

Innovating Spaces of Work in Legal Systems:

Learning from
Legal Incubators,
Accelerators and
Conclaves

Siddharth Peter de Souza

Key Takeaways

- This paper examines the role that new workspaces like incubators, accelerators and conclaves are playing in shaping innovation in the legal sector.
- It argues for how the design of legal spaces of work can be reimagined to create cultures and mindsets of collaboration and user-centeredness, which if extrapolated to other parts of the profession can be helpful in building a more reflexive profession.
- Through an examination of case studies from Asia and around the world, of innovation spaces, this essay looks at how the role of space, and its interconnections with people can provide an impetus for inspiring systemic change through supporting new communities and influencing cultures within the legal profession.

1 Intro duction

Thinking about physical spaces takes on a whole new meaning in times of COVID-19 where remote work has increasingly become a necessity due to health and safety reasons. In these times, many reconfigurations have taken place in terms of what work is considered essential, and what types of work require workers to continue to be present physically. In several traditional legal spaces of work like courts, law firms, lawyer's chambers and universities, there is a shift in terms of how to function while keeping in mind the challenges of the pandemic.

Whereas there has always been general hesitancy and unpreparedness among lawyers and legal professionals to embrace technology, the pandemic has brought about a swift change in regard to looking for ways to build a future-ready profession.¹ COVID-19 has driven the rapid changes towards digitalisation, because in this instance, change could not afford to be incremental; the pandemic affected the entire legal profession, regardless of whether they were in academia, industry, judicial or administrative systems, or were legal consumers.² Several court systems have adopted online platforms,³ others have conducted open-air hearings,⁴ and there is a renewed commitment to ensuring a continuation of hearings despite the challenges of using existing spaces. This has led to a debate as to whether the court, as Richard Susskind succinctly argues, is a place or a service.⁵ Similarly, law firms have also begun incorporating remote work policies into their work cultures with many suggesting this may be a new way forward.⁶ Legal education had to rethink how to build future-ready lawyers with digital skills and at the same time navigate online forums for education with digital-first avenues for learning and exchange.⁷

- 1 As late as December 2018, Gartner's survey found that many legal departments were unprepared, and required to develop digital capabilities, information governance systems and new skill sets. See Gartner. 2018. "Gartner Says 81 Percent of Legal Departments Are Unprepared for Digitalization." (<https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2018-12-12-gartner-says-81-percent-of-legal-departments-are-unprepared-for-digitalization>).
- 2 Cohen, Mark A. 2020. "COVID-19 Will Turbocharge Legal Industry Transformation." Forbes. (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcohen1/2020/03/24/covid-19-will-turbocharge-legal-industry-transformation/>).
- 3 Remote Courts. "Remote Courts Worldwide." (<https://remotecourts.org/>).
- 4 Waita, Edwin. 2020. "Kenya's High Court Holds Open Air Hearings to Slow Spread of Coronavirus." Reuters, 20 March. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-kenya-courts-idUSKBN2172RH>).
- 5 Susskind, Richard. 2020. "The Future of Courts." The Practice. (<https://theppractice.law.harvard.edu/article/the-future-of-courts/>).
- 6 Beioley, Kate. 2020. "Linklaters to Expand Remote Working as Pandemic Changes Legal Culture." Financial Times, 25 August. (<https://www.ft.com/content/eb4da0b1-d36b-4ddd-b520-0bd62deab157>).
- 7 Cohen, Mark A. 2020. "Skills And Education For Legal Professionals In The 2020's." Forbes. (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcohen1/2020/07/01/skills-and-education-for-legal-professionals-in-the-2020s/>); "Online or In Person? Law Schools Diverge in Fall Semester Plans | Law.Com" (<https://www.law.com/2020/07/01/online-or-in-person-law-schools-diverge-in-fall-semester-plans/>); Bhumika, 2020. "Dr Nachiketa Mittal on Founding India's First Virtual Law School, His Journey as a Teacher and the Legal Education System in India". SCC Blog, 8 July. (<https://www.sconline.com/blog/?p=231950>).

COVID-19 has also amplified existing inequalities in terms of access to spaces of justice with digital divides making the virtual alternatives not automatically possible for many lawyers, litigants, and even public servants; and, therefore, it is not unfeasible that a return to physical spaces will be on the cards.

