Another year, another LegalTech, another missive from the generous host of people who contribute to this document, with a light editing touch from myself. It's the eighth year of this report, and this year I was reunited with my partner in New York "crime", ACH Legal's Ann Hemming (aka Mrs Haslam), which means you get a double bonus of input on the Knowledge Management and Learning & Development side of things, as well reports on the meetings I had with some fascinating (non-eDisclosure) people. Of course it wouldn't be LegalTech without a focus on the litigation support side, with its equal share of interesting and thought provoking individuals. I have had a good crop of real world, occasionally spikey, comment, some of it attributable and some of it off the record. As ever, my most grateful thanks to all contributors, any errors are mine and mine alone.

I always try to have a theme for the article to bind the different strands together and this year it is all about disruption, from weather problems, travel chaos, technology and legal developments. The conference gave us all pause for thought about how to plan for; preparing to be hacked, the game changing impact of artificial intelligence systems, pushing the boundaries for automation, collaboration and efficiency. As well as significant events in the eDisclosure world with acquisitions, new technologies and "war chest" funding. Throw in the weather, Super Bowl, UK specific factors, and a new low from the Hilton on how it treats the conference, and you have a powerful mix of comment and news interleaved with personal viewpoints.

Here we go.

For a second year in a row both New York city and the conference were disrupted by snow storms and their "knock on" effect on travel. Milyli's Scott Monaghan was of the view; *"All in all I thought Legal Tech was great, but travel was a nightmare. I definitely think in light of the last two years, it would make sense to move the conference to a warmer climate, or reschedule for spring or summer in NY."*, whilst Nuix's Lee Meyrick pointed out that; *"Snow in the eastern US at the start of February is hardly a surprise – moving to later in the month would probably be a good idea."*. Jeffrey Brandt produces a free daily Legal Technology news digest from PinHawk, that is well worth subscribing to (you can find a sample [here](#)) and his view was; "*You'd think that someone would eventually learn that "February," "techshow," and "New York City" can be a very, very bad combination. My train from Philly stopped about 10 minutes short of NYC as the engineer told us they had stopped all traffic into the city. We sat for half an hour on the rails and then were allowed to enter the city. Once into the show, I heard nothing but travel horror stories from others. Cancelled, delayed and rerouted flights were commonplace. Others told me they got to NYC airspace, only to be told to circle, until they ran out of fuel and were forced to land in Philadelphia. One person told me their flight landed and skidded on the runway."*

Kroll's Andrew Szczech noted that; "*I'd agree with you that maybe it is time to think about changing the venue or date in the calendar. There are huge investments in time and money being made in the show by exhibitors and attendees and late attendance can have an impact on the benefits that can be realised from these investments."* Finally cicayda's Roe Frazer complained that; "*The weather does not help in this regard. Move it to Florida or Texas or California, please. It took me 10 cancelled flights to get there."*

In January, when the weather forecasters were warning of a "Snowmageddon" hitting New York, they trotted out the dates of the previous worst 5 storms to hit the city and I noticed that two of them (Feb 06 and Feb 10) had occurred during the time I've been going to the event, so it does look as though these dates are regularly running a risk with the weather. That being said, the events calendar for eDisclosure is fairly full already, and an anonymous source says; *"The reason why Legal Tech takes place when it does is because it's the quiet period for the hotel business in New York and it's after the hoo hah that is the Super Bowl. That's why there are always lots of good restaurant deals in town. I also happen to know that the reason why it still continues to take place is at the Hilton Hotel is that there are no other comparably-sized venues in the centre of town that could host such a large event. I know that they have looked for alternatives. The other key factor is that attendees will not go to some off-island hotel in New Jersey for a conference."* Singing from the same hymn sheet is Chris Dale who says; *"In similar vein, those who deride the location and timing of LegalTech might keep quiet until they can propose something better – not just vague references to other times and places but the identification of a venue which competes for size, cost and convenience and which does not bump into other events in the calendar."*

The trouble with someone being in a monopolistic, seemingly unassailable position is that there is always a tendency to abuse the position of power. Ben Parker might have told Peter "with great power comes great responsibility" but unlike Spiderman the management of the Hilton weren't listening and they took their attempts to annoy the paying customers to new depths this year.

You could almost understand them squeezing in another conference at the same time as LegalTech, though it did mean the Hilton lobby was full of signs and people for a shoe fair rather than IT. What stunned most people was the absence of the lobby bar, the traditional meeting place for delegates. Instead there was hoarding with no explanation of what was going on. I assumed they are upgrading the facilities, and no matter when you do that you have to inconvenience someone, but it cut down even more on the availability of chairs and places to meet. The delegate lounge, which appeared last year and cut out half the bar's capacity, was available as an extra to those people who paid more for their rooms in the Hilton, so ya boo sucks to anyone who wasn't paying the exorbitant Hilton rates. I was only escorted into its hallowed ground once and found it noisy, crowded, and not particular good value. To rub salt into this wound, the only remaining bar area was block booked by ALM (and presumably sold on to the highest bidder) so was off limits to everyone else.

