



## THREE CURRENT INNOVATION TRENDS IN LEGAL SERVICES

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**Commentators argue that the market for legal services is softening. Current research indicates that although the demand for legal services is growing (and is expected to continue to increase), client purchasing habits are changing.<sup>1</sup>**

Increasingly, lawyers and law firms are becoming aware of the impact of market pressures. In particular, there is a growing understanding of the role that innovation may play in responding to those pressures.

Lawyers are moving from being 'instruction takers' towards being innovators focused on superior service and efficiency. Clients are demanding of change. Future-focussed lawyers are looking for new and innovative ways to: provide better value for clients; and, distinguish themselves in a highly competitive environment.

This article sets out three current innovation trends in legal services developed by lawyers and non-lawyers.

### **Current trends in legal innovation**

#### **#1 – Client communication tools.**

Being responsive to client needs and wants is imperative. Lawyers face growing pressure from clients to have information immediately available when the client, or the client's business, needs it.

To satisfy this demand, some firms have developed new client communication

platforms that give the client complete visibility of file management and legal spend in real time. Systems are accessible by the client at any time.

Examples of these types of systems include ME Taskflow (developed by MinterEllisonRuddWatts) and the mobile apps: inCase™, CUSafe and Dawn Raid App (developed by Clayton Utz, Australia).

#### **#2 – Guided advice platforms.**

These platforms, or the use of 'chatbots' (a computer program that simulates conversation with human users), aim to make legal information easily accessible. They reduce or eliminate the barriers people face in getting legal advice, by putting the information and the process of obtaining it in the person's control.

Examples of these developments include: 'DoNotPay' (a chatbot initially developed to help people contest parking tickets, but now assists people filling out a range of transactional legal forms in the US and UK) and Solution Explorer from the British Columbia Residential Tenancy Tribunal and Autonomo (Claudia King).

#### **#3 – Artificial intelligence: predictive coding and document review**

Utilising the power of artificial intelligence technologies ('AI') to prioritise and filter documents for review in litigation and due diligence are two examples of how some firms

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<sup>1</sup> Deloitte "Future Trends for Legal Services" (global research study, June 2016).





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are responding to increased pressure from clients to 'do more for less'.

Use of predictive technology has enabled firms to become more efficient in how large quantities of documents are reviewed and prioritised, or how standardised contracts are reviewed. In turn, these technologies allow firms to: differentiate themselves by offering fixed fee arrangements; and, gain their clients' time and cost efficiencies.

Inhouse legal teams are using AI to internally complete work, leading to cost savings and more consistency, as well as leveraging institutional knowledge.

Examples include Neota Logic, Kira Systems and ContractPod.

### **Conclusion**

Law firms and lawyers who are seeking to do things differently are not only responding to market demands, but also using these innovative strategies to define what it will mean to provide legal services in the future.

Not all legal service innovations or innovation trends will suit all legal firms. How law firms can adapt what they do and how they do it, in order to gain efficiencies, or stand out from the crowd, will be heavily influenced by initially assessing which approach will meet an individual firm's strategic objectives.

At View Consulting, we know that understanding the trends in the marketplace is vital. That's why we discuss these (and

other emerging trends) as part of our Blueprint Program.

However, we also believe that adopting change for the sake of following, will likely not result in sustained growth and profitability.

Understanding different innovation concepts in order to assess and match initiatives with a firm's business objectives and client needs is essential to those initiatives being adopted and achieving sustained growth.

For more about understanding innovation within a firm's strategic objectives see our Blueprint Program ([www.viewconsulting.co.nz/programs](http://www.viewconsulting.co.nz/programs)).

For more general legal services innovation information, sign up to our Innovation Insights newsletter: ([www.viewconsulting.co.nz/knowledgecentre](http://www.viewconsulting.co.nz/knowledgecentre)).

Author: D Falconer

E: [danielle@viewconsulting.co.nz](mailto:danielle@viewconsulting.co.nz)

P: 021 973 963

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