This essay investigates how, in the pre-pandemic era, with a rise in legal innovation, there has also been a rise in spaces of innovation, which have included incubator programmes, accelerators, and conclaves/conferences that attempted to bring together different players in the legal ecosystem with the purpose of having cross-sectoral conversations and collaboration.

The idea behind focussing on these spaces is to analyse the role they are playing in fostering innovation and how these spaces are shaping a shift in terms of cultures in the legal profession. In doing so, this essay argues for how the design of legal spaces of work can be reimagined to create cultures and mindsets of innovation, collaboration, and user-centeredness, which if extrapolated to other parts of the profession can be helpful in building a more reflexive profession. The essay looks at how we can draw insights from these new kinds of spaces in the legal sector to provide insights into whether this will usher in a more flexible and dynamic work culture going forward.

The next section of this essay will provide a background to what these creative and innovative spaces are, and how one can identify them. It will then provide some context on what the motivations of these spaces are and the legal cultures they are trying to build. The third section will examine the drivers of change, principles of innovation and mindsets that are created by these spaces, and the fourth section will examine how, in light of the pandemic, thinking in terms of innovation spaces will continue to be relevant and important for the legal industry, and how the role of cross-sectoral collaboration will be important for and central to how the profession is shaped going forward.

2 C R E Creating Spaces for Innovation

A In the past few years, there have been new categories of workplaces that are being designed to facilitate the process of innovation. These places take many forms and are without a particular formal definition. A Brookings report identifies a few of these spaces which are being deliberately designed with clear objectives to build communities, enable collaboration and inspire serendipitous encounters.⁸ They include an incubator or an accelerator which creates an environment that allows for start-ups and new enterprises to have access to support, including business, strategic and financial; they include co-working spaces which are affordable shared spaces equipped with basic business support services, and also include innovation centres which are more formal private or public centres to foster product development.⁹ Additionally, I also look at conclaves and conferences, because these are being designed as spaces where, over limited periods of time, opportunities are being created for product development, sales and marketing, information exchange and networking.

Much of the reason for the growth in these spaces is that with innovation becoming increasingly collaborative and requiring diverse competencies, there is a need for physical spaces to be able to respond to this by creating avenues for open and flexible conversations. Since there is emphasis on cross-disciplinary conversations, one of the ideas behind innovation spaces is to allow for chance and unplanned interactions between workers. These occasions can lead to sharing of ideas, which can in turn improve productivity and performance.¹⁰ Spaces can be designed to engineer different emotions and responses; they can be focussed on productivity; some are meant to encourage creativity, or even experimentation; and what this shift rep-

⁸ Wagner, Julie and Daniel Watch. 2017. "Innovation Spaces: The New Design of Work." Brookings. (<https://www.brookings.edu/research/innovation-spaces-the-new-design-of-work/>).

⁹ Wagner, Julie and Daniel Watch. 2017. "Innovation Spaces: The New Design of Work."

¹⁰ Waber, Ben, Jennifer Magnolfi and Greg Lindsay. 2014. "Workspaces That Move People." Harvard Business Review. (<https://hbr.org/2014/10/workspaces-that-move-people>).

resents in workspaces, as Waber et al. advance, is that the question is not 'where work is done' but rather 'how it is done'.¹¹ However, when workspaces are being redesigned, these spaces need to be intimately connected to how people respond, and the ways in which their social, behavioural, and cognitive needs are accounted for.¹² This is because spaces on their own will not facilitate change, especially if they are built in a manner that does not engage with the persons who will use it.

As Delgado et al. advance, developing spaces to encourage collaboration requires considering physical dimensions, which include comfort, flexibility and sensory stimulation; technological dimensions, which include support services, or networking; emotional dimensions, which include the cultivation of a community where there is possibility of co-creation; a social dimension that connects these innovation spaces to the outside community for stimuli; and a cognitive dimension, which ensures that these spaces form centres of learning.¹³

What does this mean for the legal profession? Whereas traditional places of work like law firms, courtrooms and chambers continue to exist, there is now a rise in different spaces of work, and various types of events that are designed to bring together diverse participants from members of industry, practice and academia into one space to foster collaboration. The rise in these kinds of spaces is a recognition of the fact that the legal profession needs to break down the silos between industry, academia and practice and allow for different agendas to come together to respond more effectively to the demands of new forms of work, and the kinds of disruptions that technology is bringing.¹⁴ These changes include the influx of new products such as tools that help predict how judges decide cases, how documents are prepared and how they can be reviewed and how cases and clients can be funded.¹⁵ As there is a need for cross-sectoral understandings of how these developments can impact and influence different parts of the legal ecosystem, the call for collaboration has begun to bear fruit.

