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AI and Knowledge Management: The Impact of AI and associated technologies on legal knowledge and information management practices

Introduction

Since the launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, the ripple effect of change has been felt throughout the legal sector. IT, Innovation and Knowledge teams have been at the forefront of this change, working to understand, adjust and consider the use of such powerful technologies, which have the potential to revolutionise the working practices of law firms in years to come.

To explore this topic further and dispel common myths regarding AI, leading iManage Partner Tiger Eye sat down with Helene Russell, Knowledge Management (KM) Consultant at The Knowledge Network for a roundtable discussion. Featuring knowledge and information practitioners from across leading UK firms, the group explored the past, present and future of AI, with panellists including:

- *Stella Laver, Knowledge Systems and Innovation Manager, Slaughter and May*
- *Janice Castel, Research and Knowledge Manager, Addleshaw Goddard*
- *Dave Wilson, Managing Director, Tiger Eye*
- *Alex Smith, Product Director, iManage*

Read our report to learn more about:

- Where AI can have the greatest positive impact for legal KM teams
- How Knowledge Leaders can change their practices to prepare for AI tools
- What skills knowledge teams and lawyers need for the future

Where can AI have the greatest positive impact for legal knowledge management teams?

Alex Smith, Product Director at iManage, started the conversation with the four key positive impacts he has identified for legal knowledge management teams using AI-powered processes.

"From my experience of working in-house within law firms and working alongside them in my product role, I see four ways in which AI can positively impact the working lives of legal knowledge teams.

1. *AI could help knowledge leaders to identify candidates for 'experts' and knowledge more easily. Instead of relying on people to submit know-how into a knowledge bank, KM teams can adopt more of a 'hunter' as opposed to gatherer approach, using AI to identify knowledge within other data stores, instead of waiting to receive submissions.*

2. *AI can start to help with how we add context to documents and know-how and provide insights as to how lawyers can use documents. This would be assistive, using foundational data to support curation efforts, rather than taking away the KM team's work entirely.*

3. *AI could help us to deliver knowledge contextually where lawyers work. For example, plug ins could work in partnership with Microsoft Word to deliver contextual know-how that users can use, when they need it.*

4. *Finally, AI may help us to tackle the 'blank sheet of paper' when beginning drafting documents (although I don't like this term). At this time, AI will help us to find data, and it may suggest content, but it won't accurately write a perfect precedent yet."*

Alex's advice for knowledge teams was to focus on planning around the first three years at present, as the final point is he sees that we are still 5 – 10 years away from content generation that doesn't require extensive human-led editorial reviews.

Dave Wilson, Managing Director of Tiger Eye, added:

"From my perspective, AI in practice continues to be assistive at this stage, rather than revolutionary. For example, AI could help to speed up the process of curation by prompting users with suggested tags and metadata, but curation is still a human-led process."

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How should Knowledge Leaders change their practices in order to prepare for AI tools?

Stella Laver, Knowledge Systems and Innovation Manager at Slaughter and May, commented that knowledge teams are at the very heart of the areas where AI is likely to deliver the greatest support – the identification and usage of knowledge.

Stella continued: *"In all firms, knowledge teams need to think about expanding their data sets. We all need to be focusing on our templates, the content within those, and the know-how within our databases. This is the data we need to power any generative tools and given this is what we have always focused on, there is no need to change the way we work. If anything, our work is now more important than ever, and we should see more input into such approaches given that we need something for these tools to learn from."*

> **"Every year is a good year to make sure processes are tight, approved, scalable, foolproof. These are things knowledge teams do naturally so there is no need to change the way we work ahead of the onboarding of any generative tools."**
>
> **Stella Laver,**
> **Knowledge Systems Manager,**
> **Slaughter and May**

Stella added: *"Every year is a good year to review your knowledge management practices, ensure you understand why you do what you do, and explain what it is that you do to the firm's leaders. Every year is a good year to make sure processes are tight, approved, scalable, foolproof. These are things knowledge teams do naturally so there is no need to change the way we work ahead of the onboarding of any generative tools."*

Dave Wilson, Managing Director at Tiger Eye, added: *"It is now more important than ever before that data is structured and of quality. Our data sets are now something that AI can in reality be pointed at, and learn from. Knowledge databases are by their very nature smaller data stores than the average DMS, but this content is of higher value – and it is high-value content that tools must use in order to generate or create things of value. All of the processes that knowledge teams are already doing on a day-to-day basis are absolutely essential for AI. I hope that senior leaders at firms now begin to see the true value in KM as they recognise the necessity of database preparation, knowledge collection and curation itself."*

Alex Smith, Product Director at iManage, then referred to 'Grounding' – a term used by Microsoft and iManage to refer to the process of data curation to fuel AI. He added: *"AI has to be pointed towards data that you trust. That is the only way you can generate good content. The very best data for AI to generate from is the trusted know-how curated within a knowledge base."*

What skills do knowledge teams need for the future in light of new technologies?

