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Dave Navarro

New Suits

Appetite for Disruption in the Legal World

Michele DeStefano & Guenther Dobrauz

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Jameson Dempsey, Lauren Mack, & Phil Weiss

Legal Hackers

Grassroots Legal Innovation on a Global Scale

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This chapter is about Legal Hackers, currently the largest grassroots legal innovation community in the world. Legal Hackers is a community that seeks to foster creative problem-solving at the intersection of law and technology. Since 2012, the Legal Hackers community has come together in independent, self-organized chapters around the world to co-create the future of law and policy through free educational sessions, prototyping workshops, and policy discussions. By embracing the open, collaborative ethos and the do-it-yourself spirit of hacker culture, Legal Hackers seeks to break down silos in the legal industry and facilitate the rapid dissemination of legal innovation throughout the world.[1] This short chapter will describe the history, mission, and impact of Legal Hackers.

I. Hacker Culture

Legal Hackers organizers are inspired by the «Hacker Ethic,» which originated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the late-1950s and 1960s and has been an important force in global technology innovation ever since. The original hackers, as described in *Steven Levy*'s 1984 book *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution*, were precocious and obsessively creative students and local computer enthusiasts in the greater Boston area who gathered, often late into the night, exploring the inner working of computer hardware, creating games (like *Spacewar!*, an influential early video game), and writing programs to bend computers to their will.[2] A second wave of hackers, including Apple co-founder *Steve Wozniak*, convened through meetups like the Homebrew Computer Club in Silicon Valley, sharing pieces of hardware and advancing the personal computer movement and video game industry.[3]

These early hackers embraced a shared ethos—the «hacker ethic»—built around six central tenets. First, that «essential lessons can be learned about … the world … from taking things apart, seeing how they work, and using this knowledge to create new and even more interesting things.»[4] Second, that *«[a] free exchange of information … allowed for greater overall creativity.»*[5] *Third, that «[t]he best way to promote th[e] free exchange of information is to have an open [decentralized] system, something that presents no boundaries between a hacker and a piece of information or an item of equipment that he needs in his quest for knowledge, improvement, and time online.»*[6] Fourth, that

1 *See* Legal Hackers, *Our Story*, www.legalhackers.org/our-story (last visited Jan. 12, 2019).
2 Steven Levy, Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution 3–147 (1984).
3 *Id.* at 151–312.
4 *Id.* at 28.
5 *Id.* at 28–29.
6 *Id.* at 29–31.

«[h]ackers should be judged by their hacking, not bogus criteria such as degrees, age, race, or position.»[7] Fifth, that *«[y]ou can create art and beauty on a computer.»*[8] Sixth and finally, that *«[c]omputers can change your life for the better.»*[9]

Together, these principles—which were largely unwritten until the publication of *Levy's* book—served as the cultural foundation of several disruptive innovations in the last half-century. Hackers (and those inspired by the hacker ethic) helped to spur the personal computer revolution, the free and open-source software movement, the open knowledge movement, the free culture movement, and the open education movement.[10] And while there is still much work to be done in each of those areas, their pervasiveness highlights the fundamental success of hacker culture in creating fertile soil for innovation.

While some hackers define «hacking» with specific reference to computers, early hackers saw hacking as something broader. In his article *«On Hacking»,* influential MIT hacker *Richard Stallman* discussed how the original hackers viewed their activities:

> *«Hacking included a wide range of activities, from writing software, to practical jokes, to exploring the roofs and tunnels of the MIT campus. Other activities, performed far from MIT and far from computers, also fit hackers' idea of what hacking means: for instance, I think the controversial 1950s «musical piece» by John Cage, 4'33", is more of a hack than a musical composition. The palindromic three-part piece written by Guillaume de Machaut in the 1300s, «Ma Fin Est Mon Commencement», was also a good hack, even better because it also sounds good as music. Puck appreciated hack value.*
>
> *It is hard to write a simple definition of something as varied as hacking, but I think what these activities have in common is playfulness, cleverness, and exploration. Thus, hacking means exploring the limits of what is possible, in a spirit of playful cleverness. Activities that display playful cleverness have «hack value.»*[11]

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7 *Id.* at 31.

