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LAW SOCIETY

May 2025

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Is it a plane?*
No, it's an IP dispute

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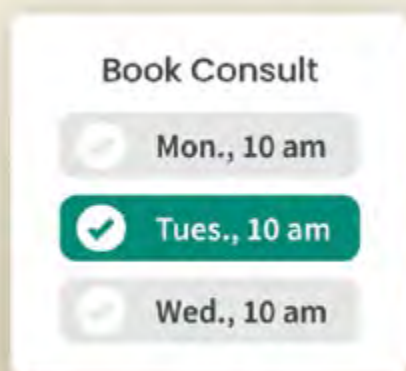
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gazette

LAW SOCIETY

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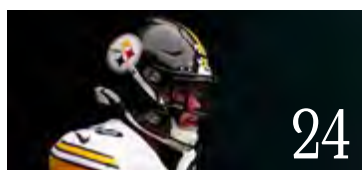
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GOING THE EXTRA MILE



An integral part of the Law Society's work is to use our position to build relationships with Government and other key stakeholders, and to showcase the expertise of the profession in pursuit of improvements to justice and law reform.

In that vein, I was pleased to recently lead a delegation to meet Justice Minister Jim O'Callaghan. We heard about his intentions for the justice portfolio, discussed the Law Society's policy priorities, and highlighted our support for justice-related commitments contained in the Programme for Government.

The minister emphasised his ambition for individuals engaging with the justice system to have a high-quality experience, regardless of the outcome of their matter. This speaks to the heart of the priorities that form part of the Law Society's ongoing advocacy efforts.

Building on needs

We discussed investment in the courts system, ensuring that the courts are modernised and resourced to harness the benefits of technology, and are more focused on the needs of victims and other court users.

Once implemented, the *Family Courts Act 2024* holds great potential for delivering a more positive experience for children and families involved in legal proceedings. The Law Society signalled its commitment to contributing to the implementation plan, while also highlighting the need for more immediate steps to be taken to improve the experience of families that have matters before the courts.

We also took the opportunity to highlight the growing importance of mediation and other means of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). As I know from my own experience, ADR can provide a far more efficient and cost-effective solution to many disputes that end up before the courts, and reduce the burden on the already overstretched courts system.

Overcoming the challenges faced by smaller practices is a high priority for me this year

small business supports.

I look forward, together with Law Society colleagues, to continuing positive engagement with the minister and his team over the weeks and months ahead.

Building speed

The relationships we build with our colleagues is also important, and there's no better opportunity than the Calcutta Run to cement and create new friendships across

all branches of the profession, coming together to raise money for good causes.

On a recent visit to India with The Hope Foundation, I saw firsthand the much-needed work made possible by your fundraising. This includes providing education for children of all ages. Many of these children have experienced homelessness or live in severely deprived areas and, without funding for schools, would not have the opportunity for education.

Another initiative is the Hope Café, where staff train for a career in nutrition and hospitality. Not least is the Hope Hospital, which provides desperately needed healthcare services to people who otherwise would not be able to afford it.

Our fundraising target for 2025 is at least €350,000 for Dublin Simon Community and The Hope Foundation. Registration is now open for the Dublin Run on Saturday 24 May. Additional events include the Calcutta Run in Cork and Galway on 25 May, as well as tag rugby, golf and tennis.

These charities really need our support, so let's go the extra mile this year. Visit www.calcuttarun.com to get started. See you there!

EAMON HARRINGTON
PRESIDENT





the **BIG** *picture*

Join the club!

Rory McIlroy reacts after winning the playoff against Justin Rose following the final round at the Masters golf tournament in Augusta, Georgia, on Sunday 13 April 2025. He becomes just the sixth player ever to complete the career Grand Slam, joining Gene Sarazen (1935), Ben Hogan (1953), Gary Player (1965), Jack Nicklaus (1966), and Tiger Woods (2000). Winning the modern Slam involves capturing the four majors: the Masters Tournament, PGA Championship, US Open, and Open Championship.

people

■ WHO ■ WHAT ■ WHERE ■ WHEN ■



All pics: Cian Redmond

SA reps assess coalition mechanisms

South African party chief whips visited Ireland in March as part of an experience-sharing visit on the dynamics of working within coalitions. The delegation visited Blackhall Place on 25 March, where they were welcomed by Law Society Director General Mark Garrett. Preparations for the visit were coordinated by the Law Society of Ireland: George Michalakakis (Democratic Alliance in the National Assembly), Ngabayomzi Kwankwa (member of the National Assembly of South Africa), Mdumiseni Ntuli (African National Congress), Eamon Gilmore, South African Ambassador Nicolette Schreiber, Dr Vasudevan Gounden (executive director, ACCORD), Nhlanhla Hadebe (Inkatha Freedom Party), and Mark Garrett.



Senzwesihle Ngubane (general manager - research, ACCORD) and Barry McCarthy (past-president, Law Society of Ireland)



In deep discussion - Nhlanhla Hadebe, Mdumiseni Ntuli, and Gary Lee (senior solicitor in the General Solicitor's Office of Superior Courts Operations)



Dr Vasudevan Gounden makes a point with Eamon Gilmore



Gillian Cregan (director of finance and operations, Law Society), Sheila Zebedee (head of fundraising and corporate engagement, Hope Foundation), Miriam O'Callaghan (broadcaster), Catherine Kenny (chief executive, Dublin Simon Community), Maura Lennon (CEO of international operations, Hope Foundation), Gráinne Daly (corporate partnerships manager, Dublin Simon Community), and Miriam Taber (senior PR executive, Law Society)

Going the extra mile

At the launch of Calcutta Run 2025 on 3 April, Law Society President Eamon Harrington and Attorney General Rossa Fanning called on the legal profession to go the extra mile this year to surpass the €350,000 fundraising target. The launch, compèred by RTÉ's Miriam O'Callaghan, was held at McCann FitzGerald, Dublin.

With over €5.6 million raised in support of homelessness services in Ireland and Kolkata since 1999, Calcutta Run is the flagship ESG event for the legal sector in Ireland. Register at www.calcuttarun.com.



Sheila Zebedee (head of fundraising and corporate engagement, Hope Foundation), Gráinne Daly (corporate partnerships manager, Dublin Simon Community), Eamon Harrington (president of the Law Society), and Miriam Taber (senior PR executive, Law Society)



Mark Garrett, Miriam O'Callaghan and Rossa Fanning



Glen Newman (Law Society), Sarah Kelly (The Panel), and Michelle Nolan (Law Society)



Cillian MacDomhnaill and Mark Garrett



'Rest of World' participants Sean Corcoran, Cian Doogan, Jordan Kochanski, Jack Travers, Darragh Beirth, Pascal Morrissey, Louis Brennan, Jordan Davin, Luke Mountaine, Derek Foley, Lonan Francis Manny, Eireamhan Semple, Eamonn Hanley, and André Donnelly

Rest of World dominates Blackhall Blitz!

The Inaugural Interfirm Blackhall Blitz (sponsored by Matheson LLP) saw law firms go head-to-head in an 11-a-side football tournament at Blackhall Place on 12 March. In all, 52 trainee solicitors from 27 firms competed. A nail-biting final ended with penalties, with the 'Rest of World' edging out a team of players from McCann FitzGerald, Eversheds Sutherland, Heffernan, Margetson & Greene, and RDJ.



The beaten finalists featured players from McCann FitzGerald, Eversheds Sutherland, RDJ, Heffernan, and Margetson & Greene



Players from A&L Goodbody, Addleshaw Goddard, Byrne Wallace Shields, and Mason Hayes & Curran



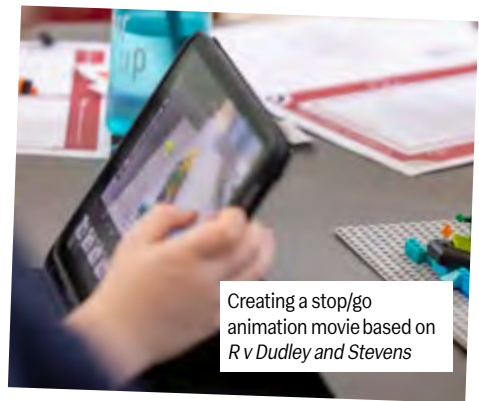
Players from Beauchamps, Matheson, and William Fry



Winners from St Audeon's National School, Merchant's Quay, featured Ryan Abdelrazek, Rylie Graham, Karsyn Jai Hassett, Adam McLarnon, and Keith Wosser Coleman

'Law Busters' take School Tasking title

Participants in the 'School Tasking' all-Ireland regional final, hosted by the Law Society on 26 March. The 'Law Busters' from Stanhope Street Primary School were the winners and will represent Ireland at the Champion of Champions Final in Warwick University this June.



Creating a stop/go animation movie based on *R v Dudley and Stevens*

All pics: Cian Redmond



Avril Holton with the team from Loreto Senior Primary School Crumlin, including Lorcan, Sydney, Penny, Josh, and Louise



Two teams participated from Stanhope Street and are seen here with their facilitators, PPC trainees Luke Montaine, Katelyn Dunleavy Larkin, Aine Hennessy, and Dearbhla Mullin



MC John Lunney introduces the first task, with judges Donna O'Reilly and Rachael Hession



Hard at work – the team from the Paradise Place Educate Together in Phibsboro, including Bianca Nonai, Diana Petrianyk, Isobel Agas, and Nyle Kattoo



The future of the profession

The Law Society's Younger Members' Committee sent a delegation to the annual European Young Bar Association Spring Conference, which took place in Rome from 20–23 March: William Wilson, Genevieve Lynch, Sarah McNulty, Lynda Crosbie, Shannon Gawley, Emma Doherty, Emma Fallon, Clodagh Murphy, and Diarmuid Ó hUallacháin

■ LSRA report ■ MOOC on AI ■ Calcutta run targets €350K

news

■ YOUR MONTHLY UPDATE ON ALL THINGS LEGAL ■



Photo: Shutterstock AI

Lawyers to pay €88k in compensation

The Legal Services Regulatory Authority has published its first complaints report of 2025, covering the period from 7 September 2024 to 7 March 2025.

Legal practitioners were ordered to pay €88,300 in compensation to clients and to waive or refund €12,982 in fees. During this time, 829 complaints were received, while 839 were closed.

The LSRA handles complaints relating to inadequate service, excessive costs, and misconduct. Of the complaints received, 801 concerned solicitors and 28 involved barristers, reflecting the higher number of solicitors and their greater level of contact with consumers.

More than half (453) of the complaints alleged misconduct, →

ENDANGERED LAWYERS



Elizabeth Oyer, USA

Elizabeth Oyer is one of many US lawyers affected by the actions of the new Trump administration. She was dismissed with immediate effect on 7 March from her job as pardon attorney, which advises the president on applications for pardon for criminal offences. This occurred after she refused to recommend that the actor Mel Gibson, a prominent Trump supporter, should have his gun rights restored.

His right to own a handgun was removed following a domestic-abuse conviction in 2011; it has now been restored. According to a Justice Department official, who spoke anonymously, Mel Gibson's case did not factor in the decision to remove her from her position. No reason was given for her dismissal.

Having prepared a memo regarding nine people in relation to restoration of gun rights, she was asked to add Gibson to the memo. After discussion with officials, she revised her memo, stating that she lacked detailed knowledge of Mel Gibson's case and that the final decision rested with the AG.

Liz Oyer graduated with honours from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and later gained an honours law degree from Harvard, where she was an executive editor for the *Harvard Law Review*.

She worked for a decade as a federal public defender and was a senior litigation counsel in Maryland's Federal

Public Defender's Office. Previously, she was a partner at Mayer Brown LLP in Washington DC, working on civil and criminal litigation at trial and appellate levels, where she also maintained an active *pro bono* practice.

The National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls issued a statement stating that it "regrets that Elizabeth Oyer is no longer the US pardon attorney. We thank her for her exemplary service. In three years, Ms Oyer achieved reforms people did not think possible. She reduced the mind-boggling 18,000 application backlog to 3,000 while new applications continued to pour in. She revamped the application forms to make them user-friendly. She made it possible for people to explain extenuating circumstances, such as domestic abuse or drug addiction, when discussing their transgressions. She travelled to prisons to meet with incarcerated people and had an open-door policy for advocates. Her record of service is extraordinary."

She reported in early April that it had been planned to send armed Special Deputy US Marshals to her home, late on a Friday night when her teenage child was alone in the house, to deliver a letter warning her to obey her obligation not to reveal information protected by executive privilege at a shadow hearing of the Democratic Party to be held the following Monday – an event she saw as an attempt to silence her: "Fortunately, due to the grace of a very decent person who understood how upsetting this would be to my family, I was able to confirm receipt of the letter to an email address, and the deputies were called off."

Alma Clissmann was a long-time member of the Human Rights Committee.

← while 179 (22%) were about legal services of an inadequate standard, 13 (2%) involved excessive costs (overcharging), and 184 (22%) were 'mixed complaints' featuring a combination of misconduct, inadequate legal services, and excessive costs.

Closed complaints

Among the closed complaints, 290 (33%) were found inadmissible and 244 (29%) were resolved with LSRA support, including 27 through informal mediation. A total of 96 (11%) complaints were upheld, and 41 (5%) were referred to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal. In all, 108 (13%) complaints were not upheld.

The report includes details about the LSRA's High Court enforcement actions against solicitors who failed to comply with its directions or determinations. In all, 18 pre-action letters were issued and nine court proceedings initiated. This resulted in 13 High Court orders compelling compliance with LSRA directions.

Family-law focus



This report also shines a light on family law, highlighting the need for clear communication on legal costs and urging both clients and solicitors to engage constructively.

At the launch, LSRA chief Dr Brian Doherty emphasised that, while family law did not generate a disproportionate number of complaints, it presented key lessons in client/practitioner communication and stress management in emotionally charged cases. "Based on the complaints received, this is a clear area where legal practitioners could improve their communications," the chief executive said. "We also emphasise the pressure and impact that family-law proceedings can have on the parties to the proceedings, as well as their legal practitioners, and advise legal practitioners to be mindful of their own wellbeing to avoid burn-out."

2025 MOOC on AI



AI is the theme for the Diploma Centre's 2025 massive open online course (MOOC) starting on 10 June. MOOCs are free online courses open to all, and are part of the Law Society's public legal education initiative. After a bumper year in 2024, which saw the ESG-themed course attract over 3,600 participants from over 70 countries, the Law Society is happy to open registrations for what promises to be an insightful exploration into AI.

This year's MOOC will provide participants with an insight into this rapidly developing area and its implications across all sectors. The course will offer an overview of recent advancements in AI, delving into issues surrounding data security, ethical concerns and economic consequences. It will also consider the impact AI may have within organisations, explore the considerable impact on society, examine AI regulation, and look at how AI can be applied in our daily lives.

Experts will review the current state of play surrounding AI, demystify concerns, discuss the potential impact it will have on key industries in the coming years, and much more.

There are seven CPD points available for completing this course, which runs over a five-week period from June. For further information and to sign up, visit mocc2025.lawsociety.ie.

IRLI IN AFRICA



MOU signed with Malawi's Chief Justice

Long before commencing my role as executive director of Irish Rule of Law International (IRLI) in December 2024, I admired the important work of this organisation.

It was therefore an enormous pleasure and privilege for me to be able to travel and see some of the programmes in operation in Tanzania, Zambia, and Malawi during visits to the three countries in recent months. Highlights included:

- Meeting the Chief Justice of Tanzania and our key partners in the Institute of Judicial Administration.
- Sitting in on training, part of which was a role-play scenario where Tanzanian magistrates, prosecutors, and social-welfare officers discussed how they could make trial settings more victim centred. The training was delivered by two Tanzanian judges who were originally trained by judges from Ireland and Northern Ireland in January 2024.
- Discussing, with the Director of Public Prosecutions in Zambia, the importance of establishing a Criminal Assets Bureau-type institution as a tool to tackle financial crimes there.
- Sitting in on financial-crimes training and gender-based crimes and youth-justice training, delivered by experts from both jurisdictions in Ireland.

- Observing a 'camp court' in a prison in Malawi. The anticipation and then the elation for some was palpable, as 16 detainees (from a total of 34 listed that day) were granted bail or discharged altogether. Overcrowding in prisons is a serious problem in Malawi, resulting in several human-rights abuses. Camp courts are an important tool in helping prisoners to get access to justice and in reducing prison population numbers.
- Signing a memorandum of understanding with the Chief Justice of Malawi Razine Mikamanda SC, reinforcing the partnership between the Malawian judiciary and IRLI.

The passion and commitment of our staff is exceptional. The same can be said of our volunteers and supporters.

Whether you are contributing to IRLI through your practising-certificate donation, carrying out research, analysing data, delivering training, attending events, or supporting in other ways, we simply could not do what we are doing without you. The whole IRLI team is incredibly grateful for your support, and we look forward to providing further updates on our work through the *Gazette*.

Maria McCloskey is executive director of IRLI.

Calcutta Run 2025 targets €350k for charities



Pic: Cian Redmond

This year's Calcutta Run is aiming to raise more than €350,000 for homelessness services in Ireland and Kolkata (formerly Calcutta). Since it began in 1999, the Calcutta Run has raised €5.6 million for worthy causes, while the 2024 event netted €325,000. This year, its partner charities are the Hope Foundation and Dublin Simon Community.

Speaking at the launch event for the 2025 run, Law Society President Eamon Harrington said that a team from Ireland had recently visited Kolkata to witness what he described as the "phenomenal work" being done by the Hope Foundation in the city.

He called on the legal profession to "go the extra mile" this year for the event. Registration is now open for individuals and firms at www.lawsociety.ie/news/calcutta-run/sign-up.

The cornerstone event of the Calcutta Run is a 6km and 10km run and walk on Saturday 24 May, beginning and ending at Blackhall Place in Dublin.

The starting sirens for the Cork and Galway runs will sound on Sunday 25 May. In addition, a golf classic will take place on 9 May, with a tag rugby event scheduled for Saturday 21 June.

