The technology world seems to come out with a new gadget, concept, movement, or trend every few minutes. For librarians, who already wear way too many hats, having to keep up the latest technologies that can benefit our patrons is not an easy thing to do. How do you start? Where are the best places to look? What can you do to stay in the know and not get left behind? Below are a few suggestions that can help you stay up to date with current technologies and collect information before determining what the best use for these technologies will be for your library.

**Conferences**

Conferences are a goldmine of knowledge showcased in one location, so it should come as no surprise that they are one of the best ways to learn about the latest trends in technology. They allow librarians to network with fellow colleagues (who are a walking plethora of information) and start conversations about innovation in the workplace.

Of course, most law librarians frequent the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) Annual Meeting and its regional chapter conferences.

Within the library sphere, another well-known conference is the CALIcon Conference, which is presented by the Computer-Assisted Legal Institute (CALI). CALIcon is a technology-focused conference that draws not only librarians, but information technology professionals and law professors into the mix. Conferences with attendees from various organizations and departments tend to highlight aspects of technology that provide actual and potential benefits for the entire community of users.

Such conferences are popular amongst law librarians. But have you heard of the Library Marketing and Communications
A news alert aggregator can also help keep you updated on the latest headlines without being bogged down with checking numerous individual news websites. AALL provides this service with its KnowItAALL daily newsletter. At BakerHostetler, we have an InfoNgen-powered newsfeed called Trends in Emerging Technologies on our intranet page.

The value was not in the “what,” since I knew generally about the apps and events, but in the “behind-the-scenes” secrets to strategic planning, creation of guidelines and policies, and examples of the human aspects of communication that were brought to light—not to mention my favorite part, the swag swap! It was very refreshing to be amongst librarians with the sole purpose of promoting library service in unusually creative ways: they brought such a customer-centric feel to the table, which is something that we often overlook in the legal field.

Look beyond the same conferences you may attend annually and venture out to ones that are not under our “law library” umbrella. South by Southwest (SXSW) (especially its Entrepreneurship and Startups Track), American Bar Association TECHSHOW, the International Legal Technology Association, LegalWeek, and Clio Cloud Conference, are just a few notable conferences that are worth a look. Even if you cannot personally attend, viewing the information on the conferences’ websites for the list of guest speakers, exhibitors, and program titles and descriptions, will give you plenty to digest. You’ll get a glimpse of today’s prevalent technology topics, as well as those on the horizon.

**PRO TIP:** Although national conferences bring together librarians from different coasts, attending them is rather expensive and time-consuming. If you cannot attend the large-scale conferences due to budget and time constraints, don’t forget about conferences at the local level. There are one-day institutes and half-day symposiums that might benefit you tremendously. This year, I attended two local technology conferences within a 20-minute drive from work with registration prices under $50. Check your local colleges’ and universities’ websites, the local library’s website, and technology-based associations to see upcoming events in your area.

**Blogs and Podcasts**

Player FM, the podcast app and player, has a “Legal Technology” webpage that connects the visitor to hundreds of the leading legal technology podcasts out there today. The Legal Talk Network website also comprises a list of legal blogs and podcasts that focus on technology. Finding the right podcast host/personality to fit your personal style may take some time, but hearing from people in our profession really expands the practical side of what is necessary to move the mission along.

I personally like the more casual, friend-to-friend, conversational podcasts that introduce new technology products as well as discuss legal issues in the digital age. When I heard Sam Glover, founder of TheLawyerist.com, speak at Emory Law’s TI:GER Innovation Conference (one of the local conferences I went to), it turned my attention to The Lawyerist podcast, which has quickly become a favorite. In fact, as I am writing this section, the latest episode is titled “The State of Legal Blogging & Podcasting.” You might want to check that out.

**PRO TIP:** If you can’t find a podcast you like, why not start one? AALL Past President Greg Lambert and two of his friends, Toby Brown and Sophia Lisa Salazar, did just that with Three Geeks and a Law Blog, which has won several accolades for its content and creativity.

A few months ago, my law school classmates began a podcast at their law firm, Carlton Fields. As huge gamers, they decided to mix pleasure with business and utilize their knowledge of gaming to create the LAN Party Lawyers podcast, where they dissect the industry in terms of the legal issues arising out of new gaming tech. Their latest episode is entitled “One Step Closer to Skynet: Artificial Intelligence and Gaming.” As a gamer girl myself, these topics hit the mark and I will definitely be listening.

By lining up thought leaders and tech gurus as special guests for your podcast, you can expand your technology knowledge universe. Find out what support your own institution can
give you to begin your own podcast. To teach is to learn twice, and hosting a podcast is the ultimate way to “teach” listeners all around the world.

If you want to learn more about how to launch your own podcast, check out the Library Podcast Basics guide from our friends at the University of Georgia Law Library.

Tech Magazines and Aggregators
I began writing articles for Computers in Libraries (they have a conference as well) during my first year as a law librarian, which introduced me to Online Searcher, Big Data Quarterly, and a dozen more sister periodical titles, many of which offer free subscriptions. I enjoyed sharing my expertise while getting paid a small sum for each article (the latter gave me more motivation to work on my tenure packet at the time).

Moreover, the information in the magazine sparked ideas for future articles and program proposals on technology. Outside of the library sphere, I like to follow Wired and ComputerWorld. You can subscribe to just their email lists if you are not ready to commit to a full subscription. I know, I know: an influx of emails is not ideal, but it is a simple way to keep track and be in the know of the fast-paced world of technology in relation to libraries.

Speaking of emails, a news alert aggregator can also help keep you updated on the latest headlines without being bogged down with checking numerous individual news websites. AALL provides this service with its KnowItAALL daily newsletter. At BakerHostetler, we have an InfoNgen-powered newsfeed called Trends in Emerging Technologies on our intranet page. We also create and curate narrowly specific topics for news alerts, such as one we have for blockchains. Attorneys are encouraged to subscribe if they have a strong interest in legal technology.

Although they were meant for our attorneys, I also subscribe to the firm-aggregated news alerts on technology, as do some of the members of our Legal Innovation Team. You can create such news alerts for yourself through BNA Convergence, or a comparable news aggregator, for topics such as “Artificial Intelligence,” “Big Data,” “Internet of Things,” “Machine Learning,” “Quantum Computing,” and the like.

PRO TIP: Search for “Call for Papers” for legal technology periodicals, even if you are not looking to write an article at the moment. Calls for papers and proposals will allow you to uncover some great magazine and journal titles that you may not have heard of before. That is how I stumbled upon Computers in Libraries.

Final Tip
Don’t limit yourself to just the library or legal information field. Some of the best technology tools I’ve used discovered through trends in other industries, such as business, finance, banking, K-12 education, as well as other disciplines aside from the law. Just keep your eyes and ears open to what is happening around you in terms of legal tech trends and you will be able to keep it fresh at your workplace.

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