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Thoughts on the Future of Law from Reinvent Law - Silicon Valley

I had the privilege of attending [Reinvent Law—Silicon Valley](#) – on Friday, March 8. Special kudos go to Professors Renee Knake and Daniel Martin Katz from the Michigan State University College of Law and to the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation for sponsoring the event and bringing together a significant number of thought leaders who are engaged in thinking about how to use technology to improve the access to and the provision of legal services in the United States and globally.

There were too many presentations to try to summarize everything that was shared during the day. Nonetheless, there were a few themes that showed up throughout the course of the day that merit attention as we think about where the market for legal services might be headed.

First, several people made presentations focused on the increasing importance of data analytics, knowledge management and process management. These included Josh Becker of [Lex Machina](#) (discussing generating economic value from analyzing large volumes of patent litigation data), Kingsley Martin, of [KMStandards](#) and Sol Irvine of [Yuson & Irvine](#) (both discussing knowledge management relating to contract language to develop more efficient processes for drafting contracts), Karnig Kerkorian and Rudy Minasian of [Velawsity](#) (discussing process management tools to help solo practitioners by more efficient), and Sean McGrath of [Propylon](#) (discussing temporal data management tools that allow searchers to identify the effective language of regulations or statutes at a specific time) to name just a few.

Second, several people emphasized the need for broader access to legal services at affordable prices and discussed the use of process management and alternative structures to better meet the need for legal services for middle class people and small business owners. These included Stephanie Kimbro of [Burton Law](#) (encouraging unbundling of legal services and greater participation in branded networks), Chas Rampenthal of [LegalZoom](#) (imagining what legal services might look like if a major retailer decided to offer legal services), Raj Abhyanker of [LegalForce](#) (discussing process management and data management as key to growth of Trademarkia (predecessor to LegalForce)) and Charley Moore of [RocketLawyer](#) (discussing the needs of small business owners to have more affordable guidance regarding how to deal with regulatory structures and legal problems).

Third, related to the access question, there was significant discussion of the constraints of Rule 5.4 and the revolution taking place in the United Kingdom following the authorization of Alternative Business Structures for providing legal services. Presenters discussing the evolving legal services market in the United Kingdom included Ajaz Ahmed of [Legal365.com](#) (discussing a legal services market ripe for disruption from businesses focused on client service) and Andy Dawes of [Riverview Law](#) (discussing the growth of its fixed fee model of providing services to corporate clients).

In addition, our own Bill Henderson made a presentation on the training model that might be necessary to better prepare lawyers to be effective in the new normal, with greater emphasis on data analytics, knowledge management and process management in addition to traditional legal knowledge and relationship skills.

One of the most thought provoking presentations for me was the presentation by Colin Rule of [Modria](#) regarding the growth of Online Dispute Resolution. Modria is an outgrowth of the dispute resolution components of EBay and PayPal where 60 million disputes have been resolved in an “extrajudicial” context, with many being resolved only through use of software (without the intervention of other humans). This prompted me to realize that if one

reconceptualizes the access to legal services issue as an access to justice issue, there may be a variety of more efficient ways to offer people access to justice that might completely bypass the current legal system.

There was much to think about regarding a legal services market that is facing the reality of disruptive innovation. What the conference highlighted for me is that change is happening and that there are a number of very bright, very thoughtful people who are trying to invent the future by taking advantage of data and technology to find better, more efficient, more affordable ways to provide legal services to a broader array of clients. Not all of the innovators in attendance at the conference are going to have an economically viable model, but some of them will, and that will mean some of them will be winners, and some of those who continue to do things the traditional way are going to be losers.

[posted by Jerry Organ]