Miriam O'Callaghan speaking at the launch of the 2025 Calcutta Run

'Immeasurable' difference

At the launch, Hope Foundation chief executive Maura Lennon explained how the Calcutta Run funds were making an "immeasurable difference" to the charity's work in India. Hope Foundation programmes were not just 'band-aids', she said, but had a long-term, sustainable and positive impact.

She detailed specific programmes for which money from the Calcutta Run had been earmarked this year – including children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, and a residential care centre for girls aged 12 to 18 who would otherwise be at risk of abuse.

Dublin Simon impact

Catherine Kenny (chief executive of Dublin Simon Community) explained how her charity was also benefiting from the Calcutta Run donation. Most of the money goes towards the charity's medium and high-support accommodation for people who are unable to take on a tenancy or live independently. This year, donations had also allowed a person to be provided with end-of-life care.

The launch, compèred by RTÉ's Miriam O'Callaghan at McCann FitzGerald's Dublin office, was attended by Attorney General Rossa Fanning SC and representatives of many of the major law firms.

The AG commented that the Calcutta Run was a "public manifestation" of the good that the law and the legal profession does in Ireland.

At a time when the legal profession is facing more scrutiny and criticism in this jurisdiction and around the world, this initiative says something really positive about the social good that law firms can do," he said.

CONVEYANCING COMMITTEE UPDATES PRECEDENT

The Law Society's Conveyancing Committee has updated the specimen pre-lease enquiries from 1991, which are now available for use by practitioners. The revised precedent, titled [Pre-Lease Enquiries and Checklist](#), should prove invaluable to those practising in commercial lease transactions.

A comprehensive [Pre-Lease Due Diligence](#) explanatory memorandum to accompany the new precedent has also been published to accompany the updated pre-lease enquiries. Both documents are available for download from the ['Information Services/Precedents'](#) section at lawsociety.ie (solicitor login required).

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- Would you like an email update as and when new conveyancing practice notes are issued?

The Law Society is trialling an email notification system over the next six months for conveyancing practice notes to see if this would be of value to practitioners. If you would like to participate and receive a notification with a link to new practice notes as they are published by the Conveyancing Committee, please get in touch with us at solicitorservices@lawsociety.ie.



wellbeing 

REWARDS AND CHALLENGES

Like everything in life, working in the Legal Aid Board has both its rewards and challenges. It is fulfilling to represent a client and to achieve an outcome that improves their circumstances or position. The importance of public service is an aspect of my job that I value greatly. Access to justice should be a right, not a privilege. However, the ongoing challenges around resources are a constant problem for all in the Legal Aid Board. It can be difficult to navigate the solicitor/client boundary, stress and time management, and the potential for burnout.

I started working in the Legal Aid Board in 1996, after having worked in private practice for a number of years. I feel fortunate to have worked in a number of interesting areas of law, in particular to have been part of the founding team in the Refugee Legal Service back in 1999 and to have practised in the area of judicial review, which tracked the

development of this dynamic new area of law. Within the Law Centre in Smithfield, we deal with a variety of areas of law, particularly family law and child abduction. The centre has a dedicated team dealing with international protection and human trafficking. We provide advice and representation to complainants in rape and sexual-assault cases in the Criminal Courts of Justice.

Recognising burnout

The work is very demanding, both in the content of cases and the volume of case work. At a certain point, I realised it was having an impact on my wellbeing. Recognising burnout can be difficult but, for me, it entailed a pervasive exhaustion, frustration, and feeling a degree of compassion fatigue. I decided to do a diploma in group analytic psychotherapy. I wanted to have a greater insight into my own response to clients and to better understand the dynamics in teams. Fundamentally, I wanted to develop myself outside my professional remit.

The diploma was challenging, but insightful. It forced me to reflect on


Grainne Brophy is principal managing solicitor at the Legal Aid Board (Smithfield Law Centre).

Confidential, independent, and subsidised support is available through LegalMind for legal professionals. All enquiries to LegalMind are fully confidential to Clanwilliam Institute (the Law Society's partner providers). All therapy sessions are conducted by highly trained professionals in a confidential forum. Email: reception@clanwilliam.ie; tel: 01 205 5010 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday); web: lawsociety.ie/legalmind.

Sharing personal and professional stories has long been a powerful way to create a sense of connection and belonging. It creates a space for vulnerability that can provide the listener with inspiration and hope, or newfound insight to a challenge or difficulty they too might be facing. We welcome you to get in touch with ps@lawsociety.ie to share a story for this 'Professional Lives' column.

the false self we all project, but which as a lawyer can be even more pronounced. There was no hiding from this in my therapy group, where there was, at times, a painful unmasking of it. While completing the diploma over a four-year period, I developed a particular interest in the areas of reflective practice and supervision. Supervision can be done on an individual basis or in a group setting. It is a forum that allows you to reflect on your work, your interaction with colleagues and clients, and better understand the triggers and projections. Ultimately, it allows for a better perspective on your work and on yourself.

As solicitors, we should try and recognise the effects of people's experience of trauma. For example, problematic drug use can be a response to trauma, social poverty, and dysfunctionality. Trauma can involve clients being fearful, feeling overwhelmed, and having a lack of control. The Legal Aid Board is now providing training in trauma-informed practice for all staff. This is an excellent initiative that has been really well received. Fundamentally, however, the value of supportive peers and allowing for debriefing and informal conversations during the working week cannot be understated.

While I am still faced with the daily demands of my profession, enhancing my understanding of group dynamics, projection, and trauma has given me the tools to better undertake these challenges – there is now an opportunity for reflection and growth. 

HIGH NOON

It's two years since the Sheriff Review Group published its report into the role of sheriffs. David O'Keeffe says that its findings now need to be urgently addressed

In March 2024, the Department of Justice Sheriff Review Group published its much-anticipated report into the role of sheriffs, in particular in respect of debt-enforcement actions taken on behalf of the Revenue Commissioners. The review group was tasked with examining the future role of sheriffs, with a view to establishing whether the nature of their role was in line with international best practice and to identify the extent to which debt collection in Ireland could be modernised.

Among its recommendations, the review group addressed the “unnecessarily confusing” variation in terminology used to enforce court orders to satisfy judgment debts in the District, Circuit and High Courts, and noted that “the procedures and processes, including time limits and the duration of court orders, vary between the different court levels”.

It identified that “there is considerable scope for modernisation of both terminology and procedures that would serve to simplify the law and to make it much more accessible and user friendly”, and urged an updating and streamlining of rules of court governing execution orders.

The review group's recommendation joins a long line of proposals for reform of the procedures for obtaining enforcement of court orders

Head them off at the pass

The review group's recommendation joins a long line of proposals for reform of the procedures for obtaining enforcement of court orders. As far back as 1988, the Law Reform Commission's *Report on Debt Collection: The Law Relating to Sheriffs* recommended an amendment to the *Rules of the Superior Courts* to harmonise the procedures for obtaining execution orders in the Circuit and High Courts.

In its 2009 *Consultation Paper on Personal Debt Management and Debt Enforcement*, the LRC again noted that “the procedural steps to be followed and documents to be prepared vary not only depending on the level of court involved and the different rules of court, but can also vary as between courts at the same level of jurisdiction depending on the practices of judges and court officials in the various courts”.

Despite these calls for reform, the system for enforcement of court orders by sheriffs has remained, to outsiders, a confusing mosaic. In the High Court, under order 42 of the *Rules of the Superior Courts*, where judgment has been obtained in respect of a debt, the creditor can obtain an execution order against the debtor's goods (an order of *fieri facias*) from the Central Office of the High Court. There

is no need for the creditor to go before a judge to obtain an order of *fieri facias*, so long as the creditor produces to the Central Office the judgment upon which the execution order is to be issued, certifies the sums due and owing, and files a *praecipe* setting out the record of the proceedings, the title, date of judgment and order, and the party against whom execution is to be ordered.

Order 36 of the *Circuit Court Rules* does away with the opaque Latin terminology and provides for a judgment creditor simply to request an ‘execution order’ directed to the sheriff. In the District Court, much more straightforwardly, the judgment of the court itself will require the sheriff to take in execution of the goods of the debtor to satisfy the judgment debt.





Round up the posse

In its report, the review group notes that this variation in language is “unnecessarily confusing and lacking in transparency”. In this regard, the review group echoes the earlier recommendation of the Civil Justice Review Group, chaired by former President of the High Court Peter Kelly, in its *Report of the Review of the Administration of Civil Justice 2020*. In that report, the Civil Justice Review Group noted that “the need for simplification of procedures and the language in court rules and forms is recognised in submissions to the review group and in reforms in other jurisdictions directed at improving access to justice for litigants in person”.

This consideration is particularly important in the

context of the enforcement of judgment debts, where Free Legal Advice Centres recognised in its 2003 report *An End Based on Means?* that “those in debt are likely, in most cases, to have little access to private solicitors, given the nature of their financial predicament”.

Evidently, an unrepresented litigant is less likely to be able to navigate and understand the complexities of the various execution orders that can be directed to sheriffs under the *Superior Courts, Circuit Court* and *District Court Rules*.

Reach for the sky

It is welcome that, on the same date as the review group report was published, an amendment to the *Circuit Court Rules* brought some increased consistency between the procedures for obtaining


execution orders in the Circuit and High Courts, in respect of the time period within which an execution order could be obtained.

Prior to the making of the *Circuit Court Rules (Order 36) 2024*, a judgment of the Circuit Court would be in effect for a period of 12 years. An execution order could be obtained within six years of the judgment, and the leave of the court was required in order to obtain execution after the expiry of six years. However, once a period of 12 years had expired since the date of the judgment, there was no possibility for a judgment creditor to obtain an execution order. As the High Court confirmed in *Pepper Finance Corporation (Ireland) DAC v Doyle*: “Order 36 of the *Circuit Court Rules* precludes both the issuance of, and renewal of, an execution order after the expiration of 12 years from the date of the relevant decree or judgment.”

Fill your hand

The revised order 36 removes the 12-year outer limit on the execution of judgments. In this regard, the *Circuit Court Rules*

have been brought into line with order 46, rule 24 of the *Rules of the Superior Courts*, which provides that execution of a judgment may issue within six years of the judgment or after that period by order of the court. As confirmed in *Start Mortgages DAC v Hendrick*, there is no 12-year limitation period on issuing execution of a judgment in the High Court. This improved consistency between the *Circuit Court* and *Superior Courts Rules* is welcome and helps to ensure that the law on enforcement of judgments is transparent and predictable.

Save to this limited extent, however, in the year-and-a-half since the publication of the review group report, there has been no other move to reform the confusing variations between the rules of the various jurisdictions. It is to be hoped that, following the second anniversary of the publication of the report, the repeated calls to improve the clarity of the law on enforcement of court judgments by sheriffs will be heeded. 

David O’Keeffe is a partner in BHK Solicitors LLP, 1 Washington Street West, Cork.

LOOK IT UP

CASES:

- *Pepper Finance Corporation (Ireland) DAC v Doyle* [2023] IEHC 662
- *Start Mortgages DAC v Hendrick* [2023] IEHC 11

LITERATURE:

- *An End Based On Means?* (Free Legal Advice Centres, 2003)
- *Consultation Paper on Personal Debt Management and Debt Enforcement* (Law Reform Commission, 2009)
- *Report on Debt Collection: The Law Relating to Sheriffs* (Law Reform Commission, 1988)
- *Report of the Review of the Administration of Civil Justice 2020* (Civil Justice Review Group, October 2020)
- *Report of the Sheriff Review Group* (Department of Justice, March 2024)

SOMETIMES YOU CAN'T MAKE IT ON YOUR OWN

With a quarter of Irish solicitors working in-house, it's time for in-house counsel to take a more prominent role in the *pro bono* environment, argues Alannah Shortt

Lawyers in Ireland are privileged to have their qualification and, with this privilege, comes a responsibility to help ensure that everyone has access to and is informed about the legal system. This responsibility does not extinguish once you move in-house – it is as important as ever.

For decades, the image of *pro bono* legal work has been linked to the towering glass offices of traditional law firms. Firms have long championed the cause, embedding *pro bono* into their cultural fabric and leveraging it as a cornerstone of professional development. Their established programmes, robust resources, and mentorship structures provide fertile ground for lawyers to engage in *pro bono* work. However, the legal landscape in Ireland is changing, with around 25% of solicitors working in-house.

I have been involved in many *pro bono* projects while working in-house, with many projects being completed with the In-House *Pro Bono*

Network, a network of in-house solicitors facilitated by A&L Goodbody. The network is open to all in-house legal teams who are passionate about *pro bono* and want to use their legal skills as a force for good. It was established in 2023 by a small group of in-house legal teams and A&L Goodbody, and it has collaborated on several *pro bono* projects since.

Elevation

A current example is the Prison Literacy Programme. A&L Goodbody had been operating a prison-literacy programme and was able to expand its work with the support of the In-House *Pro Bono* Network. Following a focus group with the learners, five areas of law were identified as being of relevance: housing, employment, social welfare, travel, and equality. Members of the network undertook training to equip them to design and teach the lessons to the learners. Following this training session, two members of the network were paired with an A&L Goodbody solicitor to prepare and deliver the session

In-House Pro Bono Network is open to all in-house legal teams who are passionate about pro bono and want to use their legal skills as a force for good



to the learners. The teams met in advance to plan and organise a lesson plan around agreed themes. There was a strong emphasis on collaboration and group work throughout the lesson. The aim was to avoid a lecturing scenario and, instead, foster an environment of teamwork and learning through activities and printed visual aids.

The learners were really engrossed in the lesson and provided positive feedback. The students engaged throughout the lesson, asking questions and challenging each other's points of view. The participation in group work and enthusiasm was strong throughout, which is a testament to the practical and collaborative approach that was taken. This is just one of many exciting projects the In-House *Pro Bono* Network has been involved in – and if you are thinking about getting involved, now is your chance.

New year's day

The modern in-house legal team is no longer a mere support function. In-house counsel now possess a diverse and sophisticated skillset, capable of addressing a wide range of legal needs within the *pro bono* environment. This, coupled with the growing emphasis on corporate social responsibility, creates a unique opportunity for in-house lawyers to make a significant impact.

Working in-house, you are handling contracts, compliance, and a vast variety of any and all legal matters that come across your employer's desk. *Pro bono* work might seem light years away from your daily grind, but there is a lot to gain from getting involved.

Working on *pro bono* programmes or projects can provide multiple benefits to an

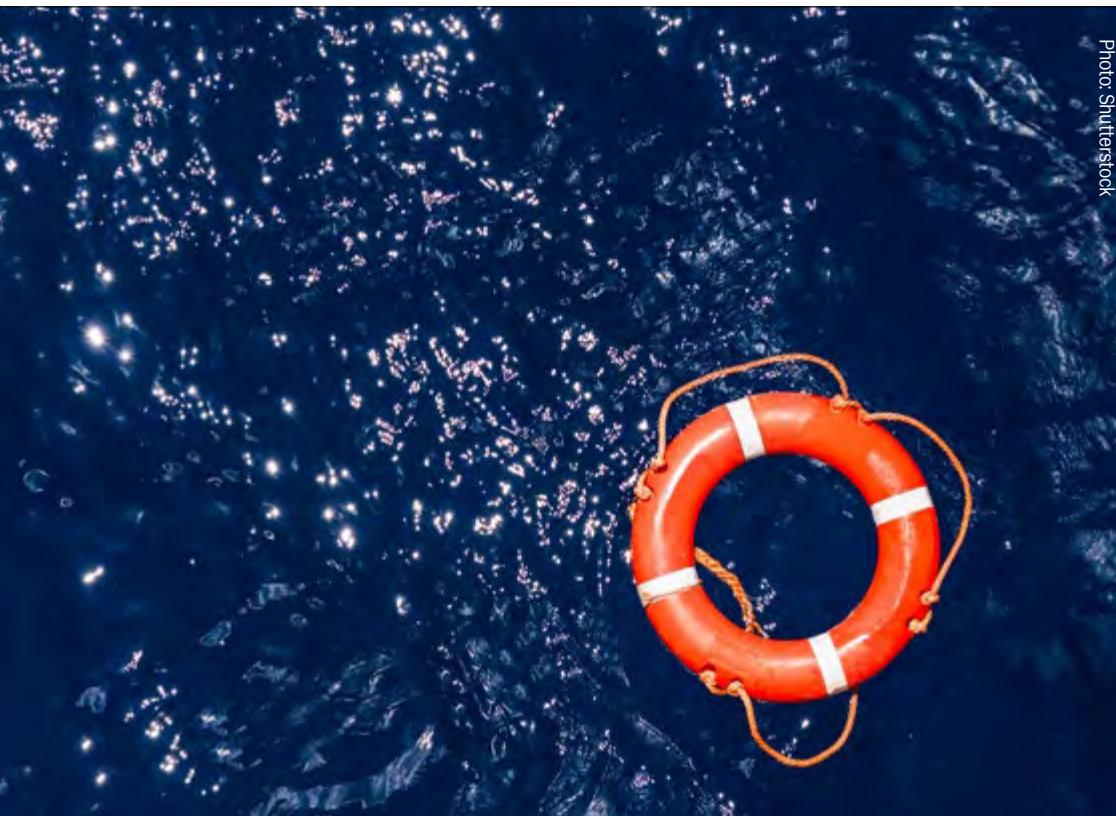


Photo: Shutterstock

individual: using your legal skills and training to help people who need it can boost your sense of purpose and job satisfaction. Often, the human-related topics that are dealt with during a *pro bono* project can be quite far away from your day-to-day – for example, housing rights, immigration law, employment legislation, etc. Partnering with a law firm and preparing and researching accordingly for each *pro bono* project helps to overcome this knowledge gap. Tailoring projects to match your skillset is easier to do than you might think, and you will surprise yourself at how much you do know in relation to topics outside of your day-to-day. Examples of projects that suit the in-house skillset include advising on corporate governance for a charity, advising on data protection or intellectual property for a not-for-profit, or providing information sessions for entrepreneurs on employment rights or setting up a business.