Cohen argues that in a digital economy, businesses that find success are those that 'create a symbiotic relationship with consumers facilitated by technology, access and customer service'.¹⁶ With the influx of technology-inspired businesses that are offering legal products, law firms are now incorporating more agile and lean ways of working which are client-centred and data-centric in order to stay relevant in the market, including

11 Waber, Ben, Jennifer Magnolfi and Greg Lindsay. 2014. "Workspaces That Move People."

12 Siller, Deanna. "Change by Design: A New Framework for Leading Continuous Change." Gensler. (<https://www.gensler.com/research-insight/blog/change-by-design-a-new-framework-for-leading-continuous>).

13 Delgado, Lorena et al. 2020. "Innovation Spaces in Universities: Support for Collaborative Learning". *Journal of Innovation Economics Management* 31, 123.

14 Bridgesmith, Larry and Caitlin Moon. "Breaking Down Silos Between Tech, Firms and Academia to Reach Innovation." *The American Lawyer*. (<https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/sites/americanlawyer/2017/12/15/breaking-down-silos-between-tech-firms-and-academia-to-reach-innovation/>).

15 "Q&A: Richard and Daniel Susskind on the Future of Law." *Canadian Lawyer Mag*. (<http://www.canadianlawyermag.com/legalfeeds/author/na/qanda-richard-and-daniel-susskind-on-the-future-of-law-6828/>); de Souza, Siddharth. 2017. "Transforming the Legal Profession: The Impact and Challenges of Artificial Intelligence." *Digital Policy Portal*, 16 November. (<http://www.digitalpolicy.org/transforming-legal-profession-impact-challenges-artificial-intelligence/>).

16 Cohen, Mark A. 2019. "The Legal Industry Is Starting to Collaborate - Why Now and Why It Matters." *Forbes* (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcohen1/2019/07/22/the-legal-industry-is-starting-to-collaborate-why-now-and-why-it-matters/>).

hiring data scientists and designers.¹⁷ With more players in the market and competing options for customers, the traditional relationship between the lawyer and the client, where much of the power lay with the lawyer who would call the shots, is changing.

In Asia, new clusters are emerging that are spearheading the creation of spaces for law and technology innovation. One significant initiative is spearheaded by the Singapore Academy of Law, which runs the Future Law Innovation Programme (FLIP). FLIP aims to drive the adoption of technology (such as leveraging data analytics in work flows or litigation strategies or adopting document-review systems for due diligence) by law firms, legal tech start-ups, and legal departments. It also aims to foster collaboration between stakeholders from government, academia and business to build new models for the delivery of legal services while at the same time organising a community of legal tech practitioners and catalysing innovation.¹⁸ The Global Legal Innovation and Digital Entrepreneurship (GLIDE) Accelerator run by FLIP is a three-month accelerator that provides both online and offline training to legal start-ups with the expectation that they will have a meaningful impact in developing the future of legal services in Singapore.¹⁹ The programme includes coaching, regular training on how to build a product and develop it, mentoring and networking with thought leaders, and a landing pad to help participants get integrated into the Singaporean market.²⁰ In India, meanwhile, law firm Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas has set up an in-house innovation lab called Prarambh. It calls itself India's first legal tech incubator, with the objective of identifying and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship in the legal sector. The programme offers subject matter expertise, a co-working space, as well as mentoring and support to help businesses reach commercial successes.²¹ Hong Kong's Law Society has recently launched an Inno Tech Hub which aims to develop a roadmap to help the profession respond to the changes taking place, through building a community of innovators and preparing networks and collaborations between lawyers and technologists so as to build a future readiness to equip members of the legal profession.²² The hub will use seminars and hackathons to engage with different stakeholders to build a technology roadmap.²³ In Europe, the Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiiL) runs one of the most prominent spaces in the legal ecosystem for justice acceleration. The focus of this accelerator is on goals related to addressing access to justice problems closely connected with the Sustainable Development Goals. The Accelerator runs a four-month programme with training, peer learning and access to funding and does an annual call for applications from innovators around the world.²⁴ Universities like Ryerson in Canada have also developed dedicated innovation hubs with the aim of support-

