Reviews and Awards

Tomorrow's Lawyers

An Introduction to Your Future

Second Edition

Richard Susskind

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Tomorrow's Lawyers predicts that we are at the beginning of a period of fundamental transformation in law: a time in which we will see greater change than we have seen in the past two centuries. Where the future of the legal service will be a world of internet-based global businesses, online document production, commoditized service, legal process outsourcing, and web based simulation practice. Legal markets will be liberalized, with new jobs for lawyers and new employers too. This book is a definitive guide to this future - for young and aspiring lawyers, and for all who want to modernize our legal and justice systems. It introduces the new legal landscape and offers practical guidance for those who intend to build careers and businesses in law.

Tomorrow's Lawyers is divided into three parts. The first is an updated restatement of Richard Susskind's views on the future of legal services, as laid out in his previous bestselling works, The Future of Law, Transforming the Law, and The End of Lawyers. He identifies key drivers of change, such as the economic downturn, and considers how these will impact on the legal marketplace. In the second part, Susskind sketches out the new legal landscape as he predicts it, including the changing role of law firms, and in-house lawyers, with virtual hearings and online dispute resolution. The third part focuses on the prospects for aspiring lawyers, predicting what new jobs and new employers there will be, and equipping prospective lawyers with penetrating questions to put to their current and future employers.

This new edition has been fully updated to include an introduction to online dispute resolution, Susskind's views on the debates surrounding artificial intelligence and its role in the legal world, a new analysis of new jobs available for lawyers, and a retrospective evaluation of The Future of Law, Susskind's prediction published in 1996 about the future of legal services.

This is the essential introduction to the future of law for those who want to succeed in the rapidly changing legal landscape.
PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

One of the central claims in the first edition of this book, published in 2013, was that the legal world would change more in the next 20 years than it has in the past two centuries. Three years on, I believe we are on course. In the intervening period, much has happened in the legal world. To give a flavour—many major law firms have since set up low-cost service centres to undertake routine legal work; the Big 4 accounting firms have rapidly grown their global legal capabilities; there has been a great upsurge of legaltech start-ups, now well over 1,000 worldwide; the idea of artificial intelligence (AI) in law has captured the imagination of innovators across the profession, from market leading firms to law student developers; in England and Wales, in our liberalized legal regime, innumerable ‘alternative business structures’ have been launched (there are now over 500); professional bodies, such as the Canadian Bar Association, have produced studies on the future of legal services; senior judges have been strongly advocating the wider use of technology; the British government has committed to investing over £1 billion in modernizing and digitizing the court system in England and Wales; innumerous in-house legal departments, especially in the US, have been appointing chief operating officers to rethink and manage their operations; and, if readers will forgive me, more Chinese lawyers have bought this book than English lawyers. In short, much has changed in these three short years. At the same time, most commentators agree that the pace of change is accelerating. And great numbers of leaders across the legal profession are now openly acknowledging that the world of law is entering a period of transformation. In truth, we are just warming up. My own thinking has also moved on. In part, I have learned, as always, from my law firm clients, each of whom has been powering ahead, embracing alternative labour models as well as new technologies. I have also been preoccupied over the last couple of years with online dispute resolution. I chaired an advisory group of the Civil Justice Council that devised the idea of online courts, and their introduction is now judicial and government policy for England and Wales. Above all, I had the great privilege of writing a book, The Future of the Professions, with my son, Daniel Susskind, a Fellow in Economics at Balliol College, Oxford. This was published in 2015. Looking beyond law to other professions, and working with an economist, has led me to revisit some of my past analysis. All of which is to say that the first edition of this book is now out of date. Accordingly, my aim in writing this second edition is to take account of recent advances in the legal marketplace alongside developments in my own thinking and experience. Once again, I have kept it brief, because my concern here is with the big picture— the broad trends and the likely outcomes. My main purpose is to encourage open-minded debate and reflection, with a view to improving our legal systems. While the book was originally intended for young lawyers, it transpires that older lawyers also like short and inexpensive books and so they read it too. I am happy with this— all lawyers, unless they are retiring today, are tomorrow’s lawyers.