A number of people commented acerbically on all things Hilton. Lee Meyrick; "*The Hilton is no place to do business, off floor and off site meetings are the norm. The 'executive lounge' was atrocious, I couldn't meet there".* An anonymous voice lamented; *" The Hilton lifts. People have been born, married and died in the time that it takes for the Hilton's lifts to arrive. The use of the term 'elevator' could only be used in a sarcastic and world-weary tone.* Litsavant's Mark Dingle; "*Removing the front bar didn't endear them to me – it was a jolly useful place to meet, greet, socialise and do business (and not necessarily in that order). Taking the side bar "off limits" and flogging it to the highest bidder exacerbated this problem".* Opus 2 International's Brenda Mahedy complained; *"And speaking of premium prices… What?! No Lobby Lounge? I missed spending $12 on a Corona and meeting up with old friends each evening."*

For regular readers of this report I can pass on the good news that the octogenarian trio who run the single coat check facility on the conference lobby area are still alive (I hesitate to use the word "well" as that would imply some improved alacrity or movement on their part). With the queues regularly reaching the 20 minute wait point, I followed a good bit of pre-show advice and either braved the cold, or used my light weight walking jacket, which I could stuff into my conference bag.

If you thought the anger at the hotel was bad, the comments on the conference charges and facilities were even worse. Jeffry Brandt again; "*As I heard the various vendors grumble and grouse, the cost of everything is extreme, power, telecommunications and simply getting your materials from the loading dock to the show floor. The complaint was that all trade shows are expensive, but that LegalTech (and more specifically I suspect, the Hilton) was worse. I also suspect NYC unions are stronger than many other American cities and that drives costs up even further.* Jeffry also confirmed that Handshake had refused to pay the rate of $600 to rent a 40" TV for three days, bought one for $200 from Amazon Prime, had it delivered to the hotel and raffled it off a prize afterwards. (For UK readers I checked our Amazon and you can get a 40" TV for two hundred, it just that it is pounds and not dollars, so $300, but still half the price of a rental.)

However the real ire was saved for the so called Wi-Fi on the exhibitors floor. Brenda Mahedy; *"High prices also applied to Internet service. We paid a small fortune for Internet service that was terrible."* Mark Dingle; *"Crap Wi-Fi again!"* I spoke with a number of exhibitors and they all echoed that they had paid a lot of money for not a lot.

I always compare LegalTech to the Edinburgh Festival, where the real action is in the Fringe events. You need the Hilton to act as the anchor for all the off-site meetings, demos and interesting stuff, but its flagrant disregard for the "punters" is building a deep sense of resentment. We need the conference, do we really need the aggravation. I suspect that if a viable alternative can be found, there will be no loyalty to the city, location or date as they have not done anything to earn it. Roe Frazer noted that change is coming to US law, and that change is being generated by the smaller more boutique firms and postulated that; *" I do wonder if this new breed of companies will find value in exhibiting at LTNY at exorbitant rates to smaller crowds of mostly AmLaw 200 Luddites."*

Enough negativity, there was a great deal of benefit within the conference, a lot of things to cover and only so much reader time and patience to fit it all in.

Let's start with the most disruptive thing about LegalTech, that actually happened in the weeks before the event.

On 21 January, Equivio, a provider of eDiscovery text analytics tools both in its own right, and for embedding into other third party products was bought by Microsoft. Or rather the done deal was formally announced. There is an excellent article by Nick Patience, formally at Recommind but now running the software analyst team at 451 Research called;

"Equivio deal is a classic Microsoft – good enough eDiscovery and information Governance" which you can read here.

Nick's key points are first, this removes the OEM capability as quick as current contracts expire and second, it enables Microsoft to provide "good enough" functionality in these areas for Office 365. The second is more of a slow burner for the specialist eDisclosure/Discovery organisations but their market share, or more significantly, their room for possible expansion, could be under serious threat.

Nuix (as is normally the case) came out swinging, with a press release on the eve of the show entitled: "*Nuix a safe bet against Equivio's uncertain future*" announcing they would be including email threading (one of Equivio's star features) free of charge in the upcoming 6.2 release of its software. Just in case you; "*are concerned that Microsoft might discontinue the product after finalising its acquisition of the company.*" My advice? You need to check with your current eDisclosure supplier if they embed Equivio into their product and if they do, what's their strategy for when the Man from Microsoft says "No!".

In terms of the show itself a number noticed that it seemed quieter than previous years, though last year I commented that *"it's a little bit more dependent upon the local populace than the organisers would have us believe."*, and I think the cold weather kept some of the locals away. Or there could another reason, as one person put it *"The quality of the swag was definitely down on previous years"*, and Lee Meyrick noticed that; "*There seemed to be distinctly less branded giveaways – is this marketing budgets being squeezed?"*

QuisLex's Andrew Goodman noticed something else as well; *"It seemed that this was a down year for "booth schwag" – there just didn't seem to be the volume or desirability of giveaways beyond the basic thumb drives and pens, in contrast to what we have seen in the past. One offer did stand out, however: shoe shines. One provider offering shoes shines would have been interesting; two suggests more of a trend. I wonder how it was received (especially given who was doing the shoe shining at the two booths in question) and if it would be back next year."*

Ah yes, the shoe shines. Two booths had the full on, sit on a high chair and get your shoes shined for free, (well free, except you tipped the person doing the work) experience. Huron Legal had two mature gentlemen (straight from central casting in terms of their shone shine appearance). OmniVere had a pair of young blonde ladies in tight red skirts and white blouses (which gradually got dishevelled with shoe polish as the day wore on) who make their living working shoe shine at conferences the length and breadth of the USA. I found this out when, in the true spirit of investigative journalism, I had my rather mucky shoes relieved of their London dirt and given a true New York glossy patina. I do these things so you don't have to, dear reader. Mind you, you could also get a quick manicure at the Huron stand, so I think they win on equality, but OmniVere always had the 10 minute queue.

