

LAWTECH ADOPTION AND TRAINING

FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF SOLICITORS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

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Technology is becoming an increasingly important string in the bow of the modern day solicitor. With the adoption and use of technology becoming an integral part of firms’ practices and business models, the Law Society has made understanding lawtech trends and preparing our members a central part of our member offer. I am delighted therefore to share the findings of this survey, undertaken by researchers from the University of Oxford, of lawtech adoption and training amongst solicitors in England and Wales.

The survey seeks to benchmark solicitors’ use of, and training in, lawtech. The report also explores solicitors’ future lawtech training needs, and their experiences of working alongside lawtech specialists who are not lawyers.

I would like to thank our members for taking part in the survey. The survey findings offer valuable insights into the current state of play in lawtech adoption and training. Just as importantly, they also offer a clear indication where more action may be required to improve solicitors’ use of, and expertise in, lawtech.

Paul Tennant

Chief Executive of the Law Society

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LAWTECH ADOPTION

- The three most common contexts in which respondent solicitors use legal technology (“lawtech”) are “document/knowledge management” (80%), “accounts/time recording” (69%) and “document automation/matter workflow” (43%).
- Overall, adoption of lawtech that makes use of artificial intelligence (“AI”) is low. Just 27% of respondents report using it for “legal research”, 16% for “due diligence”, and 12% for “e-discovery/e-disclosure/technology assisted review”.
- Just under half of respondents said that their organisations understood the challenges for lawyers brought about by new technology. Only a fifth of respondents said their organisations captured data effectively, so it could be used by lawtech.

LAWTECH TRAINING

- Half of respondents had received some lawtech training during the past three years. This was most commonly for specific software packages adopted by their employer (38%); less common was generic lawtech training, in matters such as “legal issues raised by use of technology” (12%) or “project management” (11%).
- Respondents anticipate future training needs in the following order: 1. data analytics; 2. legal issues raised by use of AI technology; 3. software packages; 4. ethical issues raised by use of AI technology; 5. digital literacy; and 6. innovation techniques.
- Two-fifths (41%) of respondents said that they were sufficiently trained to use new technology at work. But four-fifths said that productivity at their organisation would improve if lawyers were trained further in how to use new technology.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAMS (MDT)

- 60% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “lawyers need to become familiar with non-legal technical specialisms such as data science, project management, and design thinking.” However, there was no consensus whether this was best done by working together with non-lawyers, or through lawyers themselves acquiring multi-disciplinary expertise.
- 40% of respondents worked in multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs), defined as working on a day-to-day basis with IT/legal innovation specialists, legal project managers, data scientists, and/or process mapping experts. A greater proportion of in-house solicitors (49%) worked in MDTs, compared to solicitors who worked in law firms (36%).
- Respondents working in MDTs were more likely to use AI-assisted lawtech in “legal research”, “due diligence” and “contract analytics” than those not working in MDTs.

INTRODUCTION

The UK legal services market is a key segment of the UK economy. According to recent research undertaken by KPMG for the Law Society,¹ the sector added more than £60 billion gross-added value to the UK economy in 2018, and directly employed 358,000 people. Especially in a post-Brexit era, it is vital that the UK legal sector remains globally competitive. One way in which UK lawyers may be able to sustain competitive advantage is by embracing productivity-enhancing legal technology (“lawtech”) including artificial intelligence (“AI”).

This survey seeks to clarify current usages of, training in, and attitudes towards, lawtech by qualified solicitors in England and Wales. By benchmarking the current state of play and identifying future needs, we aim to identify issues that may require attention and action by the legal profession and legal services organisations.

This survey focuses exclusively on the lawtech experiences and needs of qualified solicitors, regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority. The online survey was conducted between November 2019 and January 2020, and yielded a total of 353 valid responses. Given the variety of ways in which we identified potential respondents (see the Appendix for research methodology), we make no claim to the representativeness of our sample.

Reflecting the diversity of legal services provision in England and Wales, our survey sample includes respondents from conventional law firms, in-house legal departments, alternative business structures (ABS) and lawtech solutions providers. But since the numbers of responses from the last two categories were very small, our analysis focuses on comparing responses from law firm and in-house legal departments. We are also able to compare how the responses of junior solicitors differ from senior solicitors in law firms.

We hope our findings offer the legal profession, and other key stakeholders, actionable insights into the current state of lawtech usage and training by solicitors in England and Wales.

¹ KPMG (2020) *Contribution of the UK legal services sector to the UK economy: a report for the Law Society*, p6-7.

The survey asked first about the more longstanding lawtech solutions that individual solicitors use on a day-to-day basis. Some of the digital solutions have wider applications than to legal practice. It then turned to the use of lawtech solutions assisted by artificial intelligence (AI). We probed into differential usage by type of organisation, by seniority of solicitors within law firms, and by professional experience as measured by the number of years since qualification.

Figure 1 summarises responses about the use of five types of more longstanding lawtech solutions by solicitors. The three most commonly-used were “document/knowledge management” (80% of respondents), “accounts/time recording” (69%) and “document automation/matter workflow” (43%). One in five (11% of) respondents used lawtech in all five areas of application – namely, these top three plus “extranets/dealrooms” and “CRM/marketing/tender document creation”. Law firm respondents were more likely to use the top three solutions than in-house respondents (see **Figure 1**). Within law firms, partners (19%) were more likely to use all five solutions than associates/assistants (9%) (see **Figure 2**). Perhaps surprisingly, lawtech usage did not differ significantly by year of qualification (see **Figure 3**).

In comparison with more longstanding lawtech solutions, such as document/knowledge management and accounts/time recording, usage of AI-assisted lawtech by respondents was typically lower. This technology was used most prevalently in relation to “legal research” (27% of respondents), “due diligence” (16%), and “e-discovery/e-disclosure/technology assisted review” (13%) (see **Figure 4**).

Among various cohort subsets, usage of AI-assisted lawtech varied by respondent seniority. In particular, within law firms, “e-discovery/e-disclosure/technology assisted review” was more likely to be used by assistants/associates (17%) than by partners (9%), while AI use cases in “regulatory compliance”, “fee earner utilisation analytics”, and “contract analytics” were more prevalent among partners than among assistants/associates (see **Figure 5**). **Figure 6** shows the adoption of AI-assisted lawtech by year of qualification. Junior solicitors (who qualified in the 2010s) were more likely to use AI in “due diligence”, “e-discovery/e-disclosure/technology assisted review”, and “contract analytics” than more senior solicitors (who qualified during the 1960s - 1980s period) (see **Figure 6**).

