

Getting started with legal tech: Why it doesn't have to be daunting



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Legal tech is a term that's growing in popularity. It refers to the digital tools law firms can use to support, supplement or replace traditional ways of delivering legal services.

For some, the myriad possibilities of legal tech are really exciting. For others, the whole thing can seem overwhelming and more than a bit scary. Luckily, one of the great things about legal tech is its flexibility. Firms can pick and choose the aspects that work for them and stay away from those that don't.

Some forward-looking firms might want to explore the ways in which artificial intelligence and chatbots can help them completely revolutionise what they do and how they do it. Other firms might feel far more comfortable utilising legal tech to streamline their administrative processes and therefore maximise the time they're able to spend engaging with clients face-to-face.

In other words, legal tech doesn't have to be daunting. Rather, it can be whatever you need it to be.

Why is it important to consider how legal tech could work for your firm?

Whatever the style of your law firm, we believe it's vital to explore ways that you could use technology to help you do what you do more efficiently.

In the words of Anna Bradley, Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) chair:



'The adoption of legal technology... can help to increase access to justice for the public and small businesses, as well as supporting firms to be more efficient, benefitting everyone and the economy as a whole.'



Essentially, digital tools can help law firms like yours to better serve the needs of clients. Some of the innovations that can have the biggest impact are actually the simplest ones. Video conferencing software is something most people are now very familiar with, but incorporating it into an everyday part of a legal firm's operations can be transformative. The same can be said of tools such as case management software and e-verification methods.

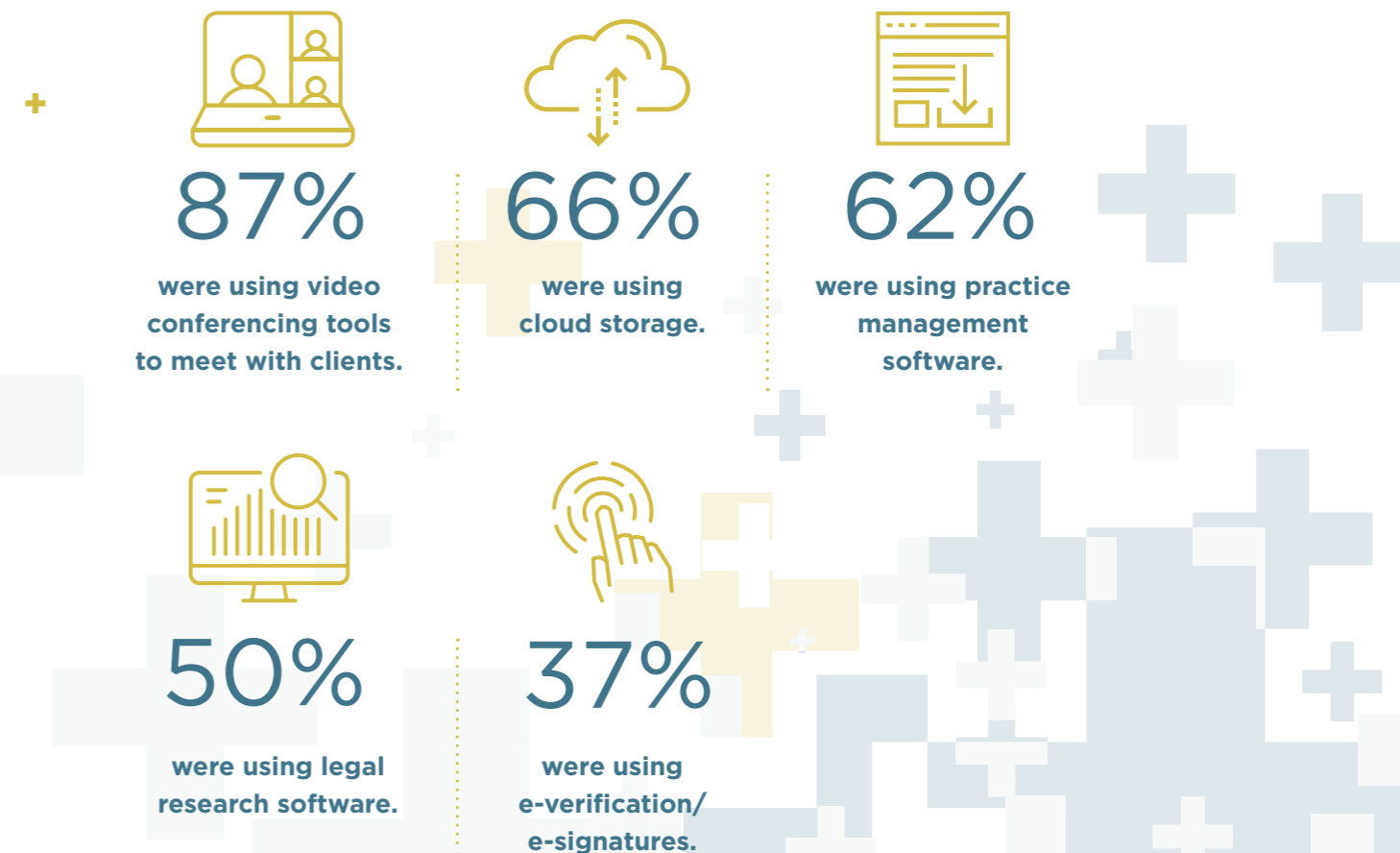
Not only can technology improve the way your firm engages with clients, it can also increase productivity, allow greater flexibility and, ultimately, increase income potential.