There are many charities and organisations in Ireland who could benefit from these kind of services.

Vertigo

So how would you go about completing a *pro bono* project? First, decide what project you would like to get involved in. Who are your charity partners and how can you help them? What expertise have you and your team, and how can you take advantage of these skills?

Second, reach out to law firms to partner with you on the project, for reasons outlined in the panel. Once decided on a project, it is important to properly scope it. Will it involve giving legal advice or legal services? What kind of time commitment will be involved for you and what resources will be needed? Examples include technology resources, travel expenses, room hire, or refreshments.

Most importantly, deliver the project. Whether it be a

research-based desk project, or a face-to-face event, deliver the *pro bono* project with the same high standard and integrity as you would in your regular day-to-day work.

Finally, reflect on the project. What worked well, what challenges did you face, and what would you change if you were to do it again? Plan your next *pro bono* project leveraging off what went well, and what aspects you enjoyed the most.

Pride

It is a great time for in-house lawyers to take a more proactive role in the *pro bono* environment. Collaborations with law firms and independent law centres unlock a wealth of opportunity for in-house lawyers to have a meaningful impact. By leveraging off our unique perspective and diverse expertise, we can not only enhance our professional development and strengthen our companies' social responsibility profiles, but also make a tangible

difference in the lives of those who need it most. It is time to move beyond the traditional boundaries of in-house practice and embrace the responsibility to promote fair access to and education surrounding the legal system here in Ireland. The potential for positive change is immense and, with a few simple steps, your in-house team could easily get involved in a *pro bono* project.

Alannah Shortt is a solicitor at BNP Paribas.

With or without you

In-house lawyers can provide legal services only to their employer and not to third parties. As such, when taking on a *pro bono* project, it is important to partner with a law firm or independent law centre.

Pro bono work cannot be provided by in-house solicitors to third parties under the title of their employer. Bodies corporate are prohibited under the *Solicitors Acts* from acting as a solicitor, and in-house solicitors may only provide legal services to their employer, not to third parties. Any insurance cover provided by a body corporate does not meet the statutory professional indemnity insurance requirements in this jurisdiction, as such cover must be provided by a solicitor firm or independent law centre.

Speak with your law firm to ensure you are both comfortable that the necessary professional indemnity insurance is in place to carry out the project, and that the Law Society has been correctly notified of the project. The Law Society's website has useful information on this topic www.lawsociety.ie/Solicitors/knowledge-base/Practice-Notes/in-house-solicitors-and-pro-bono-work, so please check it out.

SUNSET SUPERMAN

Superman faces his toughest battle yet: the forces of copyright law. Will he prevail, or could a copyright claim deal a killer blow to DC Comics and Warner Bros? Simon Carty hides the kryptonite

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uperman is invincible. No villain – not even Lex Luthor with his kryptonite – can bring him down. However, there's one force that even the Man of Steel might struggle against: an IP lawyer. As legal battles rage over the ownership of Superman's rights, an upcoming film means that the son of Krypton might face his greatest enemy yet – not in Metropolis, but in the courtroom. The ongoing fight unfolding in a US courtroom – that falls under British copyright law – might just finish Superman. Though playing out in the US, the dispute has implications beyond American

borders. Given Ireland's copyright framework and its close alignment with UK film distribution, there are reasons to consider how this dispute might extend into the Irish and wider EU legal context, potentially jeopardising the release of *Superman: Legacy* in Irish cinemas.

Man of Steel

Superman has long been at the centre of legal disputes over copyright, but recent developments raise questions about whether a new film could be released in Ireland. *Superman: Legacy*, directed by James Gunn and set for a summer 2025 release, has been positioned as a major revival for both the character and cinema at large. With box-office attendance struggling post-pandemic, and superhero fatigue reportedly setting in, Warner Bros is hoping this film will be a significant cinematic event.

This article examines how the complexities of US, UK, and EU copyright law intersect, and whether Ireland's regulatory environment could result in legal barriers to

Superman: Legacy's release. More broadly, it also asks whether Irish copyright law provides better protection for creators than its UK equivalent, and how these differences might affect the Irish entertainment industry in general.

Superman was created in 1938 by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who sold all the rights to Detective Comics, Inc (now DC Comics) for \$130 (approximately \$2,900 today when adjusted for inflation). In recent years, their estates have sought to reclaim portions of those rights under copyright law. The latest dispute, however, was filed in the US, where Joseph Shuster's estate has sued Warner Bros Discovery (WBD) and DC.

While the case is being heard in a federal court in New York, it is based on UK copyright law, which the estate argues granted them reversionary rights over Superman in 2017 – 25 years after Shuster's death. The lawsuit alleges that WBD has continued to use Superman in various countries without honouring these rights or paying royalties, and the estate is seeking damages and



an injunction to block WBD from using Superman internationally.

Justice League

A ruling in favour of the estate could have implications beyond Britain or the US. If the court recognises the Shuster estate's reversionary claim, it could establish a precedent for how copyright ownership transfers are interpreted in jurisdictions with similar legal frameworks.

In particular, this case could lead to greater scrutiny of historical copyright contracts in jurisdictions such as Ireland, where legacy agreements may not have anticipated modern interpretations of reversion rights. Under Irish and EU law, contracts signed decades ago might now be examined in light of newer legislative frameworks prioritising creator rights – such as the *EU Copyright Directive* (2019/790), which enhances authors' ability to reclaim rights when works are not adequately exploited.

The case also raises broader questions about whether Irish courts would take a similar approach if an Irish-based creator, or their estate, sought to reclaim rights under comparable circumstances. While there is no direct equivalent of US or UK termination rights in Ireland, courts could be influenced by legal arguments emerging from this dispute – especially if EU law is interpreted in a way that strengthens the ongoing interests of authors and their heirs in works initially assigned under different legal norms.

A ruling in favour of the estate might not directly change Irish law, but it could influence how Irish courts approach similar cases, particularly under EU copyright directives that provide enhanced protections for authors. If WBD is forced to renegotiate rights in the UK following this ruling, it could trigger similar claims in Ireland and other EU member states, leading to broader questions about how historical contracts are evaluated in light of EU-level protections for creators.

Smallville

Before the implementation of the *Copyright Directive*, Irish copyright law was more closely aligned with the British approach,

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The estate alleges that Warner Bros Discovery (WBD) has continued to use Superman in various countries without paying royalties, and is seeking damages and an injunction to block WBD from using Superman internationally



particularly in how contracts were structured. Historically, both Ireland and Britain treated copyright as a tradable asset, allowing rights to be fully assigned or sold outright, with fewer protections for authors after an initial transfer. This model left many creators and their estates with little legal recourse to reclaim ownership of their works.

With Ireland still within the EU, and Britain on the outside, their legal frameworks have increasingly diverged. The *EU Copyright Directive* has reshaped Irish copyright law, strengthening authorial rights and introducing new safeguards that did not exist in Ireland or Britain before Brexit.

One notable change is that Irish law now offers enhanced protections against the long-term loss of rights, including mechanisms that allow authors to revoke transfers of rights when works are not being adequately exploited, in accordance with, among other things, article 22 of the directive.

This shift is relevant to cases like the Superman dispute because it raises the question of whether Irish courts would apply modern EU protections to older contracts – particularly where rights were initially assigned under pre-EU frameworks. While the UK still follows its own *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988*, Irish law is now firmly embedded within the EU's author-friendly approach.

This divergence matters because, under older Irish law, Shuster's estate might have had fewer options to reclaim rights – similar to that in the UK. However, the

argument for creator protections has strengthened under today's EU-influenced Irish copyright system. If Warner Bros Discovery was required to renegotiate rights in the UK following the lawsuit, it could lead to further challenges in Ireland, particularly if Irish courts interpret the case in light of EU rules that prioritise the interests of creators over those of corporate ownership.

This lawsuit, therefore, is not only about past rights, but about the evolving nature of copyright-reversion claims under international law. The estate alleges that WBD has continued to use Superman in various countries without paying royalties. The lawsuit seeks damages and an injunction to block WBD from using Superman internationally.

Ireland's historically close cultural and linguistic ties to the UK, as well as its economic position as a small market, mean that it does not operate an entirely independent film distribution model. Unlike larger European markets that have distinct domestic-release schedules, Ireland's cinema industry is largely aligned with UK releases. Most major studio films, including *Superman: Legacy*, are distributed under UK schedules, due to the economic realities of distribution logistics.

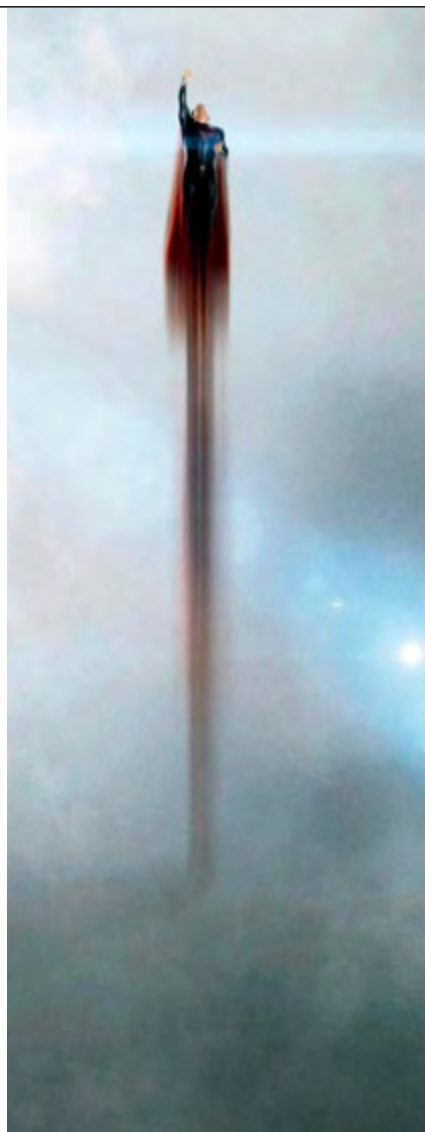
If WBD is required to renegotiate rights in the UK following this case, Irish releases would likely be directly affected, as they are typically bundled with UK distribution agreements.

Dawn of justice

Given this interconnected market, if legal proceedings in the UK result in a block on *Superman: Legacy*, it is highly likely that Ireland would also be affected.

Warner Bros may choose not to release the film in Ireland separately, due to logistical and contractual complexities in distribution. Furthermore, if the Shuster estate were to bring a parallel claim under EU law, it could lead to additional delays or restrictions within Ireland, even if a resolution were reached in the UK. Consequently, the outcome of this dispute may dictate whether Irish audiences can view the film alongside global markets or encounter unforeseen disruptions.

For now, *Superman: Legacy* remains



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This case could lead to greater scrutiny of historical copyright contracts in jurisdictions such as Ireland, where legacy agreements may not have anticipated modern interpretations of reversion rights

on track for release, but the legal battles behind the scenes may ultimately determine whether Irish audiences will get to see it at the same time as the rest of the world.

Superman has battled countless villains over the years, but even he may struggle against the forces of copyright law. The Man of Steel always finds a way to prevail, however, no matter the odds.

Simon Carty is a member of the Law Society's IP and Data Protection Committee and is principal of Simon Carty Legal & Advisory, Dublin 2. He is also a member of the production team for Mrs Brown's Boys.

LOOK IT UP

CASES:

- *Mark Warren Peary, individually and in his capacity as executor of the Estate of Joseph Shuster (Plaintiff) v DC Comics, Inc, a New York corporation; DC Comics, a New York general partnership; DC Entertainment, Inc, a Delaware Corporation; Warner Bros Discovery, Inc, a Delaware Corporation; and DOES 1-10 (Defendants)* (Civil Action No 1:25-cv-00910)

LEGISLATION:

- *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* (UK)
- *Directive (EU) 2019/790* of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market and amending Directives 96/9/EC and 2001/29/EC

LITERATURE:

- 'Article 22 - right of revocation', Eleonora Rosati (*Oxford Academic*, August 2021, p400-407)
- *Summary of the Articles of Directive (EU) 2019/790* (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment)
- 'Super burnout: with most superhero movies flopping, can Marvel and DC's 2025 slates reverse an unprecedented box-office drought?', Adam B Vary (*Variety Australia*, 29 October 2024)
- 'Warner Bros hit with Superman copyright lawsuit ahead of new movie', Blake Brittain (Reuters, 31 January 2025)





The game plan

Peter Kearney and Ciaran Maguire of Dublin firm Reddy Charlton have been advising on the staging of the first regular-season NFL game in Dublin later this year. *Gazette* linebacker Andrew Fanning tackles the firm's quarterbacks

Reddy Charlton LLP has been advising the GAA and Croke Park on the staging of the first regular-season NFL game in Dublin, which

will take place later this year. Managing partner Peter Kearney and partner Ciaran Maguire say that the firm's advice on bringing the NFL to Dublin was mainly linked to the use of Croke Park for the 'home team' fixture for the Pittsburgh Steelers. (Their opponents have not yet been announced, but media speculation suggests it could be the Green Bay Packers from Wisconsin.)

Reddy Charlton has a long-standing relationship with the GAA, acting for both the organisation and the commercial arm of Croke Park. The relationship goes back to one of the firm's founding partners, John McKnight, who played inter-county football for Armagh in the 1960s.

Maguire describes the NFL's international arm as "a pleasure to deal with", adding that the US organisation had plenty of experience in organising games in various venues elsewhere in Europe – including London and Munich.

"It was evident that they were very keen to make this a success, and they were very collaborative in the way

that they worked to achieve the aim of bringing this set-piece event to Ireland," he stated. "There's no doubt that we benefited from that to a certain extent. They knew what they needed and they could set it out clearly."

Field of play

The Reddy Charlton partner says that the deal that brought the NFL match to Dublin was, at its heart, a commercial contract, adding that there were "quite a few moving parts" in an event of that scale.

There was "tremendous support" from the Department of Tourism and Sport to make the event happen, he said. The firm's advice partly covered the practical aspects of accommodating the 40,000 fans who were expected to come from the US.

"You have a policing plan to deal with, you have a transport plan. There is just a necessity for an event of the NFL's scale and scope to have facilities available for things like 'tailgating', which wouldn't be common here," Maguire adds.

"There are puzzles that need to be solved, because it's not something that we generally cater for, so we need to cut our cloth accordingly and tailor it for a bespoke event – and that needs a lot of help," he states.



Touchdown

Describing Croke Park as a ‘jewel in the crown’ for Dublin, Maguire says that the dimensions of the pitch make it better suited for the NFL, in some ways, than a venue such as the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium: “And obviously there’s a lot that needs to be changed within the stadium to facilitate an event like this,” he adds.

“The media interest is of a completely different level to anything that you would need to deal with domestically, and that necessitates an expanded press box and additional facilities as mundane as the cabling that goes with it. There is a phenomenal number of moving parts that all need to marry up,” he says.

Asked what advice the firm would have for anyone looking to attract future big sporting events to Ireland, Kearney points to the importance of the ‘soft power’ that we can yield, epitomised, in this case, by the familial links between the Rooney family, who own the Pittsburgh Steelers, and Ireland.

“I think this event shows the strength of those ties and the advantage that Ireland

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The media interest is of a completely different level to anything that you would need to deal with domestically, and that necessitates an expanded press box and additional facilities as mundane as the cabling that goes with it. There is a phenomenal number of moving parts that all need to marry up

has in terms of our global network. Those types of connections might serve other organisations well as a starting point for attracting future events,” he adds. “It might also provide inspiration to look beyond the traditional goals of getting football or rugby competitions to these shores.”

In a huddle

In addition to the GAA, the firm has a number of sporting organisations, clubs, and societies on its books as clients. “These bodies typically required a broad range of legal services,” says Peter Kearney, “some of which might not necessarily immediately come to mind under the banner of sports law.

For example, for many of the clubs they advise, the most significant assistance they require is related to trustees and, more recently, corporate trustees.

Maguire described sports law as “a very broad palette of work”, ranging from advising clubs on internal issues and personnel matters, to land deals, sponsorship, and broadcasting rights.

Another big issue for sports clubs, says Kearney, is the area of child safeguarding and child protection.

On the topic of the regulatory environment for sports organisations, Maguire says that there are certainly more obligations than existed in the past: “But, to a large extent, I see that as a good thing. Clubs are much better geared up. It’s not people ‘having a go’ to the same extent as might have been the case previously.”

On a broader scale, the biggest change for large sporting organisations has been the increased thirst for broadcast content – people now expect to be able to access games on demand.

Kearney points out that this has been a trickier issue for the GAA as a community-based organisation, since it wants people to attend games and so needs to strike a balance between what it makes available to broadcasters and ensuring physical attendance in stadiums.

Loose ball

Where else does Kearney see a role for solicitors interested in sports law? He acknowledges that there tends to be a

degree of scepticism or uneasiness on the part of clubs or organisations who have to deal with agents on behalf of players or young adults. He identifies that as an area where solicitors can become more involved.

“Our firm’s experience is primarily in acting for organisations or clubs – as opposed to the individual sports person – but for the broader profession, I don’t see why solicitors can’t have a larger role to play, particularly by bringing the trust and confidence of our profession to those relationships.”

Ciaran Maguire adds that solicitors and barristers are also well-placed to bring a wealth of experience to organisations on corporate-governance issues that have become a ‘hot-button’ topic within sport in recent years, citing issues at the FAI and the Olympic Council of Ireland as examples.

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The biggest change for large sporting organisations has been the increased thirst for broadcast content – people now expect to be able to access games on demand

Many solicitor trainees express an interest in getting into sports law, and the Reddy Charlton lawyers believe that an involvement in playing or organising sport at a personal level can provide some advantages.

Kearney, who was involved in the GAA during his teens, is careful to stress, however, that formal advice means drawing on your legal – rather than sporting – knowledge.

“Be involved with your club or your local body and get a good understanding from that vantage point,” advises Maguire. “You get a good sense of how the broader organisation works, and you make the connections and foster links to the people that will need advice at a more senior level.”