In, what has become over the past five years, a regular element of the show, Inside Legal do an excellent job in creating a word cloud from the agenda and musing upon what topics are "hot" in 2015, and what has changed from previous years. See their full article here. According to their analysis, the main focus of the show was more on information governance, risk and compliance, with eDiscovery still a major topic, but not as dominant as previous years. Lee Myrick again; "*Information Governance has lost its stigma as being "teenage sex" (everyone talking about it, no one doing it) and much more of a "how should we" conversation than "is it worth doing".* Andrew Szczech's view was; "*The clear theme of the conference was around Information Governance (IG). Obviously, it's great for conferences to generate new discussions and there is no doubt that conversations around this topic have evolved considerably over recent years. However, I did feel there is a bit of a disconnect between what clients are asking for on a day to day basis (which is mostly good old fashioned eDiscovery) and what is actually being talked about in respect of the IG discipline. Also, judging by the different comments, questions and opinions made by visitors to our stand, there are very diverse opinions about what IG actually is. We found that the questions most often asked were regarding global eDiscovery capabilities. An increase in cross border disputes and investigations together with greater focus on data privacy has driven these enquiries."*

However, Nigel Murray's only comment about the show was a pithy; *"I focussed this year on Information Governance and your comment about Big Data last year holds true for IG: The best analysis of "Big Data" I have come across is: "Big data is like teenage sex: everyone talks about it, nobody really knows how to do it, everyone thinks everyone else is doing it, so everyone claims they are doing it."* He and Lee Myrick have bipolar views on Information Governance (or it is teenage sex they disagree on?).

Information Governance was certainly the focus of the Nuix pre-conference "Shine" dinner on the Monday night. Eddie Sheeny said that this year's trend was from Information Governance to Information Security. He highlighted the need for Incident Response teams, plus a Cyber Threat Analysis team and touched (again) upon the security at law firms and how they are targeted.

Theresa Payton (former White House CIO) gave an excellent speech on a different approach to security, her key message is to plan for WHEN it happens, not on IF, no amount of prevention will stop these guys (though you can make their life a lot harder). She had a hand-out of a 90 day plan to look at processes and procedures and predicted that security in the future will be a blended mixture of biometrics, passwords and the use of big data to provided background to your data access.

Hogan Lovells' Matthew Davis picked up on the cyber-security point saying; "*Unsurprisingly, cyber-security was a more prevalent topic at this year's show, joining perennial favourites big data, information governance and predictive coding (to become the Four Horsemen of the IT Apocalypse?) in the educational sessions. Without having carried out any empirical research, it also seemed to me that there were more cyber-security technology offerings amongst the exhibitors.*"

We will return to the Information Governance/Management theme in a bit.

The keynotes (as far as I'm concerned) did revert to the normal formula that one was very good/relevant to something I was interested in, the other two not as much.

The ones I didn't attend were on the opening and closing days. The first session was on **Cybersecurity, Privacy and Data Protection Legal Challenges in the Digital Age** and I pass on the view of Intelligent Voice's Nigel Cannings; *"I saw one keynote (a curious one on data privacy - A complete self-serving load of nonsense: we respect your privacy unless we want to trawl your content to advertise against it)"*. Not a fan then. The final day had a session on **Examining the Legal Ethics of the Chevron-Ecuador Pollution and RIO Cases**, which actually did seem to be highly interesting to a US audience, but totally irrelevant to the rest of us.

The session I did attend was delivered by [Professor Jeff DeGraff](#) who told us all about **Leading Innovation: Jumpstarting Your Organisation's Growth Engine.** The topic was very interesting, though it suffered from the normal processes, where the pre-show sales pitch promises lots of content focused on the legal market, only for the reality to be a very slick pre-packaged delivery of a standard hour on the topic, with a little legal seasoning scattered across the top. That being said, it highlighted the dilemma that it takes [10 years to master something](#), but you can't afford to wait that length of time, so how do you short circuit the process. Proff DeGraff gave some hints, but as ever, you probably need to buy his latest book to really find out how.

The other session I attended was **Fitbits, Drones & Automobiles – How the internet of things changes everything**, which was entertaining as it had speakers who were on very different sides of the use of drones argument. One postulated on what a force for good they were and gave examples of positive deployment that would be stifled by proposed rule changes. The other (from the organisation proposing those rule changes) highlighted the implications on privacy when the captured imagery was fed through number plate recognition software or facial recognition programmes. One fact stuck with me, the US Border patrol considers anywhere within 100 miles of the US borders to be within its remit, that (because of the large number of waterways connected to the sea) covers two thirds of the US population, who are liable to have drone surveillance overhead.

