graduate operational support roles within law firms

Its only recently that law firms have taken a hard look at the level of sophistication involved across all the technologies used to support their own business efficiencies and have introduced graduate recruitment schemes specifically to support themselves. These schemes are completely seperate from say paralegalling and explicitly do not provide a stepping stone to qualifying as a solicitor. The numbers being hired are still small but if you have an interest in law firms and don't wish to qualify they offer the opportunity to work with organisations where you can make a direct impact. Those with already established programmes include Allen & Overy LawTech Graduate Programme, Linklaters Legal Operations Graduate Scheme, Norton Rose Fulbright Business Legal and Operations Graduate Scheme, Ashurst Advance Pathways Programme, and Herbert Smith Freehills Global Legal Operations Graduate Programme.

Working with a legal start up

Work experience in a start up focussed on law firm clients, the legal market place for AI driven advisory services, or workflow management tools is valuable for a number of reasons.. Being in a start up you will probably be exposed to a range of responsibilities common to all start ups which add value to your CV as transferable skills. In addition you will get to see first hand how technology is changing the way legal services are delivered and which law firms are either in the forefront of changing the way they do business. Emerging or already established firms to look to for work experience include those listed on the legal start ups of London website. However by its very nature the start up labour market is one where new firms are not always readily visible. Websites like Otta can also help you search for specific legal opportunities in all kinds of start ups.

Career support resources

If you'd like to stay informed about current developments in law and technology then access the materials and activities hosted by The Legal Technologist website and in particular its podcast series and career stories. To end where we started the Legal Geek often plays host to Richard Susskind as a keynote speaker at its conferences and one in particular each year

is open to students at no charge, the Student and Junior Lawyer LawTech Fair. In addition it offers a mentorship programme to students under represented in the legal profession.

…Final word
The University of Law hosts the Legal Tech hub known as ULTRA to support its own Master of Sciences in Legal Technology. There are several useful resources on the site to inform you and offer insights and in particular a video interview with Luminance, creators of one of the world's most advanced technologies for legal process automation and founded in Cambridge.