Next, the survey asked respondents what they thought about the effectiveness of their organisations’ usage of lawtech. To a statement “*My organisation understands the challenges for lawyers brought about by new technologies*”, 44% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (see **Figure 7**). A greater proportion of respondents agreed or strongly agreed in law firms (53%) than in corporate legal departments (19%). In law firms, partners (58%) were more likely to agree than assistants/associates (50%) (see **Figure 8**).

Figure 1: Use of lawtech, by organisation type

	In house legal dept	Law Firm	Grand Total	
Document / knowledge management	69.7%	85.2%	80.2%	
Accounts / time recording	25.3%	88.6%	69.1%	
Document automation / matter workflow	34.3%	45.8%	42.5%	
Extranets / deal-rooms	34.3%	38.6%	36.5%	
CRM / marketing / tender document creation	18.2%	31.4%	27.5%	
Other	14.1%	14.4%	14.4%	
	Other	In house legal dept	Law Firm	Grand Total
	18	99	236	353
% Selected All Uses	0.0%	3.0%	15.7%	11.3%

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses, including from respondents working at ABS and legal technology solutions providers.

Figure 2: Use of lawtech, by lawyer seniority in law firms

	Associate/ Assistant	Partner/ (Managing/Senior) Partner	Grand Total	
Accounts / time recording	93.3%	91.8%	88.6%	
Document / knowledge management	93.3%	80.6%	85.2%	
Document automation / matter workflow	44.9%	48.0%	45.8%	
Extranets / deal-rooms	41.6%	38.8%	38.6%	
CRM / marketing / tender document creation	23.6%	43.9%	31.4%	
Other	10.1%	13.3%	14.4%	
	Null	Associate/ Assistant	Partner/ (Managing/Senior) Partner	Grand Total
	49	89	98	236
% Selected All Uses	8.0%	8.9%	19.0%	11.3%

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses from respondents working at Law Firms.

Figure 3: Use of lawtech, by year of qualification

	1960s-80s	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-2019	Grand Total	
Document / knowledge management	67.6%	79.7%	86.5%	82.4%	80.2%	
Accounts / time recording	73.2%	65.6%	66.7%	69.7%	69.1%	
Document automation / matter workflow	39.4%	37.5%	47.9%	41.2%	42.5%	
Extranets / deal-rooms	26.8%	35.9%	40.6%	39.5%	36.5%	
CRM / marketing / tender document creation	21.1%	28.1%	30.2%	29.4%	27.5%	
Other	14.1%	9.4%	18.8%	13.4%	14.4%	
	Null	1960s-80s	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-2019	Grand Total
	3	51	40	59	83	236
% Selected All Uses	33.3%	11.3%	9.4%	14.6%	9.2%	11.3%

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses from respondents working at Law Firms.

Figure 4: Use of AI-assisted legal technology, by organisation type

	In house legal dept	Law Firm	Grand Total	
Legal research	32.3%	25.0%	27.2%	
Due diligence	12.1%	18.2%	16.4%	
eDiscovery / eDisclosure / technology assisted review	13.1%	14.0%	13.3%	
Regulatory compliance	10.1%	12.3%	11.6%	
Contract analytics	8.1%	10.2%	9.6%	
Other	10.1%	5.1%	7.1%	
Fee-earner utilisation analytics and / or predictive billing	2.0%	10.2%	7.9%	
Predictive analytics for litigation	1.0%	2.1%	2.0%	
	Other	In house legal dept	Law Firm	Grand Total
	18	99	236	353

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses, including from respondents working at ABS and legal technology solutions providers.

Figure 5: Use of AI-assisted legal technology, by lawyer seniority in law firms

	Associate/ Assistant	Partner/ (Managing/Senior) P..	Grand Total	
Legal research	21.3%	22.4%	25.0%	
Due diligence	18.0%	16.3%	18.2%	
eDiscovery / eDisclosure / technology assisted review	16.9%	9.2%	14.0%	
Regulatory compliance	3.4%	13.3%	12.3%	
Fee-earner utilisation analytics and / or predictive billing	6.7%	11.2%	10.2%	
Contract analytics	6.7%	9.2%	10.2%	
Other	2.2%	7.1%	5.1%	
Predictive analytics for litigation	1.1%	1.0%	2.1%	
	Null	Associate/ Assistant	Partner/ (Managing/Senior) Partner	Grand Total
	49	89	98	236

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses from respondents working at Law Firms.

** Null indicates respondents who did not select any of the above options.

Figure 6: Use of AI-assisted legal technology, by year of qualification

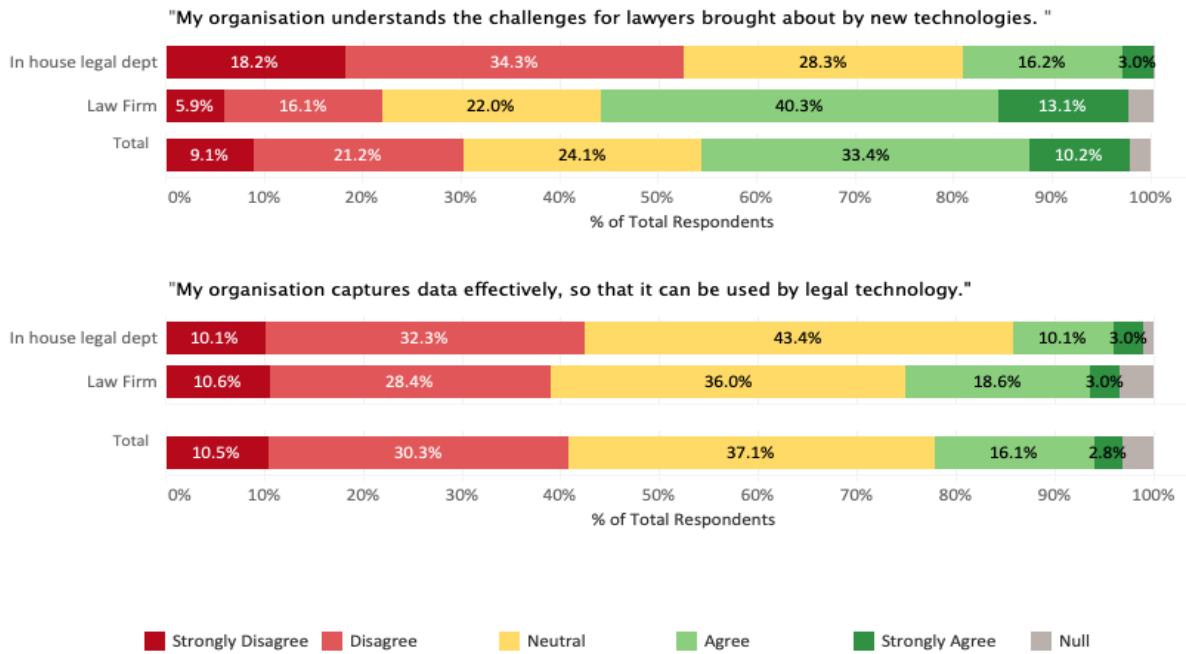
	1960s-80s	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-2019	Grand Total	
Legal research	32.4%	28.1%	21.9%	26.1%	27.2%	
Due diligence	14.1%	9.4%	12.5%	22.7%	16.4%	
eDiscovery / eDisclosure / technology assisted review	5.6%	14.1%	14.6%	16.0%	13.3%	
Regulatory compliance	15.5%	12.5%	9.4%	9.2%	11.6%	
Contract analytics	4.2%	9.4%	10.4%	12.6%	9.6%	
Fee-earner utilisation analytics and / or predictive billing	9.9%	7.8%	3.1%	8.4%	7.9%	
Other	5.6%	3.1%	6.3%	10.1%	7.1%	
Predictive analytics for litigation	1.4%	3.1%	1.0%	2.5%	2.0%	
	Null	1960s-80s	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-2019	Grand Total
	3	51	40	59	83	236