There is an excellent article on other aspects of Fitbits etc. written by Cicayda's Marc Jenkins and available [here](#). I'd recommend you signing up to Mark's "Flipping the Gorilla" blog, it's always worth a read.

The one downside to the presentation was that there was an archetypical "Jobsworth" sat outside the door who insisted that everyone physically sign in to the session, despite us all wearing scannable badges.

Part of my time at LegalTech is now spent meeting various technology firms to hear their latest and greatest announcements. This is me acting as roving reporter for Charles Christian, whilst he avoids the weather and chaos and stays home to tend to more immediate matters. I managed seven 15 minute interviews in a two hour span, so there's a lot to get through in this section.

I've mentioned before that I produce an annual Buyer's Guide to eDisclosure systems in the UK, and I have come to realise that it has a widespread audience. However, that didn't prepare me for it being referenced twice in my interviews with various organisations, in both cases, to paraphrase my interviewees; *"We really like your Buyer's Guide, it helped us work out which company we wanted to buy."* A bit of an unintended consequence, however this hints at more disruption coming to the UK market, as two suppliers should be making statements about being bought by the end of March.

To start with I met with Jill Brown & Clay Cocalis from [DTI Global](#) who are on a bit of a personal mission to disrupt the marketplace by acquisition. In November they bought Hudson Legal, which gave them managed review facilities in both the US and UK and in January finalised the purchase of Applied Discovery (a US based litigation support supplier who hadn't made it across the pond). They aren't stopping there, as they are one of the two companies about to announce their arrival in the UK via the purchase of a eDisclosure supplier, bringing yet another major Relativity supplier to the mix, as they have over 10,000 licences in active use. They were quite bullish about the eDisclosure/Discovery market, seeing it growing by an annual 8-10% for the next few years, and are determined to grow with it, both by organic expansion and acquisitions. In their view, 2014 saw the true adoption of analytics (Computer Assisted Review to you and I), with workflows incorporating the technology right from the start of the EDRM process. The other trend they also highlighted was the Professor Richard Susskind identification of a possible full time career as an eDisclosure/Discovery specialist lawyer/attorney.

Next was David Carns from a US litigation company I'd not come across before, [@LegalDiscovery](#) (though I can assure you, they have now got an entry in the latest edition of the Buyer's Guide). They have their own "all in one" software product called CasePoint which is browser and platform independent. I mention them because I think this is an indicator of how things are changing the eDisclosure market.

My premise (shared by a number of other commentators in this arena) is that the supplier market has become quite settled with everyone offering similar products. One of the key factors supporting this conclusion is that the 2014 Gartner "Magic Quadrant" report on eDisclosure looked remarkably identical to the 2013 picture, indicating a stable (or depending upon your viewpoint, possible stagnating) market that is ripe for disruption in many ways. One we have already discussed, acquisitions; (such as Microsoft buying Equivio, and DTI Global gobbling up 3 companies in almost as many months). The other we will look at later on in this report, which is the emergence of new technologies, and the third is emergence of better products which gradually win over the luddites and take market share from existing companies.

CasePoint seems to be one of the products at the forefront of the "better" approach, with built-in collection facilities for Office 365, Drop Box, Google mail as well as functionality to collect from a range of social media including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Yammer. However, as David pointed out, they actually used social media in about 1% of the cases in the US, and of more importance was the end to end process that saw data through Early Case Assessment, Computer Assisted Review and end production. His personal take on the most significant trend in 2014 was the way in which the technology to rapidly cull data was becoming far more "automatic", essential and built into products.

Jami Gyurci from [BigHand](#) was next to talk about the way the company was trying to disrupt the US market for dictation, which was still at the educational stage of explaining the benefits the technologies can bring. In this she was being helped by the understanding from people (becoming more used to talking at their mobiles to get information) that voice recognition by such products as Google and Siri was bleeding through into the world of dictation. The software was also underpinning more acceptance of workflow and user control of those processes, with form filling on the technology horizon as the next advance.

Kathryn Mortensen representing Xact Data Discovery (an eDiscovery service supplier based in the US and India) discussed the challenges they faced in educating end users, who were still afraid of Computer Assisted Review and other analytic tools. Xact were explaining the different ways the technology could be used, and in the consolidating eDiscovery marketplace were trying to differentiate themselves in terms of improvement in both the tools they used and the service they delivered. She unconsciously echoed one of the themes of the conference, in that there are far less law firms bringing eDiscovery tools in-house, but far

more end client organisations using those tools "inside the fire wall" for Information Governance / Litigation Readiness.

I spoke with Andrew Goodman from QuisLex last year. In 2014 he was talking about the trend for organisations to move away from buying eDisclosure software and running it themselves, instead preferring to select an established supplier for an end to end offering to take advantage of the supplier expertise and experience This year we discussed how they too were following the route of an improved "product" offering, in QuisLex's case this involved the use of Six Sigma Black Belt project management and individuals with linguistic degrees providing search expertise. Andrew recognised that by embracing Computer Assisted Review as they did, and by providing subject matter experts in specific fields, they were cutting down on the volume of "grunt" review work they did, but resulted in much better quality projects, results for the clients, and ultimately repeat business.