17 Cohen, Mark A. 2019. "The Legal Industry Is Starting to Collaborate - Why Now and Why It Matters." For instance, firms like Simmons Wavelength are designed as teams of data scientists, designers and policy makers who are looking at creating new legal services and processes. See "Wavelength.Law." wavelength.law. (<https://www.wavelength.law>).

18 "Future Law Innovation Programme (FLIP) by SAL." FLIP by SAL. (<https://www.flip.org.sg>).

19 "GLIDE Accelerator." FLIP by SAL. (<https://www.flip.org.sg/glide>).

20 "GLIDE Accelerator." FLIP by SAL.

21 "Innovation Lab_ Prarambh." Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas - Advocates & Solicitors. (<https://www.cyrilshroff.com/innovation-lab/>).

22 Ko, Sebastian. "InnoTech Law Hub Launches! | Hong Kong Lawyer." (<http://www.hk-lawyer.org/content/innotech-law-hub-launches>); "InnoTech Law Hub | Law Society of Hong Kong." InnoTech Law Hub. (<https://www.a2jhackathon.net/contact>).

23 "InnoTech Law Hub | Law Society of Hong Kong." InnoTech Law Hub. (<https://www.a2jhackathon.net/contact>).

24 "HiiL Justice Accelerator." HiiL. (<https://www.hiil.org/what-we-do/the-justice-accelerator/>).

ing legal solutions that keep in mind consumers through boot camps, hackathons, and more intensive programmes to take entrepreneurs from the concept stage to market-ready products.²⁵

These hubs are housed by different organisations and in different locations but they are designed with overlapping features. They seek to provide an ecosystem to support and foster innovation in the legal sector, but they are also inculcating cultures of inter-disciplinarity between law and business, law, data and technology and law and design. There is an interest to ensure that ideas that have potential, have the support in the form of mentorship, training, workspaces, and funding to go to market. This in itself is a departure from work as usual in the legal sector, which, otherwise, is more individualistic, focussed on domain expertise, and competition. It is recognition of the fact that going forward, the legal system requires different, technological, design and business expertise that in turn requires different economic and organisational models.²⁶

In addition to incubators and hubs emerging as spaces to facilitate collaborations between different stakeholders in the legal sector, another type of space that is being innovated to bring together different interest groups is the conference/conclave space. I classify these as spaces of work because for several start-ups as well as existing players in the legal market, these spaces are becoming important as avenues for inspiration, learning, and business. They have become spaces for participants to demonstrate their work, build networks, and find future partners or funders for their projects. These large-scale conclaves at the intersection of law and technology that seek to reimagine the future of the legal profession have been a feature in different parts of Asia in the last few years. In 2017 and 2018, Zegal, a leading legal tech enterprise in Hong Kong, brought together over 200 participants to discuss the latest developments and implications that technology is having across Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and cloud legal technology, and was aimed at lawyers in private practice and those who worked in-house.²⁷ In Malaysia, the Lex Tech conference in 2017–2018 was also set up with the objective of educating lawyers on the latest trends and products in legal technology.²⁸ In India, the Agami Summit in 2019 brought together over 300 change makers to discuss the future of law and justice in the country, with the intention of being able to provide a common platform to amplify and make visible ideas that would enable justice.²⁹ The Singapore Academy of Law organised a fully virtual tech law conference, with different themes ranging from legal innovation to access to justice, with the purpose of debating not just the law of technology in terms of policies, regulations and cases, but also the technology of law which includes the infrastructure and other transformations that are taking place in the sector.³⁰ What is innovative about these conclaves is that they are experimenting with formats, from the more traditional panel discussions, to