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses from respondents working at Law Firms.

** Null indicates respondents who did not select any of the above options.

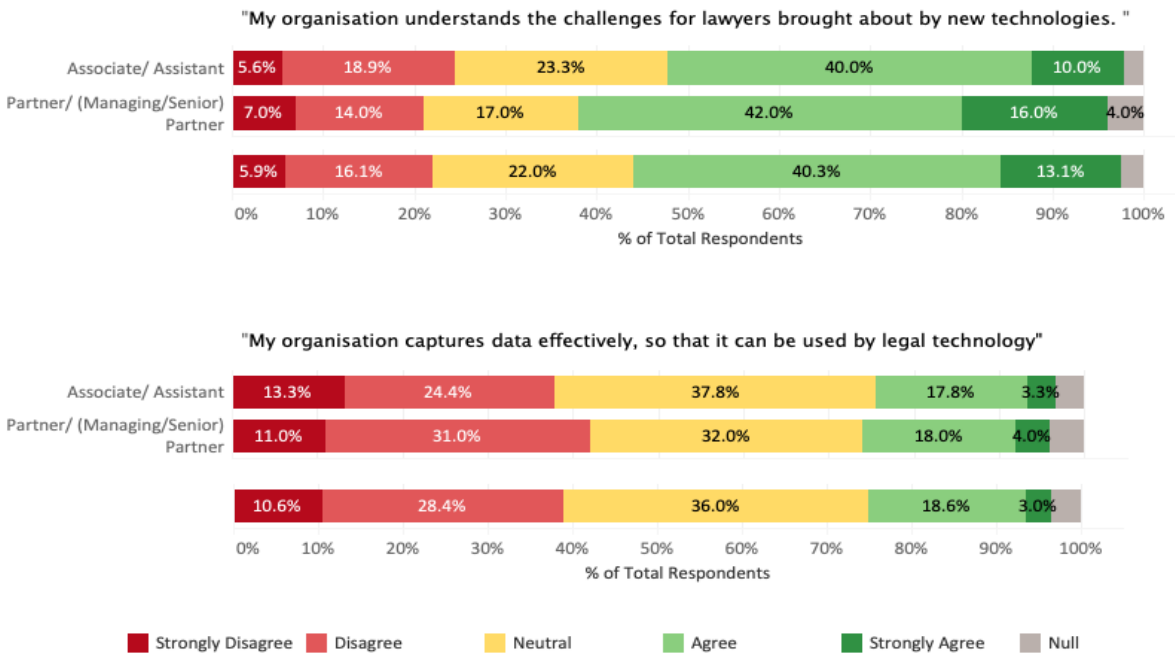
Only one fifth (19%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “My organisation captures data effectively so that it can be used by legal technology”, while 41% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Concern about the effectiveness of data capture was more prevalent among solicitors working in law firms (22%) than in corporate legal departments (13%) (see **Figure 7**). Within law firms, there was no significant difference between the proportions of associates/assistants (21%) and partners (22%) who agreed with this statement (**Figure 8**).

Figure 7: Attitudes towards technology adoption and data capture, by organisation type



**Total' includes all complete responses, including from respondents working at ABS and legal technology solutions providers.

Figure 8: Attitudes towards technology adoption and data capture, by lawyer seniority in law firms



**Total' includes all complete responses from respondents working at Law Firms.

The broad recognition that lawyers are facing challenges brought about by new technologies implies a potential need for training to develop complementary skills. The survey explored how much relevant training respondents have received to date, and perceptions regarding their need for training in the future.

We asked about training lasting a day or longer that solicitors had received during the last 3 years. Among all respondents, the most common type of training received was in relation to “software packages” (38%), followed by “legal issues raised by use of AI / technology” (12%), and “project management” (11%). Training in a particular software package is highly specific; putting this to one side, the majority of respondents had received no generic training in skills relevant to new technologies in the previous 3 years.

Respondents in law firms were more likely to receive training in software packages used by their employers than those in corporate legal departments. By contrast, respondents in corporate legal departments were more likely than those in law firms to receive training in legal and ethical issues raised by the use of AI / technology, and in project management (see **Figure 9**). Within law firms, unsurprisingly, more assistants/associates said they received training than partners (see **Figure 10**).

When asked about their anticipated technology training needs in the next 3 years, a clear majority of respondents (90%) indicated that they would need training at least one area. The most commonly anticipated training needs were : 1. data analytics (71%); 2. legal issues raised by use of AI / technology (65%); 3. software packages used by the respondent’s employer (61%); 4. ethical issues raised by use of AI / technology (48%); 5. digital literacy (45%); and 6. innovation techniques (44%) (see **Figure 11**). There were no notable differences by organisation type (see **Figure 11**), nor by solicitor seniority in law firms (see **Figure 12**).

