

LEGAL EDUCATION THROUGH ICT ENABLED TEACHING METHOD: CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

by

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Introduction

From a structural aspect, legal education has been a gatekeeper to the rule of law for ages, and it is expected that it would give to the future lawyers, judges, counselors, and legal scientists a deep understanding of how the executive, legislative and judicial system works (Ebenezer, 2022). This educational profession has traditionally been very conservative, retrospective and dogmatic. This is the traditional law school classroom, where students sit and take notes on a passive object, the physical object (Cella, 2011; Fornasier, 2021) and the professor in a position of total control, speaking monologically, and teaching in one direction. The fundamentals of the law, such as using the Socratic method, analyzing case law and carefully editing reporters, treatises and statutory volumes, all focused on face-to-face communication and dialectical argumentation. However, in the socioeconomic world the world has been transformed significantly with the onset of digital age and emergence of systemic technological disruptions. The legal profession is in the midst of a major transformation as society is moving through the fast-paced digitalization and industrialisation, as well as the advent of new data architectures. The practice is digital today, and digital case management systems, e-discovery algorithms, automated document assembly engines, electronic court filing architectures and others are commonplace in today's digital environment (Fornasier, 2021).

This establishes a new gap between past (analog law school) and future (hyper-digitized legal marketplace of the present day). The academic institutions are constrained to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in their teaching models due to the growing competency gap. In a broad sense, ICT education is a broad convergence of integrated telecommunications, enterprise middleware, computers, and interactive digital software that makes the creation, storage, manipulation and transmission of knowledge possible.

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In the Indian context, the urgency for this transformation is particularly significant given the sheer scale of the country's legal education system. As of 2024, India has approximately 1,800 law colleges and universities enrolling around 70,000 new law graduates annually, many distributed across geographically dispersed institutions with widely differing resource levels.² The Bar Council of India has issued formal circulars directing all Centres of Legal Education to incorporate emerging technology subjects including artificial intelligence, cyber-security, blockchain, and electronic discovery into their curricula, reflecting an official policy recognition of the digitisation imperative in legal training.³

ICT has various innovations that are put into place, including learning management systems (LMS) like Moodle or Blackboard, intelligent lecture capture systems, virtual mock courts and AI-based adaptive learning systems. While the subject of the use of ICTs in legal education cannot be ignored, there are pedagogical implications which are clear: pedagogical flexibility is unprecedented; the geographical reach of legal education has been extended and realistic professional simulations are offered. But, the shift from analog instruction has severe structural issues. This paper explores systemic problems and underlying issues when attempting to use technology to instruct and educate about the law. It discusses the multiple aspects of the difference, such as pedagogical differences, regulatory barriers, data privacy issues, inequities regarding resources, and the complex ethical dilemmas of AI in the learning context. Ultimately, it can pave the way forward for law schools everywhere. The second part is on the transition from analog pedagogy to learning with ICTs. The second part is dedicated to the transformation of analog pedagogy to learning with ICTs. The use of ICT in legal education is not merely about upgrading the legal classroom, it is about epistemology or re-thinking of legal education, legal knowledge and application. In an analog world, the knowledge of law can sometimes be thought of as a set of rules and precedents in history which could be learned, or memorized. This knowledge can be passed on to the student solely by the professor. At the same time, ICTs-based teaching practices are not only de-centralizing information, but also

² 'Law School Rankings 2024: Cultivating Market-Ready Lawyers' (BW Legal World, 2024)
<<https://www.bwlegalworld.com/article/law-school-rankings-2024-cultivating-market-ready-lawyers-527915>>
accessed 1 September 2026.

³ Press Information Bureau, 'Circular to All Universities and Centres of Legal Education by Bar Council of India to Incorporate Subjects such as Blockchain, Electronic Discovery, Cyber-Security, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence and Bio-Ethics in Their Curricula' (Government of India, 2024)
<<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2040667>> accessed 1 September 2026.

giving rise to the possibility to build a horizontal and collaborative relationship between teacher and student, rather than a vertical and dogmatic one (Cella, 2011)

The Typologies of ICT Integration

The use of innovations supported by ICTs in legal training is generally based on two types of structures: blended learning, and pure distance learning (e-learning) (Cella, 2011).