8 *Id.* at 31–34.

9 *Id.* at 34–38.

10 *See id.* at 212–13; Christopher Tozzi, For Fun and Profit: A History of the Free and Open Source Software Revolution (The MIT Press, 2017) at 265–68; Hans Põldoja, The Structure and Components for the Open Education Ecosystem (Aalto University, 2016) at 26–28; Eric S Raymond, *Origins and History of Hackers, 1961–1995* (2003), http://www.catb.org/~esr/writings/taoup/html/hackers.html (last visited Apr. 28, 2019).

11 Richard Stallman, *On Hacking,* https://stallman.org/articles/on-hacking.html (last visited January 12, 2019).

Legal hacking falls within the hacking paradigm. Indeed, *Stallman* himself is the author of the GNU General Public License (GPL), a self-perpetuating free software license that leverages legal tools–copyright licenses to advance hacker values, including the requirement that anyone who uses the licensed work must license their own resulting software under the same license.[12] Since then, free and open-source software communities have developed a myriad of governance models, licensing structures, and quasi-legal cultural norms, all of which we would consider «legal hacks». In the 1990s, hackers such as *Nick Szabo* explored the concept of «smart contracts» which were agreements implemented using computer code or other digital technologies.[13] Drafting clever smart contracts may also be considered legal hacking, although in the not-so-far away future, drafting smart legal contracts may evolve into a daily task for legal professionals.

Law schools have also acted as central convening points for lawyer hackers and open culture advocates. For example, Harvard Law School's Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society and Stanford Law School's CodeX Center for Legal Informatics have advanced an open ethos to address law and technology issues. The legal informatics research community, including the International Association for Artificial Intelligence and Law has spent decades exploring ways that technology can make the legal system more efficient, effective, and just.[14] And programs around the world, such as LawWithoutWalls, have embraced cross-disciplinary, project-based learning to further legal innovation.

There have been several hacker-inspired movements that have explored issues at the intersection of law and technology, including Creative Commons, Wikimedia, and the Internet Society.[15] The free law movement, in particular, has embraced the values of hacker culture as applied to law, with individuals such as *Thomas R Bruce* and *Peter W Martin* of the Legal Information Institute at Cornell University; *Carl Malamud* of Public.Resource.org; the late *Aaron Swartz* and *Mike Lissner* of the Free Law Project serving as standard-bearers in freeing legislation, standards, regulatory codes, and case law from copyright licenses and expensive, proprietary legal technology databases. The «gov 2.0» movement, including Code for America and similar communities, have also brought together lawyers and technologists («civic hackers») to improve

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12 *See* The GNU General Public License, https://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-3.0.en.html (last visited January 12, 2019).

13 *See,* e.g., Nick Szabo, «*The Idea of Smart Contracts*» (1997), https://web.archive.org/web/20160831070942/http://szabo.best.vwh.net/smart_contracts_idea.html (last visited Apr. 11, 2019).

14 *See,* e.g., Trevor Bench-Capon et al., *A history of AI and Law in 50 papers: 25 years of the International Conference on AI and Law*, Artificial Intelligence and Law 20.3 (2012).

15 *See* Creative Commons, www.creativecommons.org; Wikimedia Foundation, www.wikimediafoundation.org; Internet Society, https://www.internetsociety.org/.

government transparency and service delivery.[16] Many gov 2.0 advocates are also active in Legal Hackers.