Where does the legal industry currently stand with legal tech?

The SRA recently commissioned a report on technology and legal services from the University of Oxford.

The report gave a very promising picture of the development of technology within the legal sector:





When asked about more specialist legal technology, a significant number of firms said they were either already using it or planned to do so in the future:



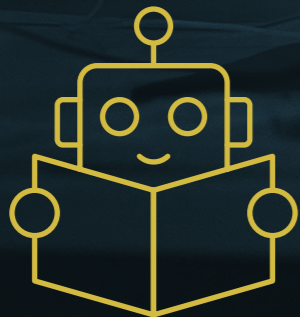
36%

were using/planning to use online portals for matter status updates.



30%

were using/planning to use interactive websites to generate legal documents.



50%

were using/planning to use chatbots or virtual assistants.



When firms were asked why they had introduced these new technologies:



72%

said it was to improve service quality.



71%

said it was to improve efficiency.



44%

said it was to allow staff to work more flexibly.



33%

said it was to reduce the overall cost of service delivery.



22%

said it was to increase security and compliance.



67%

Additionally, 67% of those introducing new services introduced new technology at the same time.



Key barriers



Despite the rapid growth of technology in the industry, many law firms still feel they're coming up against significant barriers.

In our experience, these barriers often fall into the following categories:

Lack of time

This is one of the most common issues: busy people running busy law firms don't have time to scope out requirements and assess possibilities, never mind actually make changes. This, of course, is a catch-22 situation, as implementing new technologies is highly likely to improve time management constraints.

Concerns about data migration and data security issues

Worries about what will happen with data migration and data security issues when moving from system to system put a lot of law firms off. Though there's no doubt that this can be a big job, it's certainly not an insurmountable issue. It can likely be completed far quicker and with fewer complications than you think.

Uncertainty about regulations and compliance

According to the SRA report, 45% of firms who have adopted new technologies were originally put off by uncertainty about how those technologies would affect regulation compliance. In fact, introducing more automation is likely to increase compliance. Accessing professional advice can help to avoid any pitfalls in this area.

Concerns about removing the 'human element'

Making better use of legal tech is not about introducing AIs and robots to manage everything on your behalf. Despite this, there's often a real concern that embracing digital tools will somehow remove the 'human element' from the service you provide. We believe embracing technology actually does the opposite. By automating the more mundane, administrative tasks, you'll create more time for relationship building between clients and legal professionals.

Cost

Unsurprisingly, a lot of law firms shy away from legal tech simply because of the cost. The SRA report showed that 58% of adopter firms were initially held back because of this. Historically, practice management software for a firm of 25-50 users would cost upwards of £200k to install, and that's without the cost of training or ongoing support. Today, the 'software as a service' solutions currently on the market usually charge on the basis of a price-per-head monthly fee, with training and support included. This can be much more manageable from a budgeting perspective.

Uncertainty about technology's associated business benefits

Looking again at the SRA's report, 36% of firms who are not currently using innovative technologies have chosen this path due to uncertainty about expected business benefits. If this is something you've been questioning for your firm, we'd recommend having a conversation with a consultant. They'll be able to help clarify how new efficiencies with technology could help to maximise your firm's available billable hours.

Thinking your firm is too small to innovate

If you run a small firm, you may fall into the trap of thinking that legal tech is not for you. The idea of investing huge sums of money in pursuit of innovation may seem out of reach.

In our experience, smaller firms actually have a competitive advantage here. Larger firms often have complex infrastructure and multiple layers of management, which can make decision making tricky. Smaller firms can make decisions faster, implement more easily and, therefore, get ahead of the game. Engaging outsourced trainers and consultants is actually very cost effective, and you can scale the resources according to project need.