Andrew Fanning is a freelance journalist for the Law Society Gazette.



SHOW ME THE MONEY! A GREENHORN GUIDE TO AMERICAN FOOTBALL

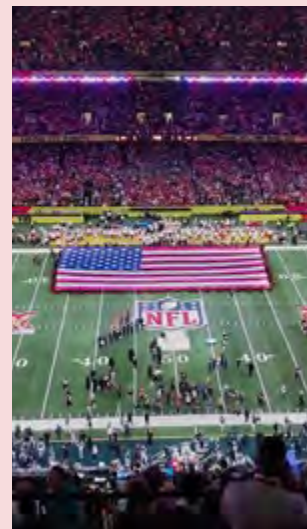
The National Football League (NFL) is the top professional league in the US for American football. Its championship, the Super Bowl, tends to be the most watched television event each year.

The NFL has its beginnings in a league formed in 1920 called the American Professional Football Association. Of the ten teams that took part in the original league, none are still involved in the NFL. The Green Bay Packers joined in 1921 and is the oldest and longest-running franchise in NFL history. In 1922, the league changed its name to the National Football League. In 1959, a rival league, the American Football League (AFL), was formed. In 1970, the two leagues merged, incorporating many AFL innovations, but taking the NFL name. There are currently 32 teams in the NFL. They are divided equally between the American Football Conference (AFC) and the National Football Conference (NFC), each with four divisions of four teams.

Each NFL season begins annually with a three-week preseason in August, followed by an 18-week regular season, which runs from early September to early January, with each team playing 17 games and having one ‘bye week’.

Following the conclusion of the regular season, seven teams from each conference, including the four division winners and three ‘wild-card’ teams, advance to the playoffs – a single-elimination tournament that culminates in the Super Bowl. This is played in early February between the winners of the AFC and NFC championship games.

The Green Bay Packers hold the most combined NFL championships, winning nine titles before the Super Bowl era and four Super Bowls since. The New England Patriots and Pittsburgh Steelers are tied for the most Super Bowl victories at six each. The reigning league champions are the Philadelphia Eagles.



COIN TOSS

- NFL players weren’t required to wear helmets until 1943,
- More than 127.7 million viewers watched this year’s Super Bowl,
- The cost of a 30-second advertisement in the 2025 Super Bowl was said to be around \$8 million (or \$266,666 a second) – the most expensive Super Bowl commercials in history,
- The Dallas Cowboys franchise is worth over \$10.1 billion – the most valuable team in the NFL (according to Forbes, all 32 NFL teams are worth at least \$4 billion),
- CBS paid \$4.65 million in 1962 for the first exclusive rights to broadcast NFL games. In its current ten-year deal (2023-2033), Fox pays \$2.2 billion annually for its AFC package. ABC/ESPN/Disney pays \$2.7 billion a year (2022-2033).

ONE OF THESE THINGS IS NOT LIKE THE OTHER

The sincerest form of flattery? Mary Bleahene picks through the legal minefield of intellectual-property rights and own-label 'lookalikes' – and assesses the findings of two recent court cases in Ireland and Britain



Photo: Shutterstock AI



imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but the copying by some retailers of the packaging or other features of the appearance of established branded products can diminish and dilute brand distinctiveness. It can also mislead consumers regarding the provenance or other characteristics of retail products. The circulation of lookalike products in retail is arguably, therefore, neither good for established brands nor for shoppers.

Lookalike or 'copycat' products (as they are sometimes called) adopt distinctive features of the packaging of leading brands to create the often mistaken impression that they enjoy the same qualities, origin, or characteristics of the established brands, but usually retail for a much lower price.

The lookalike practice can adversely affect both large and small niche brands, and often enables the lookalike retailers to boost their sales without the same advertising or marketing investment as the brand owners.

Looks like me

Ireland and Britain, unlike many EU countries, do not have dedicated unfair competition legislation that protects brand owners against the marketing of lookalike products, even in situations where the lookalikes may be deceptively similar, causing confusion.

In its absence, brand owners must rely instead on the existing legal framework of registered and unregistered intellectual-property rights, namely registered trademarks, passing-off, registered/unregistered designs, and copyright. In general, registered and common-law trademark rights are the most effective IP rights, but not the only ones.

The common-law tort of passing-off, or its threat, can be effective in combating lookalikes. For a successful passing-off action, the brand owner must prove:

- Brand reputation,
- Misrepresentation likely to deceive or mislead, and
- Resultant brand damage.

Same direction

In most cases, the lookalike will have a different brand name to the established brand, and this factor has sometimes been held sufficient to avoid shoppers being misled or deceived.

However, in the landmark case of *McCambridge v Brennan Bakeries* ([2012] IESC 46), the Supreme Court found passing-off by the Brennan's lookalike sliced



bread, notwithstanding that it was clearly marketed under a different brand name.

The court held that, while the individual similarities between the packages were insufficient on their own to constitute misrepresentation, the Brennan's lookalike packaging had to be viewed in its entirety. The court found that the combination of generic features with "less generic features" copied by Brennans went "beyond the realm of mere resemblance into imitation", causing a misrepresentation amounting to passing-off. Although passing-off provides protection where shoppers are deceived or misled, it does not protect against mistaken association or the bringing to mind of the brand leader. Having said that, when combined with other registered IP rights, such as registered trademarks, it can be very helpful.

Same old brand new you

In selecting products to buy, market research shows that shoppers use primarily colour, then shape, then design of packaging to make quick purchasing decisions. Fortunately, brand owners can register different packaging features, such as colour, colour combinations, shape of goods, brand imagery, and the overall packaging as trademarks under current legislation.



Brand owners in Ireland and Britain must rely on the existing legal framework of registered and unregistered intellectual-property rights, namely registered trademarks, passing-off, registered/unregistered designs, and copyright





Most lookalike brands do not obviously copy directly from the brand leader and, instead, seek to reproduce the concept, theme, or idea of the packaging, making copyright less effective

Irish and British legislation both protect against similar marks causing confusion, including the likelihood of economic association. In addition, the legislation protects marks with a reputation where a lookalike product takes unfair advantage of the reputation without due cause. This special treatment for reputed packaging marks was recently explored by the English Court of Appeal in *Thatcher's v Aldi* ([2025] EWCA Civ 5), to the advantage of the brand leader.

Thatcher's had registered UK trademark number 3489711 for a figurative mark for "cider; alcoholic beverages, except beer" in Class 33.

Thatcher's alleged that the use of lookalike packaging for cider by a discount retailer was trademark infringement because the packaging took unfair advantage of its reputation in its registered mark. The judge agreed that the lookalike cider packaging called the registered mark to mind, notwithstanding no actual confusion, and that the lookalike retailer obtained an unfair advantage because it could then benefit from Thatcher's development and promotion, rather than competing on its own merits and promotion.

The lookalike product achieved highly substantial sales in a short period of time without promotion, which enabled the court to legitimately infer that the lookalike product could not have achieved such sales without consumers making a link between the registered reputed mark and the lookalike packaging.

The song remains the same

Registered designs can also assist brand owners where the design of packaging or individual packaging features are new and have individual character (that is, they produce a different overall impression to previous designs or design features). In most cases, the novelty requirement means that the designs must be registered in the early stages of their development – sometimes before they are launched.

It is difficult for brand owners to predict in advance what features of packaging will be borrowed in lookalike products, and if they merit the cost of registered design protection – this is a disadvantage of the registered design system.




Similar problems arise with 'unregistered design right', which requires that the design be original and not commonplace. Brands frequently update packaging to keep up with consumer tastes – registering many iterations of designs is expensive and time consuming, as is keeping track of unregistered design rights in successive packaging versions.

As with designs, copyright in the original artwork of packaging may also be asserted, provided that the lookalike copies a substantial part of the copyright work. However, most lookalike brands do not obviously copy directly from the brand leader and, instead, seek to reproduce the concept, theme, or idea of the packaging, making copyright less effective.

Never be the same again

Established and reputed brands that are likely to inspire lookalikes should take heart from the recent Court of Appeal (England and Wales) decision, which found that establishing a link in the mind of consumers with reputed brands, thereby profiting from their reputation, can amount to registered trademark infringement.

In addition, the trend of the Irish courts to accept that passing-off can arise in lookalike branding because of the overall similarity in packaging, regardless of the use of different brand names, should assist brand owners in their efforts to preserve their exclusivity on the shelves of Irish supermarkets.

Businesses that wish to protect against lookalikes should review, in particular, their registered trademark portfolios to ensure that they have all the necessary trademark registrations in place for their packaging designs. On the other hand, supermarkets developing own brands that may be inspired by brand leaders would be well advised to carry out proper trademark availability searches before committing to packaging designs. 

Mary Bleahene is a registered trademark agent and a member of the Law Society's Intellectual Property and Data Protection Committee.



Cracking the whip

One year on from the introduction of the *Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Right to Request Flexible Working and Remote Working*, Rachel Jones asks what has worked, what has not, and what needs to be improved?

Photo: Shutterstock AI



In Ireland, the landscape for remote and flexible working remains complex. The code of practice has brought greater structure and transparency to remote and flexible-working requests in Ireland. However, some deficiencies in the code may bring continued challenges.

What has worked?

A clearer framework for requests – before the code, remote and flexible working policies in Ireland did not have a set framework, and their implementation relied entirely on the discretion of employers.

However, the code provided a formalised process and set timeframes for both employers and employees on how to handle requests for remote and flexible working, which was outlined at the time in a Lewis Silkin article titled ‘Right to request remote and flexible working comes into operation today’.

Overall, the code standardised decision-making and reduced uncertainty for employers on how to manage an employee’s request for a remote or flexible-working arrangement.

Legitimising remote and flexible working – although employees only have the right to request remote or flexible work, with limited entitlement to actually work this way, the code has helped establish these arrangements as legitimate options, rather than just temporary pandemic measures.

Many employers have embraced hybrid-work arrangements and recognise their benefits for employee satisfaction and retention.

What hasn’t worked?

Employer discretion over employee rights – while it is welcome news for employers, one of the biggest

criticisms of the code continues to be the high degree of discretion that employers have when refusing employees’ requests to work remotely or flexibly, based on ‘business needs’.

Additionally, employees cannot challenge a refusal at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), unless their request was ignored or their employer did not handle their request in line with the process outlined in the code.

For example, in *Dienifer Taylor v Microchip Technology Ireland Limited*, the complainant’s request was denied because it was not submitted in writing, underscoring the importance of following the procedural requirements outlined in the code.

Over the past year, the cases before the WRC have reinforced a key reality that employers maintain full discretion over whether to approve or deny requests. This was particularly evidenced in the case of *Alina Karabko v TikTok Technology Ltd*, where, although the employee’s contract specified Dublin as her workplace, she initially worked remotely due to company-wide policies in response to COVID-19.

When her employer introduced a return-to-office policy requiring two days in the office, she was granted a temporary exception to continue working remotely. Even when her employer increased the in-office requirement to three days per week, she continued working fully remotely and formally requested a permanent remote-work arrangement under the code by citing her role’s suitability for remote work and her relocation outside Dublin.

Her employer acknowledged her request, extended its decision period, and ultimately refused her request by citing business needs, team collaboration, and

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IN-PERSON AND LIVE ONLINE COURSES

Date	Course	CPD Hours	Venue	Fee
8 May	Leadership and the Modern Lawyer Masterclass	5 professional development and solicitor wellbeing (by group study)	Law Society of Ireland	€200
8 May	Midlands General Practice Update 2025	Total 6 hours (by group study)	Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise, Co. Laois	€165
15 May	Essential Solicitor Update Leitrim 2025	Total 6 hours (by group study)	Landmark Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon, Leitrim	€165
21 May	Public Sector Careers Symposium 2025	2.5 professional development and solicitor wellbeing (by group study)	Law Society of Ireland	€65
23 May	Regulation Matters: on/off boarding clients	1 client care and professional standards (by elearning)	Zoom webinar	€65
27 May	Probate Update with Probate Bar Association	1 general (by elearning)	Zoom webinar	€65
28 May	Risk and Resilience in the Legal Profession	2 professional development and solicitor wellbeing and 2.5 client care and professional standards (by group study)	Law Society of Ireland	€225
29 May	North West Practice Update 2025	Total 6 hours (by group study)	Lough Eske Castle Hotel, Lough Eske, Co. Donegal	€165
04 June	Advocacy Masterclass 2025	15 general (by group study)	Law Society of Ireland	€995
11 June	Planning for Retirement for Legal Practitioners	1 client care and professional standards, 1 general, 3 professional development and solicitor wellbeing (by group study)	The Strand Hotel, Ennis Road, Limerick	€185
12 June	Essential Solicitor Update Limerick and Clare 2025	Total 6 hours (by group study)	The Strand Hotel, Ennis Road, Limerick	€165

ONLINE, ON-DEMAND COURSES

Date	Course	CPD Hours	Fee
Available now	Domestic Violence and Coercive Control Awareness	0.5 client care and professional standards (by elearning)	Free
Available now	Legislative Drafting Processes & Policies	3 general (by elearning)	€230
Available now	Practical Guide to Cybersecurity	3 client care and professional standards (by elearning)	€195
Available now	Regulation Matters Hub	Up to 4 client care and professional standards (including 2 accounting & AML compliance)	€195
Available now	Construction Law Masterclass: The Fundamentals	11 general (by elearning)	€395



knowledge sharing. When Ms Karabko challenged the refusal as not being fair or reasonable in the WRC, it was confirmed that the WRC can only assess whether an employer followed the correct process – not whether the refusal was justified. Ultimately, the decision reinforced that employees have the right to request, but not to be granted, remote work.

Additionally, in *Javier Osorio v Cognizant Technology Solutions Ireland Limited*, an employee's request was refused due to a client's requirement for on-site presence. In upholding the employer's right to make that decision, the WRC reinforced the importance of procedural fairness over substantive employee rights.

No right to re-request or appeal the decision – there is no obligation for the employer to reconsider an employee's circumstances after the initial decision, which may be seen as being deficient, but should be welcome news for employers who won't have to deal with repeated requests.

As such, employees whose requests have been denied have no right to appeal the decision or re-request a remote or flexible working arrangement within a set period of time. That said, this contrasts with international best practices where, in the UK, employees may reapply for a remote working arrangement after a set period of time or if circumstances change.

Potential for discrimination – the flexibility given to employers in granting or denying requests has also raised concerns about potential discrimination. For example, certain groups – such as parents, caregivers, and people with disabilities – are more likely to request remote work. If their requests are disproportionately denied

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The flexibility given to employers in granting or denying requests has also raised concerns about potential discrimination

compared with other employees, the employer's policy may be indirectly discriminatory.


While the WRC has yet to rule on discrimination claims related to the code, this remains an area of concern that will likely require further legal scrutiny.

Recommendations for improvement

Looking to the future, we would expect the WRC to become a forum for employees to appeal the fairness of their employer's refusal to an employee's request for a remote or flexible-working arrangement by the 'back door', instead of being limited to only overseeing whether the procedure in the code has been adhered to.

There is also a need for clarity on whether employees can re-request a remote or flexible-working arrangement following an initial refusal.

Additionally, the code does not account for industry-specific differences. While remote work is relatively easy to implement in corporate settings, it remains challenging in the healthcare, manufacturing, and retail sectors. As a result, employees in certain sectors have seen little to no benefit from the new framework. This imbalance suggests that sector-specific guidelines may also be introduced to address the challenges of different industries.

One year on, the code has brought greater structure and transparency to remote and flexible-working requests in Ireland. However, some deficiencies in the code may bring continued challenges, particularly regarding enforcement and the ability to appeal their employer's decision. Ultimately, while the code is a step forward, its limitations mean that employees still lack a genuine right to remote working. 

Rachel Jones is an associate at Lewis Silkin.

LOOK IT UP

CASES:

- *Alina Karabko v TikTok Technology Ltd* (ADJ-00051600)
- *Dienifer Taylor v Microchip Technology Ireland Limited* (ADJ-00053037)
- *Javier Osorio v Cognizant Technology Solutions Ireland Limited* (ADJ-00052414)

LEGISLATION:

- *Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Right to Request Flexible Working and Right to Request Remote Working* (Workplace Relations Commission)

LITERATURE:

- 'Right to request remote and flexible working comes into operation today', Catherine Hayes and Siobhra Rush (7 March 2024, Lewis Silkin, Dublin)

Let me put
it to you



When ChatGPT burst onto the scene, it was greeted like digital sliced bread. But, as the saying goes, 'garbage in, garbage out'. So what do you need to know to use it effectively? David Cowan scrapes the mould off



F

or the legal profession, new tech like ChatGPT and its ilk can seem to cut too close to the bone, with the usual bout of headlines that law-bots and digi-judges are on their way. The end of lawyers!

In reality, tools such as ChatGPT, and now DeepSeek, are a long way from this. It is not lawyers that are being replaced, but rather some tasks, which include drafting tools. The pen, the typewriter, and computers have all been increasingly powerful as aids to legal drafting. ChatGPT is the latest tool that can help – if properly used. But it is an aid, not a replacement, and where lawyers have overly relied on ChatGPT, they have come a cropper in court.