- 25 "Legal Innovation Zone I Programs." (<https://www.legalinnovationzone.ca/join/>).
- 26 Cohen, Mark A. 2020. "The Rise of Legal Tech Incubators and Why Allen & Overy's "Fuse" Has the Right Stuff." *Forbes*. (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcohen1/2018/02/12/the-rise-of-legal-tech-incubators-and-why-allen-overys-fuse-has-the-right-stuff/>); See also "Redesign Law - Gensler's Legal Office of the Future." *Redesign Law*. (<http://www.redesign-law.com/>).
- 27 "ZegalCon | Zegal." (<https://zegal.com/zegalcon/#AGENDA>).
- 28 Kaplan, Ari. 2018. "Why Legal Tech Conferences Have Become a Global Phenomenon." *ABA Journal*, 15 June. (https://www.abajournal.com/news/article/why_legal_tech_conferences_have_become_a_global_phenomenon).
- 29 "Agami Summit 2019: Over 300 "Change Makers" Convene to Contemplate the Future of Law and Justice." *Bar and Bench - Indian Legal news*, 2019. (<https://www.barandbench.com/news/agami-summit-2019-over-300-change-makers-convene-to-contemplate-the-future-of-law-and-justice>).
- 30 "TechLaw.Fest 2020." (<https://www.techlawfest.com/about-techlaw-fest/>).

storytelling sessions and interactive workshops. These conferences have also begun to create forums where start-ups can set up booths or stalls to share their products; there are spaces for networking and it is seen as a space where there is access for new players to negotiate and make connections in an increasingly crowded market. Reflecting on the Legal Geek conference, a pioneer in large scale legal tech conferences in London, Roger Smith argues that such conferences suggest a shift in the approach of legal products and services, with a closer focus on customer experience in the legal sector rather than the more conventional focus, where different legal institutions largely spoke to each other whether these were courts, or law firms but not with the user.³¹

T By consciously broadening and providing a space for new kinds of actors, these conferences are creating interdependencies as well as future collaborations between traditional players and new actors. Both incubators and conferences each take on a different focus substantively but they overlap in terms of their interest to build and nurture communities. They are interested in building conversations and supporting practitioners who can contribute to sharing and shaping how the legal profession will be able to respond to and engage with technology developments. In the next section, I will explore what are some of the principles that are emergent in innovation spaces.

³¹ Smith, Roger. 2019. "LegalGeek: From DX to CX | Law, Technology and Access to Justice." Legal Geek, 16 October. (<https://law-tech-a2j.org/law-tech/legalgeek-from-dx-to-cx/>).

3 Principles of Innovation Spaces

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Much has been written and said about how technology is changing the nature of the legal profession; however, while this is an underlying catalyst, what becomes apparent is that there is a need for a people and institutional buy-in to ensure that such change is systemic. Innovating the workspace has the potential to create different kinds of expectations and experiences for how law works and functions.

These innovation spaces, are carefully curated to bring together people, and combine different kinds of diversity and expertise.³² They are designed with a deliberate creation of openness and flexibility that is inviting new and different players who would not otherwise count as part of the legal sector to become engaged, whether in the form of incubators or in participating and displaying their work at conclaves.

Beyond providing common spaces for different expertise, products and services to meet and interact, these workspaces also, as discussed above, provide avenues to support, accommodate and empower members of the communities through coaching, capacity-building, and creating avenues for networking and community development.³³ Embedding continuous learning is also seen as part of the culture of these new spaces of work, with incubators and accelerators organising multiple events for participants to have access to the latest information and trends about changes taking place in the sector and conclaves similarly trying to do a mapping of the whole sector in a compressed amount of time. These imperatives of continuous learning are also designed to train professionals who are then aware and capable of dealing with and responding to rapid and dynamic changes, which in the legal profession are emerging at multiple locations and are being driven not just by regulators or bar associations, but also by non-traditional legal service providers who

³² Bessant, John. 2019. "Creating Innovation Spaces." *Disruptor League*, 8 July (<https://disruptorleague.com/blog/2019/07/08/creating-innovation-spaces/>).

³³ Bessant, John. 2019. "Creating Innovation Spaces."

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are offering tech-enabled services.³⁴ As a result, oftentimes, it is the regulation that is playing catch-up with these developments and it is important for those working in the field to be able to stay abreast of these changes. Creating cultures of learning in workspaces can help to build more responsive future members of the profession.