Figure 9: Training in lawtech, by organisation type

	In house legal dept	Law Firm	Grand Total	
Software packages used by employer	27.3%	42.4%	37.7%	
Legal issues raise by the use of AI / technology	17.2%	9.7%	11.9%	
Project management	15.2%	10.2%	11.3%	
Ethical issues raised by the use of AI / technology	9.1%	6.8%	7.1%	
Innovation techniques	6.1%	6.8%	7.1%	
Digital literacy	6.1%	5.1%	5.9%	
Design thinking	4.0%	4.7%	4.8%	
Data analytics	4.0%	3.0%	3.4%	
Software coding	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%	
Process re-engineering	2.0%	3.0%	2.5%	
	Other	In house legal dept	Law Firm	Grand Total
	18	99	236	353

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses, including from respondents working at ABS and legal technology solutions providers.

Figure 10: Training in lawtech, by lawyer seniority in law firms

	Associate/ Assistant	Partner/ (Managing/Senior) Partner	Grand Total	
Software packages used by employer	49.4%	34.7%	42.4%	
Project management	7.9%	11.2%	10.2%	
Legal issues raise by the use of AI / technology	10.1%	8.2%	9.7%	
Ethical issues raised by the use of AI / technology	5.6%	7.1%	6.8%	
Innovation techniques	5.6%	7.1%	6.8%	
Digital literacy	6.7%	3.1%	5.1%	
Design thinking	3.4%	4.1%	4.7%	
Data analytics	1.1%	5.1%	3.0%	
Software coding	3.4%	2.0%	3.0%	
Process re-engineering		5.1%	3.0%	
	Null	Associate/ Assistant	Partner/ (Managing/Senior) Partner	Grand Total
	49	89	98	236

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses from respondents working at Law Firms.

** Null indicates respondents who did not select any of the above options.

Figure 11: Anticipated training needs, by organisation type

	In house legal dept	Law Firm	Grand Total	
Data analytics	68.7%	71.2%	71.1%	
Legal issues raise by the use of AI / technology	64.6%	65.3%	65.2%	
Software packages used by employer	56.6%	63.1%	60.6%	
Ethical issues raised by the use of AI / technology	46.5%	47.9%	47.9%	
Digital literacy	51.5%	41.5%	44.5%	
Innovation techniques	47.5%	43.2%	44.2%	
Project management	47.5%	34.3%	38.2%	
Design thinking	32.3%	26.3%	27.8%	
Process re-engineering	30.3%	22.9%	25.5%	
Software coding	20.2%	20.8%	20.4%	
	Other	In house legal dept	Law Firm	Grand Total
	18	99	236	353

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses, including from respondents working at ABS and legal technology solutions providers.

Figure 12: Anticipated training needs, by lawyer seniority in law firms

	Associate/ Assistant	Partner/ (Managing/Senior) Partner	Grand Total	
Data analytics	73.0%	68.4%	71.2%	
Legal issues raise by the use of AI / technology	73.0%	58.2%	65.3%	
Software packages used by employer	61.8%	66.3%	63.1%	
Ethical issues raised by the use of AI / technology	56.2%	42.9%	47.9%	
Innovation techniques	40.4%	43.9%	43.2%	
Digital literacy	42.7%	39.8%	41.5%	
Project management	40.4%	29.6%	34.3%	
Design thinking	30.3%	19.4%	26.3%	
Process re-engineering	23.6%	20.4%	22.9%	
Software coding	27.0%	12.2%	20.8%	
	Null	Associate/ Assistant	Partner/ (Managing/Senior) Partner	Grand Total
	49	89	98	236

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses from respondents working at Law Firms.

** Null indicates respondents who did not select any of the above options.

The survey also asked about respondents' appetite for personally undertaking training in the areas identified above. When asked "would you welcome the opportunity to better understand the application of technology to the practice of law by taking a course?", 88% of respondents said yes. Of those who responded positively, three-quarters were most interested in learning about the technology itself, and a quarter about legal issues raised by the technology. The survey also asked respondents to rank their preferred modes of training. The most popular was "training provided by an external provider" (50% ranked this No.1), followed by "training delivered in-house by my employer" (29% ranked this No.1) and "self-directed (or self-service) training" (22% ranked this No.1). There was no significant variation in responses to these questions by organisation type, nor by seniority within law firms.

Given that we asked respondents about both their prior training and their anticipated future training needs, we are able to explore the relationship between the two. Is prior lawtech training associated with an awareness of a greater need for future training? Or is an absence of training to date associated with a wish for more training in the future? The survey evidence suggests that, on the whole, the former is more accurate: those with prior training were more likely to anticipate a need for future training (see **Figure 13**). For example, respondents who received "software coding" training are more likely than those without such training to anticipate training needs in "software coding" as well as other areas ("data analytics" and "project management", for example). Those who had received training in "process re-engineering" were more likely than those without such training to anticipate need for training in "design thinking", "digital literacy", "innovation techniques", among other things. Our findings indicate a potentially self-reinforcing division between solicitors who are trained in digital technology and those who are not. It is possible that those who had received training feel encouraged to undertake even more.

The survey also asked respondents if they felt sufficiently trained in the use of lawtech. Overall, 41% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "*I feel sufficiently trained to use new technology at work*". Encouragingly, we find that those who had received prior training in lawtech were more likely to feel sufficiently trained than those who had not. A similar proportion (43%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "*I can confidently identify legal risks associated with using new technology*" (see **Figure 14**). Within law firms, this degree of confidence was more evident among partners (47%) than assistants/associates (42%) (see **Figure 15**).

Despite this confidence and sufficiency of training to date, nearly 4 out of 5 respondents (79%) agreed that "*Productivity at my organisation could be improved further by training lawyers in how to use new technologies*" (see **Figure 14**). Respondents in law firms (80%) were somewhat more likely to agree with this statement than those in corporate legal departments (77%). The starkest difference in opinion was noticeable within law firms, with more assistants/associates (87%) perceiving this productivity enhancing opportunity than partners (72%) (see **Figure 15**).

