



# The Future of Legal Communication: Trends and Predictions

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## ABSTRACT

The evolution of legal communication has entered a dynamic new era shaped by emerging technologies, globalization, regulatory transformations, and shifts in client expectations. From its roots in formal, stationery-based exchanges to today's rapid, mobile, and social media-driven interactions, legal communication now requires an unprecedented blend of technical proficiency, ethical vigilance, and adaptive professionalism. This paper examines historical developments, the impact of computer-mediated communication, the proliferation of legal tech startups, the influence of social media, changes in legal education, globalization's demands, and the transformation of legal documentation. It also addresses upcoming trends such as real-time collaboration, remote client engagement, and regulatory modernization. Together, these factors predict a future where legal professionals must be agile communicators, blending traditional legal ethics with cutting-edge technology and cultural sensitivity to thrive in a rapidly globalizing legal landscape.

**Keywords:** Legal Communication, Legal Technology, Client Communication Trends, Legal Education Reform, Social Media Ethics, Legal Tech Startups, Globalization and Law.

## INTRODUCTION

Legal communication serves as an indispensable and fundamental component of the legal profession. It creates the essential framework for establishing connections with clients and facilitating the effective delivery of various legal services. When clients reach out to legal advisers to seek guidance or assistance, these initial communications form a critical first impression of the law firm involved. Legal communication typically encapsulates not only the use of appropriate, client-specific language tailored to the particular context but also adheres to the correct protocols that govern legal communication. Proper methods of legal communication include the use of professional legal stationery, language, and tone that aligns with the firm's standards and is suitable for the specific client. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that communications are directed to the appropriate recipient to avoid potential miscommunication. Corporate clients, for example, usually expect their communications to be more formalized, typically presented through traditional letters, even though email has become the easier, quicker, and often more practical mode of communication in modern legal practices. Similarly, if these proper formats and expectations are not adhered to, disciplinary problems may arise, creating challenges for the law firm. In addition to appearance and format, legal communication must accurately convey the correct information relevant to the matter at hand. It is crucial for legal professionals to possess comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of the pertinent laws when providing legal information to clients. Disseminating incorrect or misleading legal information can not only result in dissatisfied clients but can also expose the legal professional and the firm to potential malpractice liability. The contents of legal communications must also be crafted to match the recipient's relationship and expectations. For instance, excessively formal communications can be perceived as stilted, overly rigid, and uncaring, whereas those that adopt a too casual tone may lead to important ideas and suggestions not being taken seriously or regarded with the requisite level of professionalism. The balance between formality and informality is thus a delicate yet essential aspect of effective legal communication [1, 2].

### **Historical Context of Legal Communication**

Additionally, other textbooks discuss various online research sources and techniques. All of these suggested assignments and indicative assignments are nonetheless traditional – the necessary format or audience is static. The political talk show has homogeneous methods of delivery. While there are positive concerns raised by the professional consequences, technical concerns on electronic eavesdropping or message alteration will be more extensively in this paper. A discussion about the alteration of electronic messages would include a discussion on one of the best means of attorney-client document security: stronger custodian control. This includes adopting burdens, training personnel on devices, increasing awareness of possible document alteration modes, such as re-sending a prepared action during his attorney's day off. With training and understanding, attorneys are better prepared for client communication. With better awareness, there must be a better way of communicating. Computer-mediated communication has become very popular in the legal profession. One of the many consequences of computer-mediated communication is unpredictably increased popularity among the young. Young attorneys outnumber older attorneys using computers and notebook computers, and they are more likely to retrieve and use Internet-based legal research information services. One firm whose clients were mostly tech-savvy young techies resorted to Web-based legal ideas and issues bulletin boards and established office "newsgroups" to air interesting, but non-confidential information for young lawyers attending newsgroup meetings. By using it, the track record of sending emails is available, and this could persuade a judge on the to-the-point questions of countless verified abusive clients on emails or unintended recipients more effectively. Just as older generations quipped that Gram was a precisely timed analogue watch, computer-mediated messages have constructed a world in which time could be stretched and shrunk without end. The so-called after-hours messages and emails sent in impatience are devastating because of the coded content of carefully wrought attorney-client communication. In addition, if enforced, tacit attorney-client document-initiated preservation on a 72-hour moratorium, strictly processing of messages sent on weekends would dramatically increase efficiency and be good for both sides. Preventing this transmission actually requires cessation or calm communication channels, though this is a quaint truth. Consider a firm whose attorneys were made thirsty on a Friday afternoon collectively, and it was Tuesday before they recovered from a haze [3, 4].

