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Big Data Gets Bigger: 5 Ways to Employ Legal Analytics

Technology advances in both law and the wider world will mean greater reliance on analytics in legal technology.

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Big data is just getting, well, bigger. And while legal technology's progress has been slow in relation to technology changes in the wider world, legal professionals are increasingly turning to one technique to handle emerging big data challenges of the day.

That approach is data analytics—a practice in which data is extracted for categorization and analysis by a variety of techniques and tools. And just as there is a seemingly endless amount of data, there are seemingly endless ways analytics can be applied. Here are some cases where legal professionals are already beginning to employ analytics:

1. Early Case Assessment

In these technology-driven times, early case assessment (ECA) has become something of an afterthought, yet with e-discovery costs skyrocketing alongside data proliferation, the practice may soon reinstate its place in the practice of law.

But why ECA? Well, analytics may be playing its hand here. As Gardere Wynne Sewell partner Peter Vogel [recently put it](#), analytics in ECA allows “really robust analysis and evaluation” of data and metadata. This is already playing out in legal services, with platforms like FTI Technology's [Radiance](#) relying on visual analytics for ECA and kCura enabling such capabilities into its [Relativity 9.4](#) platform.

2. Internet of Things Challenges

Internet of Things (IoT) devices have become more connected with our lives, so it was only a matter of time before it became a matter for the legal world to [tackle](#). And just as so many devices

encompass IoT, a multitude of challenges are presented by them, among which is discovering and interpreting the variety of data points they generate. For many, an approach lies in analytics.

Finnegan partner Kenie Ho sees analytics as a reliable method for dealing with being “drowned in data.” He told LTN that analytics at a higher level could potentially be used for security challenges as well as discovery challenges, especially when trying to understand data from devices whose useful data isn’t generated in a natural language (e.g., emails in English).

“Perhaps Internet of Things is another step in the process of lawyers letting go,” said William Belt, director of enterprise development at Complete Discovery Source. “They’re going to have to trust analytics and the technology to deal with the ultimately gargantuan volumes that can come out of this brave new world.”

3. Business Intelligence

Modern economics and technology have posed [challenges to the billable hour model](#) traditionally relied on for legal service delivery. Now, law firms as well as corporate law are being asked to operate more like a business, which means relying on data for decision making. This helps them operate with what’s known as [business intelligence](#).

For lawyers, analytics can help utilize data for insights around everything from how attorneys practice, how time is used, strategic placement of attorneys, and the likelihood of achieving a desired outcome in a case.

4. Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity surged in importance in 2016, and with hacks potentially conducted by nation-state actors continuing to be investigated in 2017, this will likely only continue. In understanding the threat landscape that keeps expanding, analytics sheds light on what information is sensitive, detecting existing infrastructure vulnerabilities, weighing the efficacy of responses and deploying better security technology and efforts where they’re needed most. The practice also allows organizations to enact predictive threat protection, an approach to addressing security via prevention rather than reaction.

Discussing a [partnership](#) between Verizon Enterprise Solutions and Splunk Enterprise Security Solutions earlier this year, Splunk senior vice president of security market Haiyan Song said analytics allows organizations “to gather actionable insights to better defend against and respond to threats.”

5. Compliance

2016 was quite the year for [compliance technology](#), and as with many other facets of legal technology, analytics can play a role in addressing regulations. For example, in investigating misconduct, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) relied on the practice in investigating misconduct (additionally, the SEC now has a [Center for Risk and Quantitative](#)

[Analytics](#)).

Another example of analytics in action for regulatory compliance can be found in employment law. As Eric Felsberg, leader of Jackson Lewis' analytics group, recently told [LTN](#), employers can use analytics to ensure that decisions made comply with relevant law, and also use it for strategizing how to meet compliance requirements.

This is just a glimpse of the ways in the legal technology arenas where analytics is likely to play a role. As other technologies emerge, and others like machine learning continue to get better in 2017, there will be even more opportunities for the practice to impact the legal industry.

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