Figure 13: Future Training Needs, given Past Training

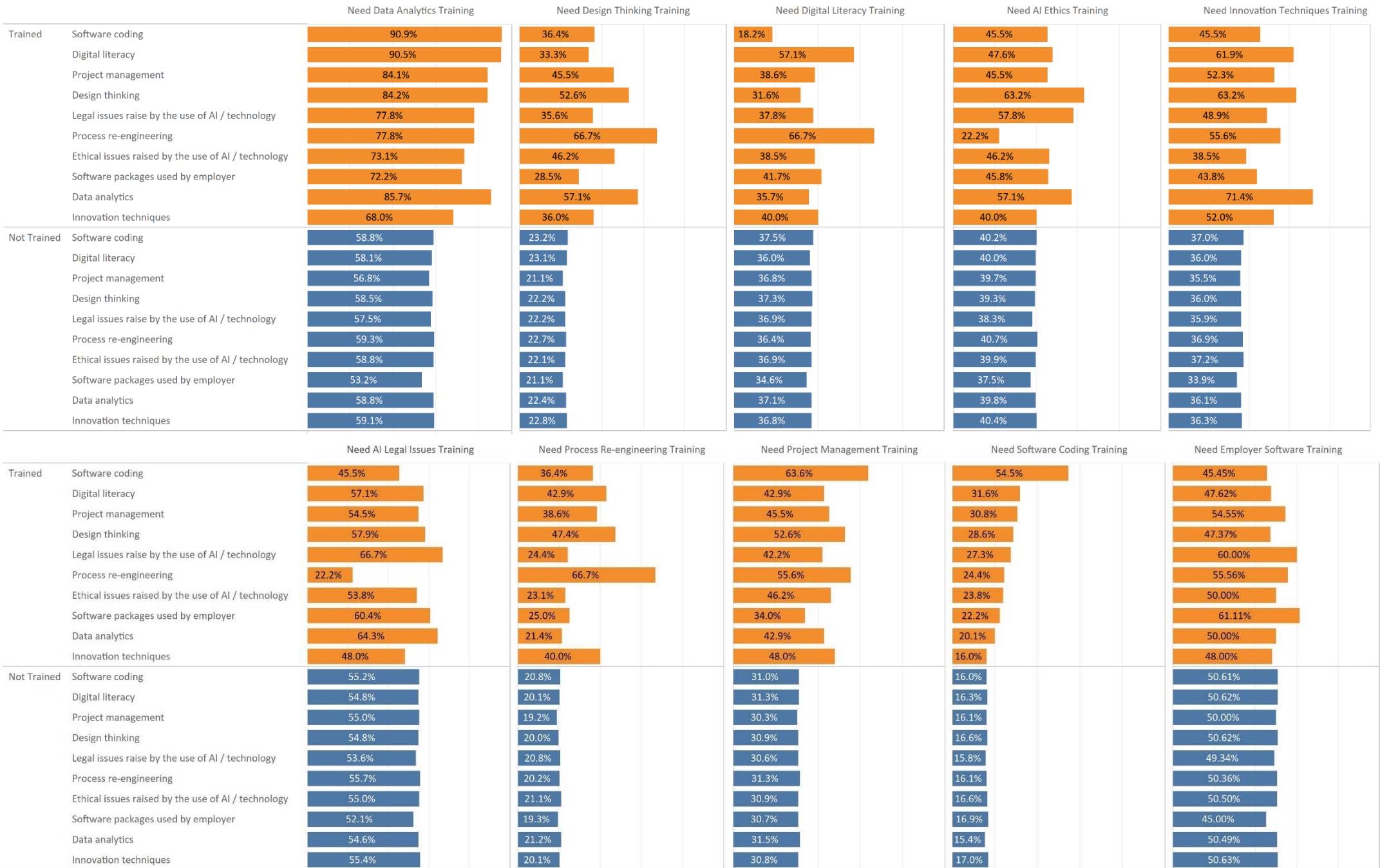
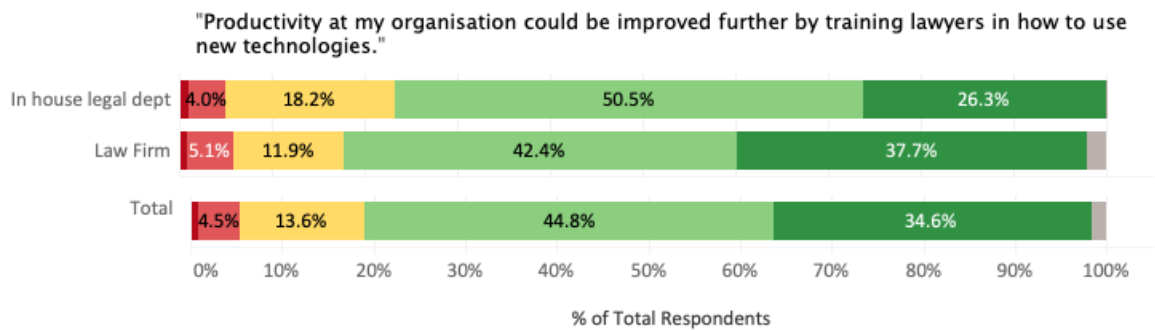
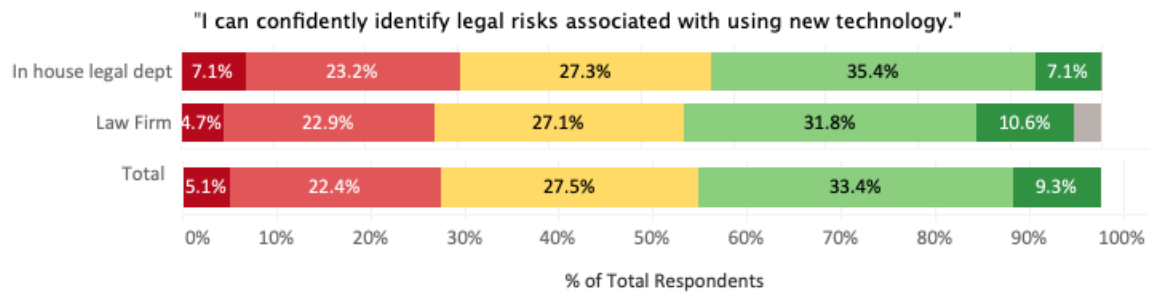
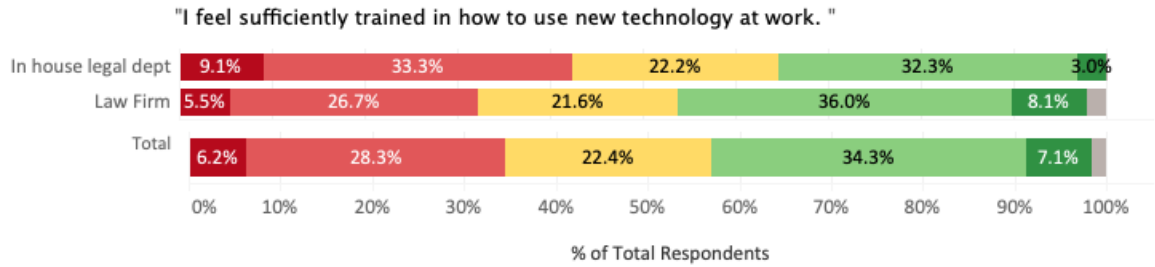


