

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS LAUNCHES DIGITAL LAW GROUP

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Firm news

The global firm is bringing digital and legal skills together to better serve clients

Herbert Smith Freehills is pleased to announce the establishment of a global, multi-disciplinary group called the Digital Law Group.

The firm's CEO Mark Rigotti explained: "Our clients are facing significant digital transformation, and so are we. Our people need new skills to be able to provide our clients with the advice they need in this new, evolving business environment. We know that this isn't something that can happen in just one part of our firm – it has to happen across the whole business.

"The Digital Law Group is our commitment to up-skilling all our lawyers, wherever they sit in the business, and supporting them with technical experts, to provide advice with an understanding of the opportunities, risks, ethics and regulatory requirements brought on by digital transformation; the more pressing current hotspots being artificial intelligence, data, digital assets, robotics and automation."

The Digital Law Group is made up of a permanent team of senior lawyers, supported by a rotating cohort from across the firm.

Mark added, "Because digital expertise is increasingly 'business as usual', we want as many of our lawyers as possible, including graduates, to participate."

One of the key initial focuses of the group will be smart legal contracts. These are contracts that are able to self-execute, because their operative provisions have been replicated in computer code, and 'plugged in' to a secure, digital eco-system that effectively performs the contract including recording performance, making payments, and giving notifications.

All contracts can be made smart, and in time most will be. This complex but inevitable transition will require new skills, new collaborations and new processes. The Digital Law Group will be at the forefront of helping Herbert Smith Freehills' clients to navigate this fascinating journey, including helping to draft smart legal contracts, and advising on the legal issues around them.

Herbert Smith Freehills' Global Head of Digital Law, Natasha Blycha commented: "The next ten years will see an unprecedented level of change in the way legal services are delivered. The primary tool of our trade - the contract - is being digitised.

"If we look at the impact the digitalisation of money had on the financial industry and on the economy, we start to get a glimpse of the enormity of the impact we can expect from the digitalisation of contracts. Our clients will need really informed and thoughtful advice on this - that's what we're doing with this initiative."

"All future lawyers will need to be digitally literate," added London partner Nick Pantlin, Head of TMT & Digital for the UK and one of the pioneers of the group. "Our strong technology brand means that we are already advising clients across all industries and geographies on digital transformation. The Digital Law Group further enriches the advice, technology and services we can offer to clients."

The Digital Law Group will work closely with Herbert Smith Freehills' Alternative Legal Services team, which provides market-leading solutions for high-volume, document-intensive legal work, as well as the firm's Legal Operations team and its global network of lawyers.

For more information, please click [here](#).

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