—Richard Susskind October 2016 Radlett, England
I have written this book to provide tomorrow’s lawyers and legal educators with an accessible account of the pressing issues that currently face the legal profession and the justice system. We are, I have no doubt, on the brink of fundamental change in the world of law, and my main aim is to encourage wider discussion of the forces at play and their likely impact. Although originally conceived as a guide to the future for the next generation of lawyers, I expect that the book will also be read by more experienced practitioners. For busy professionals who do not have the time to read lengthy texts, I hope that it serves as a punchier version of my ideas than my previous work. Certainly, it represents a substantially updated version of my views on trends in the legal market. I do not anticipate that readers will agree with all of what I say. But if the book gives rise to more serious reflection and debate about the future of the law and lawyers, then I have done my job. And yet, because we live in such rapidly shifting times, it is a job that is necessarily incomplete. Each day, I hear fresh tales of innovation in law— a new legal business here, an online facility there, and a regular flow of imaginative ideas for meeting clients’ needs in different ways. In citing these innovations, I had to draw the line somewhere, however, and so I have only been able to refer to developments that surfaced before the end of May 2012. I would not be surprised, by the time this book is published, if some important new legal services have been launched in the interim.

I have some people to thank. First of all, there is the team at Oxford University Press. This is the fifth time that OUP has agreed to take on one of my books and, as ever, it has been a privilege to work with such a well-regarded publishing house. I am especially grateful to Ruth Anderson and Sophie Barham in the UK and to Ninell Silberberg in the US for their friendly support and advice. I must also record my thanks to the various referees who anonymously assessed my book proposal and made a wide range of suggestions that led, I believe, to many significant improvements. Next is Patricia Cato, who helped me with innumerable initial drafts and still comfortably outperforms any speech recognition system in making sense of my rapid Glaswegian. I have also benefited greatly from the guidance, encouragement, and criticisms of a small group of friends and colleagues who generously spent many hours of their time reading an early draft of the book— Neville Eisenberg, Hazel Genn, Daniel Harris, Laurence Mills, David Morley, Alan Paterson, and Tony Williams. To each, I extend my profound thanks. Two reviewers deserve separate mention— my sons, Daniel and Jamie. This book would not have been written without their love and encouragement. They enthused when I came up with the idea of a book for aspiring lawyers, they motivated me when other commitments made it difficult to maintain momentum, and they commented extensively on earlier drafts. Their range and clarity of thought amaze me. The last person but one to thank is Ali, my daughter and friend, to whom, along with her brothers, this book is dedicated. I cherish every one of the many companionable moments we spend together. I could not have a more wonderful daughter.

And finally, as always, I am very grateful to my loving wife, Michelle. For over 30 years now, she has indulgently endured my bouts of obsessive writing. It cannot be easy. Her boundless support for my work and her confidence in my ideas mean so very much to me. ---- Richard Susskind
June 2012 Radlett, England
INTRODUCTION
This book is a short introduction to the future for young and aspiring lawyers.

Tomorrow’s legal world, as predicted and described here, bears little resemblance to that of the past. Legal institutions and lawyers are at a crossroads, I claim, and will change more radically in less than two decades than they have over the last two centuries. If you are a young lawyer, this revolution will happen on your watch.

‘Young’ should be construed broadly, applying to students who are contemplating a job in law through to newly promoted partners in firms who are wondering how their careers might unfold. I also write for those who are interested in young legal businesses, such as the legaltech start-ups and the new-look law firms that are now seeking to redefine the legal marketplace.

To elder statesmen in traditional firms, who may feel after a couple of paragraphs that they are excused from reading on, I issue a warning. Although it may appear that the future, and particularly the topic of technology, is of interest primarily to the next generation, some of the transformations that I discuss here are coming in the next few years. Unless retirement is imminent, what I say here will directly affect older lawyers too. More than this, leaders in the legal profession today should be concerned not just about hanging on until their pensions click in, but about their long-term legacy as well.

‘My call is to the young in heart, regardless of age’, John F. Kennedy once said, and I say this again now. I write primarily for the youthful of spirit, for the energetic, for the optimistic—for those who join me in recognizing that we can and should modernize (I now like to say ‘upgrade’) our legal and justice systems.

Discontinuity in the Legal Profession
This book comes at a time of great debate in the legal world over an array of vital issues. There is deep concern, for example, about cuts in public legal funding that may reduce ‘access to justice’. There are worries about law schools that seem to be offering places to students in greater numbers than there are job opportunities. And there is unease about the disproportionate cost of pursuing claims in the courts.