### **Emerging Technologies in Legal Communication**

Two forms of technology now standard in law practice were virtually unheard of in law schools when the Mac was introduced: "e-mail" and computers using networks. The computers that law schools used to educate students no more than fifteen years ago are now antiquated. On-screen editing and document-management systems now exist almost primarily on networks, and within the networks, they are scaled to permit the rapid searching and retrieval of text of hundreds of thousands of documents and electronic files. Yet whose version of a document is the one that is in force? The altered document? A draft? A copy corrupted by a virus? These questions require law schools to prepare future lawyers to draft appropriate documents, but they also ask how a presently agreed-upon document can be amended and how the current version is established. A fundamental issue is how e-mail changes client-lawyer communications. E-mail is so fast, open, and raw; lawyers can now communicate with clients using groundless logic and unsubstantiated opinions in ways requiring less thought than using more public means. Some local mandatory provisions and the Model Rules are not written for e-mail because they presume that communications will be detectable "on the record" and "off the record". E-mail changes the tool, but substantive law, ethics, and specifications in law school are only a fraction, all potentially outdated. This new speed raises endless ethical questions that no courts or code could preclude from being asked. Given the current wireless and mobile Internet connection, any thoughts can reach the client as long as they can be drafted on a handheld or cellphone. The e-mail and other mobile computing devices can be used to send and manipulate, with little or no formality or thought. Earlier isolated local-law-field channels do not need to be made uncommunicative because of added speed and openness. Some clients might attempt to disqualify or eliminate counsel who do not e-file frames for the public record. As a fact-finder, how can a jury at trial not use a smart device and a wireless Internet to purport findings and gain access? [5, 6].

### **Impact of Social Media on Legal Communication**

Social media and networking sites are thriving platforms of mass communication, providing vast opportunities for individuals and organizations alike. For litigation attorneys, these platforms have become essential for commenting on high-profile cases and judicial behavior, enabling the immediate dissemination of information directly from mobile devices without lengthy approval processes. However, there are also significant warnings regarding social media usage. The immediacy of postings allows fragmentary thoughts to emerge uncontrollably, creating substantial risks for legal professionals who

must navigate platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. The uncertainty surrounding ethical engagement on social media is a notable concern, with no clear guidelines established for legal professionals. The public nature of social media presents challenges, as communication, even when aimed at a limited audience, can easily become widely accessible. Numerous instances exist of legal professionals facing repercussions—disqualification, suspension, or reprimand—due to their social media activity. Imprudent remarks intended as humorous or critical commentary may backfire on the individual involved. The fast pace of social media further heightens the risk of unethical communication, as there's often insufficient time for thoughtful deliberation, leading to posts that might reflect bias or misconception. Support and guidance on ethical compliance in social media use are plentiful, with various bar associations providing relevant ethics opinions. While social media presents distinct advantages over traditional media in tracking and engaging with the rapidly changing legal landscape, it carries parallel ethical concerns. Although certain strategies may optimize the benefits of social media while addressing ethical obligations, such methods are often practical, requiring careful consideration of trade-offs [7, 8].