Figure 14: Confidence in lawtech use, by organisation type

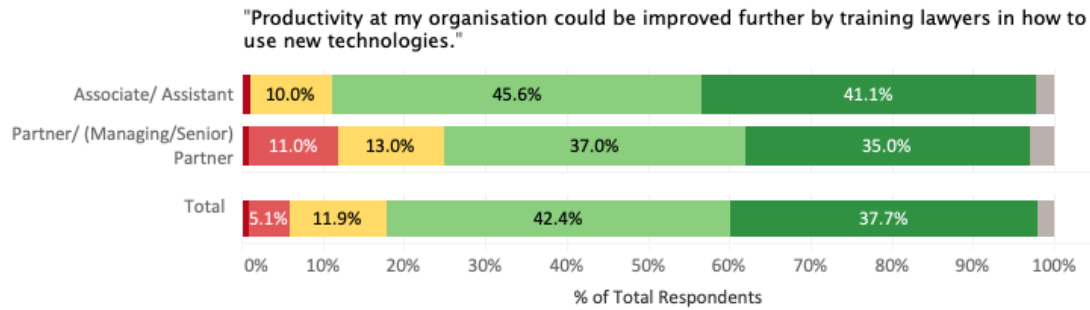
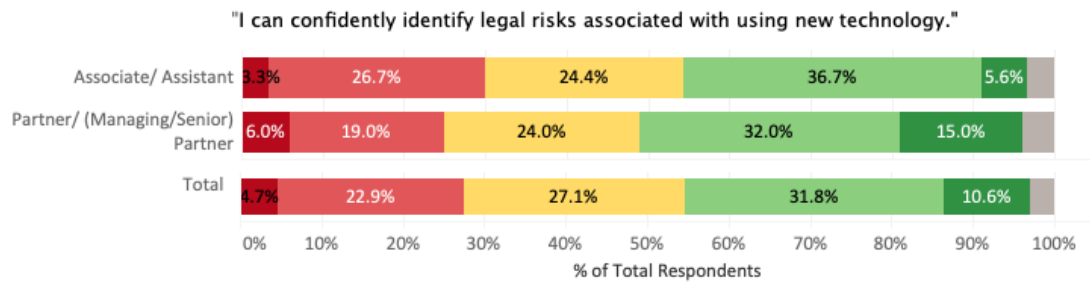
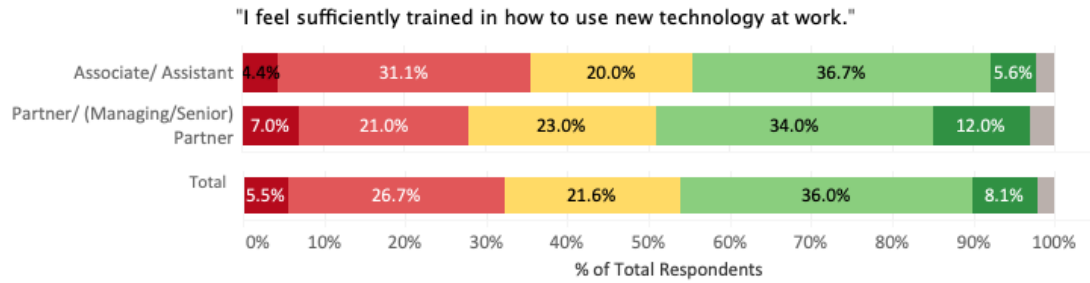


*% of those who strongly disagree: In house legal dept-- 1.0%; Law Firm-- 0.8%, Total-- 0.8%

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Strongly Agree
■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Null

*'Total' includes all complete responses, including from respondents working at ABS and legal technology solutions providers.

Figure 15: Confidence in lawtech use, by lawyer seniority in law firms



*% of those who strongly disagree: Associate/ Assistant-- 1.1%; Partner/ (Managing/Senior) Partner-- 1.0%, Total-- 0.9%

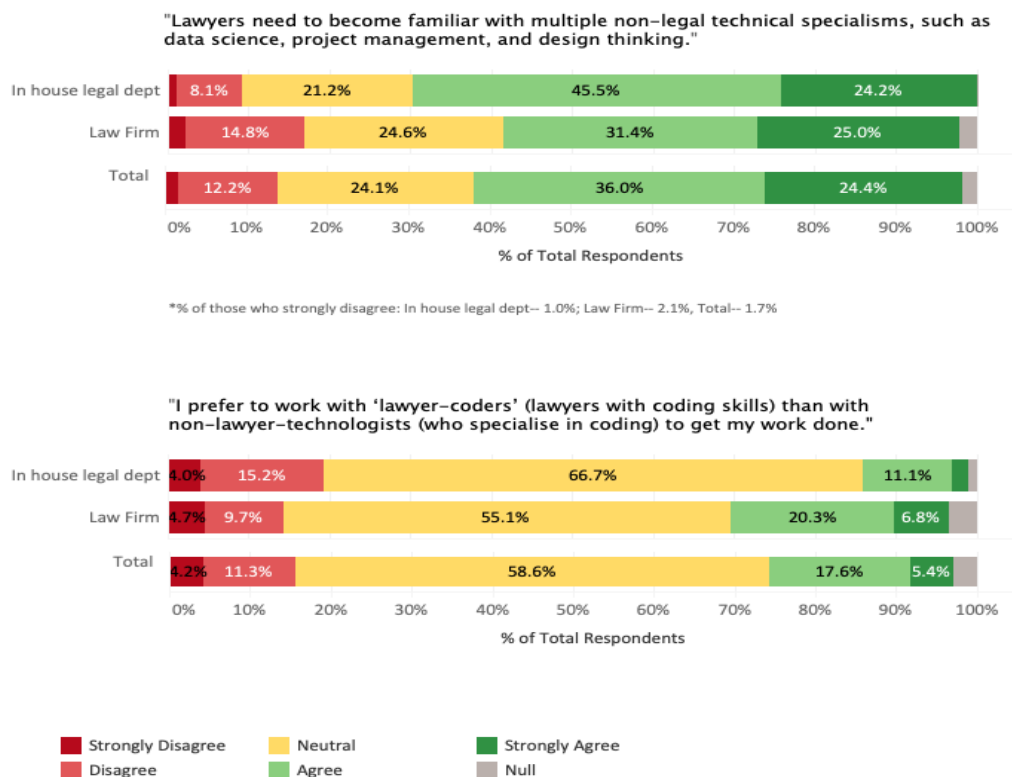
■ Strongly Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Strongly Agree
■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Null

*'Total' includes all complete responses from respondents working at Law Firms.

