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Technology and the Classroom: Bringing Twenty-First Century Technologies to the Law Library

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TECHNOLOGY
AND THE
CLASSROOM

BRINGING TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY TECHNOLOGIES TO THE LAW LIBRARY

Inside the Inasmuch Foundation Collaborative Learning Center at the University of Oklahoma Law Library.

BY DARIN K. FOX

Technology has played an important role in law practice for decades, but something changed in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Law firms, pinched by declining revenues and a stalled economy, seemed to open their eyes to the efficiencies that technology creates. Legal technology experts increased their calls for the practicing bar to embrace technology, and the American Bar Association (ABA) began to take notice.

Seeing declines in law firm hiring and in applications to law schools nationwide, as well as rapidly increasing legal education costs, the ABA formed the Task Force on the Future of Legal Education in 2012. In its final 2013 report, the task force noted that "competence in law-related technology is increasingly important, but few schools include this as part of the curriculum."

In 2012, the ABA also proposed amendments to the ABA *Model Rules of Professional Conduct*, signaling the growing importance of technology

With the increasing importance and availability of mobile technology in law firms, the library applied for a grant to provide iPad Airs to all law students, the faculty, and the librarians. OU Law received a $300,000 grant in the spring of 2014 to fund the project for three years, and it has since been extended to 2019. The iPads are used for notetaking, reading, and annotating course materials such as etextbooks and PDF files. They are also used for classroom and courtroom presentations with PowerPoint and TrialPad, accessing mobile versions of Office 365, training on case management software, and a host of other law-related applications. The common platform allows faculty to know that all students have access to this technology, and it allows students to learn from one another. When students graduate, they take the iPads and law-related software into practice with them at no charge. In the fall of 2017, OU will provide iPad Pros with a keyboard case and the Apple Pencil. The school anticipates that the Pencil will become an important notetaking device in both law school and in practice.

Technology Training

Since today's lawyers must be able to work efficiently in a digital environment, the second element of OU Law's Digital Initiative project is a mandatory technology training program. All law students are required to attend a minimum number of training sessions each year. Students fulfill this requirement through a variety of training options. Librarians and legal technology vendors provide twice-weekly lunch training sessions on topics such as advanced features of Microsoft Word, courtroom presentation software, law firm case management software, cloud storage, security, document and form building, and more. The vast majority of the sessions are conducted by the library's digital resources librarian, Kenton Brice, who managed the technology of a small law firm in the Dallas area for five years before joining OU. The library

in law practice. The ABA House of Delegates approved an amendment to Rule 1.1 on "Competence," which requires lawyers to "keep abreast of changes in the law and its practice, including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology." As of February 2017, more than two-thirds of states have adopted similar language.
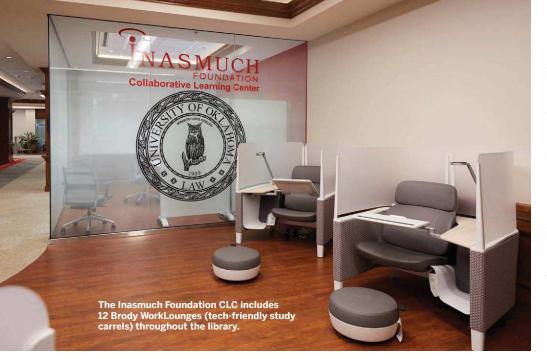
Seeing the growing importance of technology skills for law graduates, the University of Oklahoma (OU) College of Law began its "Digital Initiative" project in the fall of 2014. The project consists of three parts: (1) iPads with keyboard cases and related software such as Office 365, TrialPad, cloud storage, and a suite of Thomson Reuters practice tools for all law students; (2) a mandatory law practice technology training requirement for the entire student body; and (3) renovation of the law library with technology designed to support student collaboration and curricular innovation.

iPads and Beyond

The Digital Initiative project began in the fall of 2014 with a decision to provide iPads to the entire student body.

The Inasmuch Foundation CLC includes 12 Brody WorkLounges (tech-friendly study carrels) throughout the library.

also provides curricular integrations in courses such as Legal Writing, Trial Techniques, Transactional Law, Civil Pre-Trial Litigation, and Advanced Legal Research. In Legal Writing, all students are taught how to use features such as tables of contents, marking citations, styles, and other features that are useful in writing legal pleadings. Course integrations are being handled by a team of librarians, including Brice, Joel Wegemer (the deputy director of the law library), and myself. The library also offers some online training options with corresponding quizzes.

Half of the student body attends more than the required number of training sessions each year, and about a quarter of the student body attends more than 20 sessions during their law school career.

As of this spring, OU Law now offers technology certification as a member of the LTC4 consortium. Students can obtain certification in skills like legal documents, collaboration, time and billing, and security. (For more information visit bit.ly/MJ17LTC4.)