II. The Origin of Legal Hackers

The terms «legal hacking» and «legal hackers» predate the Legal Hackers organization, and appear to have been coined and first explored by *Tim Hwang*, who opened a legal startup, *Robot Robot & Hwang*, with the aim of *«open[ing] broad new opportunities for experimentation and fashion the emergence of a kind of legal hacking as a field of endeavor.»*[17] Predicting a *«big, bad, rootin'-tootin' High Noon style shootout on a global scale»* between large incumbent firms and new upstarts, *Hwang* noted that *«[f]or legal hackers and supporters of legal hacking, there's both ideological and pragmatic reasons to get into this fight. Not on any one side, but on creating applications and services that aid both sides.»*[18] Noting that *«neither side of this fight has it quite where the legal hacker wants it yet,» Hwang* lamented that the new upstarts *«largely want to just replicate the same old services and activities, but just cheaper, faster, and more efficiently,»* but that *«the conflict itself fuels a demand for the kind of research and development that legal hackers want … so it's worth finding ways to grease the wheels of collision.»*[19] *Hwang* later launched a «legal hacking» conference, the New and Emerging Legal Infrastructure Conference (NELIC) on April 15, 2011, organized the first FutureLaw Conference in 2013, and was active in the nascent legal design movement.[20]

While the concept of legal hacking predates the Legal Hackers organization, the global Legal Hackers community began in 2012 as a project of the Brooklyn Law Incubator & Policy (BLIP) Clinic at Brooklyn Law School in Brooklyn, New York.[21] Founded in 2008 by Professor *Jonathan Askin*, BLIP

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16 *See* Joshua Tauberer, Civic Hacking, Open Government Data: The Book (2nd ed., 2014), https://opengovdata.io/2014/civic-hacking/ (last visited Apr. 29, 2019); *see id.* at «History of the Movement», https://opengovdata.io/2014/history-the-movement/; *see* also Alex Howard, *Defining Gov 2.0 and Open Government* (Jan. 5, 2011), http://gov20.govfresh.com/social-media-fastfwd-defining-gov-2-0-and-open-government-in-2011/ (last visited Apr. 29, 2019).

17 Robot Robot & Hwang, About, https://www.robotandhwang.com/about/ (last visited Jan. 12, 2019).

18 Tim Hwang, *On Legal Arms Dealing*, Robot Robot & Hwang, Sept. 26, 2010, https://www.robotandhwang.com/2010/09/on-legal-arms-dealing/ (last visited Apr. 11, 2019).

19 *Id.*

20 Tim Hwang, *Three Updates*, Robot Robot & Hwang (Oct. 2, 2016), http://www.robotandhwang.com/2013/10/three-updates/ (last visited Apr. 29, 2019); Tim Hwang, *NELIC Registration is Open!*, Robot Robot & Hwang (Mar. 9, 2011), https://www.robotandhwang.com/2011/03/nelic-registration-is-open/ (last visited Apr. 29, 2019); Tim Hwang, *Some Design Notes on FutureLaw 2013*, Robot Robot & Hwang (Mar. 4, 2013), http://www.robotandhwang.com/2013/03/some-design-notes-on-futurelaw-2013/#more-484 (last visited Apr. 29, 2019).

21 *See* Legal Hackers, *supra* note 1.

provides *pro bono* legal support to pre-seed technology startups in New York City. Central to BLIP is the concept of the Lawyer 2.0: the tech-savvy lawyer who can effectively advocate up and down the legal stack—from commercial contracts to tectonic policy shifts–all while leveraging the tools and methods of the technology community to effectively and efficiently represent clients. *Askin* developed this vision after years working as a telecommunications and technology attorney and lobbyist in Washington, DC, where, in his view, *«every D.C. lawyer advocating for tech entrepreneurs thought they were full-blown tech lawyers,»* but were instead mere «policy advocates.»[22]

The period of late 2011 to 2012 was an important moment in technology activism in the United States. In late 2011, the U.S. Congress introduced two bills: the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and the PROTECT IP Act (PIPA) (companion bills in the United States House of Representatives and Senate, respectively).[23] Both would have given the United States government stronger enforcement mechanisms against websites that were allegedly hosting content without the appropriate licenses from the copyright holders.[24] Because content platforms in the Web 2.0 era relied heavily on user-generated content—including countless remixes, covers, reinterpretations, and clips—and existing law incentivized platforms to not actively police their platforms (instead relying on the notice-and-takedown framework enshrined in the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA)), the SOPA/PIPA bills would have forced platforms to heavily regulate user-generated content or face the prospect of judicially-imposed shutdowns of their websites. In response, technology activists, entrepreneurs, and platform companies mobilized in opposition to the bills.[25] They focused on lobbying Congress, rallying users, and otherwise making their views known. Most notably, several platforms blacked out their sites in protest.[26] By mobilizing their user bases to call their representatives in Congress and participate in protests, the platforms were ultimately able to successfully block the passage of SOPA and PIPA.

