



**Northumbria  
University**  
NEWCASTLE



## Participant Information Sheet

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### **Exploring and Understanding the Evolving Technological Trends in Legal Practice In order to Identify and Address any Gaps in Legal Education**

We would like to invite you to participate in a research study conducted by two law academics from the University of Cumbria and Northumbria University.

Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken, and what it will involve.

#### Purpose of the Study

This is a collaborative project. We are keen to investigate and learn more about the use of technology, and the emerging trends posed by technology, in legal practice. Using the findings from this initial investigation, we will explore how law schools are addressing the needs and expectations of legal practice in supporting and preparing students for 'digital lawyering'. In order to address these aims, the following research questions are posed by this study:

- 1) What technology is being utilised, and is expected to be utilised, by legal practice?
- 2) What skills, aptitude and knowledge is needed and expected from law graduates by legal practice?
- 3) Are law schools addressing these needs and expectations in their delivery of legal education?

The study you are being invited to participate in is intended to complement the research already undertaken on technology and its use in legal practice, and in legal education, both by various organisations and academics, and by the project leads of this study. We intend to undertake this study to further generate discussion around digitalisation of legal practice, teaching of technological skills and knowledge to students, using opinions and commentary from yourself, as well as other professionals and experts in fields relevant to the research.

#### Why You Have Been Invited to Participate

You have been invited to participate in this research study because of your awareness and experience in the fields relevant to this study – technology, legal practice, management, recruitment of future trainees and lawyers, business needs, and legal education.

The decision to participate in this study is entirely your decision.

If you do decide to take part, there is opportunity to speak to the project leads by way of email to clarify any questions you may have before completing your consent to participate. We

intend to conduct interviews with you in the form of an ‘intentional–expressive’ approach. This approach utilises open-ended questions regarding the fields relevant to this study, with follow-up questions to encourage an open conversation between yourselves and us. The discussion and dialogue method proposed will allow us to interact with you, and to capture your views and opinions relevant to the study. The interviews with you will take place either at your office or via skype, dependent upon your convenience and preference.

Even after signing the statement of consent, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without the need to give a reason. If you choose to withdraw from the study following the submission of your completed questionnaire, you may ask for your responses not to be included as part of the study, as long as this notification is received within one month of the date the interviews take place.

### What Will Happen if You Decide to Take Part

If you would like to take part in the study, please reply to your email invite and indicate your wish to do so, or contact either of us using the details below. We will then respond to you within one week to set up a date, time and method for the interview. The interview will take you approx. 30 minutes to complete, and will involve answering questions based on your personal experience with, and/or professional opinion of, the use of technology in legal practice. You will be given the opportunity to provide your personal views and commentary on the topic beyond the confines of the questions being asked. You will also have the opportunity to ask us questions at any time during the interview.

### Benefits of Taking Part

Your participation in this study will contribute to an important area of modernising and reforming legal education and practice. As senior academics in our universities, we have responsibility to shape and structure the content of the law degrees which our students study, thereby effectively equipping them for the real-world of work, in particular in legal practice.

### Confidentiality/Anonymity

The data collected from the interview will not contain any personal information about yourself, your occupation or the organisation that you work for. We would only refer to the city or region where your office is based in any publications, and only if necessary. No one will be able to use this information to identify you or your law firm.

### What Will Happen to Your Results

Your responses will be used as data for us to answer these research questions:

- 1) What technology is being utilised, and is expected to be utilised, by legal practice?
- 2) What skills, aptitude and knowledge is needed and expected from law graduates by legal practice?

Once we have analysed the responses to these questions, we will draw up our findings and our recommendations to answer the final research question: Are law schools addressing the needs and expectations with regards to technology in their delivery of legal education?

### Study Approval

This study has been approved by the ethics committees of both the University of Cumbria and Northumbria University.

### Further Information and Contact Details

If you have any questions about this study, or require further information relating to the project, please contact either of the project leader:

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Dr. Craig Laverick is a Senior Lecturer in Law at Northumbria University,  
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**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.**