### **The Role of Legal Tech Startups**

Legal tech is one of the fastest-growing areas of investment in tech firms. Investment in legal tech startups reached US\$1 billion in 2018 alone, more than double the amount from 2017. In a series of blog posts, EJW hopes to reflect on some major areas of law, litigation, and legal education that are impacted by recent developments and technological innovations. While the legal tech trend is a time of great promise, it also brings challenges. In terms of business model, many startups focus on serving smaller law firms. Some also target in-house counsels of larger corporations. The success of startups that focus on serving larger law firms is still unproven, as legacy firms may be slower to adapt to technology and change how matters are staffed and workflow processes. Building a team to develop and implement a tech-based solution that can be used by lawyers in more than one jurisdiction is a huge undertaking. It requires a dedicated team of experts, such as a product manager who knows the business and what product is needed. Litigation affords plenty of opportunity for companies to address recurring problems with technology solutions. The need for innovation in notices is ripe for fulfillment, but it will be an uphill battle. New products generally focus on one problem, such as the automation of a specific activity in the legal process. Driven innovation is more difficult to develop but may create new business models. In corporate law, contracting has been a ripe area for legal tech innovation until a commodity was been developed. Due diligence is a more complex and challenging area, where many opportunities exist and products are emerging. Data breach preparation and incident response a highly dynamic area that demands constant updates of pre-existing policy. That begs for help from data scientists who understand the data and outside counsel who understand the contracts and regulatory framework governing its use [9, 10].

### **Trends In Client Communication**

Drawing from my own work and that of colleagues, I foresee three trends in attorney-client communication that warrant attention. One trend involves the provision of varying delivery devices to clients. Devices such as memory cards, smartcard USB sticks, and secure online document-accessing software provide better options for receiving digital information than simply attaching files to emails or linking to an unprotected folder. These delivery devices will not completely obviate the need for enhanced security training, but they will provide better communication tools to protect client information. A second trend involves a movement away from law offices as ideal spaces for attorney-client communication. Law offices generally do not provide the right mix of public and private space needed to allow for informal exchanges of information. I expect to see more attorney-client meeting spaces in non-traditional venues such as hotels, libraries, and even coffee shops. Imperfect meetings could be fine-tuned with enhanced tools such as document annotation software on portable displays, video documentation, and experience-capturing software. The last trend that I foresee is the continued transition to real-time collaboration tools, along the lines of document creation. Good and empowering attorney-client communication requires instant access to documents and the ability to comment on and annotate them. Knowledge management and legal document deployment systems will soon incorporate secure, permission-driven, collaborative document creation and edition capabilities for computation and markup, similar to those available with products. "Playlists" of access to documents on a client-by-client "community" or "cabinet" basis will replace traditional repositories. Once such tools are available, I expect them to be well-received by users, and demand will rise beyond digital natives. As the coordination of meetings, document creation, tracking of communications, etc., all become simpler and safer tasks, quotidian lawyering will become even more attractive. Today, increased leisure for attorneys, faster

turnaround for legal work, and enhanced attention to and inclusion of clients may sound fanciful or utopian. However, they lie ahead beyond the horizon, in my view [11, 12].

### **Changes In Legal Education and Communication Skills**

The MacCrate Report, the Carnegie Report, and the Best Practices Report call for faculty in law schools to teach students to think like lawyers early in their legal education and use those skills proficiently in practice. The reports recommend greater integration of the teaching of doctrine and theory on the one hand, and skills and professionalism on the other, both in what is taught and how it is taught. Non-scholarly educational literature on best practices in teaching and assessment can provide law schools with insights and tools to implement the recommendations. This non-scholarly literature, however, requires adaptations to fit law schools' unique situations. Schools should employ more context-based instruction throughout the program of instruction, use more simulations and similar materials, employ a wider variety of assessment formats, provide more feedback on formative assessments, and use instructional technology to help carry out these recommendations. Considerable infrastructure and ongoing faculty development will be required to establish and maintain these best practices. Law schools must focus on effective uses of technology to meet those lower priorities. Looking toward the future is an exercise fraught with peril. If it were easy, there would be more extensive predictions of great accuracy. Law faculty and educators are no more adept than others in predicting the future. Yet, even so, it is necessary to consider how today's law students may be affected by tomorrow's world so that the students can be best prepared. Changes coming to clients will likely have profound effects on what today's law students do once they become lawyers. These changes should be considered, and the implications for the education of lawyers will then be analyzed. Lastly, some relatively specific recommendations for individual law schools follow, all aimed at improving the law schools' individual donors' education of tomorrow's lawyers [13, 14].

