

Law Schools Catch the Startup Bug

To prepare students to find careers in a market oversaturated with people with law degrees, the schools are making entrepreneurship part of their curriculum.



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The startup fever that has gripped other wings of academia has now reached America's law schools.

According to [The New York Times](#), law schools at institutions including Michigan State University, Northwestern University, and University of Colorado are pushing their students to learn more about technology and how to be entrepreneurial. Some have even started to host startup competitions described as "one part seminar and one part *Shark Tank* reality show."

Catherine Carpenter, vice dean of Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles, tells the *Times* that it's her job to give students the skills to become legal entrepreneurs. Legal services are expensive and based on an archaic delivery model, she says, which leaves many entrepreneurs and startups unable to get the help they need. Tomorrow's lawyers need to find ways to solve that dilemma.

Below, check out what these law schools are doing to help create a generation of smart, versatile, tech-and-data-competent lawyers who can find a promising career by entering niche law practices or starting their own legal services company.

The law laboratory

At Michigan State, associate professor Daniel Martin Katz has co-founded the [Reinvent Law Laboratory](#), a law accelerator sponsored by the Kaufman Foundation, with a mission to use technology and design to create affordable law services for the masses. Each summer, the program hosts its Entrepreneurial Lawyering Startup Competition, where students pitch their ideas for companies to judges. This year, the *Times* reports, groups pitched startups that would help homesteaders work and claim land, assist immigrants seeking citizenship to file their taxes, and produce an app to let people find lawyers in a pinch.

Katz tells the *Times* his goal is to help his students become "T-shaped,"--the vertical line is a metaphor for deep knowledge of the law, while the horizontal line reflects a broad knowledge of tech. "Analytics plus law gets you into a niche," he says.

Meet the tech lawyer

Bill Mooz, a visiting professor at the University of Colorado law school, is the creator of the school's four-week Tech Lawyer Accelerator program. He tells the *Times* that his high-intensity session provides "all of the things they don't teach you in law school and they don't teach in law firms but which you need to be

effective in today's world." The program features lectures from companies like NetApp and Adobe and tools to make "legal services more efficient," the Times reports. After the program ends, the students work for a startup for a semester.

Big Data lawyer

Daniel Rodriguez, the dean of Northwestern Law, says his school is capitalizing on professors who have business and technology experience to promote and teach "the law/business/technology interface." As data analytics and other technologicis become part of many companies' business models, lawyers need to understand what their clients do. "Not to be too jargonistic, but big-data analytics have pervaded many aspects of the management world, and lawyers need to have some facility with that," Rodriguez tells the *Times*.

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