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22 Jonathan Askin, *A Remedy to Clueless Tech Lawyers*, VentureBeat (Nov. 13, 2013), https://venturebeat.com/2013/11/13/a-remedy-to-clueless-tech-lawyers/ (last visited Apr. 29, 2019).

23 Stop Online Piracy Act, H.R. 3261, 112th Cong.§ 103(a)(1)(B) (1st Sess. 2011), available at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112hr3261ih/pdf/BILLS-112hr3261ih.pdf; Preventing Real Online Threats to Economic Creativity and Theft of Intellectual Property Act of 2011 (PROTECT IP), S. 968, 112th Cong. § 3(a)(1)(B)(1st Sess. 2011), available at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112s968rs/pdf/BILLS-112s968rs.pdf.

24 David Kravets, *A SOPA/PIPA Blackout Explainer*, Wired (Jan. 18, 2012), https://www.wired.com/2012/01/websites-dark-in-revolt/ (last visited Apr. 29, 2019).

25 *See* Vlad Savov, *The SOPA blackout: Wikipedia, Reddit, Mozilla, Google, and many others protest proposed law*, The Verge (Jan. 18, 2012), https://www.theverge.com/2012/1/18/2715300/sopa-blackout-wikipedia-reddit-mozilla-google-protest (last visited Apr. 29, 2019).

26 SOPA Strike, http://sopastrike.com/ (last visited Apr. 29, 2019).

Professor *Askin's* students—including *Phil Weiss*, *Warren Allen*, *John Randall*, and others—wanted to get involved in the ongoing SOPA/PIPA debate. *Askin* thought that a «legal hackathon» could be the answer, but there wasn't much precedent for it. Traditionally, the goal of a hackathon was to build a functioning piece of software or hardware over the course of a day or two, sometimes tied to a specific operating system, API, or theme. At that time, there had been several «law hackathons» focused on computable legislation, but none focused on using the hackathon model for collaborative policymaking—a «legal hackathon». BLIP's legal hackathon took place on April 15, 2012 in the Moot Court Room of Brooklyn Law School. Speakers included *Tim Wu*, a law professor who coined the term «network neutrality»; *Andrew Rasiej*, founder of the New York Tech Meetup and Personal Democracy Forum; *Tim Hwang*; and *Nina Paley* of Question Copyright. During the afternoon, teams broke out to prototype ideas for improving U.S. federal intellectual property policy. The hashtags used for the event were #legalhack and #hacktheact, the former of which has since become the primary hashtag of the global Legal Hackers movement.

With the BLIP Legal Hackathon behind them, the law students (many of whom were graduating 3Ls) returned to their studies and upcoming bar exam preparation. But for a few of the hackathon organizers, the success of the hackathon demanded further action. That September, Weiss and Allen, with the help of Randall, formed a Meetup group named *New York Legal Hackers*.[27] The idea of New York Legal Hackers was to create an open, collaborative forum for lawyers, technologists, entrepreneurs, and academics to meet and «legal hack» (a verb) issues at the intersection of law and technology. *Tariq Badat*, another Brooklyn Law School classmate, and *Lauren Mack*, a recent graduate from Benjamin N Cardozo School of Law who had attended the BLIP Legal Hackathon, quickly joined as co-organizers of the group.

New York Legal Hackers grew rapidly, reaching 500 members in its first year. Early events focused on data privacy, user-generated content, alternative dispute resolution for startups, immigration policy, fashion design, encryption, public wifi, and legal technology startups.[28] Unlike traditional law and policy events, Legal Hackers hosted their events in startup coworking spaces like General Assembly, Projective Space, and eBay NYC. Speakers included law professors, general counsels, startup founders, and information security researchers. But the early ambitions of Legal Hackers were local, focusing on serving the New York City community based on local interests. That would soon change.