Another objective of these innovation spaces is to encourage the creation of new legal products, services and networks. In order to do this, many of these spaces place an emphasis on creating interactions, whether these are opportunities for chance encounters or structured places for networking and exchange. In the case of incubators, these take place by creating open working spaces along with several social events that allow for developers to be able to get in touch with users. In conferences, on the other hand, these include building a social dimension, creating forums and showcases for products and services and domain-based networking for those interested in in-house lawyering or law firm innovation, for example. Creating such structures is meant to offer opportunities for collaborations, as well as collaborative learning where participants have opportunities to be inspired and empowered by the potential partnerships and associations they can have through taking part.

Innovation spaces are also deliberate in terms of creating different mindsets. While they do offer different avenues and programmes for inspiration, there is an assumption that those who participate in such spaces will be open to collaboration and co-creation. In developing cross-sectoral conversations, these spaces seek to introduce ideas of client focus and user-centricity by creating a common area for producers, funders and consumers of legal products and services to interact and engage with each other. Not only does this inspire more direct conversations about what the market needs of products and services are, it also provides information on where early adoption of ideas is possible. As a result there is now a new culture of experimentation and prototyping that encourages lawyers to build new products while at the same time providing a supportive ecosystem, so that in case things do not work out, there is a space to fail as well.³⁵

At a systemic level, it is worth noting that both in the case of Singapore and Hong Kong, the drive towards building a future-ready profession is coming from the respective governments, which, through the Singapore Academy of Law and the Law Society of Hong Kong, see both regions as emerging legal tech hubs. They are making a conscious attempt at systematising access to mentoring, training and the networks required to allow people and organisations to thrive. This suggests that these spaces are not meant to be short-term but play an important part in terms of how the legal profession sees its future.

34 Siddharth, Peter de Souza and Maximilian Spohr (eds). 2020. *Technology, Innovation and Access to Justice*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

35 Moon, Caitlin. 2020. "#makelawbetter 🏡: A Movement (153)." *Legal Evolution*, 3 May. (<https://www.legalevolution.org/2020/05/make-lawbetter-%f0%9f%91%8a-a-movement-153/>).

4 What Happens Now, and Post-COVID-19?

W In the move towards remote working, as has been seen in the past few months, it becomes obvious to question the implications of working away from the office. While talk of the end of the office as we know it has already begun, with studies showing the transition of particular jobs being smoother than expected given the current situation, there continue to be those who speak of the necessity of the office as a space for creativity, collaboration, social interaction, and work-life balance.³⁶ Nick Bloom, an expert on home working, speaks of how, in the light of the pandemic, working from home may lead to greater inequality not just because of the nature of the jobs people have, but also because some people do not have the infrastructure to work from home and, as a result, will be left behind by the transitions.³⁷ Additionally, it will also lead to the erosion of town centres, as many of those who would have come to work, and would then frequent bars or restaurants, or other forms of entertainment, will now not be able to do so.³⁸

A Post-COVID-19 will likely see more hybrid kinds of events and spaces that draw on attributes available to physical spaces, while at the same time tapping into the advantages of remote work. As the Tech Law Fest hosted by the Singapore Academy of Law has shown, while the conference is now online, it still tries to translate the ideas and design of open collaborative working to online formats. Similarly, incubators and accelerators are now trying out hybrid formats where work is still taking place through online training or hackathons and meet-ups.

³⁶ See also Espinoza, Javier. 2020. "Death of the Office" Exaggerated despite Homeworking Boom." *Financial Times*, 1 July. (<https://www.ft.com/content/1e86dc36-907b-11ea-bc44-db-f6756c871a>); Gratton, Lynda. 2020. "Coronavirus Has Transformed Work but Risks Snuffing out a Creative Spark." *Financial Times*, 21 May. (<https://www.ft.com/content/788b8ab8-946a-11ea-899a-f62a20d54625>).

³⁷ Nicholas Bloom. 2020. "How Working from Home Works Out." *Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research*. (<https://siepr.stanford.edu/research/publications/how-working-home-works-out>).

³⁸ Nicholas Bloom. 2020. "How Working from Home Works Out."