The use of certain types of lawtech, including that assisted by artificial intelligence (AI), often requires lawyers to work closely with a variety of other professionals. In our study, we identify the existence of multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) – when solicitors work on a day-to-day basis with non-legal professionals in data science, project management, and other areas. In order to work effectively in MDTs, do solicitors themselves need to extend their own expertise, to become lawyer-coders for example? Or is it sufficient for solicitors to simply have team members who are experts in these other areas? The survey explores these issues.

First, we delve into solicitors’ perceptions and preferences. With respect to the statement “Lawyers need to become familiar with multiple non-legal technical specialisms, such as data science, project management, and design thinking”, 60% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed (see **Figure 16**). Solicitors in corporate legal departments (70%) were more likely to agree with this statement than those in law firms (56%). Within law firms, assistants/associates (67%) were significantly more likely to agree with this statement than partners (48%) (see **Figure 17**).

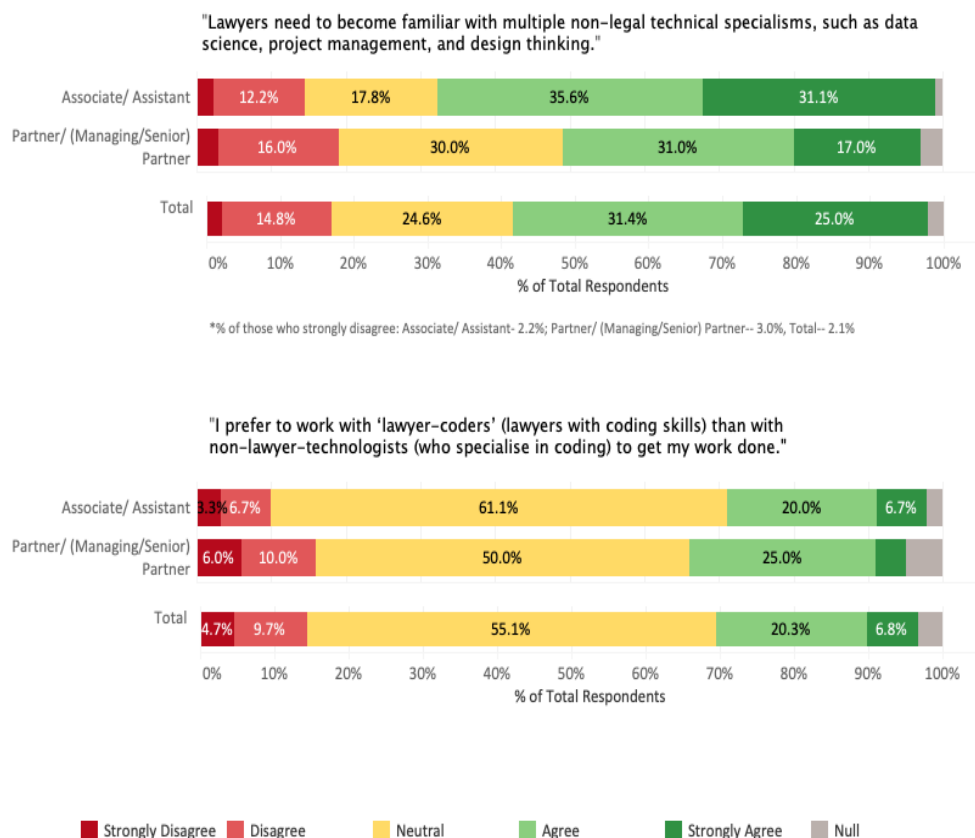
Figure 16: Attitudes towards MDTs, by organisation type



*'Total' includes all complete responses, including from respondents working at ABS and legal technology solutions providers.

Multi-disciplinary teams can be formed either by combining together a group of individuals each with different technical specialisms (*team-level* multi-disciplinarity) or by grouping together individuals who each combine multiple technical specialisms (*individual-level* multi-disciplinarity). We sought to explore respondents' preferences between these skills mix types by asking to what extent they agreed with the statement: "I prefer to work with 'lawyer coders' than with 'non-lawyer technologists'". No overall preference emerged: while nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 59% were neutral. Law firm respondents (27%) were more likely to agree with this statement than in-house legal department respondents (13%) (see **Figure 16**). Within law firms, the preferences of associates/assistants (27%) did not vary much from those of partners (29%) (see **Figure 17**). Solicitors working in law firms therefore had a relative preference for lawyers to extend their own expertise to adopt and implement lawtech. That said, the vast majority of all respondents remained neutral about this issue. Given the limited level of multi-disciplinary training reported by respondents, it seems plausible that it will be easier for firms to create multi-disciplinarity at the team level than to recruit multi-disciplinary individuals.

Figure 17: Attitudes towards MDTs, by lawyer seniority in law firms



*"Total" includes all complete responses from respondents working at Law Firms.

Second, our survey enquired about the actual work environment for solicitors today. To establish how closely our survey respondents worked in multi-disciplinary teams, the survey asked: “with whom do you work on a day-to-day basis in order to get legal work done?”. Respondents were able to select one or more responses from a menu consisting of “other lawyers”, “paralegals”, “IT/legal innovation experts”, “legal project managers”, “data analysts/data scientists”, and “process mapping experts.” Not surprisingly, an overwhelming majority (87%) of respondents stated they worked with other lawyers, and 53% with paralegals (see **Figure 18**). By contrast, just 24% of respondents worked with IT or legal innovation specialists, 11% with legal project managers, 4% with data scientists/data scientists, and 4% with process mapping experts.

From the above list, we may characterise lawyers as working in multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) if they work on a day-to-day basis with any one of the following four (non-legal) professionals: “IT/legal innovation experts”, “legal project managers”, “data analysts/data scientists”, and “process mapping experts.” As the question does not explore the nature of the interactions or any hierarchy involved, this likely over-represents the number of actual *teams*. Defined in this way, 40% of all solicitors in our sample worked in MDTs. Interestingly, a greater proportion of solicitors in corporate legal departments (49%) worked in MDTs than those in law firms (36%). Within law firms, a larger proportion of partners (35%) worked in MDTs than associates/assistants (30%) (see **Figure 19**).

Confirming our supposition that the deployment of AI is associated with MDTs, respondents working in MDTs were more likely to use AI-assisted lawtech than those not working in MDTs. **Figure 20** reports the use of AI-assisted lawtech by respondents working in MDTs. Comparing this with **Figure 4**, which reports the use of AI-assisted technology for the entire sample, suggests that MDT respondents were more likely to adopt AI-assisted lawtech in the following use-cases: “legal research” (33.8% of MDT respondents compared to 27.2% of non-MDT respondents), “due diligence” (36.8% compared to 16.4%), and “contract analytics” (27.9% compared to 9.6%).