### **Globalization and Legal Communication**

Most legal educators agree that legal education should be focused, in part at least, on some of the basic skills necessary for competent practice. In that connection, some of these skills are analytical reasoning, problem solving, the ability to organize and outline, legal research, good oral communication skills, and good written communication skills. Concerning the latter, it is evident that good written communication skills are essential to competent legal practice. Such skills are necessary not only to good lawyer-client and lawyer-layman communication, but also for a competent performance of important tasks such as drafting contracts, pleadings, motions, legal memoranda, legal opinions, and briefs, with which all lawyers have to deal regularly. Although concerns about the rising tide of globalization, a term that refers to the movement toward an integrated economy on a global scale, may not be new, the movement toward the globalization of the economy has quickly gained momentum, intensity, and relevance in the past few years. The need for countries to open their markets to trade and investment, to dismantle their trade barriers, to liberalize their economic policies, to reform their political institutions, to convert state-owned enterprises into private ones, to develop stock markets and financial systems, to stabilize their currencies, to strengthen the legal systems which govern but also support such globalization, has virtually become the accepted consensual agenda within international forums, poses a challenge to individual practitioners and legal educators alike. Those impacts on the legal profession connected with the movement toward the globalization of the economy are two-fold: one is the increase in the practice of international law, corporate law, and closely related fields; and the need to export and otherwise adapt to local conditions the basic libraries of rules governing the conduct of business relations, as well as the institutions which enforce and support them. Globalization would lead to an increase in trade. That, in turn, would encourage investment—thereby invigorating all the economic sectors—agriculture, manufacturing, and service. In sum, globalization, like democracy, is seen as good and will stimulate the economy, increase productivity, and raise the gross national product of all countries involved [15, 16].

### **The Future of Legal Documentation**

Akin to law libraries in the era of print, digital law resources are complex and growing more so. This is an obstacle for users who are used to simple, high-speed information retrieval akin to Google. Many types of resources bring information to users with varying degrees of success. Law schools might educate students on a more detailed, intensive, and intentional approach to integrating basic research skills, tools, and techniques into the law school curriculum throughout the three years of study. In addition, library personnel might wish to consider in-person meetings, side-by-side instructional meetings that translate the classroom information into real-life usage. Conversations with 1Ls on research strategy might soften anxiety and reinforce that there is a steep learning curve, and that librarians, in a larger sense, and research assistants, in a more focused sense, stand ready to help through the process. Learning both



means and content is intricate and time-consuming, and merits close attention in the face of accelerated change. New information computer applications present great promise and daunting consequences. Studies indicate that currently, scant emphasis is placed on teaching basic research skills. Law professors who are overwhelmed with the newly available resources might benefit from a clearer view of the top contenders. Deans or department heads who are concerned about faculty and student productivity in the university might enlist library personnel to provide reminders, meet with faculty, and prepare a package of visibility guidelines together with education on basic usage. Additionally, developing a formal program within the faculty development schedule that educates professors in the use of new resources would help maintain educational integrity. This is especially critical to those who came to the academy from a productive law practice to form a comfortable life aside from private practice [17, 18].

### **Regulatory Changes Impacting Legal Communication**

Even in light of recent history, it is difficult to appreciate how dramatically the legal communications landscape is changing. Various thoughtful articles explore the call for increased regulation of legal communications nationally and globally. Some write from the perspective of a minority bar in a nation where, even within states, lawyers hold different powers over social status, which in turn influences access to justice. Issues of deontological obligations are a theme throughout, but some scholars argue that many issues regarding the evolution of the profession are simply orthogonal. Industry change is happening at a breakneck pace, and traditional regulatory responses are too slow to adapt. For change initiatives to be effective, there needs to be fundamental change to the law schools that produce future lawyers. In the meantime, the legal community should seek to temper regulation in ways that do not hinder innovation and should develop a protocol for licensing that removes unnecessary barriers to multistate practice based on the Ten Principles of Professionalism. Ethical rules themselves should not apply to all lawyers in all contexts because ethical rules should be founded on universal, context-neutral ethical norms. The time between good and evil is traditionally the time of the workshop: the craftsman at work. But, is there still space and time for a craft to flourish in the networked age? The seemingly endless possibilities of online communication and competition are overwhelming to both new lawyers and their clients. In this new environment, law schools train students to be lawyers, but the assignment is actually to be legal service providers. Sending and receiving emails, placing phone calls, writing text messages, using social networking, drafting documents, and establishing websites are necessary skills, but legal services marketing and the logistics of psychological productivity remain unexamined [19, 20].

