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## Live&Learn

THE Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint, or MyDigital, was launched early this year in a bid to transform the country into a digitally-enabled and technology-driven high-income nation, as well as a regional lead in digital economy by 2030.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is reshaping how governments, economies, industries and even traditional businesses work. Almost every aspect of life is becoming increasingly impacted by digital transformation, and law is no exception.

Currently, there are approximately 20,000 practising lawyers in Malaysia, with the ratio of almost one lawyer to every 1,600 citizens.

The number is expected to grow and so would competition among legal service providers to serve the public.

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a seismic shift in the delivery of legal services and accelerated digital transformation within the field as lawyers turned to cloud computing, contract review, smart contract, e-discovery, and virtual collaboration tools to continue providing legal services during the lockdown.

On the same note, the Malaysian judiciary has embarked on digitalising court processes with the introduction of the Case Management System (CMS), the Court Recording and Transcribing (CRT) system, the Queue Management System (QMS), e-registration, e-filing, e-payment, e-appeal, e-review and e-jamin, to name a few.

# Changing face of legal education

Need for law students to be equipped with future skills to bridge technological gap



**Trend of the times:** Legal education is undergoing change to redefine how law is being taught. – 123rf.com

Despite the restrictions posed by the pandemic, the wheels of justice continue to turn, as the judiciary has non-hesitantly embraced new digital platforms.

The judiciary has also conducted virtual remote hearings and virtual appeal proceedings during the pandemic using various video-conferencing platforms.

The effectiveness of such measures is evident from the statistics released by the judiciary last May where 22,521 civil cases and 118,541 criminal cases were successfully disposed of during the enforcement of the movement control order.

This exemplifies the Malaysian judiciary's agility in adopting advanced technology to provide wider access to court.

In a recent report, the Malaysian

judiciary is said to explore the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in implementing a sentencing guideline at the Kuala Lumpur and Shah Alam lower courts to determine the measure of punishments for physical and sexual assault, theft of property, drug possessions and traffic violations.

These technological advancements involving AI, algorithm, machine learning and automation are making their way into the legal profession and the judiciary.

AI is already being employed to assist judges in providing sentencing and soon, the merits of using technology to automate certain legal tasks such as document drafting, review and analysis will relieve lawyers of standardised, routine and repetitive tasks, allowing them to focus more on



SKILLS IN DEMAND

high-value work and to provide better client experience.

The impact of these profound disruptive changes to the legal profession and the judiciary emphasises the need for law students to equip themselves with future skills to bridge the technological gap, prior to stepping out into the real work environment – be it in legal practice, in-house practice or the judiciary.

The future of legal education is already here. Most legal institutions have integrated technological and multidisciplinary approaches into their law modules to remain current and relevant.

Some legal institutions have introduced a new legal curriculum framework to encourage law students to acquire skills in the field of legal technology, including conducting electronic-based legal research, virtual moot, virtual clinical education, and virtual immersive learning using neuro-linguistic programming, gamification, augmented reality, virtual reality and mixed reality.

These features not only embed humanisation elements in shaping law students' soft skills in the real and immersive world, but also improve students' self-directed learning in this era of transformation.

Reading law today is no longer about memorising the law, but requires students to embrace future attributes such as digital and technological know-how, strategic thinking, creative problem-solving, and being output-driven,

customer-centric, and collaborative across industries and disciplines, to be able to add value to the legal ecosystem.

In fact, law students are also encouraged to sharpen their commercial savviness and advocacy skills as these traits can neither be replaced by AI nor automated.

These skills will equip law students for bigger roles such as those of crisis managers, legal process designers, supply chain experts, data analysts, risk managers, entrepreneurs, legal technologists and beyond.

As lawyers and the judiciary continue to harness technology in the new norm, it is foreseeable that this trend will accelerate further even after the pandemic subsides.

Legal education is undergoing change to redefine how law is being taught. Hence, law students must keep up with the changes and cultivate technological skills to supplement their academic studies.

This would give them a competitive edge as they become the lawyers of tomorrow, best prepared for success.

As articulated by Chief Justice Tun Tengku Maimun Tuan Mat, "Embracing technology and its advancement is not easy, but everyone will have to adopt a new mindset and be ready to move forward."

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