LawBase's Philip Homburger was seeing lots of interest in managing eDisclosure using matter management tools, which was possibly a little self-serving as LawBase is a …… matter management tool. Putting cynicism to one side, the UK has seen a significant surge in interest in legal project management since the introduction of the Jackson reforms and the requirement to agree the budgeting spreadsheet known as Precedent H at the first Case Management Conference (CMC). This focus on agreeing budgets seems to have spurred many more to embrace matter management, budget estimation and the establishment of workflows, so that time is captured and recorded against budgets in sufficient accuracy and speed to be of use. Law firms have always had these kinds of processes, but Precedent H seems to have jolted them into being a much more important element of legal business strategy. LawBase does have an anglicised version, but no UK supplier. It might be worth someone's while to get in touch with Philip as the product seems quite impressive.

Kevin Brooks from Inventus was my final interview in this session, and was the second person to reference the Buyer's Guide as a handy list for people looking to buy UK firms. Inventus is a consultancy firm that focuses on helping organisations manage their eDiscovery process. Like FTI Consulting who own Ringtail, Inventus has their own litigation support product called Luminosity which provides end to end functionality across the EDRM model. It will be fascinating to see who is bought by Inventus and how Luminosity is then brought to the UK marketplace. We live in interesting times indeed.

Later on in the conference I had time to meet with Joe Garber from HP Autonomy who brought me up to speed on the (in his words) "turnaround" of Autonomy within HP. A number of people (Joe included) had left HP/Autonomy during the time that HP was accusing the previous owners of Autonomy of various shady practices in the period leading up to the acquisition by HP. It is not the intention of this article to even speculate upon the rights or wrongs of the case, but it does seem to have rumbled its way to a much quieter state. In the meantime HP have made the decision to fully embrace Autonomy and integrate it firmly into the mainstream product line. This has prompted Joe, and a significant number of those who left, to return to the company and once again promote the product.

Bearing in mind the comments elsewhere about Information Governance, the main use HP was making of the Autonomy IDOL engine was in the "Big Data" side of Information Management and Governance (so it seems Nuix is not going to have that particular playing field all to itself). They also had email archiving and "normal" eDiscovery/Disclosure in their sights, but significantly had changed the Autonomy sales team from an isolated vertical facing force to an integral part of the Information Management/Governance group.

After some years in the "wilderness" it looks as though Autonomy is back as a major player in the top end of the market, which is good news as it increases the choice available to people who need high end solutions to cope with high end problems.

Finally, in a totally unscheduled interview I bumped into an old colleague from my LECG days, Julian Ackert who is now with an organisation called iDiscovery Solutions (IDS). I won't bore you with the catch up natter, but I mention Julian's firm as it is yet another one who makes part of their living by providing plugins to the Relativity ecosystem. In the case of IDS it is a defensible, measured way of monitoring and improving review reliability called "Consensus Coding". This meeting was actually the trigger for me deciding that this year's edition of the Buyer's Guide should have a specific section dedicated to all the plugins available (in the UK) for Relativity.

Enough of the formal meetings, what else was going on.

I said I'd return to the Information Governance (IG) / Management side of things. Last year's article predicted that 2014 would be the Year of Information Governance and I think this year's show confirmed that.

Mark Dingle noted that; "*Whilst I didn't attend, the education sessions on information governance were reported by others I know as being very good and insightful.",* and Matt Davis noted that; "*I did get the impression that at least two very well-known providers are now looking at targeting their tools/services at the information governance space. This is obviously consistent with the desire to get their technology in at the corporate level rather than hoping to be used when an 'event' occurs."*

I did receive some more negative comments about IG, but I will leave it to Chris Dale to see those naysayers off; "*It is conventional to sneer at whatever happens to be the main topic for the year. This year the main subjects seemed to be "analytics" and "information governance", both topics which are simultaneously important and hard to explain or, at least, capable of multiple definitions. Why do people sneer? These are the subjects on which there have been either technology or UI advances (however small and incremental) and/or ones on which the industry collectively has something to talk about. By all means argue with definitions, or counter with the suggestion that something else is more important, but why do people feel it necessary to sneer at the collective push towards particular subjects?"*

At this point I'm handing over to ACH Legal's Ann Hemming who has the following to say about both the conference and invitation only knowledge management event she attended on the Thursday. I'll return when we look at eDisclosure.

As usual the main emphasis of the exhibition and sessions was e-disclosure, but there is a shift now to focus on Information Governance rather than discovery. The effects of the Sony hacking had made everyone take IG much more seriously and there were some interesting insights into the impact of Sony on the Legal IT world. The key message for IT Directors and CIO's being, assume that you will be hacked, whatever preventative measures you put in place, so plan for it. Nuix in particular were promoting their solutions for information governance throughout the conference in both demos and in the education sessions. Big data management is certainly the top priority for in-house counsel and risk managers, so Nuix, Recommind and the other major vendors in the discovery space are turning more attention and emphasis to IG solutions.

Document automation was also a big focus for KM professionals this year. At a separate KM conference, Document Assembly, Matter Management and upgrading Intranet Portals were top of the agenda, with implementing Project Management a close fourth.