### **The Role of Data Privacy in Legal Communication**

The days of floppy disks or dial-up modems sending brief messages about case updates are long gone in legal communication. As technology continues to escalate, greater emphasis has been placed on making and keeping records of communication. Also, as communication revolves around the computer and telephone, many law schools have started implementing technological training and classes. Communication does not solely include emails and phone calls; it can also include records from social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, as well as recent advancements in legal technology. Coupled with these legal communication advancements in technology come ethical obligations. Keeping records of communication is a helpful tool for both attorneys and clients. However, these records can lead to many concerns if not properly protected. Law students are now faced with thrilling risks and unforeseen benefits when drafting, delivering, and storing electronic communication. In an age when clients frequently email sensitive documents or information, law students have ethical duties to ensure that these methods of communication protect the privacy of clients and lawyers alike. In addition to the two aforementioned solutions being implemented, law schools across the country need to begin teaching law students how to properly handle and protect Multi-Media Electronic Communication. School training should consist of how to maintain ethical practices when handling information, including the Communication of Electronic, Digital, Video, and Social Media. This training should also include examples, guest speakers, mock hearings, and trials. Also, in the best interest of law students, this instruction is best taught at the paralegal or pre-law class stage to ensure that they understand the immediacy of these honorable obligations in the modern world of electronic communication [21, 22].

### **Client Expectations and Legal Communication**

In recent years, client expectations for communication with their lawyers have changed rapidly. This transition was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic fallout, during which many lawyers turned to communications technologies that had previously been considered novel or unconventional. It cannot be stressed enough that a lawyer's failure to adapt to the changing environment in which lawyers and clients communicate with each other may impact the firm's business, and, worse yet, seriously impair the quality of representation a client can receive, despite the best efforts of the attorney. Nearly all lawyers now rely

on some form of technological communication with their clients. After hiring a lawyer, the client has the right to hear back from the lawyer in a reasonable amount of time. If a client tries to reach out to a lawyer and experiences frustrating delays, the rise of alternative communications may tempt them to find a new lawyer. In-house counsel, especially younger attorneys, are also imposing their expectations further down the chain for their law firms. Likewise, substantial amounts of information in exquisitely sensitive matters is entrusted to lawyers. Communication regarding personal matters may involve deeply sensitive topics, such as criminal investigations, family law disputes, and violations of ethical duties by others. Such communications must occur at a safe level of security, free of the chains of Big Tech and the Internet. If sensitive information leaks or appears in public knowledge, catastrophic harm may ensue on a personal level—not to mention criminal. If a law firm didn't seem to care about the security of this information at the beginning of the representation, it would strike the client as untrustworthy and impulsive. No requirement per se exists that a lawyer must know every deep question about encryption or understand what "open source" means. On this level, such a skill set may fall under the omission of basic competence. Further, this is not the end of the concerns the firm should have [23, 24].

### **Future Predictions for Legal Communication**

As technological capabilities rapidly evolve, so too do the predictions and suggestions for their use in law. New, valuable technology for law might include, but certainly would not be limited to, software that facilitates the collection and analysis of data; text-recognition software; general software for managing computer files and/or electronically stored information; cloud-storage services; secure messaging and voice/video-calls; electronic case/files management; legal research enhancements and access; and social media. The rise of this data-driven world has made new tools widely available. Reasonably enough, law schools and law-firm clients have begun taking note and considering what these tools mean for lawyers' ethical duties of confidentiality, competence, and communication. Data-intensive technologies have the obvious potential to increase lawyers' care and skill, which should foster client trust. There are legal-tech tools that seek to find precedential language in cases; predictive-analytics tools that identify earlier, more experienced, or more successful counsel; analytics tools that distill trends in dockets and opposing lawyers' tactics; analytics that tabulate and visualize stats in a practice area; tools that identify relevant pending legislation; and social-media crawling software that finds social-media accounts. These innovations can both enhance traditional research and empower lawyers to better understand clients' and cases' needs and contexts and find ways to help in ways that might earn trust. On the other hand, a lawyer might consider using a resource outside of Tech Disclosures to promote personal expertise and law-firm capabilities, which might suggest incompetence in those areas [25, 26].