Creating a Digital-Friendly Space

The third element of the Digital Initiative relates to the physical facilities provided to students. During the 2016 calendar year, the library renovated a quarter of its space with modern technology to facilitate student collaboration and curricular innovation. With a generous $1.5 million grant from the Inasmuch Foundation of Oklahoma City, OU Law redesigned 8,000 square feet of the law library to create the Inasmuch Foundation Collaborative Learning Center (CLC). The space has seven different elements, each of which are briefly described below.

The library created four new study rooms to facilitate group work with technology. Each room is equipped with an Apple TV, HDMI inputs, a large 65-inch monitor, wall-mounted and portable glassboards, writable glass table tops, sound dampening acoustic panels, USB charging ports, standard charging ports, and rolling work chairs. These rooms are used heavily by moot court teams to prepare briefs and by study groups to outline course materials. They are also used in law school courses as breakout rooms for small group projects.

Next, the library designed a modern computer lab to be used for multiple purposes, including conducting training sessions, individual student work, and group work. The lab is equipped with dual-monitor touchscreen workstations with highly adjustable monitor arms. These workstations are placed in groups of four, and the elliptical shape of the desks allows two students to work together easily on a project. There is also a dedicated 65-inch monitor at the end of each "pod" of workstations that can display any computer's screen. This allows groups of four or even a training class of 12 to 16 students to work together. Students often use both monitors, in addition to their laptops, iPads, and written notes, all at once. Students report that they work more efficiently with multiple screens and when they can spread out their materials. There has been some debate among law libraries regarding the need for dedicated computer labs going forward. However, OU Law has found this new lab to be extremely popular, and

The Inasmuch Foundation CLC Seminar Room seats 20 students and provides furniture and technology to support flipped courses.

we are planning a similarly configured auxiliary lab to accommodate interest in this type of workspace. The CLC Lab is equipped with Dell VMware "thin clients" (modern versions of Wyse terminals of the past) that reduce maintenance time and allow for easy deployment of new software.

There is also a growing need for seminar rooms with flexible furniture and technology to support flipped courses. Therefore, the Inasmuch Foundation CLC Seminar Room, which seats 20 students, was built. The room is equipped with four 65-inch monitors, an Apple TV, multiple HDMI inputs, speakers, rolling glass boards, and a Crestron panel for switching inputs. There are eight tables and 21 chairs, which can be rolled into a variety of configurations. One or more tables can be placed by each monitor so that groups of three to five students can work together, and with the push of a button, each group's presentation can be displayed on all four monitors or a specific set of monitors in sequence. This type of room also creates flexibility for the professor. For example, a professor can display his laptop on two screens and his iPad on the other two screens.

During the renovation, OU redesigned the service desks with online collections and technology in mind as well. The reference and circulation desks are equipped with dual-monitor touchscreen computers that allow the staff to easily rotate one screen to face the patron. This allows patrons to take pictures of call number locations and maps at the circulation desk, and it allows librarians to train patrons on the use of electronic resources. The reference desk also has ample cafe-style bench seating so that students may work on a research project for extended periods and ask research librarians for assistance as needed.

Near the reference desk, a cafe space offers lounge seating, cafe-style bench seating with USB and standard charging stations, cafe tables with writable glass tops, a self-serve coffee bar, and a lounge area with a 65-inch monitor that runs law-related movies during the day (closed caption only). This popular location provides easy access to library staff,

Four study rooms are equipped with an Apple TV, glassboards, writable glass tabletops, a 65-inch monitor, and more.

wireless printing, and the computer lab.

In a quieter corner, modern study carrels, designed for use with laptop computers, iPads, and print materials, were installed. These modern study carrels are extremely comfortable and designed for long study sessions, as they incorporate task lighting, foot stools, and power outlets. There are 12 of these Brody WorkLounges by Steelcase in various areas of the library.

Embracing Virtual Reality

With an eye to the future, the library also installed two virtual reality stations. The stations were custom designed by an architect and inspired by virtual reality stations that are currently being used across campus at the OU Libraries. The law library is exploring how virtual reality can be used for evidence demonstration and training. The library is currently creating 360-degree videos that can be used to train law students on a variety of topics—courtroom procedure, appellate advocacy, negotiations, and boardroom and courtroom presentations. OU Law's international human rights class encourages students to watch a 360-degree video of a Syrian refugee camp narrated by a young girl who has lived in the camp for years. The virtual reality goggles allow the viewer to see everything that is happening in the space that's been recorded. In a courtroom or moot court setting, this

would allow a student the flexibility of viewing any activity occurring in the room, such as the judge's reaction, the jury's reaction, or the opposing council's reaction to any given event.

The Future of Teaching Technology

As legal education evolves, the law library will continue to adapt to support the needs of faculty and students. The library's next project will be to create a flipped classroom capable of seating a typical 1L section, and developing plans for a curricular innovation space that can be used to train students, recent graduates, and alumni on the use of law practice technology. ∎

AALL 2017 ALERT
Don't miss the session "Teaching and Implementing Emerging Technologies in Legal Practice," Tuesday, July 18 from 8:30 a.m.–9:30 a.m. For more information visit bit.ly/AALL17Brice.

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