Moving a step further than Document Automation, the latest generation of expert systems are starting to make an impact on the legal scene. Neota Logic, (who last year announced a partnership with Huron Legal) were very popular. They were organising live demo's in a separate suite and had standing room only at their events. Thompson Reuters are working with Neota Logic on some tax solutions products that will come to the UK later this year. Other popular vendors were Wizdocs. http://www.shakelaw.com https://mewe.org/

Partnerships between academics, software houses and law firms are also being announced as the potential for AI is being recognised as a potential for new legal business models.

Virtual lawyers and new business models were under discussion and the subject of a lot of interest. https://www.lawdingo.com/ https://www.priorilegal.com/

IBM's Marc Teerlink presented at the KM conference, showing Ross among other products that Watson is now powering (Medial diagnostics being the most developed). Marc confirmed Watson Legal Attorney would be ready next year. He was discussing how Watson will change the traditional apprentice/master dynamic in law firms as younger lawyers will be able to learn and practice their skills with an AI mentor.

Cloud solutions and collaboration platforms formed another theme. Microsoft 365 Matter Center for Office was on everyone's radar. They had a very big presence and a lot of workshop sessions, also promoting the real time collaboration features of Office 365.

Let's look at the eDisclosure part of the show.

Many people made the comment that it was another year of consolidation. Mark Dingle thought that; *"Litigation Support not quite as dominant a theme as in previous years – indicating a consolidating and maturing industry perhaps?"* Whilst Rob Robinson thought that there appeared; *"to be two types of developments highlighted at LTNY that will impact the practice of eDiscovery. Those types of developments being **business** developments and **technology** developments."* Which is a theme we shall explore a little further in a minute. Andrew Szczech did see some room for disruption though; *"It seems that we are at the point where enhancements to review platforms are more evolutionary than revolutionary. The level of maturity of these platforms is perhaps now similar to products such as Word and Excel in which releases are not as ground breaking as they used to be. Having said that, developments in tools to assist cost management seem to be on the latest frontier in technology."*

On the business development side of things the show opened with kCura issuing the following statement; *"kCura today announced it will be taking on a long-term, minority investor for the first time, raising $125 million from San Francisco-based Iconiq Capital."* The question on everyone's lips was what do you do with a war chest of $125M? What we all presumed was that they had an objective (or two) in mind and that we would hear a lot more about this. The purchase of Equivio was also focusing people's mind on the wider strategic objectives of some of the organisations in this space. Some significant disruption is on its way.

Turning to the technology side of things, and I believe that one of the disruptive products in the eDisclosure space is Intelligent Voice, from the eponymous company, more details here. I actually saw a product demonstration just before LegalTech, but their MD Nigel Cannings was over for the show and found very fruitful pickings "*My first year at the actual show (I've been in NY at the same time as the show and met people: not quite the same) - and I spent 12 hours a day in a suite at the Warwick demoing to users and partners from the US, Australia, NY and even the UK. ….. Best value sales trip of my life: I made more than the cost of having two people there and the suite before I stepped on the plane home. And a hell of a lot more before I landed."*

So what's all the buzz about? Ever since the IQPC eDisclosure and Information Governance conference in May last year, one of my talking points has been how the current focus of eDisclosure R&D has been on digital audio. I name check the IQPC conference as it is always an excellent lens on current developments in all of its chosen areas, and whenever I am asked; "Which conferences in UK should I go to?", the IQPC one is top of the list. Details of this year's event on 12 – 14 May can be found here. Anyway, back to digital audio.

The gist of my comments has been that searching of digital audio, was where text searching was 5 years ago, in that you can go to the 30 second clip that contains specific word(s) without having to listen to the rest of the 60 minute recording. Over the next couple of years, I postulated, would come all the abilities of clustering, individual voice recognition, interaction mapping, and much more, all of the search functionality we know take for granted in text in eDisclosure. Over the next couple of years was my prediction, and then I saw an Intelligent Voice demo and realised that the future was here, now, and it was this UK product.

To paraphrase Nigel's explanations, current voice technology is actually based on 60 and 70's theory/technology, that got side-tracked into the intelligence community before being released into the commercial world. It is based on a mathematical modelling approach and works well, within its limitations, but cannot extend much further. Intelligent Voice (IV) is based on deep neural networking leading into recurrent neural networks, (which, dear reader, is about as good as my understanding gets, but I was more interested in the results) and has tremendous room for improvement. Already IV can identify an individual's voice (no matter which phone the audio is shown as coming from), understand concepts as well as keywords, and build a map of the interrelating conversations between specific individuals and those topics.

I know at least on UK company, Epiq, are promoting the product heavily, expect to see more as the market wakes up to the possibility of this tool. More importantly, regulators are already aware of what it can do and are putting searching audio front and centre in their demands upon the regulated.

Last year I highlighted the "full and frank" exchange of views that was the on-going debate on Computer Assisted Review (CAR) between John Tredennick from Catalyst and Cicayda's Roe Frazier. Since then I have helped organise a conference at which both gentlemen have spoken, and met with them both in New York. It's fair to say that the debate continues. What's more, this year I was introduced to a potentially totally disruptive technology that might side-line the whole argument as it upends the perceived wisdom on searching. What it does do is introduce a third loud confident voice to the agreement, leaving the spectators in need of some interpretation as to what is going on. Well, that's what this article is for, so here goes.