### **Challenges Facing Legal Communication**

Like any communication, the law faces challenges in transmitting understanding among its involved participants. Inherent resources and affordances support the use of communication as a cognitive tool, while situational context determines which of them are recruited to time and place. Current legal conceptions parochially define communication as an atomized, transactional property—one that is acquired, possessed, and transmitted like a good or service. This representation ignores those resources and affordances and the ways in which context shapes them. Narrow definitions of what constitutes legal communication, and of the capabilities needed to employ, understand, and interact with communication, create gaps where structural burdens arise. These gaps discourage the systemic consideration of interventions that would broaden participants' communicative capabilities and alarmingly amplify burdens faced by persons with cognitive or communicative limitations or misalignments, producing scenarios that are systemically expected yet all too often functionally impossible. A better understanding of the nature of communication would help not only to recognize the gaps and the burdens they create but also to develop interventions that could ease those burdens and shift systems toward more equitable outcomes for all. How well human requirements for comprehensible information exchange and the respective resources and affordances of that process map onto the law's architecture for that exchange is widely overlooked. It is chiefly this mapping, or lack thereof, that shapes participants' many experiences of comprehensibility. This paper argues that intractable differences between them reduce the law's ability to safeguard the justice and fairness that it claims to protect. A few good questions to ask are whether the legal system cares about its involved participants' ability to meaningfully defend themselves against the burdens that it creates, and whether it cares that the barriers to that ability are needlessly steep for many. The low standards for competence in communicating that the law enforcers and the principal interpretations that it forms are certainly alarming. The tautologic definition of legal communication arguably does not even really explain what it is, but rather how it works [27, 28].

### Best Practices for Legal Communication

As lawyers embrace technology to enhance the accessibility and use of the law and deliver that information in new forms and formats, they must also be mindful of how new technologies can affect their communication with clients. Technology-assisted communication with clients presents unique opportunities and ethical concerns, but while most practicing lawyers would see themselves as competent in communicating with clients, it is in the use of various affordances of new communication technologies, such as text messaging, email, online meeting software, and social media, that they may feel less sufficiently knowledgeable, prepared, or able to competently use these tools and respond to the ethical concerns they raise. Companionate new research aims to examine and provide some guidance on these issues. The Future of Ethics in Legal Communication Technologies in 2030 and 2050: Twenty-three lawyers visualized the landscape of communication with clients as it develops over the next 10 to 20 years. Respondents foresee an increase in communications through open and accessible platforms, with a much larger proportion of texts intermixed with voicemails and phone calls. Many anticipate the use of voice-activated text/AI technology to communicate with clients and a greater presence of aesthetics-driven content on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Twenty-five years out, predictions expand to include AI lawyers, hyper-specialized fields and firms, a shifting technological demography, and the potential for human rights lawyers to become targets. Competitive Legal Communication in the Age of Digital Disruption: As the legal profession embraces the digital revolution, automation increasingly disrupts and transforms traditional legal tasks, and multitudes of data become ever more central for the legal profession. The corollary is an intensifying emphasis on the client as the unit of analysis in the legal services industry, with burgeoning competition across various economic levels. This “digital Darwinism” relates to not only traditional productivity/ efficiency metrics but also a misalignment in client experiences with legal expertise and human communication [29, 30].

### CONCLUSION

The future of legal communication is poised at the intersection of tradition and innovation. As the legal industry embraces faster, more decentralized modes of communication, professionals must master emerging tools while maintaining rigorous ethical standards. Historical formalities will increasingly give way to flexible, technology-mediated exchanges, requiring new norms for confidentiality, professionalism, and responsiveness. Legal tech startups are reshaping workflows, and globalization demands a broader cultural and linguistic competence from lawyers worldwide. Law schools must prepare students to navigate these evolving demands through integrated curricula emphasizing technology, ethics, and global perspectives. Meanwhile, regulators must adapt frameworks to balance innovation with accountability. Ultimately, the success of future legal practitioners will depend on their ability to communicate accurately, empathetically, and securely across diverse platforms and cultural contexts, ensuring that the foundational values of trust, integrity, and clarity remain central to legal practice in a digital, interconnected world.

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