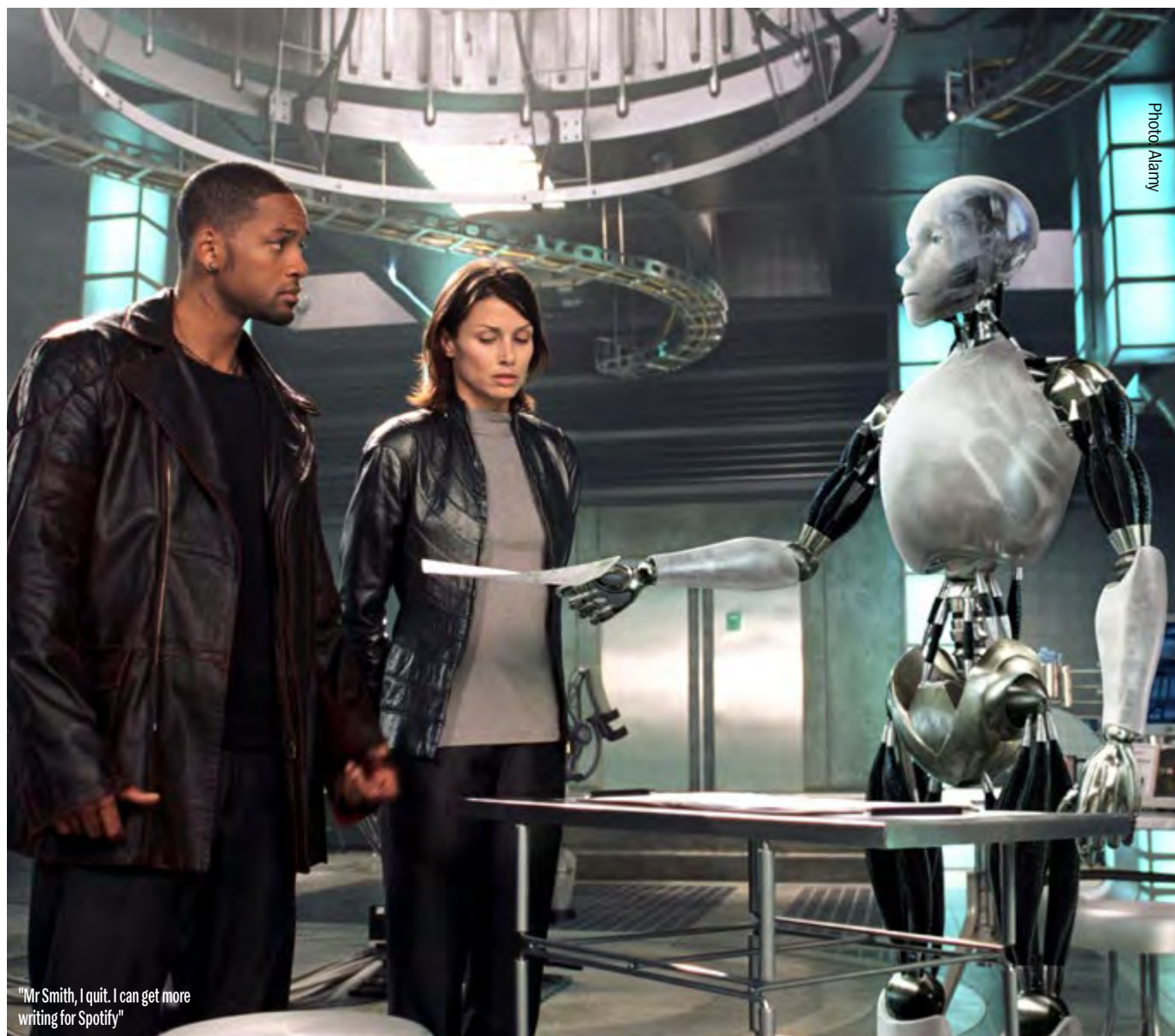
A cautionary tale

In an American personal-injury case, Roberto Mata sued the airline Avianca. His lawyers submitted a ten-page brief, authored by Steven A Schwartz of the firm Levidow, Levidow & Oberman, which cited over half a dozen court decisions, including *Martinez v Delta Airlines*, *Zicherman v Korean Airlines*,

and *Varghese v China Southern Airlines*. Unfortunately for Mr Schwartz, a practitioner of 30 years in New York, these cases were ‘hallucinated’ by ChatGPT. Schwartz admitted in an affidavit to the court that he had used “a source that has revealed itself to be unreliable”.

In a two-hour grilling in court, he explained to the judge that he had never used ChatGPT before, so “therefore was unaware of the possibility that its content could be false”. After prompting ChatGPT further, the program doubled-down and confirmed that the cases were real. The judge read out aloud a few lines of the draft and asked Schwartz: “Can we agree that’s legal gibberish?”

This now infamous example illustrates two things. First, the fallacy that this technology will soon replace lawyers. Second, the need for practitioners to develop legal prompting skills for use with AI and other technology. Lawyers have always been trained to ask questions, to be sure – but, in the digital space, how this is done requires a specific approach that goes by the name ‘legal prompting’.



"Mr Smith, I quit. I can get more writing for Spotify"

Using good legal prompting techniques allows lawyers to use ChatGPT as a tool, just like a laptop or smartphone is a tool. Practitioners need to migrate towards understanding such tools as part of what I call the 'augmented lawyer' approach. This combines human legal ability with the power and reach of big-data technology.

How do these tools work?

ChatGPT is a large language model (LLM), meaning that it generates human-like language responses to questions, or prompts, provided by humans. LLMs offer a new form of technical support for different types of intellectual work undertaken by lawyers. By skilfully using



All output still needs to be checked over – we don't want any of those expensive little hallucination gremlins creeping into the final work to be presented to clients or in court

the right commands, or prompts, lawyers can save time on numerous tasks in the context of legal work, but it still requires much effort by the human lawyer. Short cuts, as Mr Schwartz found out to his cost, still remain a precarious route for legal practitioners to take.

These are all tools that are pre-trained on a large amount of data. The data used includes text, images, videos, and speech. The more rules and data provided to the LLM, the more accurate and efficient the outcomes. Indeed, where there is big data and clear rules, then the use of LLMs can make more sense, as the issue is essentially about volume handling. However, they do demand a lot of data, energy, resources, and costs.

Every WHICH way

Letter	Action	Descriptor
W	Who	Who do you want to use LLM output for? Your input should state who is asking the question, because this is an important determinant of the output.
H	Has	Decide what it is you are looking for in your output, and be precise in your needs by thinking about the information you have to provide in your input, such as persons, data, and events that may create a well-honed request in pursuit of a holistic output.
I	Instructed	Provide your instructions as steps, setting out the various elements you need in your request. In other words, do not ask a simple question. Provide your instruction as if you were giving someone the route they need to take to a destination.
C	Connections	You have a goal in mind when instructing LLMs, and the system needs to know that, so that it connects the instructions according to the set goal. So say: 'Here is what I need... because..'
H	Holistically	Give constraints and narrow the scope of what you want the LLM to produce, and thus keep matters tight. For example: 'Don't include a discussion of the statute of frauds as it relates to real-estate sales.'

Source: Cowan, Law and Technology (Bloomsbury Professional Ireland, 2025).

The critical aspect is the pre-training phase, and this goes back to an equation in all computing that should never be forgotten: 'garbage in, garbage out' (GIGO). LLMs use guesswork and, while it mimics many human thought processes, it can fall down dramatically compared with how humans think and value information.

One of the unresolved issues of how LLMs work is the extent to which they infringe intellectual-property rights in the course of 'scraping' as much content as they can from the internet as the pool of data for responding to a prompt. There is a case to be made that this is IP theft on a grand scale. Hence, for instance, if a judicial assistant uses ChatGPT to draft material for a judge, then there is an element of IP theft involved. If a solicitor uploads a question relating to a client, this becomes part of the recycled content that the LLM uses to 'learn' for prompts given by other users, raising client-privacy concerns.

Limitations

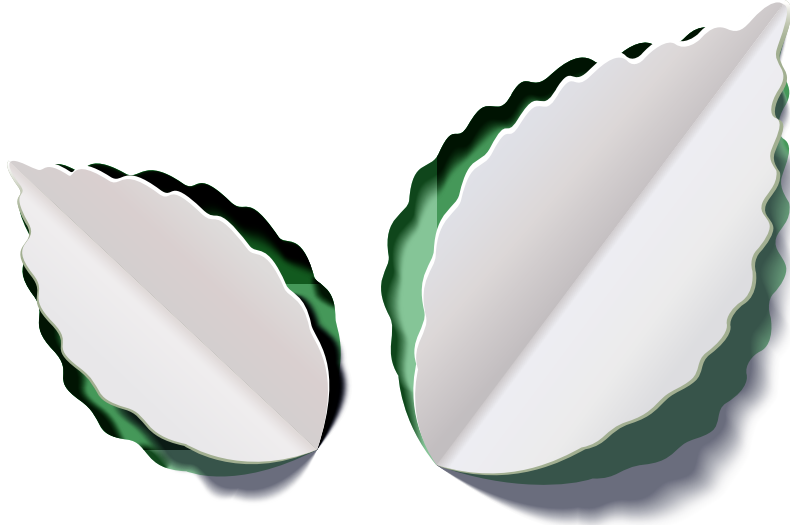
Having such a set of tools makes legal prompting, or legal-prompt engineering, an important emerging skill. Approaching the use of LLMs as an augmented skill helps

to tackle some of the limitations. The risk of using these tools is that they can:

- **Reflect bias:** this can result from a bias in the training data or the algorithm used. Any flaws in the data may become obvious to the user, but the system takes the data at face value and may accept it.
- **Make false statements:** this can occur due to errors and bias in the instructions or training data, as we still have the dynamic of GIGO. LLMs deal with probabilities. The results can be random and lead to the system 'guessing' what the answer may be to the enquiry.
- **Hallucinate:** this occurs when the response generated by the model is made up in order to provide an answer, having chosen what appears to be the most probable response. It may make up a case citation, because it 'knows' there should be a case but cannot find one. The model then produces this without necessarily explaining this to the user.
- **Ignore basic logic:** the text generated by the model may appear very sensible and logically laid out, but it does not replicate human knowledge. The answer may not be the logical one; instead, it is what the model considers probable.

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Put in a good enquiry, and you should have a good result to work with. However, it will – and indeed should – always be lacking in something. This is because you, as the lawyer, should be adding more to the output to make it value-added for the client, even where you have done a lot of work to refine the output



PAPER LOVES TREES

European forests, which provide wood for making paper,
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have been growing by 1,500 football pitches every day!

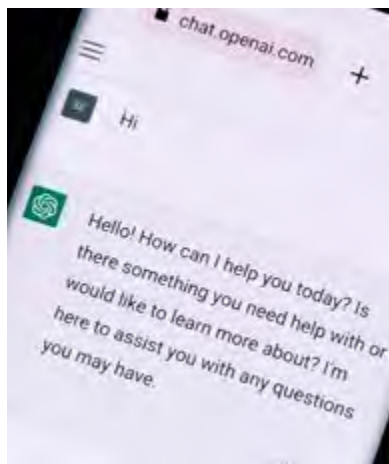
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Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2005 - 2020
European Forests: EU27 + Norway, Switzerland and the UK.





If a judicial assistant uses ChatGPT to draft material for a judge, then there is an element of IP theft involved. If a solicitor uploads a question relating to a client, this becomes part of the recycled content that the LLM uses to ‘learn’ for prompts given by other users



It is essential to have these limitations in mind as we conduct legal work. This does not mean that such tools fail to offer great value. It means seeing LLMs as tools, not replacements. The ‘WHICH’ approach (panel 1) helps to focus your enquiry and create a holistic output.

Legal-prompting skills

When we reason as humans, we think of questions to help us reach a conclusion. What an LLM needs is a prompt.

We may formulate the enquiry as a natural-language question, but the

SEVEN-STEP PROGRAM

- 1) **Definition:** tell the LLM what your role is in asking the question. Are you the prosecutor, defence counsel, judge? Be precise about the area of your enquiry. For instance, you might ask about the retention of mobile-phone data in respect of a suspect. The question: “Can the gardai access the mobile-phone location data of a suspect?” will give a more precise answer than: “What are the privacy rights of a suspect to have their data protected?” The LLM is picking up the keywords of ‘mobile’, ‘phone’, ‘location’, ‘data’, and ‘suspect’ in the first enquiry, and the keywords ‘privacy’, ‘rights’, ‘data’, and ‘protected’ in the second.
- 2) **Audience:** tell the LLM to whom your research is directed. Are you drafting a court submission, writing an email advising a client, or presenting ideas for an internal team on a client matter? The audience determines the relevant facts, language, and ideas required by the LLM to narrow the enquiry.
- 3) **Question:** the prompt needs to be a precise component of an overall questioning strategy. Do you want a general idea, research pointers, specific cases and citations, strategic options, a template?
- 4) **Style:** do you need the LLM output to provide the response in a particular style; for instance, a formal document with a recommended layout?
- 5) **Context:** specify the context for your enquiry by providing locations, timings, people involved, and other details to help make your prompt more specific. These are keywords as well. These items can be highlighted to the LLM by putting the contextual example within three hashtags or dashes. For instance, you could refer to: “The suspect was visiting his family in Dublin #### a busy time because there had been some riots around the time### he was always angry with his family and strangers alike”.
- 6) **Clarity:** you can review the response and ask further questions to refine the output or undertake some initial verification. For instance, you could ask: “Do you have a citation for that case?” or even tell the LLM: “You are incorrect”, and ask a question that invites the LLM to modify the answer.
- 7) **Verify:** having been through the process, it is essential to verify the response, which is part of the previous step – but even with that input, you should verify the responses. The mode here should be more towards ‘distrust, and verify’, rather than ‘trust, but verify’.

Source: Cowan, Law and Technology (Bloomsbury Professional Ireland, 2025).

LLM discerns the prompts within the question, which are the keywords and the blocks of text. The more focused and distinct the keywords, the more the LLM will return a useful response. Further precise prompts can help to develop the initial response.

Legal training involves this approach, such as cross-examination, and the LLMs are akin to undertaking a digital cross-examination to get the quality of response required. However, if it is done lazily or hurriedly, then the LLM is more likely to make errors, because it is likely to miss data points. This is because it has less definition on which to base its probability reasoning.

Building on the WHICH approach, there are seven steps that can be taken to refine your questions and develop your legal prompting skills (see panel 2), by helping you to determine how to enter your requests in order to get successful outcomes. This comes down to clarity in what the user wants, and effective communication in translating wants into actions.

Gremlins

A well-honed enquiry is the antidote to GIGO. Put in a good enquiry, and you should have a good result to work with.

However, it will – and indeed should – always be lacking in something. This is because you, as the lawyer, should be adding more to the output to make it value-added for the client, even where you have done a lot of work to refine the output. Of course, the less complex the needs of the enquiry, the more the input will create a satisfactory output that might need little additional effort.

That said, all output still needs to be checked over – we don’t want any of those expensive little hallucination gremlins creeping into the final work to be presented to clients or in court! ☹

Dr David Cowan is assistant professor at Maynooth University and the author of Law and Technology (Bloomsbury Professional Ireland, forthcoming in June 2025).

TO BOLDLY GO



In an era where technology is reshaping every industry, the Law Society's Technology Committee is scanning the wormhole of this significant transformation. Mary Hallissey makes it so

With 20 members from all corners of the country and profession – including in-house counsel, small and medium-sized firms, sole practitioners, academics, and partners from large firms – the Law Society Technology Committee is tasked with guiding the profession through the complex and ever-evolving intersection of the use of technology in legal practice.

The committee is chaired by Kate McKenna. Kate trained at McCann FitzGerald, where she picked up her passion for technology law. When qualifying in 2011, she focused initially on IP and tech law, but pivoted in 2020, when she joined Frontline Ventures.

Here, her interest in IP and tech law serves her well in her role as head of legal at a venture capital firm that invests in early-stage European and growth-stage US B2B software companies.

“With technology, it’s so relevant to our daily lives – at home, at work, and how we interact with the world around us,” she comments. “That has been a major hook for my continuing passion for the area. Technology can also help the law to be a more sustainable profession.”

Technology has also enabled greater work flexibility in what can be a highly stressful profession, both in private practice and in-house. The ability to work remotely has created a more flexible and inclusive working environment for practitioners, especially

those who have young families, are out on sick or maternity leave, or have a disability, she says.

Strange new worlds

The Technology Committee’s mission is clear: to empower the profession as a whole to confidently and competently navigate the rapidly evolving technological landscape in their legal practice.

“We sit down together as a committee, annually, to refresh our mission statement to ensure we are doing all we can – through guidance on systems, regulatory compliance, and accessibility – to support practitioners integrate technology sustainably in their legal practices,” explains Kate.

The committee has dedicated subcommittees to tackle the major issues facing the profession (as identified in polls undertaken by the Law Society during its strategy refresh last year), including in AI, generative AI, and cybersecurity.

“We also have a subcommittee liaising with the Courts Service team in connection with their Digitisation of Justice Strategy, as well as a Practice Technology Subcommittee helping professionals stay ahead of the curve,” Kate says.

Discovery

AI is one of the most transformative forces in legal practice today, and the committee wants to make sure that lawyers understand its potential and its pitfalls.

The AI Subcommittee has been instrumental in educating the profession on the intricacies of AI regulations, especially as the EU prepares to implement its landmark *AI Act*. With a focus on compliance requirements and practical

applications, it has published a series of guides aimed at demystifying AI for Irish solicitors.

Topics range from AI literacy and prohibited uses, to timelines for compliance. The Technology Committee is also committed to working towards educating the profession on how to use AI responsibly in their legal practice, in areas such as legal research, contract automation, and predictive analytics.

“AI is going to change the way we practice law, and we want to make sure that legal professionals are prepared to embrace it ethically and effectively,” Kate says.

AI isn’t just a passing trend – it’s part of the future of law, and the committee is ensuring that the profession is ready for it.

Enterprise

In a world where cyberattacks are becoming more sophisticated by the day, protecting sensitive client information has never been more crucial.

The Cybersecurity Subcommittee is working hard to raise awareness about the risks of phishing, data breaches, and ransomware. Through practical advice and





Kate McKenna and committee secretary Derek Owens

thought leadership, the subcommittee is now a key resource for law firms looking to bolster their cybersecurity defences.

It has collaborated with the Education Committee to produce a series of webinars on best practice for digital security, covering everything from securing digital infrastructures, to training staff in spotting phishing attempts. This offering should be available for practitioners very soon.

Deep Space Nine

As the digitisation of courts' services accelerates, the Technology Committee is determined to ensure that technological systems are designed with the correct functionality and interoperability with other relevant core systems that are required to interact with the Courts Service's platform.