General 'what ifs'

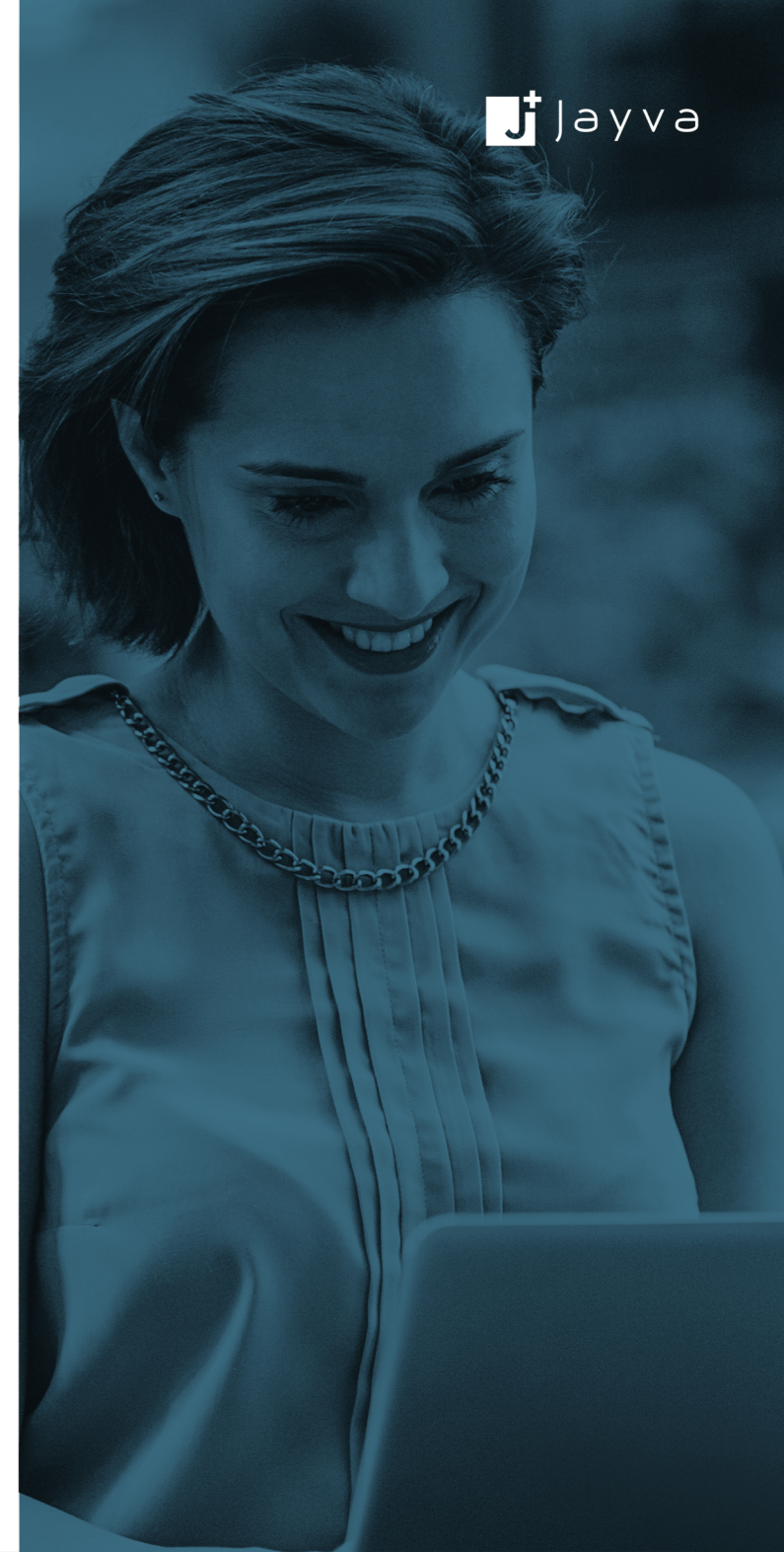
What if the new tech slows us down? What if our clients don't like it? What if our staff don't like it? What if it keeps breaking? These are all questions we've heard from law firms. Making changes can be difficult, and it's natural to have some concerns. However, getting too caught up in these kind of 'what if' scenarios can stop you making any moves at all, which seems like a sure-fire way for your firm to get left behind the rest of the market.

How to get started

If you're ready to take the leap into something new, why not let our highly knowledgeable consultants support you through the process? We're always on hand to help legal firms get the best from technology.

We can work with law firms of any type, any size and any location. As we have a whole global family of Jayva consultants, we're guaranteed to be able to match you up with the right professional.

Whatever your current set up, whatever your conundrum, we'd love to talk to you about it. Please reach out to us by phone, post or email, and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.





Who we help

Law firms
Law departments

What we do

Project management services:

- Implementation management
- Change management
- Business process improvement
- General project management and project rescue

Legal accounting consultancy services:

- Financial health check
- Accounts rescue
- Legal accounting best practice and cashier mentoring
- Data entry and migration

Training services:

- Legal accounts, case and document management training
- Microsoft Office training
- Super user training
- Getting the most from remote meetings
- Automation of processes including templates and workflow design/training

How we can benefit you

Dedicated consultants and trainers for the legal sector.
Inspiring law firms to adapt, harness technology and thrive.

Let us help your business

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