- **Blended Learning:** This is the approach that uses digital learning to complement classroom teaching. Asynchronous discussion forums, multimedia study materials, and diagnostics of students can be handled by the instructor by means of the LMS. Active learning tools, such as real time polling software and digital case-mapping, are used in the classroom, replacing passive listening.
- **Pure Distance Learning / E-Learning:** describes this model. It breaks down the geographical barriers and enables law schools to provide specialized legal certifications, continuing legal education (CLE) credits and full degree programs to a diverse class of students from around the world. Seeking to visualize the Hybrid Shift Cella (2011).

Legal research databases such as Westlaw, LexisNexis and SCC Online are essential parts of this ecosystem. Previously, students used to spend hours looking for precedents in the library. They currently employ the boolean type of searching, the natural language processing filters, and hyperlinked citation networks. This will change the focus of the pedagogy from mechanical retrieval of information and away from the more complex processes of analysis, synthesis, and critique of complex legal doctrine. In addition, students can use sophisticated simulation tools, including virtual mock courtrooms and electronic platforms for dispute resolution in a secure setting for experiential learning. Students can collaborate on documents and prepare pleadings, file motions and submit oral arguments to remote panels of judges and peers using synchronous video technologies. Through this hands-on experience, the fundamental work skills, emotional intelligence and technical literacy that are essential in today's courtroom are acquired (Maharg & Muntjewerff, 2005).

In the Indian legal education context, indigenous platforms such as SCC Online and Manupatra have become the primary digital research tools for law students and practitioners. SCC Online provides access to over four million judicial decisions from the Supreme Court and all High Courts, while Manupatra offers comprehensive statutory, regulatory, and case law coverage

employing natural language processing and AI-assisted retrieval.⁴ The increasing integration of such India-specific legal databases into law school curricula represents a significant departure from exclusive reliance on foreign research platforms, making Indian jurisprudence more directly accessible to a new generation of law students.

Challenges at the heart of the implementation of Legal Pedagogy through ICTs

While the use of models with ICT in law schools is beneficial, there are some structural, institutional and human barriers in the implementation of these teaching models. Since legal education is traditionally oriented, changing to the modern world poses a challenge. The difference in institutional resistance and difference in faculty digital divide. One of the first hurdles in integrating technology is a faculty resistance to and institutional inertia. In general, legal academics are very well trained in traditional text analysis and classical rhetoric, and often find it difficult to switch to using complex digital tools, with a "mental block" being created (Surbhi, 2023).

The senior professors see technology as a negative and threatening force in the classical law classroom, rather than a positive one. In real terms this translates to a 'digital gap' within universities. Some faculty are younger and regularly employ interactive technology and digital tools and others are older and employ lecture-based courses. This variation results in an "uncoordinated learning" for students at the same school. To help to overcome this divide, ongoing technical training, professional development programs and an attitude shift towards viewing digital literacy as an essential skill for 21st century legal education is required (Cella, 2011; Reddim, 2026).

This faculty-level digital divide is empirically documented in the Indian context. The ASER 2023 report found that even where hardware and internet connectivity were nominally available, low digital readiness remained a significant barrier to effective technology adoption, with a substantial proportion of educators lacking the confidence or skills to use digital tools purposefully for instruction.⁵ In India's law schools, where a significant proportion of faculty

4 Ghostline Legal, 'Top 5 Legal Databases You Should Be Using As A Lawyer' (Ghostline Legal, 27 April 2024) <<https://ghostlinelegal.com/top-5-legal-databases-you-should-be-using-as-a-lawyer/>> accessed 1 September 2026.

5 ASER Centre, 'Annual Status of Education Report (Beyond Basics) 2023' (Pratham, 2023) <<https://asercentre.org/aser-2023/>> accessed 1 September 2026.

are senior practitioners trained exclusively in traditional methods, this skills deficit translates directly into uneven and inadequate technology-integrated pedagogy across institutions.

The name of the game here is called Technological Infrastructure Deficits and Economic Disparities. The perfect picture of a tech-integrated legal classroom is based on the premise that all students have instant access to cutting-edge technology, the latest software applications, and the fastest Internet connection. But in fact the Higher education landscape is highly economically polarised. However, in spite of the fact that many countries are still in the process of development, in the rural area advanced educational technologies have been restricted by the encounter of severe infrastructure issues (Surbhi, 2023).