By liaising closely with the Courts Service, the committee hopes to be a voice for the practitioner having to interact with these new systems in a way that ultimately benefits the profession as a whole, and their clients.

The committee is devoted to aiding accessibility and breaking down the barriers to inclusion in the Irish legal sector. "Technology should be a tool for inclusion, not exclusion, and improvements should benefit everyone," says Kate.

The Technology Committee recently collaborated with the disAbility Legal Network to publish a list of assistive

technology available for use in legal practice. It is the view of both that, with more and more workplace interactions taking place online (from the hiring stage to engaging with our colleagues and clients on a daily basis), and with the increased use of AI by many businesses, technology can be harnessed by law firms, large and small, to bring about greater accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities.

“

The Technology Committee's mission is clear: to empower the profession as a whole to confidently and competently navigate the rapidly evolving technological landscape in their legal practice

Committee in focus

Voyager

Kate points out that the adoption of technology in legal practices is no longer optional – it's a necessity.

From client-relationship management systems to document-automation tools, the Practice Technology Subcommittee is helping firms choose the right technologies to streamline their workflows.

But it's not just about convenience, it's about compliance, too. The committee works to ensure that the technologies that law firms adopt are in line with the *General Data Protection Regulation*. By offering practical guidance on technology selection, the committee is helping firms integrate the right tools without compromising on confidentiality, intellectual-property rights, or data security.

The committee meets online monthly and is committed to strengthening its relationships with key stakeholders across the legal ecosystem. By engaging with the Law Society, Courts Service, and external bodies, it stays at the heart of all discussions shaping the future of legal technology. The committee is also looking at how technology can help practices to reduce operational inefficiencies and better adapt to hybrid-working environments.

The committee will be beefing up its educational efforts in cybersecurity and AI, with conferences and guidance documents, and further collaborations with other committees are all in train.

The next generation

The Technology Committee chair believes that the future of the legal profession lies in the hands of young lawyers and trainees. By engaging with the next generation early, the committee hopes to cultivate a workforce that is not only tech-savvy, but also prepared to tackle the looming challenges.

As technology continues to transform the profession, the committee's efforts to guide, educate, and support it are helping to ensure a future that is not only more efficient and technologically advanced, but also more inclusive, secure, and sustainable. The Technology Committee has engaged warp drive! 🚀

Mary Hallissey is a journalist with the Law Society Gazette.

A helping hand?

As AI becomes more embedded in the productivity-driven model of modern work, what worth should we assign to aspects of labour that are not easily measured in monetary terms or tied directly to profit? Ruth O'Sullivan runs it through ChatGPT

Artificial intelligence is no longer a remote concept reserved for the tech sector – it is rapidly weaving itself into the fabric of all workplaces, including the legal profession. Often dubbed the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution', AI is proving to be a transformative force, redefining how we live, work, and think about productivity.

But as AI reshapes the landscape of legal work, it also invites a deeper question: how does this technological evolution influence the human experience of work, particularly our sense of connection, purpose, and psychological wellbeing?

In the legal sector, this cognitive and, increasingly, structural shift is well underway. According to Thomson Reuters' *Future of Professionals Report* (July 2024), AI is reshaping legal practice by streamlining routine tasks, such as automating document review, standard contract drafting, and other time-consuming functions. This allows legal professionals to redirect their focus toward complex,

As AI becomes more deeply embedded in legal workflows, an important question arises: what impact does this have on our ability to connect with one another at work?

high-value work, ultimately enhancing both efficiency and output.

Business case

The marketplace is responding in kind. A growing array of AI tools, tailored specifically for legal environments, now assist with everything from legal research to contract analysis and compliance monitoring. The business case is clear: greater accuracy, time savings, and cost-effectiveness.

But the impact of AI extends beyond workflow mechanics. A recent working paper from MIT suggests that AI can significantly boost employee self-efficacy and job satisfaction – factors that contribute meaningfully to workplace culture. While early indicators are promising, especially for knowledge-based sectors like law, research into AI's cultural impact within legal workplaces remains in its infancy.

Connection lies at the heart of any thriving workplace culture. More than just casual camaraderie, it reflects the deeper human need to form and maintain meaningful relationships – a fundamental driver of collaboration, trust, and psychological safety.



Social bonds

As a cornerstone of social bonding, connection has been consistently linked to improved physical and mental wellbeing. In the workplace, these benefits translate into greater engagement, resilience, and a sense of belonging among colleagues.

It's no surprise, then, that connection is a powerful catalyst for positive workplace culture. In environments where connection is nurtured – through open communication, shared values, and mutual support – teams tend to perform better, morale is

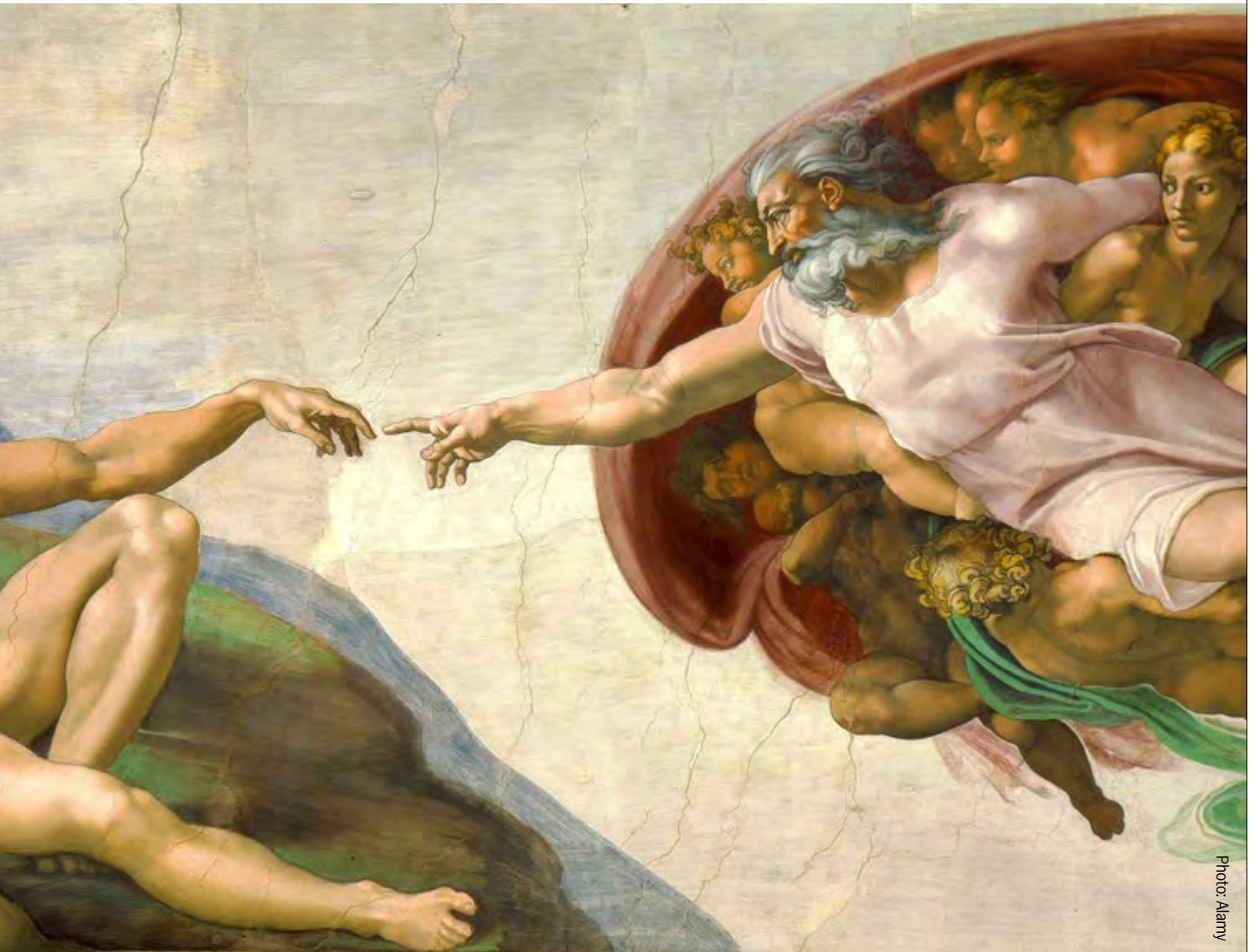


Photo: Alamy

If not implemented with intention, AI could quietly strip away the everyday human interactions that build a cohesive and connected workplace culture

higher, and staff are more likely to stay and grow within the organisation.

In a legal setting, where high-pressure environments and complex work are the norm, fostering connection isn't just a soft benefit – it's a strategic imperative.

As AI becomes embedded in legal workflows, an important question arises: what impact does this have on our ability to connect with one another at work?

If AI is relieving lawyers of mundane and repetitive tasks, then, at least in theory, it opens up time and

mental space for deeper, more meaningful work. This shift has the potential to benefit not just individual focus, but also team collaboration. When legal professionals are less burdened by a sea of competing yet routine processes, they are free to engage in higher-order thinking, strategic problem-solving, and creative collaboration.

Innovation game

By reducing cognitive overload and freeing teams from task-based constraints, AI creates the conditions from which genuine innovation can

emerge. Innovation flourishes not in environments of constant busyness, but when people have the time and space to think expansively, connect ideas, and work together with intention.

In this context, lawyers not only experience stronger levels of connection, contributing to a more positive workplace culture, but also find themselves driving legal innovation. With more space for human-led, human-centric thinking, solicitors are uniquely positioned to shape how the law evolves in an increasingly digital age.



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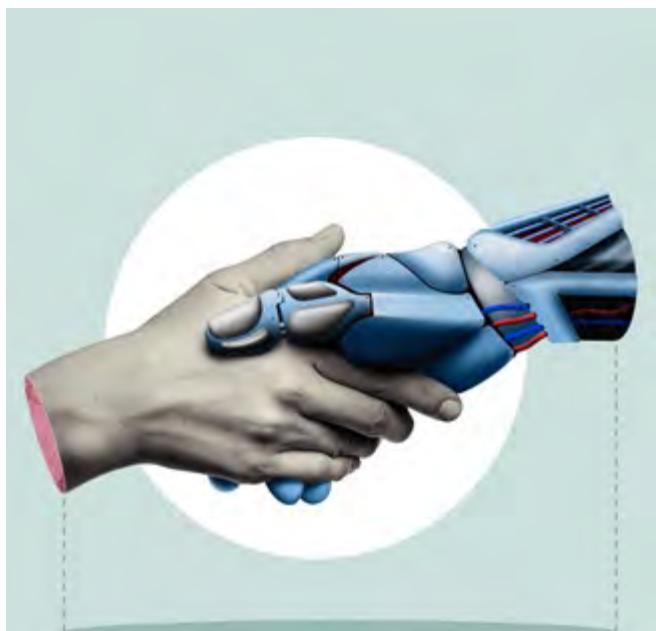
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Furthermore, the additional ‘bandwidth’ created by AI opens up opportunities for teams to cultivate more meaningful dynamics and build psychologically safe environments where individuals and teams can genuinely thrive. This is particularly valuable for younger team members, who rely on mentorship and collaborative learning to develop their professional skills. With more time available for conversation, guidance, and hands-on training, firms can strengthen the pipeline of capable, confident legal talent.

Client rapport

From a client perspective, this shift enhances the human side of legal services. With less administrative pressure, solicitors can invest more time in building rapport, deepening client relationships, and responding to client needs with greater attentiveness and care.

However, as AI accelerates efficiency and streamlines workflows, it raises an

important question: could this come at the cost of human connection in the workplace? The very tasks that AI now handles, often viewed as mundane or repetitive, have historically served as informal but vital touch-points for collaboration, learning, and relationship-building. These interactions, while seemingly minor, contribute to the relational glue that holds teams together.

With AI increasingly shouldering the brunt of these tasks, there is a risk that communication within teams could become more transactional, focused solely on outcomes and outputs, rather than relational and grounded in trust, mentorship, and shared experience. This shift is especially relevant in larger legal workplaces, where collaboration spans not just among lawyers, but across a broader ecosystem of legal assistants, operations staff, clerks, and technologists. If not implemented with intention, AI could quietly strip away the everyday human interactions that build a cohesive and connected workplace culture.

While the business case for workplace wellbeing and culture is now well-established, the integration of AI challenges us to look even more closely at the uniquely human elements of working life – connection, purpose, mentorship, creativity

Value judgement

This invites a broader, more philosophical question: what do we truly value in the work we do, in the legal profession and beyond? As AI becomes embedded in the productivity-driven model of modern work, it compels us to reconsider the worth we assign to aspects of labour that are not easily measured in monetary terms or tied directly to profit.

While the business case for workplace wellbeing and culture is now well-established, the integration of AI challenges us to look even more closely at the uniquely human elements of working life – connection, purpose, mentorship, creativity. As machines take on more of what we once considered ‘work’, there is a growing risk that people may begin to feel like cogs in an increasingly automated system, especially if value is assessed purely through the lens of productivity – something that AI is designed to enhance.

This moment of transformation calls for deeper reflection: why do we come to work each day? What part of our identity is bound up with being professionals? And perhaps most importantly: are we going to work for connection, or are we simply cultivating connection as a means to boost productivity?

In a sector where relationships, trust, and judgement are integral, how we answer these big questions may help shape not just the future of the legal profession, but the human experience of work itself.

Ruth O’Sullivan is psychological services executive at the Law Society of Ireland.

Under the spotlight

The third annual review of the Court of Justice of the European Union was hosted by the Irish Centre for European Law last February. Hilkka Becker reports



The Irish Centre for European Law (ICEL) hosted its

third annual review of the Court of Justice for 2024 at the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, on 28 February.

Mr Justice Anthony M Collins, president of the ICEL and judge at the Court of Appeal, opened the event. He observed that perhaps the most important development in 2024 was the transfer of jurisdiction from the Court of Justice to the General Court to receive references for preliminary ruling under article 267 of the *Treaty on the Functioning of the EU* in six discrete areas that make up around 20% of referrals to the Court of Justice.

Since this expands the General Court's jurisdiction beyond direct actions, this change may fundamentally alter the relationship between the two courts. The success of the transfer may lead to future transfers of jurisdiction in fields where the case-law is well-established.

New technologies

The recently re-elected First Advocate General at the Court of Justice, Prof Maciej Szpunar, delivered the keynote address. He observed that one of the greatest challenges facing the Court of Justice are the legal problems resulting from the emergence and development of new technologies. The law is often ill-adapted to the

In 2024, the Court of Justice continued to bolster rights to equal treatment and protection against workplace discrimination, particularly as regards disability, gender, part-time and fixed-term workers

The rules on electronic signatures have already become outdated

specificities of new technologies, not least because they can change quickly, as exemplified by the rules on electronic signatures – which have already become outdated.

A similar development can be identified with regard to legal concepts. Taking the *eCommerce Directive* as an example, while the country of origin principle appears to have stood the test of time, the concept of ‘information society service provider’, based on a one-size-fits-all approach, has not. The internet also undermines certain essential legal concepts, such as territoriality, with direct consequences for both the enforcement of rules by states and the jurisdiction of their courts, and the distinction between the ownership and the use of goods.

In that context, primary responsibility falls on the legislature, which has the requisite political legitimacy, to regulate new technologies. In that context, he warned against the risk of courts overreaching their powers through what he

described as the “banalisation” of fundamental rights, referring to the temptation to ground judgments in this area upon those rights, thus limiting the legislature’s freedom to find solutions to what are difficult legal issues.

Asylum and immigration

Dr Aoife McMahon BL, who regularly appears before the superior courts and the Court of Justice in cases in the field of asylum and immigration law, began the first panel with an exposition on developments in the [Court of Justice’s case-law](#) in 2024.

She identified three key trends: the protection and development of the principle of mutual trust between the member states; balancing fair procedures against the right to a decision within a reasonable time (discussed in the judgment in Case C-756/21 *X v IPAT*, a reference from the Irish High Court); and the definition and application of the concept of ‘particular social group’ to persons



fleeing societies afflicted by gender-based violence in the home and/or systemic discrimination against women to seek international protection.

Competition developments

Dr Barry Doherty BL, an acknowledged expert on the subject, reviewed the [many judgments](#) the Court of Justice delivered in the field of competition law in 2024. Among those examined were Case C-264/23 *Booking.com*, Case C-48/22 P *Google v Commission (Google Shopping)*, Case C-240/22 P *Commission v Intel*, Case C-611/22 P *Illumina v Commission*, Case C-650/22 *FIFA*, and Case C-605/21 *Heureka*.

He described three developments in the case law: a narrower application of the *Bronner* case law on essential facilities, a shift by the commission towards a more economic approach in its analysis of legal issues, and changes in the use and the content of the ‘as-efficient competitor’ (AEC) test, which the commission relies on in its assessment as to whether the conduct of a dominant undertaking has exclusionary effects that are capable of harming competition.

Workplace discrimination

First out of the blocks in the second panel after lunch was Ms Ciara Fulton (partner, Lewis Silkin, Belfast), a regular speaker at this event in recognition of her expertise in the fields of social rights, employment and citizenship.

In discussing 13 cases, she observed that, in

She identified three key trends: the protection and development of the principle of mutual trust between the member states; balancing fair procedures against the right to a decision within a reasonable time; and the definition and application of the concept of ‘particular social group’ to persons fleeing societies afflicted by gender-based violence in the home and/or systemic discrimination against women



2024, the Court of Justice continued to bolster rights to equal treatment and protection against workplace discrimination, particularly as regards disability, gender, part-time and fixed-term workers.

In Case C-631/22 *JMAR v Ca Na Negreta SA*, the Court of Justice held that employers must make reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities, even where they are “permanently incapacitated”. It confirmed that payment for accrued annual leave is a fundamental right, equivalent to taking paid leave, in Case C-218/22 *BU v Comune di Copertino* and Case C-689/22 *SG v Union of Municipalities Alta Marmilla*.

The Court of Justice also took a broad approach to the concept of ‘agency worker’, thereby reinforcing the level of protection for that category of workers, in Case C-441/23 *LM v Omnitel Comunicaciones SL*.