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27 New York Legal Hackers, https://www.meetup.com/legalhackers/ (last visited January 12, 2019).

28 *Id.*

III. Building a Chapter-Based Community

While Legal Hackers originally formed to serve the New York City technology and startup community, the movement soon spread to other cities, which formed their own «chapters» of Legal Hackers. In 2012, two original New York Legal Hackers members—open data advocate *Rebecca Williams* and telecommunications attorney *Jameson Dempsey*—moved from New York City to Washington, DC for new employment options. *Williams* and *Dempsey* had been active in the New York Legal Hackers community through attending and organizing events. *Dempsey* had also worked closely with Professor *Askin* during his time at Brooklyn Law as a student, research assistant, BLIP clinical student, and BLIP fellow, and had attended the first legal hackathon.

When *Williams* and *Dempsey* arrived in DC, they thought there was a great opportunity to open a second chapter of Legal Hackers. The chapter model was inspired by other decentralized, chapter-based, technology-focused communities, including the Internet Society, Wikimedia, Code for America, and Sandbox. The newly formed DC Legal Hackers added a third organizer, *Alan deLevie,* then a law student at American University Washington College of Law and now a developer at Casetext, began to organize events. One member of DC Legal Hackers, *Amy Wan*, later moved to Los Angeles, where she founded the third chapter: LA Legal Hackers. In 2013, *Dan Lear*, a Seattle-based technology transactions attorney and legal technology evangelist, wrote an article, «Hacking the Law» for the American Bar Association Journal, highlighting the nascent Legal Hackers movement, and began his own legal innovation meetup.[29] Other Legal Hackers chapters formed in the U.S. cities of Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and Miami, embracing the open, collaborative mission of Legal Hackers. The first European chapter of Legal Hackers launched in Stockholm, followed soon thereafter by chapters in Barcelona, Bogotá, Costa Rica, and Seoul.

As more chapters formed, the original New York Legal Hackers team took on a new role: international community organizers. They updated their branding, adopted a motto («We are explorers. We are doers. We are Legal Hackers.»), formalized the chapter onboarding process, prepared a chapter handbook with best practices, and thought about ways to bring together chapter organizers to meet and share.

Beginning in 2014, a new, global organization called Legal Hackers began gathering local chapter organizers to share experiences, collaborate, and plan the future. Seeking to improve upon the first legal hackathon—which revolved more around discussion rather than actual building of tech solu-

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29 *See* Dan Lear, *Hacking the Law,* American Bar Association Law Practice Today Newsletter (Jan. 14, 2014).

tions—the New York Legal Hackers organized a Data Privacy Legal Hackathon, which combined the principals behind the first legal hackathon (discussion around innovation at the intersection of law and technology) with the objectives of a more traditional hackathon (building a working prototype over the course of a weekend with a panel of judges awarding prizes). The New York team, along with Legal Hackers in London, England and the Bay Area, California (USA), challenged participants to create a technology-enabled tool that addresses a common legal problem in the field of data privacy in a 24-hour period. Organizers and participants in the three cities connected through virtual means to discuss data privacy issues and how their hackathon teams were attempting to solve them. This type of multi-chapter collaboration on hackathons and the growing Legal Hackers community inspired the annual Legal Hackers Summit, which first took place in 2015, and brought Legal Hackers organizers from all over the world together in a single location (either physically or virtually).

Today, the Legal Hackers community spans the globe, with chapters in most major global cities. Several countries have multiple chapters, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Nigeria, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These chapters are independent, self-organized, and self-governed, catering first and foremost to the interests of the local community where the chapter is located. As a result, each Legal Hackers chapter is different, both in terms of governance, membership composition, funding (if any), and event topics. Active chapters are actively encouraged to maintain a diverse organizing team, a social media presence, and regular free, public events for the entire local community. Together, these characteristics create robust building blocks for a sustainable and engaged community. At the same time, chapters are encouraged to experiment with different forms of convening and connecting that advance the Legal Hackers mission.