Figure 18: Working in MDTs, by organisation type

	In_house_legal_dept	Law Firm	Grand Total	
Other solicitors / lawyers	81.8%	90.3%	87.3%	
Paralegals	41.4%	58.9%	53.0%	
IT / legal Innovation experts	26.3%	21.6%	23.8%	
Other	21.2%	13.1%	15.3%	
Legal project managers	12.1%	10.2%	10.5%	
Data analysts / data scientists	8.1%	2.5%	4.2%	
Process mapping experts	6.1%	3.4%	4.2%	
	Other	In_house_legal_dept	Law Firm	Grand Total
	18	99	236	353
In MDT	50.0%	48.5%	35.6%	39.9%

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses, including from respondents working at ABS and legal technology solutions providers.

Figure 19: Working in MDTs, by lawyer seniority in law firms

Q13_coworker	Associate/ Assistant	Partner/ (Managing/Senior) Partner	Grand Total	
Other solicitors / lawyers	95.5%	85.7%	90.3%	
Paralegals	65.2%	58.2%	58.9%	
IT / legal Innovation experts	13.5%	21.4%	21.6%	
Other	7.9%	18.4%	13.1%	
Legal project managers	10.1%	6.1%	10.2%	
Data analysts / data scientists	2.2%	4.1%	2.5%	
Process mapping experts		5.1%	3.4%	
	Null	Associate/ Assistant	Partner/ (Managing/Senior) Partner	Grand Total
	49	89	98	236
In MDT	48.5%	30.0%	35.0%	39.9%

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses from respondents working at Law Firms.

Figure 20: Use of AI-assisted lawtech in MDTs, by organisation type

	In house legal dept	Law Firm	Grand Total	
Legal research	38.1%	33.3%	33.8%	
Due diligence	28.6%	40.5%	36.8%	
eDiscovery / eDisclosure / technology assisted review	14.3%	26.2%	20.6%	
Regulatory compliance	23.8%	21.4%	22.1%	
Contract analytics	23.8%	31.0%	27.9%	
Other	14.3%	19.0%	17.6%	
Fee-earner utilisation analytics and / or predictive billing	9.5%	26.2%	20.6%	
Predictive analytics for litigation	0.0%	7.1%	4.4%	
	Other	In house legal dept	Law Firm	Grand Total
	9	48	84	141

*'Grand Total' includes all complete responses in MDTs, including from respondents working at ABS and legal technology solutions providers.

CONCLUSIONS

Lawtech adoption. Our survey finds that take-up of many forms of lawtech are modest in England and Wales, and especially so for technology assisted by AI. Organisational type may be relevant to take-up: while survey respondents who work for law firms were more likely to adopt a broad range of non-AI lawtech applications than those who work in-house, the reverse was true for AI-enabled applications for legal research.

Training. Half of our respondents had received some form of training relevant to lawtech in the previous three years. However, if we exclude training in specific software packages used by respondents' employers, only a minority of respondents had received generic training relevant to lawtech. Training patterns vary somewhat by organisation type: respondents working for law firms were more likely to have received training in specific software packages used by their employers, whereas solicitors working in-house were more likely to have received other types of training relevant to lawtech.

Training also varied by seniority. Within law firms, associates and assistants, as compared to partners, were more likely to receive lawtech training. At the same time, the length of experience *per se*, as measured by the qualifying year of respondents, appeared to matter less. Associates and assistants were more likely to endorse strongly the productivity-enhancing potential of lawtech training, and the need for lawyers to become familiar with non-legal technical specialisms.

The survey results point to specific issues that warrant further attention by the legal profession and their employing organisations.

Data capture. Our survey highlights the inability of organisations to capture data effectively in such a way that it can be used by lawtech. This is a key barrier to lawtech adoption. Data capture, therefore, should be a major concern for the legal profession.

Future Training. Four-fifths of respondents believed that further lawtech training would bring about productivity improvements at their organisations. The survey also shows that prior lawtech training is associated with clearer identification of future training needs. It is possible that individual lawyers perceive that repeated training has increasing benefits. Cumulatively, therefore, organisations that give their lawyers lawtech training now may benefit from a virtuous circle, with their lawyers better able to identify their future lawtech training needs.

Multi-disciplinary teams. Most respondents felt that it was important for lawyers to be open to working with other disciplines, although there was no clear consensus as to whether this implied a need for multi-disciplinary *individuals*, as opposed to *multi-disciplinary teams*. Only a minority of respondents described themselves as currently working day-to-day with

professionals with non-legal technical expertise, a pattern we have (loosely) characterised as multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs). Such MDT activity was more commonly associated with respondents working in-house than among those in law firms. MDT activity was also associated with a higher rate of deployment of AI-enabled lawtech solutions. Further research is needed to deepen our understanding of these emergent patterns of labour, which may – potentially – have a profound impact on the nature of the legal profession.

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RESEARCH METHODS

This study is based on an anonymous survey of members of the Law Society of England and Wales, conducted between 12 November 2019 and 13 January 2020. The survey questions were devised using the Qualtrics platform, and were piloted on a small number of solicitors before finalising the questions. Initially, 10,000 potential survey respondents were selected at random by the Law Society, and were sent an anonymous link to the online survey to complete. The survey link was then shared with the Law Society’s Technology and Law Committee and through the Law Society’s social media channels to solicit further participation from Law Society members. In order to increase survey participation, subsequent survey invitations included those aimed at under-represented groups of respondents, such as members of the Law Society’s 40,000-member Junior Lawyers Division.

In total, 427 responses were received. But, after discarding partial responses, the sample comprises a total of 353 valid responses. By organisation type, 236 respondents (67%) worked for law firms, 99 respondents (28%) worked in-house, 12 respondents for entities trading as “alternative business structures”, and 6 respondents for lawtech solutions providers.

Our respondents are spread widely in terms of years of experience, with the qualifying year ranging from 1965 to 2019. A third (33%) obtained their practising certificate in the 2010s. While we captured responses from junior solicitors, the career aspiration of the overall sample is traditional, with half (51%) of the respondents stating that either “I already reached a high level of seniority and intend to stay ‘in post’ until I retire” or “I hope to continue with a traditional legal career progression, to become partner”. A significant minority (15%), however, were amenable to working for, or establishing either an alternative legal service provider or a lawtech solutions provider.