There are some simplifications in what follows, but I think that is a good thing, as simplicity is what we need.

Let's start at the beginning. CAR is a process of "training" a computer system to identify potentially relevant documents. The current (version 1.0) process, as adopted by Relativity using their analytic software consists of (preferably) a single knowledgeable reviewer (normally a relatively senior lawyer with a good understanding of the Matter and its issues) reviewing a batch of some 1,500 documents for potential relevance. The system then re-indexes itself based on those calls and starts to "tag" potentially relevant documents and another batch is reviewed, at which point the process is repeated. After 2-3 rounds of training the system starts suggesting which documents are potentially relevant and the reviewer takes a couple more rounds to feedback to the computer what is and isn't correct. The whole process normally takes about 10 working days, 5 days of review interspersed with 5 days of re-indexing. At the end of this you have a process which allows you to identify the potentially relevant documents in a collection, and, more importantly, those which do not meet the criteria. The most expensive part of any review process is looking at documents which ultimately end up as non-relevant. Using CAR you can put those to one side and (subject to some sampling to prove to the opposing party that they are indeed non-relevant) you never have to look at them again. I personally have run a couple of CAR projects in the past year, and the survey in this year's Buyer's Guide shows that nearly 83% of UK suppliers also employed CAR during 2014.

So what's the argument?

There are now three stands to this. First, improving the current process, which is where John Tredennick comes in. You need to understand that in John's world this is called Technology Assisted Review or TAR. John talks about TAR 2.0 and continuous active learning. Basically John's Catalyst product starts "learning" what it relevant from the moment you make the first review decision, and it dynamically updates its indices as it goes along, so you lose the cycle of review, re-index, review, making the whole process faster and more efficient. John has published a book about TAR 2.0 called "TAR for smart people" which you can get here. John is of the opinion *"TAR 1.0 was a breakthrough but continuous active learning is equally so today."*

The second stand is championed by Roe Frazer's company cicayda. They have drawn upon the expertise developed by the US military/ intelligence organisations into data mining since the 9/11 terrorist attack. Rather than train a computer to recognise patterns in linguistic information, they have technology that can use sparse clues, analysis of interaction networks and other ways of conquering the known and unknown data characteristics to identify the key bits of data in a case. Cicayda does not have a technical argument with CAR, more it is about efficiency. They would say that CAR works but there are alternative approaches that provide more efficiencies.

Those who know Roe will not be surprised to hear that his feedback on LegalTech was a verbal equivalent of a hand grenade thrown over the CAR parapets; *"In the past few years and even this year, the buzz phrase for many companies, panels, and some of the usual suspects has been "predictive coding". While no one can quite agree on what the term means any more, everyone is saying yes that they have it. This is poppycock to say the least. While the method of predictive coding is one way to reduce your data, and one company actually offers it, the rest are simply muttering predictive coding while offering (in reality) simple data reduction, advanced word searching, contextual search, and latent semantics. If LTNY were to hold a MASQUERADE BALL, many would be wearing the mask of predictive coding, and they would all look utterly different. Interesting, through discussions at LTNY, I learned that firms that buy it, do not use it. Also, that predictive coding is virtually useless in a second pass review and beyond. So much for predictive coding subject matter experts."* Roe has continued his debate in the latest issue of Charles Christian's Legal IT Insider, see page 12 for the details.

Finally we have the new, but equally vocal proponent of change, of John Martin from BeyondRecognition. Now bear with me as the following gets a little bit technical. What I would say, is that if you are interested in the technology, get in touch with John and arrange a web based demo.

The technology was developed in response to the document management / disclosure requirements of British Petroleum immediately after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Having solved that vast requirement the technology is being used in a variety of areas, including eDisclosure via its sister company BeyondReview.

The technology is called visual classification. It treats every document as a picture and uses graphical analysis to build a Global Glyph Catalogue for each document. This catalogue has pictures of each of the letter, words and sentences within the document as well as an understanding of the textual layout,

irrespective of the content. So it automatically clusters all invoices as the same kind of document, as well as being able to group within that cluster all the invoices coming from Allvision. That is one half of the equation, the other is the search technology behind it that allows many to many searches to carried out in exceptionally fast times. It also has the DT Search text engine built into it so you can carry out all the normal text searches on the data.

What John Martin claims this is, is nothing more than a total disruption of all the search technologies that currently exist. (I told you this article was themed on disruption). Like all good visionaries he paints a compelling picture of its use in the information management / governance sphere, where all documents are classified at the moment of their production, and depending upon their classification are placed under a pre-determined retention schedule. In eDisclosure, he talks about the removal of the need to create seed sets for CAR as they are pre-created by the BR technology, ready to be processed within the review tool. Even automatic language translation falls within the current remit of the product.

I personally think that great technology can get you so far, but after that there are a whole host of factors that determine whether or not you "Cross the Chasm" into mainstream adoption. Time will tell if John is correct and the whole search/eDisclosure world is turned upside down, or if it's merely a technology side-line.

