Almost all players in the legal market talk about innovation. But what is innovation? Who’s doing it and how do rank-and-file workers handle it? To prepare for their sessions at the 2019 AALL Annual Meeting and at ILTACON 2019, Ron Friedmann, Marlene Gebauer, and Darin Fox conducted a “bottom up” survey. That is, instead of targeting law firm management or people with “innovation” in their job titles, the authors wanted to hear from a broad cross-section of line managers from across multiple organizations. A total of 81 responses were received; the majority from law firms and law schools. Here are highlights from the survey.

**INNOVATION INITIATIVES**

Does your organization have a formal or informal innovation initiative?
- “We have created both a formal innovation team and have had meetings and design sessions. We have also created a new committee to enhance the client experience, which will also focus on innovation.” – Law Firm
- “We started with a specific Innovation Lab initiative but the goals and team members were too broad. It has morphed into specific programs within Practice Management, KM, a process improvement program, and internal app developments.” – Librarian, Law Firm
- “Very informal, but always focused on continuous process improvement—eliminating waste and applying innovation.” – Office of General Counsel
- “Committee: Innovation in Legal Practice” – Law School Administrator

What challenges do you face in implementing innovative technologies, workflows, or strategies?
- “Adoption is always challenging, even where there is an obvious use case and where the tool clearly matches and addresses an existing pain point.” – Law Firm
- “Lack of library department staff; little buy-in from management.” – Librarian, Law Firm
- “Financial. Buy-in from users. Tech does not work as described.” – Librarian, Law School
- “Change management ... getting people comfortable with even trying something new and different.” – Office of General Counsel

View the full survey results at bit.ly/SO19Surveyresults.

**AALLgo EXTRA**


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**BARRIERS TO INNOVATION**

The chart below shows the four most common reasons survey respondents gave as barriers to innovation. Answers were tagged in four categories.

![Bar chart showing barriers to innovation](chart.png)

Content provided by Ron Friedmann (Chief Knowledge & Information Officer at LAC Group); AALL panelists: Marlene Gebauer (Greenberg Traurig) and Darin Fox (University of Oklahoma); and ILTA panelists: Cheryl Disch (Duane Morris) and Joshua Fireman (Fireman & Company).