Constitutional developments

Prof Takis Tridimas (director of the Luxembourg Centre for European Law) gave an update on constitutional developments in the case-law. He observed that the Court of Justice acts as a constitutional court when it engages in “multidimensional balancing” as regards both the allocation of powers between member states and EU institutions and the interpretation of fundamental rights.

He noted that EU legislation has tended to become increasingly detailed and voluminous. In his view, this was because, while it used to focus on coordinating pre-existing national laws, the legislature is now required to regulate new and complex areas from scratch.

Of the many judgments he referenced, joined cases C-29/22 P and C-44/22 P *KS & KD v Council* (in which the court considered the boundaries of its jurisdiction in the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy) stood out. At first instance, the General Court ruled that, by reference to articles 24(1) TEU and 275 TFEU, the Court of Justice usually does not have jurisdiction with respect to acts adopted under the policy.

The Court of Justice, on appeal, held that it had jurisdiction to rule upon such acts if they were not directly related to any political or strategic choices that the union institutions had made. The redrawing of the boundaries of judicial intervention in respect of measures taken under the policy is even more important in the light of an anticipated increase in their number.

He was followed by Méabh Smyth BL, who presented a résumé of the 16 references for preliminary ruling made by the Irish courts in 2024. As has been the case in recent years, a relative majority of these references concerned environmental law, notably in the context of litigation concerning the planning code, followed by arrest warrants under the *Trade and Cooperation Agreement*, asylum and immigration, the *Citizens’ Directive*, energy, fisheries and transport.

Critique of the *Apple* case

The first speaker on the third panel, Dr Stephen Daly (King’s College, London), described developments in the field of state aid, notably the relationship between that area and taxation, with particular reference to Case C-465/20 P *Commission v Ireland*, also



known as the 'Apple' case.

Dr Daly delivered a resounding critique of that judgment in the clearest of terms. He pointed to a lack of coherence with previous Court of Justice decisions, notably in Case C-454/21 *Engie*, and further opined that the judgment in *Apple* trespassed upon the exclusive jurisdiction vested in the General Court to find facts.

Arrest warrants

The third panel concluded with a presentation by Tony McGillicuddy SC on developments in the area of criminal law and arrest warrants. He drew the audience's attention in particular to two references by the

Supreme Court in Case C-202/24 *Alchaster* and Case C-743/24 *Alchaster II*, which raised issues as to whether the Irish courts can act upon warrants issued under the *Trade and Cooperation Agreement* with the UK, which has replaced the pre-Brexit arrangements between the EU and UK under the *Framework Decision on the European Arrest Warrant*.

After deprecating the Court of Justice's policy to anonymise the names of individuals where that is not done in the legal system of the member state from which a reference is made, he expressed the view that, in light of the court's views towards mutual trust

Did the *Apple* judgment trespass upon the exclusive jurisdiction vested in the General Court to find facts?

between the EU and the UK, further legal challenges to these arrangements are likely to arise before the courts in this jurisdiction in the near future.

Future judgments

In a brief closing address, Mr Justice Collins identified a number of important judgments that the Court of Justice will probably deliver in 2025. These include Case C-191/23 *Denmark v Parliament & Council*, a direct challenge to the EU's competence to adopt legislation or to regulate matters that concern 'pay', in which Advocate General Emiliou delivered an opinion where he proposes to uphold the action; and Case C-181/23 *Commission v Malta*, in which Advocate General Collins, as he then was, proposed to dismiss the commission's infringement proceedings against Malta, wherein it claims Malta breached article 20 TFEU (European citizenship) and article 4(3) TEU (duty of loyal cooperation) by not requiring applicants for Maltese nationality to have a 'genuine link' with the country.

Save the date

The next ICEL event – **Human Rights in Practice 2025** – is due to take place in Belfast on Friday 16 May. The event will be an opportunity to learn about the latest developments relating to the *European Convention on Human Rights* and the Council of Europe more broadly. It will also consider the practice of human-rights law on the island of Ireland, comparing approaches in both jurisdictions. 

Hilkka Becker is chair of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (on behalf of the board of the Irish Centre for European Law).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPEAN LAW



FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS

Case- 277/23

Ministarstvo financija (Erasmus+ grant), 16

January 2025

A Croatian student received financial support under the Erasmus+ programme

University of Helsinki Library
(Photo: Shutterstock)

for a period of study at a university in Finland. The Croatian tax authorities removed the personal allowance for a dependent child from his/her mother based on the mobility support that the student received.

The Croatian Constitutional Court questioned whether the national tax legislation at issue is compatible with EU law. The CJEU replied that it is not. If a member state participates in the Erasmus+ scheme, it must ensure that arrangements for

the allocation and taxation of grants do not constitute an unjustified restriction on the right to freedom of movement and residence within the territory of the member states.

In this case, the support was considered in calculating the mother's income tax, placing her at a disadvantage. This amounted to a restriction on the right to freedom of movement and residence. There are economic links between the parent and child. This permits the taxpayer parent who is directly disadvantaged by the effects of the restriction on free movement to raise it.

A restriction on the right to free movement and



residence can be justified under EU law only if it based on objective considerations of public interest, independent of the nationality of the people concerned. It must also be proportionate to the legitimate objective of the provisions of national law.

Financial support under

the Erasmus+ programme is intended to contribute to covering additional costs that would not have arisen but for that mobility. Thus, that financial support does not reduce the expenditure of taxpayer parents in connection with their maintenance obligations to dependent children or further

increase those parents' capacity to pay tax.

The tax treatment of that financial support is likely to lead to a heavier tax burden for those taxpayer parents without the resources available to them having been increased to meet that burden. ⁸



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The Digital Transformation of the Closing Process

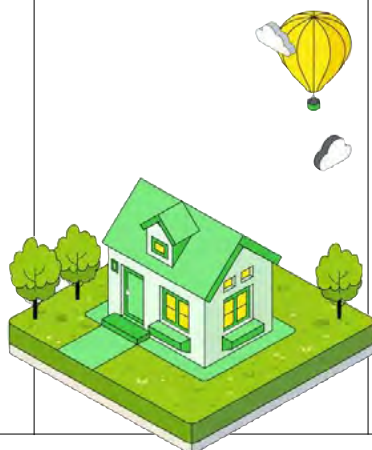
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Unlike traditional processes, **Núa's handling of solicitor bank-account details is more secure than other lenders**. Solicitors input their **account details directly into the Núa Closing Portal**, where our system automatically validates the **IBAN** to minimise manual errors. We complete a one-time verification via **call-back or email confirmation**, after which no further checks are required unless the details change. This information is securely stored, visible only to the **solicitor** and **Núa's operations team**, and is directly linked to our payments processing system – ensuring safe, efficient drawdowns with reduced administrative burden on solicitors.

2) Loan offer pack
Once electronically **DocuSigned** by clients, the full loan offer pack is instantly available for download via the Núa Closing Portal by all relevant parties, including the solicitor – ensuring fast, easy access and eliminating paper delays.

3) Digital Undertaking Form – a first for Ireland
Núa is proud to be **the first lender in Ireland** to

introduce **digital signatures** for the standard **Law Society Undertaking Form**, marking a major milestone in the modernisation of the mortgage process.

Our system pre-populates the Law Society-approved Undertaking template with all necessary **Núa** and **client details**, reducing manual input for solicitors and ensuring accuracy from the outset. Solicitors can then seamlessly add property and title details, which are automatically integrated into the document.

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- **Electronic signing via DocuSign:** The Undertaking Form can be fully signed online by both the client(s) and an authorised signatory of the solicitor firm, creating a **completely paperless, secure, and efficient process**.
- **Traditional wet-ink signing:** If preferred, the form can be printed, manually signed, and uploaded back into the Núa Closing Portal for validation.

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digital signatures for Undertakings, Núa is setting **a new industry standard** – delivering faster turnaround times, reduced administration, and enhanced security for solicitors and their clients.

4) Drawdown process
Drawdown requests are made electronically through the Núa Closing Portal using validated bank-account details, and only after all drawdown conditions have been completed and verified online. With **real-time status tracking** available

to both solicitors and clients, everyone stays informed – helping avoid last-minute delays and surprises.

5) Closing pack

- **For convenience, solicitors can download pre-populated templates for key documents at any time, including:**
- **Certificate of Title,**
- **Form 51,**
- **Deed of Confirmation,**
- **General Housing Loan Terms and Conditions.**

6) Title deeds processing
Physical title deeds, along

with the closing pack, can be sent to Núa via **DX**. Solicitors can track title deed progress through the Núa Closing Portal and receive live updates on any missing documents or the release of undertakings.

Why Solicitors prefer to work with Núa

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núa

Law Society Council meeting 7 March 2025

Niamh Ní Mhurchú would be co-opted to Council.

ESG strategy

Following a presentation by the director of operations and finance and consultant Pragmatica earlier in the week, Council approved the Law Society's ESG strategy.

Property masterplan update


Council received an update from member Paul Keane on the Green Hall programme. The planning application will be slightly delayed. The design team is going to great lengths to ensure it has anticipated any issues likely to arise with the planning authority. Conservation issues are outstanding, and consultation is required with the city council's conservation officer.

DG report

The director general delivered his report to Council, which outlined progress against the Law Society's strategic plan in 2024 and activities planned for 2025. At the last meeting, the report contained a review of the 2024/2025 strategy and performance. Feedback was received on this, and some changes have been made and circulated. A review of the Law Society's website is ongoing, with feedback taken from members.

Other matters

The head of governance updated Council on rollout of the new platform.

The director of education presented an overview of education services and activities to Council alongside Rory O'Boyle (head of PPC) and Mairead O'Sullivan (head of library and information services). 

The president, on behalf of Council, extended condolences to Dara Robinson on the recent passing of his wife Catherine.

Motions

One motion was before Council for decision: 'Council to consider adoption of a policy on the co-option of members to Council.'

Following discussion, Council approved an amended motion, as follows:

"That this Council shall create a policy in respect of the co-option of new Council members where the circumstances arise and in accordance with the bye-laws of the Law Society.

"That the policy shall incorporate a requirement that, prior to nomination of candidates, the Council discusses and approaches its considerations in respect of the co-option of new Council members on the basis of:

- What is in the best interest of Council,*
- What is in the best interest of the profession,*
- The principles of any policy on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion adopted by the Law Society of Ireland from time to time, participation in recent elections to Council having regard to bye-law 6(21) of the Law Society of Ireland, geographic diversity of Council members, desirable skill-set among Council members, and diversity*

of practice specialisms and experience among Council members."

Council then approved the creation of a policy on co-option to Council as set out in the approved amended motion.

Appointments

Council approved the following appointments, having considered recommendations from the Coordination Committee for appointment to internal and external bodies: add Aisling Kirwan and Jon Legorburu to the Technology Committee; add John Horan and Victoria Marchant as lay members to the Complaints and Client Relations Committee; and nominate Carmel Kelly, head of solicitor communications, to the disAbility Legal Network Committee.

Co-option of a member

As agreed in January, Council proceeded with the co-option of a member to replace Michele O'Boyle SC, who has resigned from Council following her appointment to the LSRA. Three candidates had been nominated prior to the deadline set at the January meeting.

In accordance with the bye-laws governing the co-option of members to Council, a vote was conducted, following which Council confirmed by a majority of at least 25 members present and voting that

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TAXATION COMMITTEE
CONVEYANCING COMMITTEE

Updated guidance on clearance on disposal of land

The Taxation Committee would like to draw the attention of practitioners to the updated Revenue guidance on requests for clearance on the disposal of land and buildings by non-resident vendors (TDM Part 45-01-05). See revenue.ie/en/tax-professionals/tdm/income-tax-capital-gains-tax-corporation-tax/part-45/45-01-05.pdf.

A new Taxation Committee practice note has issued in

tandem with this updated guidance. Among other things, the note addresses disposals of property for a non-resident vendor where there is a secured charge and disposals where the solicitor is not possessed of funds, and includes a number of recommendations.

See 'Changes to Tax and Duty Manual (TDM) Part 45-01-05' at lawsociety.ie/solicitors/knowledge-base/practice-notes.

Update to requisitions on title

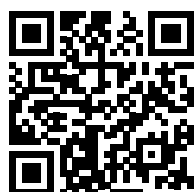
The Conveyancing Committee has published new Requisition 45 to coincide with the commencement of the residential-zoned land tax (RZLT) introduced in the *Finance Act 2021*. The first liability date for RZLT was 1 February 2025.

This new requisition is being inserted at the end of the existing *Requisitions on Title 2019* for convenience, but will be inserted more appropriately when the ongoing review of the requisitions is completed.

This note is produced for

conveyancing purposes only. It ought not to be relied upon as an interpretation of part 22A of the act. Where appropriate, specialist tax advice ought to be obtained in respect of liability or potential liability to RZLT.

See the February 2025 note, 'Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)' at lawsociety.ie/news/news/Stories/residential-zoned-land-tax-rzlt and the new *Requisitions on Title 2019* (revised March 2025 edition) at www.lawsociety.ie/globalassets/documents/precedents/requisitions-on-title-2019-revised-march-25.pdf.



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Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal

REPORTS OF THE OUTCOMES OF LEGAL PRACTITIONERS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL INQUIRIES ARE PUBLISHED, IN SUCH MANNER AS THE LEGAL SERVICES REGULATORY AUTHORITY CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE, AS PROVIDED FOR IN SECTION 88 OF THE *LEGAL SERVICES REGULATION ACT 2015*

In the matter of Festus Ibi (solicitor number S21367), currently practising at Law Centre (Smithfield), 48/49 North Brunswick Street, Georges Lane, Dublin 7, and in the matter of an application by the Complaints Committee of the Legal Services Regulatory Authority to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal, and in the matter of the *Legal Services Regulation Act 2015*

Complaints Committee of the Legal Services Regulatory Authority (applicant)
Festus Ibi (respondent)

2022-LPDT25

On 20 February 2025, the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal found the respondent guilty of professional misconduct in that he:

- 1) Failed to have in place professional indemnity insurance while carrying on practice as a solicitor, as required by regulation 4 of the *Solicitors Professional Indemnity Insurance Regulations 2018* (SI 351/2018),
- 2) Breached section 59(1) of the *Solicitors Acts 1954-2015*, in that he permitted his name to be made use of, in business carried on by him as a solicitor, upon the account, or for the profit of, one or more unqualified persons (that is, Crystal Talia, Anthony Tighe, and/or David Williams (aka David McHugh)).

The tribunal ordered that the respondent:

- 1) Be censured in relation to

- his misconduct, under section 82(1)(c) of the act,
- 2) Complete a course recommended by the Legal Services Regulatory Authority pursuant to section 82(1)(d) of the act, namely the Ethics and Professional Conduct on-demand webinar hosted by La Touche Training, such course to be completed by close of business on Monday 31 March 2025 and proof of its completion to be furnished to the tribunal registrar,
- 3) Pursuant to section 82(1)(g) of the act, the respondent legal practitioner pay the sum of €2,000 to Ms Bukola Taiwo, the complainant herein,
- 4) Pursuant to section 82(1)(j) of the act, the respondent legal practitioner pay the sum of €2,000 as a contribution towards the costs of the applicant.

2022-LPDT26

On 20 February 2025, the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal found the respondent guilty of professional misconduct in that he:

- 1) Failed to have in place professional indemnity insurance while carrying on practice as a solicitor, as required by regulation 4 of the *Solicitors Professional Indemnity Insurance Regulations 2018*,
- 2) Breached section 59(1) of the *Solicitors Acts 1954-2015*, in that he permitted his name to be made use of, in business carried on by him as a solicitor, upon the account, or for the profit of, one or more unqualified persons (that is, Crystal Talia, Anthony Tighe,

and/or David Williams (aka David McHugh)).

The tribunal ordered that the respondent:

- 1) Be censured in relation to his misconduct, under section 82(1)(c) of the act,
- 2) Complete a course recommended by the Legal Services Regulatory Authority pursuant to section 82(1)(d) of the act, namely the Ethics and Professional Conduct on-demand webinar hosted by La Touche Training, such course to be completed by close of business on Monday 31 March 2025 and proof of its completion to be furnished to the tribunal registrar,
- 3) Pursuant to section 82(1)(g) of the act, the respondent legal practitioner pay the sum of €2,000 to Muhammad Shabaz, the complainant herein,
- 4) Pursuant to section 82(1)(j) of the act, the respondent legal practitioner pay the sum of €2,000 as a contribution towards the costs of the applicant.

2022-LPDT27

On 20 February 2025, the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal found the respondent guilty of professional misconduct in that he:

- 1) Failed to have in place professional indemnity insurance while carrying on practice as a solicitor, as required by regulation 4 of the *Solicitors Professional Indemnity Insurance Regulations*,
- 2) Breached section 59(1) of the *Solicitors Acts 1954-2015*, in

TRIBUNAL REPORTS

that he permitted his name to be made use of, in business carried on by him as a solicitor, upon the account, or for the profit of, one or more unqualified persons (that is, Crystal Talia, Anthony Tighe, and/or David Williams (aka David McHugh).

The tribunal ordered that the respondent:

- 1) Be censured in relation to his misconduct, under section 82(1)(c) of the act,
- 2) Complete a course recommended by the Legal Services Regulatory Authority pursuant to section 82(1)(d) of the act, namely the Ethics and Professional Conduct on-demand webinar hosted by La Touche Training, such course to be completed by close of business on Monday 31 March 2025 and proof of its completion to be furnished to the tribunal registrar,
- 3) Pursuant to section 82(1)(g) of the act, the respondent legal practitioner pay the sum

of €2,000 to Martin Bales (also known as Martin Mtambalika), the complainant herein,

- 4) Pursuant to section 82(1)(j) of the act, the respondent legal practitioner pay the sum of €2,000 as a contribution towards the costs of the applicant.