IV. The Legal Hackers Mission

Legal Hackers chapters around the world are bound by a common mission to foster creative problem-solving at the intersection of law and technology. By «fostering» creative problem-solving, the aim of Legal Hackers is not to direct innovation (like an incubator, accelerator, or venture capitalist would), but to facilitate it by connecting and inspiring community members to learn from one another, build together, and to discuss important issues in an open, collaborative, and welcoming environment—creating an «open culture» for law with a common ethos. Importantly, when Legal Hackers chapters discuss the intersection of law and technology, both terms are meant broadly: law means law, legal practice, policymaking, and norms, while technology means any tools,

systems, or services. As a result, Legal Hackers explore ways that technology can improve law, legal practice, and policymaking, while also exploring ways that law and policy can address rapidly changing technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence, blockchain technologies, and the sharing economy).

Legal Hackers has adopted several safeguards to mitigate against any potential co-optation of the community. First, Legal Hackers is not a commercial enterprise. Legal Hackers is 100% volunteers and not controlled by any commercial entity. Second, Legal Hackers is not a trade association or business network. Unlike trade associations, members do not need to pay dues to join the community and do not need to be a part of a certain profession or hold a special degree. In this way, Legal Hackers remains open to all who wish to participate. Third, Legal Hackers is not a political advocacy group. Specifically, while Legal Hackers chapters around the world host events to discuss technology policy issues and members may have opinions about policy issues, Legal Hackers (as chapters or a global movement) does not take positions on specific issues (e.g., there is no official Legal Hackers position on data protection regulation). Finally, Legal Hackers emphasizes that it does not engage in, support, or condone illegal activities or «black hat» computer hacking.

V. Who are Legal Hackers' Members?

Legal Hackers includes in its membership anyone who is passionate about creative problem-solving at the intersection of law and technology and embraces the Legal Hackers' open, collaborative ethos. Legal Hackers membership includes lawyers, policy professionals, technologists, entrepreneurs, academics, and other professionals and enthusiasts. Legal Hackers includes students and retired law firm partners, first-time entrepreneurs and serial entrepreneurs, private practitioners and government officials.

By embracing a system of values, a Legal Hackers member is more than the combination of the lawyer, her tools, and her approach toward the law. Legal hacking also includes a belief about the way that the legal system should operate and those who should be able to help shape it. Specifically, that there is value in multidisciplinarity (or, better yet, antidisciplinarity[30]), that legal information should be accessible, that legal processes should be human-centered, and that technology, responsibly deployed, can improve access to justice.

30 *See* Joi Ito, *Antidisciplinary* (Oct. 2, 2014), https://joi.ito.com/weblog/2014/10/02/antidisciplinar.html (last visited Apr. 29, 2019).

VI. What Does Legal Hackers Do?

To advance the Legal Hackers mission, local chapters host regular, typically free, public events for their community. Legal Hackers chapters are independent and self-organized, and each chapter determines the number, format, and content of its events. As a general matter, Legal Hackers chapter events fall into three categories: education, prototyping, and discussion.

First, Legal Hackers offers educational and informational events, bringing individuals of different backgrounds and interests together to share their skills and expertise. Educational activities may include workshops teaching lawyers coding, data science, or design thinking, or workshops teaching developers, designers, and entrepreneurs about the basics of open source licensing or venture capital fundraising.

Second, Legal Hackers brings together community members for hands-on activities and challenges such as hackathons, design thinking exercises, and prototype jams. The purpose of these events is to embrace the «hands-on imperative,» working to build tools and projects that advance legal innovation. For example, Legal Hackers chapters have hosted hackathons and prototyping events on issues including access to justice, disabilities accessibility, and blockchain-for-law applications.

Third, Legal Hackers brings together local stakeholders to discuss potential solutions to pressing technology policy challenges, such as network neutrality, data protection, the sharing economy, and blockchain regulation. Our goal is not to direct or shape policy, or to lobby for specific proposals, but to create an open forum for discussion that involves a variety of stakeholders who themselves can identify challenges and formulate solutions. In this way, we hope to serve as a trusted third party for these types of discussions. Participants can then take these new ideas and perspectives and implement them in their professional capacity or personal projects.