The discussion continued, with all panellists agreeing that if having the right dataset is critical to any AI adoption, knowledge teams are perfectly positioned to support the adoption and flourishing of such technologies.

Stella Laver, KM Systems Manager at Slaughter and May elaborated, adding: *"Knowledge teams are already skilled in finding, curating and perfecting know-how. We are already prompt engineers as we all know how to access the data within our data sets as we manage the tags and taxonomy. We already have these essential skills."*

Looking ahead, Stella added: *"We could however all work on reinforcing the value of what we do. We need to be braver; we need to be able to reiterate the importance of our team to the partners and the board. Knowledge, and our work as knowledge practitioners, needs to be understood and valued."*

Discussions then turned towards aspects KM teams should consider when reviewing AI tools themselves.

Alex Smith, Product Director at iManage, commented: *"We all need to focus on outputs, not features. We need to ask ourselves – will AI do this better than a human? Will checking the output of AI actually take the team more time than AI could potentially save in the task itself?"*

Dave Wilson, Managing Director of Tiger Eye, concluded: *"KM teams need to help the business to understand, focus and centre on goals when selecting, reviewing, adopting, and using any tools – AI powered or otherwise. From a position of understanding, KM teams also need to help all involved to understand how AI makes decisions and highlight any potential biases that could come from these processes, to ensure everyone has the knowledge they need to make the most of AI tools."*

What skills do lawyers need for the future in light of new technologies - and what should the knowledge team do to help with this?

Janice Castel, Research and Knowledge Manager at Addleshaw Goddard, responded first, commenting "*I don't think the fundamental core skills of being a lawyer will change. Learning how to prompt effectively is important, but lawyers will still be supported by AI rather than significantly changed by it.*"

Alex Smith, Product Director at iManage, reinforced this, adding "*Think about the tasks where AI might be useful for lawyers, such as drafting and tagging. AI is not going to replace everything a lawyer does in a matter, but it might help along the way. At the moment, we need to work out where AI fits into processes that lawyers are working on, concentrating on process mapping to identify what we can do with AI and how we can do it. KM teams are well positioned to work on this review process.*"

"AI is not going to replace everything a lawyer does in a matter, but it might help along the way"

**Alex Smith,
Product Director,
iManage**

Discussions then turned towards ways in which knowledge teams can support the training of junior lawyers, and the importance of this for AI powered firms.

Janice added: "*When I'm recruiting, I look for those with natural curiosity, and a drive to learn. Patience and resilience are also both essential characteristics when working with new technologies. Whilst these characteristics are important, we also need to make sure our practical training is robust. Junior lawyers need to understand the limits of any tools they use, not just the potential. We need to reinforce our teams' understanding of copyright aspects and licensing with suppliers, too.*"

Conclusion

Whilst AI offers a world of possibility for legal professionals, the sector is still in the early stages of exploring impactful AI-powered technologies in practice. As knowledge-based businesses, it is essential that law firms ensure their know-how is captured, centralised and of value, in order for AI to generate truly actionable resources and insights from know-how. Whilst the industry may be on the cusp of change, AI at this stage continues to be assistive, with outputs reliant on human-led review.

As we navigate this phase of discovery and investigation, legal knowledge teams are well positioned to guide firms through AI selection processes, educate end users, document successes and report on impacts, to ensure organisations adopt AI both effectively and securely.

We would like to thank our panellists for their contributions:

Stella Laver, Knowledge Systems and Innovation Manager at Slaughter and May

Janice Castel, Research and Knowledge Manager, Addleshaw Goddard

Dave Wilson, Managing Director, Tiger Eye

Alex Smith, Product Director, iManage

About Tiger Eye

Tiger Eye provide solutions for every step of the document and email journey, helping firms to work securely, work smarter and collaborate effectively.

With in-house teams for consultancy, technical support, application development and customer success, Tiger Eye are uniquely positioned to enable firms to maximise their investment in document and email technologies, including the iManage platform.

Trusted by leading law firms around the world, the team at Tiger Eye are renowned for their unrivalled technical expertise, and unmatched client satisfaction.

About Tiger Eye Blueprint

Tiger Eye Blueprint is the trusted platform for legal knowledge management, relied on by law firms around the world including Al Tamimi & Co, the leading law firm in the middle east. Streamlining legal knowledge workflows, Blueprint supports organisations to collate, curate, centralise and share know-how, with a broad range of functions designed to support knowledge teams to unlock the true value of collective expertise.

Redeveloped from the ground up in 2023, Blueprint now delivers even greater scalability, with full REST compatibility for the iManage platform, as well as flexible authentication (connecting with iManage Cloud, Cloud iManage and self-hosted iManage systems).

Contact us to request a free demo, and to experience the knowledge management platform that truly lives up to the demands of legal work.

To learn more, visit our website [here.](here)