I offer remedies for these and many other ills, but I do not provide the same kinds of answer as those offered by most careers advisers, parents, professors, and legal practitioners. For example, while most lawyers are arguing for smaller cuts in legal aid, I argue we should be exploring and implementing alternative ways of providing legal guidance, not least through online legal services; while commentators agitate about over-recruitment into law schools, I identify a whole set of exciting new occupations for tomorrow’s lawyers, although I am troubled that we are not preparing students and young practitioners for these jobs; and while judges and litigators are seeking to control the costs of litigation, I believe we should be introducing virtual hearings, online courts, and online dispute resolution.

Most inhabitants of today’s legal world tend to look for solutions by extrapolating from the past and on the assumption of continuity in the legal profession. In contrast, I foresee discontinuity over time and the emergence of a legal industry that will be quite alien to the current legal establishment. The future of legal service is neither Grisham nor Rumpole. Nor is it wigs, wood-panelled courtrooms, leather-bound tomes, or arcane legal jargon. It will not even be the now dominant model of lawyering, which is face-to-face, consultative professional service by advisers who meet clients in their offices, whether glitzy or dusty, and dispense
tailored counsel. To meet the needs of clients, we will need instead to dispense with much of our current cottage industry and re-invent the way in which legal services are delivered. Just as other professions are undergoing massive upheaval, then the same must now happen in law. Indeed, it is already happening. The bespoke specialist who handcrafts solutions for clients will be challenged by new working methods, characterized by lower labour costs, mass customization, recyclable legal knowledge, pervasive use of advanced technology, and more.

When I was at law school, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, few students gave much thought to what the future might hold for the legal profession. We took it for granted that the work of lawyers in, say, 25 years’ time, would be much as it was in our time. It transpired that we were right to expect little change. In contrast, in looking 25 years ahead from now, I argue it would be absurd to expect lawyers and courts to carry on operating as they do now. If only because of the inexorable rise in the power and uptake of technology— to pick one of several drivers of change— we must surely expect something manifestly more than modest adjustment.

So Why Listen to Me?

You might think that hordes of senior people in the legal profession are currently thinking deeply about the long-term prospects for lawyers and the legal system. But very few of the people whom you might expect to be at the helm — politicians, senior partners in law firms, policymakers, law professors, top judges, leaders of professional bodies — are actually looking much beyond the next few years. In these difficult economic times, the here-and-now seems to be providing headache enough.

In truth, in the legal community there are only about one hundred lawyers and professors around the world who are devoting their full working lives to theorizing about and planning for the long term (some of their works are referenced in the Further Reading section of this book). I am one of them and have been writing, speaking, and advising on the future for longer than most. I started my journey in 1981, as a third-year undergraduate law student at the University of Glasgow. Since then, I have written a doctorate in law and computers at Oxford University, and worked for several years with one of the ‘Big 4’ accounting firms, and then for much of the 1990s with an international law firm, on whose board I sat for three years. I have been a law professor for 25 years, and, for 20 years, an independent adviser to law firms, in-house legal departments, governments, and judiciaries around the world.

Even my fiercest critics will concede that in my numerous books and newspaper columns over the last 30 years I have been right more often than wrong in my predictions. So, I say this: if there is a better than even chance that the radically transformed legal world I predict here will come to be, then it should be worth spending a few hours contemplating its implications. If my winning run continues — and my confidence in my predictions is greater now than in the 1990s — then it might pay dividends to read on. And my hope is that readers will not respond defensively (‘how can we stop this happening?’) but will find exciting new options and opportunities in these pages (‘I want to be one of the pioneers’).

How the Book is Organized

The book is divided into three main parts. The first is an updated, simplified restatement of my views on the future of legal services, as presented in four other works — The Future of
Law (1996), Transforming the Law (2000), The End of Lawyers? (2008), and The Future of the Professions (2015, co-authored with Daniel Susskind). I have tried to pick out and highlight the key themes of these books. I introduce the main drivers of change in the legal market and explain why and how these will lead lawyers to work differently and will encourage new providers to enter the market with novel approaches to legal service. I also outline a large range of technologies that I believe will disrupt the traditional working practices of lawyers. My focus here, as throughout, is largely, but by no means exclusively, on civil work in commercial law firms. For readers who are already familiar with my ideas from my other books, I urge you not to skip Part One, because there have been significant developments in the market and in my thinking since I wrote these.