Through these events, Legal Hackers' aim is to create a *lingua franca*—a common language—and common identity between individuals of different disciplines, including lawyers, technologists, entrepreneurs, designers, and academics. In so doing, Legal Hackers hopes to train a new generation of tech-enabled lawyers, break down silos in the legal industry, build tools to increase access to justice, serve as a neutral forum for policy discussions, and ultimately facilitate rapid dissemination of legal innovation around the world.

VII. Global Community, Global Opportunity

As the Legal Hackers community has grown, the possibility for collaboration among chapters throughout the world has grown with it. Global collaboration between Legal Hackers chapters has included global and regional summits

designed for chapter organizers, as well as multi-chapter festivals and workshops.

Since 2015, Legal Hackers has hosted its annual summit, bringing together chapter organizers from around the world to meet in person and share their experience and expertise. These organizers-only summits are the highlight of the Legal Hackers' year, and feature inspiring keynotes, lightning talks, hands-on workshops, social activity, and group planning.

Starting in 2018, Legal Hackers chapters also began to organize regional summits for other chapters in the region. Kyiv Legal Hackers hosted the first European Legal Hackers Summit in Odessa, Ukraine in May 2018; Singapore Legal Hackers hosted the first Asia-Pacific (APAC) Legal Hackers Summit in November 2018; and São Paulo Legal Hackers hosted the first Latin American (LATAM) Legal Hackers Summit in April 2019. These summits combined a closed-door day for organizers to meet and share activities, opportunities, and challenges, and an open day for the broader community to learn about Legal Hackers and issues at the intersection of law and technology.

In addition to organizer-focused summits, Legal Hackers also began to host multi-chapter conference and workshops focused on a specific topic or theme. In March 2018, Legal Hackers invited the global community to participate in a Computational Law & Blockchain Festival (CL+B Fest), a «decentralized conference» that took place in thirty-seven self-organized «nodes» around the world over a single weekend (with several nodes run by groups outside the Legal Hackers chapter network).[31] The event flipped the traditional conference model on its head: rather than ask individuals from around the world to fly to a central location, Legal Hackers and its event partners prepared a template that any organizer around the world could adopt or adapt for their local community, relying on local speakers, sponsors, and participants to provide a free and open forum for education, prototyping, and policy discussion. Nodes were encouraged to stream their proceedings for free and to make any output freely accessible. Nodes were also encouraged to submit reports for possible inclusion in the first issue of Stanford University's Journal of Blockchain Law & Policy. Reports from five nodes were ultimately accepted for inclusion in the journal.

Since the CL+B Fest (which hosted its second edition from March–May 2019), there have been additional multi-chapter decentralized events on issues including open media licensing and access to justice. Just as Legal Hackers' first legal hackathon inspired similar events around the legal industry, we ex-

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31 Jameson J Dempsey, *Overview: A Decentralized Approach to Developing Technology Law and Policy on a Global Scale*, 1 Stanford J. Blockchain Law & P. 64 (2018), *available at* https://stanford-jblp.pubpub.org/pub/clb-fest-overview (last visited Apr. 11, 2019).

pect that the decentralized conference model will similarly encourage global law and policy activities.

VIII. What's Next?

Over the last seven years, Legal Hackers has grown from a legal hackathon in Brooklyn to a global movement with 140 chapters, over 430 volunteer organizers, and a community of tens of thousands worldwide. Legal hackathons have become commonplace in the legal innovation ecosystem, including the Global Legal Hackathon, which was the brainchild of an organizer of the Toronto Legal Hackers chapter. Legal innovation communities have sprouted around the world, some in the open spirit of Legal Hackers and others with more commercial aims (including events designed for marketing and business development).

Legal Hackers aim is to remain at the forefront of legal innovation, in a constant state of experimentation, finding new ways to connect and inspire within local communities and around the world. And just as technology evolves, so too will the issues that Legal Hackers addresses. Over time, our goal is build an «open culture» for law that will facilitate rapid response to pressing issues in a manner that respects local values and legal structures while providing opportunities for cross-border and cross-industry collaboration. We hope you will join us.

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