2022-LPDT29

On 20 February 2025, the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal found the respondent guilty of professional misconduct in that he:

- 1) Failed to have in place professional indemnity insurance while carrying on practice as a solicitor, as required by regulation 4 of the *Solicitors Professional Indemnity Insurance Regulations*,
- 2) Breached section 59(1) of the *Solicitors Acts 1954-2015*, in that he permitted his name to be made use of, in business carried on by him as a solicitor, upon the account, or for the profit of, one or more unqualified persons (that is, Crystal Talia, Anthony Tighe, and/or David Williams (aka David McHugh).

The tribunal ordered that the respondent:

- 1) Be censured in relation to his misconduct, under section 82(1)(c) of the act,
- 2) Complete a course recommended by the Legal Services Regulatory Authority pursuant to section 82(1)(d) of the act, namely the Ethics and Professional Conduct on-demand webinar hosted by La Touche Training, such course to be completed by close of business on Monday 31 March 2025 and proof of its completion to be furnished to the tribunal registrar,
- 3) Pursuant to section 82(1)(g) of the act, the respondent legal practitioner pay the sum of €2,000 to Lesley Anne McKay, the complainant herein,
- 4) Pursuant to section 82(1)(j) of the act, the respondent legal practitioner pay the sum of €2,000 as a contribution towards the costs of the applicant.



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05/25

WILLS

Barrett, Patrick (deceased), who died on 19 April 2023, late of 138 Mangerton Road, Drimnagh, Dublin 12. Would any person having knowledge of the whereabouts of any will made by the above-named deceased, or if any firm is holding same, please contact LMC Law, Solicitors, 230 Swords Road, Santry, Dublin 9; tel: 01 842 2919, email: probate@lmc-law.ie

Clarke, Mary Aileen (deceased), late of 20 Mount Prospect Park, Clontarf, Dublin 3, and formerly of 35 The Pines, Howth Road, Raheny, Dublin 5, who died on 12 February 2025. Would anyone who is holding a will or with knowledge of a will of the above-named deceased please contact Leonard & Co, Solicitors, 57 Clontarf Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3; tel: 01 285 7757, email: law@leonard-solicitors.ie

Hourihan, Dr Joe (Joachim) (deceased), late of Ballingarry, Minane Bridge and Enniskeane, who died on 14 February 2025. Would anyone who is holding a will or with knowledge of a will of the above-named deceased please contact Marguerite Ryan, solicitor, Hegarty Horgan Solicitors LLP, Law Chambers, Kinsale, Co Cork, P17 EC67; tel: 021 477 2557, email: marguerite@hegartyhorgan.ie

Hourihan, John (deceased), late of Ballingarry, Minane Bridge, who died on 23 January 2022. Would anyone who is holding a will or with knowledge of a will of the above-named deceased, who died on 23 January 2022, please contact Marguerite Ryan, solicitor, Hegarty Horgan Solicitors LLP, Law Chambers, Kinsale, Co Cork, P17 EC67; tel: 021

RATES

PROFESSIONAL NOTICE RATES

RATES IN THE PROFESSIONAL NOTICES SECTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

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No recruitment advertisements will be published that include references to ranges of post-qualification experience (PQE). The Gazette Editorial Board has taken this decision based on legal advice that indicates that such references may be in breach of the *Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004*.

477 2557, email: marguerite@hegartyhorgan.ie

Hourihan, Martha (deceased), late of Ballingarry, Minane Bridge and Enniskeane, who died on 7 February 2023. Would anyone who is holding a will or with knowledge of a will of the above-named deceased please contact Marguerite Ryan, solicitor, Hegarty Horgan Solicitors LLP, Law Chambers, Kinsale, Co Cork, P17 EC67; tel: 021 477 2557, email: marguerite@hegartyhorgan.ie

Kelly, Mary (deceased), late of Ballinacarrig, Tara Hill, Gorey, Co Wexford (and Valentia Nursing Home, Camolin, Gorey, Co Wexford), who died on 2 June 2019. Would any person having knowledge of the whereabouts of any will made by the above-named deceased please contact Shanley Solicitors LLP, 3 Canon Row, Navan, Co Meath; tel: 046 909 3200, email: info@shanleysolicitors.com

Kirby, Timothy Joseph (deceased), late of Knockburrane, Lixnaw, Co Kerry

who died on 14 December 2023. Would any person having knowledge of the whereabouts of any will made by the above-named deceased, or if any firm is holding same or was in contact with the deceased regarding his will or may have received in error the original will made by the above-named deceased, please contact J Cashell Solicitors, 58 Church Street, Listowel, Co Kerry; tel: 068 60042, email: info@cashells.ie

McCarron, James (deceased), late of 'Alta Villa', Broadleas, Ballymore Eustace, Co Kildare,

who died on 9 March 2025. Would any person having knowledge of any will made by the above-named deceased please contact Coonan Cawley, Solicitors, Wolfe Tone House, Naas Town Centre, Naas, Co Kildare; tel: 045 899 571, email: office@coonancawley.ie

Nolan, Jacqueline (deceased), late of 10 Mount Henry, Killenard, Co Laois, and late of 14 Ballincur, Kinnitty, Co Offaly, and formerly of 21 Cloonmore Crescent, Tallaght, Dublin 24, who died on 16 October 2024. Would any person or

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firm having knowledge of the whereabouts of any will made by the above-named deceased please contact JD Scanlon & Co LLP Solicitors, The Bridge Centre, O'Connor Square, Tullamore, Co Offaly; tel: 057 935 1755, email: info@scanlons.ie

O'Callaghan, James (deceased), late of 1 Vicar's Road, Togher, Cork; Aperee Nursing Home, Belgooly, Cork; Care Choice, Macroom, Cork; Bridhaven Nursing Home, Mallow, Cork. Would any person having knowledge of the whereabouts of any will made by the above-named deceased please contact Veronica Kelleher, Frank Kelleher & Co, Solicitors, 1 Pearse Square, Cobh, Co Cork; DX 57003 Midleton; tel: 021 481 6300, email: vkelleher@fks.ie

O'Keeffe, Robert (deceased), late of 2 West View, Cobh, in the county of Cork. Would any person having knowledge of the whereabouts of any will made by the above-named deceased please contact Veronica Kelleher, Frank Kelleher & Co, Solicitors, 1 Pearse Square, Cobh, Co Cork; DX 57003 Midleton; tel: 021 481 6300, email: vkelleher@fks.ie

O'Neill, Mary (otherwise Mary Josephine Bernadette O'Neill) (deceased), late of 154 Castle Park, Tallaght, Dublin 24, who died on 20 February 2025. Would any person having knowledge of the whereabouts

of any will made by the above-named deceased please contact Edward Geoghegan, Geoghegan Solicitors, Main Street, Lucan, Co Dublin; tel: 01 628 2947, email: info@geoghegansolicitors.ie

Pottie, Dr Aileen Elese (deceased), late of *The Garden House*, Lough Fea Estate, Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan, formerly of 1 Church Street, Fintona, Co Tyrone, and 54/56 Highgrove, Mount Talbot, Redcow, Dublin 22, who died on 27 March 2025. Would any person having knowledge of the whereabouts of any will made or purported to have been made by the above-named deceased please contact O'Sullivan Murtagh Solicitors, 24 O'Neill Street, Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan; tel: 042 969 0850; email: cm@osullivanmurtagh.ie

Smyth, Marian (née Farrell or Watters) (deceased), late of 24 Park Lawn, Mount Prospect Avenue, Clontarf, Dublin 3. Would any person having knowledge of the whereabouts of any will made by the above-named deceased, who died on 6 March 2025, please contact Seamus Farrell, 56 Mount Prospect Drive, Clontarf, Dublin 3, D03 P718; tel: 086 822 7131, email: seamus.farrell@hotmail.com

Solan, Mary Brigid (deceased), late of Curry, Castlebar, Mayo, F23 XE03. Would any person having knowledge of the whereabouts



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of any will made by the above-named deceased please contact Anne Solan, Curry, Castlebar, Mayo, F23 XE03; email: annesolancastlebar@gmail.com

Tiernan, Patrick (deceased), late of 29 Oakview Avenue, Hartstown, Dublin 15, and formerly of 8 St Brigid's Park, Blanchardstown (his family home); circa 1983, Whitestown Drive, Whitestown, Dublin 15; and from 1988/89, 33 McKee Park, Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin 7, who was born on 16 February 1959 and who died on 2 January 2025. Would any person having knowledge of the whereabouts of any will made by the above-named deceased please contact Karen Barker, Doyle & Co LLP Solicitors, Blanchardstown Law Chambers, Main Street, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, D15 HT92; tel: 01 820 0666, email: info@doyleandcompany.ie

Timlin, Patrick (or Paddy) (deceased), late of 1 Oak View Avenue, Hartstown, Clonsilla, Dublin 15, who died on 18 February 2025. Would any person having knowledge of the whereabouts of any will made by the above-named deceased please contact Ian Dodd, solicitor, Abbey Street, Ballina, Co Mayo; tel: 096 21611, info@iandodd.ie

Walsh, William (deceased), late of 80 St Maelruan's Park, Tallaght, Dublin 24, who died on 10 August 2011. Would any person or firm having knowledge of any will made by the above-named deceased please contact John Glynn & Co, Solicitors, Law Chambers, The Village Square, Tallaght, Dublin 24; tel: 01 451 5099, email: info@solicitor.net

MISCELLANEOUS

Solicitor's practice for sale - well-established firm situated in the county of Armagh. Principal willing to remain as consultant for as long as required. Reply to **box 01/04/2025**

TITLE DEEDS

Notice of intention to acquire the fee simple: in the matter of property known as the passage situated in the lands of Little Kilrush, North Circular Road, now known as Lisieux, North Circular Road, in the city of Limerick, and in the matter of an application by Brian Hamilton and Sheena Mannion

Take notice any person having an interest in any estate in the above property that Brian Hamilton and Sheena Mannion (the applicants) intend to acquire the fee simple interest and all intermediate interest in the aforesaid property by way of a court order granted on 20 March 2025 at Limerick Circuit Court,

and any person asserting that they hold a superior interest in the property are called upon to furnish evidence of title to the premises to the below named within 21 days from the date hereof.

Any person having any interest in the property superior to a lease of 9 August 1939 between Joseph Good, Emily Good, and Emily Edwina Good of the one part and Edward John McCarthy of the other part, of property at Little Kilrush in the parish of Saint Munchin and city of Limerick, and now known as *Lisieux*, North Circular Road, in the city of Limerick, should provide evidence to the below named.

In default of such information being received by the applicants, the applicants intend to inform the court that the person or persons entitled to the superior interest including the freehold interest in the said premises are unknown and unascertained.

Date: 2 May 2025

Signed: Jerome A McCarthy, Solicitors, 10C South Bank, Crosses Green, Cork

In the matter of the Landlord and Tenants Acts 1967-2019 and in the matter of the Landlord and Tenant (Ground Rents) (No 2) Act 1978 and

in the matter of a yard and premises to the rear of 70 and 71 George's Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin

Take notice that Charles Crimmins, Cathal Crimmins, and Simon Cullen intend to submit an application to the county registrar for the county of the city of Dublin for the acquisition of the fee simple and all intermediate interests in the above-described land, which they hold for a term of 900 years from 25 March 1858 under a lease dated 12 December 1859 and made between Dorothea Ellen Field, William Hamilton Gary Field, and Rosellen Field of the one part and John Edward Lynch of the other part, and take notice that any party asserting that they hold a superior interest in the said lands or any part thereof and, in particular, that they are the successors in title of the said Dorothea Ellen Field, William Hamilton Gary Field, and/or Rosellen Field, are hereby called upon to furnish evidence of their title to such interest to the below-named solicitors within 21 days from the date of this notice, and take notice that, in default of any such evidence being received, the applicants intend to proceed with the said intended application at the end of 21 days from the date of this notice

and to apply to the said county registrar for such directions as may be appropriate on the basis that the persons now entitled to the lessor's interest under the said lease and to any interests superior thereto are unknown and unascertained.

Date: 2 May 2025

Signed: Aidan J Fitzpatrick (solicitors for the applicants), 77 Merrion Square South, Dublin 2

In the matter of the Landlord and Tenant (Ground Rents) Acts 1967-2019 and in the matter of an application by Hartsea Limited in respect of the premises at 48 Sundrive Road, Kimmage, Dublin 12

Take notice any person having an interest in the fee simple or any interest in an intermediate estate in "all that and those that part of the land now known as Larkfield, containing four acres and 11 perches statute measure or thereabouts, bounded on the north-east side by Dark Lane, otherwise known as Sundrive Road, Kimmage, on the north-west by lands in the possession of Mr Beggs, on the south-west by lands in the possession of Mr Frank Perry, and on the south-east by other land, the property of the lessors demised by them to the lessees by indenture of even date" held under a lease

dated 5 January 1934 and made between (1) Michael J Cleary and Kevin Cleary, and (2) Mary W Kavanagh (the property), and further take notice that Hartsea Limited intends to submit an application to the county registrar for the county of Dublin for the acquisition of the fee simple and all intermediate interests in the property, and any party asserting that they hold a superior interest in the property is called upon to furnish evidence of their title to the property to Tom O'Grady, Solicitors, within 21 days from the date of this notice.

In default of any such title or notice being received, the applicant intends to proceed with the application before the county registrar at the end of 21 days from the date of this notice and will apply to the county registrar for the county of Dublin for such directions as may be appropriate on the basis that the person or persons beneficially entitled to the superior interests, including the freehold reversion in the aforesaid property, are unknown or unascertained.

Date: 2 May 2025

Signed: Tom O'Grady, Murphy O'Grady (solicitors for the applicant), Market Square, Mountrath, Co Laois



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Final verdict

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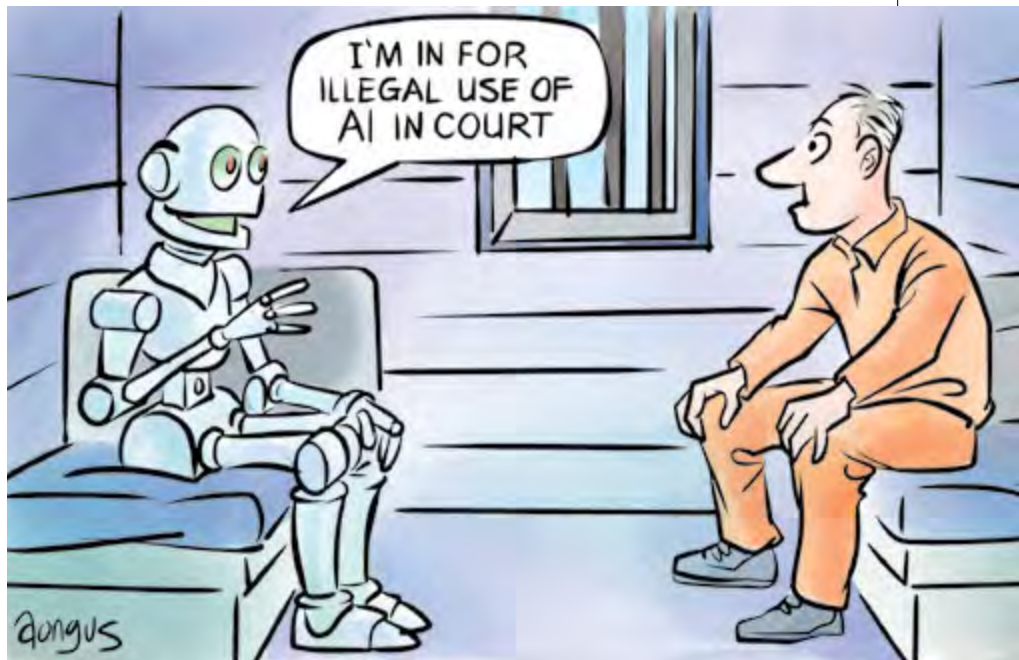
Judges in an NY court were not impressed when they realised that the 'man' addressing them in a video submission did not exist, [AP reports](#).

The judges were to hear from plaintiff Jerome Dewald. "The appellant has submitted a video for his argument," said Justice Sallie Manzanet-Daniels, before the video was played.

On the screen appeared a smiling man: "I come here today a humble *pro se* before a panel of five distinguished justices."

A baffled judge asked: "Is that counsel for the case?"

"I generated that – that is not a real person," Dewald said, later adding: "The court was really upset about it. They chewed me up pretty good."



'Gram parsings



An Australian lawyer who pulled a sickie to watch football lost his unfair dismissal claim, [Legal Cheek](#) reports. Mitchell Fuller was fired in August after his Instagram posts showed that he was actually at a football festival.

The Fair Work Commission found that photos showed "Mr Fuller and his friends socialising, such as at the beach or with beers at a pub" – behaviour the commission said amounted to dishonest conduct, "utterly

incompatible" with ongoing employment as a solicitor at Madison Branson Lawyers "where integrity and honesty are paramount".

In emails to his job, Fuller had said he "had a tough time sleeping last night and not feeling up to coming into the office". In reality, he had taken a 90-minute flight from Melbourne to Adelaide the night before. The trip had been "planned and partly paid for four days earlier".

'This snowflake is melting'

A since-amended job advert for a US firm raised eyebrows by suggesting that younger lawyers require "more handholding" around the office, [Legal Cheek](#) reports.

The advert for a London-based professional support lawyer included the job spec "using guidance notes, checklists, targeted training, individual coaching to make junior associates as efficient as possible (more handholding/explaining needed for GenZ/post lockdown)".

The Grok that keeps on Grokking

Education website [Open Culture](#) reports that it asked Elon Musk's AI chatbot, Grok, about "the steps a president would take to destroy his nation".

Musk's tool replied: "If a president of a superpower aimed to deliberately undermine their own nation, they could theoretically take steps to weaken its economic, social, military, and political foundations."

Specifically, they could tank the economy by imposing reckless fiscal policies, such as tariffs; encourage corruption and cronyism; stoke internal conflict by amplifying divisive rhetoric; attack the rule of law; and alienate allies by breaking treaties, insulting partners, or cozying up to hostile regimes.

Bonobo wishes he could think of a joke at this point. 🐼



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