Next, in Part Two, I sketch out the new legal landscape, as I expect it to be. I discuss the future for law firms, the challenges facing in-house lawyers, and the likely progression of the shifts I anticipate. I also lay out some of the ways in which ‘access to justice’ problems will be overcome through a variety of online legal services. I offer some predictions too about the work of judges and the courts, and the promise of virtual hearings and online dispute resolution. I also take the opportunity to revisit the findings of my book, The Future of Law (1996), where I made some 20-year predictions about the legal world.

Finally, in the third part of the book, I focus more specifically on the prospects for young lawyers. I ask what new jobs and employers there will be, and for what and how the next generation of lawyers will be trained. I believe that I provide optimistic and encouraging answers to these questions. I also equip young lawyers with some penetrating questions to put to their current and prospective employers. And I conclude by looking to the long term, not least in artificial intelligence (AI), and by putting down a challenge for young (in heart) lawyers everywhere. Wayne Gretzky, perhaps the finest ice hockey player of all time, famously advised to ‘skate where the puck’s going, not where it’s been’. Similarly, when lawyers are thinking about the future, whether about their law firms or law schools, they should be planning for the legal market as it will be and not as it once was. In ice hockey terms, I worry that most lawyers are currently skating to where the puck used to be. My purpose, then, is to show where that puck is most likely to end up.
Part I: Radical Changes in the Legal Market

Three Drivers of Change
The legal market is in a remarkable state of flux. In less than two decades, the way in which lawyers work will change radically. Entirely new ways of delivering legal services will emerge, new providers will be firmly established in the market, and the workings of our courts will be transformed. Unless they adapt, many traditional legal businesses will fail. On the other hand, a whole set of fresh opportunities will present themselves to entrepreneurial and creative young lawyers. I believe there are three main drivers of this change: the ‘more-for-less’ challenge, liberalization, and technology (by which I mean information technology). Other commentators may point to different factors, such as shifting demography and increasing globalization. I do not deny that such factors are significant but my specific focus here is on the changes that we will see in the way in which legal services are delivered; and all my research and advisory work, as well as what I have seen in other professions, lead me to the conviction that my three drivers are the ones to watch for. Let me introduce each in turn.

The ‘More-for-Less’ Challenge
Clients of lawyers come in many different forms. There are in-house lawyers, who work within large organizations and who spend mightily on legal advice when they have major disputes to resolve or large deals to conclude. There are managers within small or medium-sized businesses, who have properties to rent, employees to engage, and all manner of regulations with which to comply. And there are individual citizens, who may need legal help with such matters as moving house, coping with debt, or pursuing some personal injury claim. Although diverse in nature, these clients currently share a big challenge—generally, they cannot afford legal services when delivered in the traditional way.

General Counsel, the individuals who run in-house legal departments, invariably say that they face three problems. First of all, because of difficult economic conditions, they are under pressure to reduce the number of lawyers in their teams. Second, they are being asked by their chief executives, chief finance officers, and boards to reduce the amount they spend on external law firms. And yet, at the same time, third, they say they have more legal and compliance work to undertake than ever before; and that the work is riskier too. Many General Counsel tell me that they are being required to reduce their overall legal budgets by between 30 per cent and 50 per cent. On the face of it, this is unsustainable. These clients from major companies and financial institutions are facing the prospect of an increasing workload and yet diminishing legal resources. Something surely has to give here. I call this problem the ‘more-for-less’ challenge—how can clients, working with their external law firms, deliver more legal services at less cost?

The more-for-less challenge is not just a conundrum for in-house lawyers. Small businesses face a similar dilemma. These traders do not have their own specialist in-house lawyers, and whenever they are in need of serious legal help, they must currently turn to external law firms. In these demanding times, however, many business people confess that they cannot afford lawyers and often have to run the risk of working without legal guidance. As for the consumer, although the law is central to all of our lives, dramatic decreases in public
legal aid mean, effectively, that only the very rich or the very poor any longer have the means to afford the services of lawyers. Citizens face the more-for-less challenge too.

I believe the more-for-less challenge will underpin the next decade of legal service. The more-for-less challenge will, I expect, irreversibly change the way that lawyers work.

**Liberalization**

The second main driver of change is liberalization. A little background should help here. In most countries, historically and generally speaking, only qualified lawyers have been permitted to provide legal services to clients, and, even then, only from specific types of organization (typically from partnerships). Laws and regulations have stipulated who can be a lawyer, who can run and own a legal business, and what services they can provide. Different countries have drawn lines in different places, so that, in England and Wales, what is known as ‘reserved’ legal business (work that only qualified lawyers are permitted to undertake) is a narrower category than the ‘authorized practice of law’, as it is known in the US. But the principles underlying the exclusivity of lawyers are similar in most jurisdictions; and the pivotal justification is that it is in clients’ interests that those who advise them on the law are suitably trained and experienced. Just as we would not want any Joe performing brain surgery on us, then, similarly, we should not wish that same Joe representing us in the courtroom.

