

●●● Canada moving slowly on innovation of legal services

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Richard Susskind's book *The End of Lawyers?* was inspiring because it spoke of a different type of legal practice that moved away from a traditional approach to a model that embraced business innovation and technology to provide commodity-like legal services.

But I wonder how and when this will happen in Canada. In the meantime, there are some indicators that Susskind's futuristic pronouncements are becoming reality in Britain.

For example, [legalfutures.com](#) reported that one-third of conveyancing firms are considering conversion to alternative business structures.

For all the promise, I'm still not convinced this revolution will happen quickly as law schools don't train lawyers to be entrepreneurs at the forefront of technology innovation. But of notable exception are two upcoming programs: Law Without Walls and 21st Century Law Practice.

The 21st Century Law Practice program will take place for the first time this summer from June 17 to July 3. Sponsored by the Michigan State University College of Law and the University of Westminster School of Law, the program takes place in London, England.

According to the web site, the program aims "to prepare students for emerging law jobs of the present and not-too-distant future.

Today's business and technology industry leaders need lawyers who understand their work, facilitate innovation, encourage entrepreneurship, and respond nimbly to ever-changing environments."

It's definitely a bold vision of the future of law. The program includes courses on legal information engineering and technology, 21st century law practice, and Britain's efforts at deregulation in the legal sector. Any law student can apply.

Law Without Walls, meanwhile, involves a virtual collaborative academic model that engages law students to create innovative solutions to real problems related to the practice of law.

Founded by Michele DeStefano and Michael Bossone of the University of Miami, Law Without Walls selects students from some of the top schools, groups them into teams, and connects them with an academic and practitioner mentor as well as an alumni, subject expert, and entrepreneur adviser.

This year, the topics include the disaggregation of legal services, global legal practices, and publicly held law firms in Britain and Australia.

Above all, Law Without Walls engages those with a stake in the legal profession's future and provides them with a powerful vehicle for innovation and change. It's the sort of effort we should see more of in the profession.

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