So where does that leave the poor lawyers trying to make up their minds about what CAR to use? In the CAR Survey I alluded to previously, the biggest barrier to using CAR is lawyer reluctance. I always use the analogy that CAR is like a Formula 1 race car, and you don't want a novice driver (the lawyer) in charge of something as powerful as that. Instead the lawyers should be focussing on where they want the CAR to go (strategy and tactics), whilst the professionals actually drive the thing. The arguments from the three loud and colourful characters I've just described strikes me as a group of F1 drivers in a corner arguing about DRS, ERS, (car width, aerodynamics and other petrol head issues) whilst the poor lawyer is stood there asking "Where's my CAR?".

The simple answer is that CAR (version 1.0) works and as for the rest I leave it to Chris Dale to have the last word; *"Competition is good, horses for courses and all that. I can't impose uniformity of terminology, merely report it and translate and (as I do constantly) urge lawyers to take online demos, see what the terms mean in practice, press for explanations if things are not clear, and move on to another demo, reasonably soon but preferably with a long enough gap in between to be able to differentiate them in their minds - see Recommind today, Cicayda in a few days' time, Relativity a few days later, and then if you need help at a deeper level, hire Andrew Haslam to help you work out which one is for you."* What sage advice that is, and thanks Chris, the cheque's in the post.

Having almost reached the end of the EDRM model in terms of the technologies we have looked at, it's worth touching base with Opus 2 and their Magnum product, that continues to cause a disruptive stir in the courtrooms of both the UK and the US. Oliver McClintock said; *"In the wake of so much focus on predictive coding, automation and technologies that perhaps supplant some attorney work, the people with whom we met were pleased to instead discuss technologies that put the focus back on litigators, helping them to excel at their specialty."*
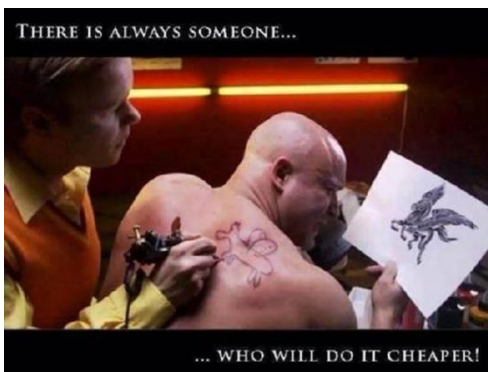
The final bit of disruption in the eDisclosure world is all about the bottom line, and that is the pricing models. If the lawyer's Billable Hour is under threat, so is the eDisclosure world's per gigabyte charge rate. A number of UK suppliers have offered fixed prices before, but these have been as alternatives to their normal models. The arrival of Iris Data Systems in the UK at the start of 2014, with their whole pricing structure based around fixed prices, has metaphorically thrown down the gauntlet to everyone else. It's not just the fixed price, but the understanding of your processes in sufficient detail that you know what your costs are, enabling you to offer a fixed price with a degree of confidence.

There was the usual range of after-hours activities, with all evenings having at least two, if not more, alternatives. We personally went to an amazing Burlesque party (PG version) arranged by the ever fragrant hostess Jo Sherman from eDiscovery tools on the first night, and on the second the Iris DS party at a wonderful rooftop bar. Someone complained that; *"…in spite of being in possession of one of their high-tech wristbands, I still failed to get into the Relativity party because it was so full it was almost spilling out*

onto the very cold 'sidewalk'.", though Mattias Aggler offer's these words of comfort; *"I did "only" attend kCura parties. As always, great but also crowded."*

There is a smallish cinema nearly opposite the Hilton that obviously is the venue of choice for film premieres. Last year the ladies (and some of the gentlemen) got excited about George Clooney and Matt Damon appearing for the launch of The Monuments Men, this year as Lee Meyrick noticed; *"Oh, and don't forget the 50 shades premiere was opposite the Hilton. Apparently that mattered to some of the ladies."*

The most surreal entertainment was watching the opening game of the Six Nations rugby (Wales v England, or as we refer to it in our household, Ann v Andrew) in the upstairs room of a New York sports bar, having paid $20/head for the privilege of ensuring the room was full of ex-pats. At least it meant we didn't have to explain that the game is like American Football, but without 45 lbs. of body armour.

Time for the traditional plea for Brits to come over to the show, eloquently put by Exigent's Clare Smith;

"Fringe Festival-ing Legal tech! In recent years, the content at LT (in my opinion) has become quite heavily leaning towards technology for the e-discovery market. Many attendees come to legal tech that aren't particularity interested in "e-discovering"… those of use are found "fringing" the festival! The best results from LT 2015 (in my opinion) has been the networking and contacts made… errr… at the bar! This is the time when people let go and are open to discussing business in a casual setting. True opinions come out about the state of the legal market and the honesty is refreshing and vibrant! This profession has been "protected" from change and evolution for far too long! Now that the disruptors of big law are here… it's time to evolve and globalize! With the power that ABS' are bringing… how are we to avoid changing? Competition is healthy in all aspects of life… why is law any different?

PS;; Who's decision was it to take the capital T from LegalTech to Legaltech…. Obviously the committee spent extensive time deciding that this is the correct was to conjugate!"

That's all, I have to leave you now as I'm booking my flights to next year's show. (Yes, 11 months in advance,). Hope to see some of you there.