But one big problem here is that this closed community of legal specialists does not seem to offer sufficient choice to the consumer. For decades, this has led critics and reformers to claim that the legal profession is an unjustifiable monopoly and that its practices are restrictive and anti-competitive. In turn, many have campaigned for a relaxation of the laws and regulations that govern who can offer legal services and from what types of business. This is a call for liberalization. (Note that liberalization is not the same creature as de-regulation. Most campaigners for liberalization still want lawyers to be regulated; and indeed they want new categories of legal service providers to be regulated as well.)

In England and Wales, the call of these campaigners was answered as long ago as 2004, with the publication of an independent review, now known as the Clementi Report. Sir David Clementi (an accountant and not a lawyer) had been appointed by the Lord Chancellor to review the regulatory framework for legal services. Meeting and responding to concerns about restrictive practices in the legal marketplace, he recommended considerable liberalization. This led directly to the Legal Services Act 2007 which, amongst many other provisions, permits the setting up of new types of legal businesses called ‘alternative business structures’ (ABSs), so that non-lawyers can own and run legal businesses; it allows external investment, such as private equity or venture capital, to be injected into legal businesses by outside investors; and it lets non-lawyers become owners of law firms. (In Scotland, incidentally, there is similar but more conservative legislation.)

This story is still unfolding in England and Wales, even though the new ownership rules came into force in October 2011 and the licensing of ABSs by the Solicitors Regulation Authority began in March 2012. More than 500 licences have been granted. Three of the Big 4 accountancy giants (KPMG, PwC, and EY) are amongst them, one of many signals of their increasing interest in the legal market (see Chapter 14). Several long-established law firms (for example, Irwin Mitchell, Knights, and Weightmans) have been licensed as ABSs, as have
innumerable smaller firms and start-ups. Household names, like BT, Direct Line, and the AA have also established ABSs.

The first major consumer brand to be granted ABS status was The Co-operative Legal Services, part of the Co-operative Group. Licensed originally in 2012 to engage in three reserved legal activities—probate, conveyancing, and litigation—the Co-op announced plans, at the time, to provide legal services from its 330 UK bank branches and that it intended to create 3,000 new jobs in the legal sector. Their announcement caused a considerable stir. Its execution was no doubt hindered by the larger problems that befell the Co-operative Group in the following year. Nonetheless, the vision of a strongly branded high street business delivering legal services remains attractive to many consumers and is likely to be realized in years to come, whether or not by the Co-op. At the same time, many other law firms have been in talks with private equity houses for the substantial funds that are said to be available for external investment in firms when they become ABSs (in 2012, RBS estimated more than £1 billion would be at hand).

These kinds of development are of profound significance and represent a major departure from conventional legal services. Not all of the moves were triggered directly by the Legal Services Act but this legislation— and here is the key point rather than the details of particular initiatives— is engendering a stronger entrepreneurial spirit in the legal market in the UK. Even where there is not formal liberalization, we are seeing a liberation from the constraints of narrow thinking about the way in which legal services can be delivered. There are new providers—new competitors—in the legal marketplace. No one knows where this will lead us. It is still too early for authoritative pronouncements about the precise outcomes. That is the nature of the market. All we can be sure of, I believe, is that major change is upon us. Investors, entrepreneurs, and High Street brands together are recognizing that the UK’s £25 billion legal market is far from efficient and there are great opportunities for offering legal services in new, less costly, more client-friendly ways.

These new players are not committed to traditional ways of working. They do not believe, for example, that all legal work should be undertaken by expensive lawyers working in expensive buildings in expensive city centres. They do not insist, as many traditional lawyers still maintain, that legal work is best undertaken on an hourly billing basis. They are not constrained by old ways of working. They are passionate about change, and they are often better business managers than most lawyers, who tend to have had little training in the actual running of commercial concerns. How different the legal world will surely be when influenced over time by the retail industry, by the management methods of corporate boards, and with the backing of venture capital and private equity.

