So, What's the Big Deal about Big Data?

By **Susan Raridon Lambreth** on May 24, 2021

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Susan Raridon Lambreth: I am interviewing Amanda Chaboryk, a Disputes and Litigation Data Lead at Norton Rose Fulbright in London. Amanda and I first met when she attended the LawVision LPM Roundtable in London in 2019 in her role as a legal project manager. Her current position as data lead is a dynamic and interesting one in today's legal environment. Amanda, please tell our audience more about what you do?

Amanda: I am focused on developing and supporting our litigation group's use of analytics, litigation finance and disputes-focused technology across the EMEA offices. I've always had a passion for both data and the law, so I feel very privileged to have a role at a firm that supports my interests and mission statement.

Susan: What do you think the relationship is between the legal industry today and data? When do they intersect?

Amanda: I think the first clear and immediate intersection is the area of data protection and intellectual property. A data protection lawyer's practice includes advising clients on how to achieve their commercial objectives whilst complying with the ever-evolving regulatory regimes regarding data. To this extent, advising on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has become a distinct practice in itself, advising clients on how to identify gaps in compliance, policy review, Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA's), and so on. To be quite specific, some data protection instructions start with data mapping exercises, which often lends itself well to the use of analysts or data experts.

Susan: Now, that is an example of a practice area around data. What are other areas where, say, big data and the law have a connection?

Amanda: Law firms' key offerings are knowledge and commercial advice to clients to help them navigate their most complex and pressing concerns. Provided that knowledge and experience are of the utmost importance – it is critical to expediently find it and act on growing frameworks of collective global or regional information within an organization. This is where the big data element comes in. An interesting way to look at this is that the law is 'semantic' and values-based. If you do a quick online search, this is defined as "relating to meaning in language or logic." On the other hand, big data is experimental and algorithmic and requires the assistance of both special methods and tools to digest. In a law firm, there are growing data sets.

One example is jurisdiction surveys, where the rules and laws in many jurisdictions are put into Excel or some other structured data format for comparison, risk analysis, and the like. Another example is time entry data, including narratives. This type of information (if structured, of course) can help inform innovative pricing arrangements. Every day, hundreds of fee earners in every firm contribute to these data sets when they record their time, deliver advice, file completed transaction documents, and so on.

Susan: I understand the value and importance of data at a macro level, but what is the "so what"' factor? If I have a multimillion-dollar practice as a partner, why should I care?

Amanda: I would like to start by saying that data matters in all organizations, regardless of the size and type. Data is essential for informed decision-making and having a 360-degree understanding of an organization's client needs, covering everything from sales to satisfaction. I do, however, understand that specific use cases and the ability to demonstrate actionable insights is what are crucial. Some examples which illustrate the "so what" are in eDiscovery – where technology assistance reviews (TAR) were some of the first major use cases of artificial intelligence in Legal. The technology enables the organization, analysis, and review of millions of documents, which would be difficult and almost impossible to be completed by just humans. It makes discovery more cost-effective and efficient. Another example is harvesting billing and narrative data to complete analysis to inform innovative fee arrangements. Still, another is data from companies that mine court records and can provide you with insights about how opposing counsel or judges may proceed in particular situations.

Susan: On the topic of litigation data, can you tell me more about disputes analytics?

Amanda: This is something I am very interested in – particularly as I believe there are so many unique data points that can be obtained from judgments. At the beginning of a case, data collection starts with analyzing the facts and points in dispute. As the case materializes, from pre-action to say disclosure, further parties join, and large volumes of documents are reviewed, including relevant case law. A non-exhaustive list of data points obtained from a judgment includes the appellant and respondent, the court, all legal representation (including law firms and Barristers), the hearing dates, the cases cited, jurisdiction, relevant legislation, etc.

Susan: Amanda, I love your passion for data and the impact it can have on legal organizations. I look forward to sharing more of these insights in part 2 of this article.

Further Reading:

[France bans publishing of judicial analytics and prompts criminal penalty](#)

[Courts Data](#)

[What is Legal Analytics?](#)

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About the Authors:

Amanda Chaboryk is a Disputes and Litigation Data Lead at Norton Rose Fulbright, a global law firm providing a full business law service. She focuses on developing and supporting the litigation group's use of analytics, third-party funding, and disputes focused Technology across the EMEA offices. Her role also involves advising on information governance, enabling data usability, and supporting analytics. She is pursuing qualification as a solicitor through the new Solicitors Qualification Examination (SQE) route.

Susan Raridon Lambreth has over 25 years of experience as a consultant to the legal profession. Susan assists firms in implementing effective legal project management initiatives and trains legal professionals in LPM skills. Along with a colleague, Ms. Lambreth co-created the first legal project management certification program in 2010 and launched the first online eLearning courses in legal project management (LPM LaunchPadTM course). Susan has also helped implement effective practice group management at almost 100 firms, including nearly half of the largest firms in the U.S.

Ms. Lambreth is the author of three books on legal project management and three on practice group management.