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While the distinction is that such meet-ups are now virtual for the time being, the clear shift is that these spaces have become embedded in the practice of law. Innovation spaces like incubators and conferences have signalled new types of conversation across silos for different actors in the legal sector; they have encouraged meetings of both law and non-law participants to spur the development of solutions to pressing challenges. In doing so, these spaces have not only broken down hierarchical and regimented forms of conversations and work, they have also inspired more established players in the legal sector like courts and law firms to embrace new ways of working through setting up innovation clusters or adopting new types of technology.

Such openness to change is a result of being able to witness and be influenced by how the nature of work, product development and delivery of services are rapidly changing, and further about how embedded these changes are, and why they are here to stay. For instance, in 2020, the Financial Times organised a Global Legal Hackathon with over 2700 participants and 225 organisations, each working towards solving problems thrown up by COVID-19 through multidisciplinary teams, and with experimental focuses.³⁹ Many of the solutions were spread across different sectors, from data privacy to access to justice, but what was unique was that the solutions showed an appetite for co-creation and experimentation across the board. These participants had to come together to identify problems as well as come up with solutions but had to do so in a manner that was agile and collaborative while at the same time taking into account user needs and customer perspectives.⁴⁰

This hackathon provides an insight into the times to come, and the value of building and nurturing innovative spaces in the legal profession. As I have shown, such spaces offer participants an opportunity to collaborate, co-create, learn, as well as share, and these opportunities happen through chance encounters that, oftentimes, are created by virtue of people being in the same space and at the same time. Cultivating the innovation that emerges by creating spaces for people to interact will allow for a more flexible, reflexive, and open legal profession. It will be one that sees the value of learning through partnerships, and also growth through interactions rather than competition.

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³⁹ Bell, Amy. 2020. "How Legal Brains Connected over Coronavirus in FT Hackathon." *Financial Times*, 4 June. (<https://www.ft.com/content/925795ca-a10a-11ea-ba68-3d5500196c30>).

⁴⁰ Bell, Amy. 2020. "Hackathon: COVID-19 Legal Problems Need Answers." *Financial Times*, 23 April. (<https://www.ft.com/content/22ac3008-7f42-11ea-b0fb-13524ae1056b>); Cohen, Mark A. 2020. "The FT Innovative Lawyers-Global Legal Hackathon: Meeting The Challenge Of Law In The Digital Age." *Forbes*, 26 May. (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcohen1/2020/05/26/the-ft-innovative-lawyers-global-legal-hackathon-meeting-the-challenge-of-law-in-the-digital-age/>).

5 Conclusion

1 The emergence of innovation spaces and clusters signals a shift towards greater collaboration and agile ways of working in the legal sector, and there is a need to examine how traditional institutions like courts or law firms can also inculcate such practices in their design of space.

2 Legal work in the future will be supplied by new kinds of enterprises that go beyond law firms and lawyers. With tech-enabled enterprises that have competencies in business, data and design, there is greater need for cross-sectoral work, and spaces that enable the breaking down of silos between practice, academia and industry, as well as provide opportunities for continuous learning.

3 While the pandemic has resulted in an increase in remote work, the office, for reasons including its value in facilitating chance encounters as well as making it more accessible for people who do not have individual facilities to work in, will continue to be relevant. However, legal work will be more mobile, flexible and dynamic and will require diverse expertise.

The Author

Siddharth Peter de Souza

Siddharth Peter de Souza is a Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Department of Law, Technology, Markets and Society at Tilburg University. Prior to joining Tilburg University in The Netherlands he was a PhD researcher at Humboldt University Berlin, and has studied law at the University of Cambridge and at the University of Delhi. He previously worked as a German Chancellor Fellow at the Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and Rule of Law, Heidelberg, and as a Judicial Clerk at the High Court of Delhi. Siddharth is the founder of Justice Adda, a legal design social venture in India.

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- A** "Agami Summit 2019: Over 300 "Change Makers" Convene to Contemplate the Future of Law and Justice." Bar and Bench – Indian Legal news, 2019. (<https://www.barandbench.com/news/agami-summit-2019-over-300-change-makers-convene-to-contemplate-the-future-of-law-and-justice>).
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