In short, market forces are sweeping through the legal profession in the UK and these will bring intense new competitive pressures for traditional law firms. The extent of the impact of liberalization is a matter of considerable current debate. Many major law firms, for example, maintain that all of this is of relevance and threat only to High Street law firms which undertake high-volume, low-margin work (that is, large quantities of legal work of modest value). They say, for example, that they have no need for external investment. However, they should bear in mind that liberalization has helped entice three of the four ‘Big 4’ accounting firms to return to the English legal market with all the competition that this will bring. Also, the large firms may not need extra cash to continue practising as they have in the past but it is not clear that they
can comfortably afford to back new service opportunities, such as setting up shared services centres for major clients (see Chapter 2).

Lawyers in countries yet to have been liberalized (which is most countries) will often dismiss the phenomenon of liberalization for a different reason — they regard this as a quirk of a small number of misguided jurisdictions. I anticipate, however, that when this liberalization gives rise to legal businesses and legal services that better meet clients’ growing more-for-less challenge, then this will have a ripple effect around the world. General Counsel of global businesses who benefit from new forms of service in liberalized regimes will not unreasonably ask for similar service in their own countries. Law firms in traditional markets may find themselves at a competitive disadvantage, unable to raise funds for ambitious new ventures, for example. Of course, whether and how other jurisdictions formally respond to the possibility of liberalization remains to be seen. In the US, many related questions have been under deep scrutiny by local bar associations, many of which seem to me quite bullish for change, and by the American Bar Association, conservatively in its Ethics 20/20 Commission (reporting in 2012) and more open-mindedly in its Commission on the Future of Legal Services (2016). Elsewhere, the Canadian Bar Association has squarely addressed liberalization and much else in its report entitled, ‘Futures: Transforming the Delivery of Legal Services in Canada’ (2014). I predict that within ten years or so, after intense agonizing and various changes of direction, most major jurisdictions in the West and many emerging jurisdictions too will have liberalized in the manner of England. And, even if they do not, liberalization in some countries will bring liberation in most others.

Technology

Much of my work over the past 35 years has been devoted to thinking and writing about the impact of technology (that is, information technology) on lawyers and the courts. I have also advised innumerable law firms, in-house departments, and governments on this same subject. The legal profession has not generally been swift to embrace new systems but it is increasingly finding it impossible to avoid the technology tidal wave.

Technology is now pervasive in our world. Consider the number of users of mobile phones (5 billion), the internet (3.5 billion), of email (2.5 billion), and of Facebook (1.7 billion). Consider also that every two days, according to Google’s Eric Schmidt, ‘we create as much information as we did from the dawn of civilisation up until 2003’. Every two days, on this view (in fact, less now because Schmidt was saying this a few years ago), we create more than 5 quintillion \((5 \times 10^{18})\) bytes of data.

Technology and the internet are not passing fads. On the contrary, courtesy of cloud computing, information and processing power are increasingly being made available as a utility, in the manner of water and electricity. And yet, many lawyers, in an untutored way, still tell me that technology is over-hyped. A few even still point to the bursting of the dotcom bubble and claim— based on who knows what— that the impact of technology is slowing down and that all recent talk of Al in the law will prove to be hot air. This is grotesquely to misunderstand the trends. Too few lawyers have heard of Moore’s Law: not a law of the land, but a prediction made in 1965 by Gordon Moore, the man who co-founded Intel. He projected then that every two years or so the processing power of computers would double, and yet its cost would halve. Sceptics at the time claimed that this trend would last for a few years and no more. In the
event, it is still going strong and computer scientists and material scientists say that it is likely to continue unabated for the foreseeable future.

In his formidable book, The Singularity is Near, Ray Kurzweil gives a practical illustration of the future consequences of Moore’s Law, if it continues to hold. By 2020, we are told, the average desktop computer will have the same processing power as the human brain, which neuroscientists tell us is approximately 1016 calculations per second. I find it amazing that in 1973, when I was 12, I held in my hand my first (large) electronic calculator, and that in less than 50 years a machine of the same size will have the same processing power as the human brain. But this is not nearly as remarkable as the following — that by 2050, according to Kurzweil, the average desktop machine will have more processing power than all of humanity combined. You can call me radical, but it seems to me that if we can see the day in which the average desktop machine has more processing power than all of humanity combined, then it might be time for lawyers to rethink some of their working practices. It is simply inconceivable that technology will radically alter all corners of our economy and society and yet somehow legal work will be exempt from any change.