Besides, their electrical power network is unstable, their internet bandwidth is insufficient, the hardware that they use is still outdated, and they haven't spent enough money to buy expensive institutional software licenses at their law schools (Sulistianingsih, 2023). With a lack of money to develop and maintain a strong digital system, they are compelled to use low cost and weak digital system. This places their pupils in the cross-curricular domain of different technical problems presented in the system. Moreover, this is a situation that exacerbates educational inequality via the student-side digital divide. Pupils from lower socio-economic status backgrounds may not have access to their own laptop or quiet place in the home to use for studying in, or a good internet connection. If the push towards online legal education does not bring these economic disparities into account, it could lead to an under-served and under-represented group of vulnerable students, that is, a barrier rather than an equaliser for these students (Reddim, 2026).

In India, this infrastructure gap is borne out by official data. The Ministry of Education's UDISE+ 2023-24 report found that only around 53.9% of schools had internet connectivity as of 2023-24, while urban tele-density stood at approximately 134% compared to a rural tele-density of just 59% as of March 2024, a disparity of 75 percentage points.⁶ Students from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households face compounding disadvantages, with the proportion of such households possessing reliable internet access remaining considerably lower

⁶ Rau's IAS Study Circle, 'Growing Digital Divide in Indian Schools' (Compass Rau's IAS, 27 May 2025) <<https://compass.rauias.com/current-affairs/growing-digital-divide-indian-schools>> accessed 1 September 2026.

than that of dominant caste households in both rural and urban settings.⁷ For law students from such communities, the shift to ICT-mediated legal education risks reproducing and deepening pre-existing social inequalities rather than dismantling them.

The pedagogical misalignment and content de-intellectualization. A more pernicious problem, and one that goes largely ignored, is pedagogical misalignment – employing technology for no learning purpose. At the same time, having a traditional, one-way lecture on a video platform (Zoom for example) does NOT make it an active learning environment. Instead, it may result in withdrawal and mental exhaustion among students (Maharg & Muntjewerff, 2005).

Furthermore, when over-reliance is laid on a pre-made learning tool (digital module or game), there is also a risk to simplifying complex legal systems. The process of legal reasoning is a complex one, with a number of ambiguities in the system, ethical conflicts and changing social values. A complex case with multiple choice questions or a simplified version of it in the form of a summary of the case on an LMS does not provide the kind of deep analysis of the text that is necessary for students to learn the law. Legal education can't be that kind of legal education: it cannot be the kind of education that is devoid of critical thinking and instead relies on digital tools to provide a superficial level of analysis.

Key issues related to ICT in the teaching methods

Beyond the practical problems, there are complex institutional, legal and ethical issues that must be continuously resolved in the implementation of the technology in legal education. The implications of Generative AI for academic honesty. The problem of academic integrity has come to the fore with the advent of a new generation of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, generative AI, into the world of law schools. For this purpose, one can easily get coherent essay, explain legal case files, make full contracts, etc. using the advanced language model. These tools may provide the research with greater specificity of words, better text structure and better text style, but they can also be used incorrectly to falsely attribute authorship as well as to obscure the actual source of ideas. This new technology brings about a new form of digital plagiarism. AI tools can rewrite research and rephrase arguments, whereas traditional copying

⁷ India Development Review, 'The Digital Wall: How Caste Shapes Access to Technology in India' (IDR Online, 21 January 2026) <<https://idronline.org/article/inequality/the-digital-wall-how-caste-shapes-access-to-technology-in-india/>> accessed 1 September 2026.

does not appropriately cite the original authors. This makes it very hard for conventional, signature-based detection software to detect. It therefore can pose a threat to the core of legal education and assessment. Any violations of academic honesty can have serious repercussions in the real world as research results form the basis for policies, decisions, and regulations that are decided in government circles, courts, and medical institutions. Academic institutions need to make it clear that the responsibility for truth and originality is entirely that of the human author, in order to overcome these weaknesses. Researchers should also ensure that all text content that is reproduced in their research is authentic, whether or not AI has been used in the research process (COPE, 2023).

Totally depending on automated detection software is no longer a solution. Rather, the law school evaluation systems need to be changed, and in-person oral defenses, supervised writing sessions, and reflective portfolios assessing a student's active critical thinking, not merely his or her final written work, are needed. Themes are: Data Privacy, Cyber Security and Surveillance Capitalism. Since ICT platforms are based on the principle of collecting, processing and storing huge amounts of user data, using the platforms in legal education poses significant privacy concerns. Personal information like student's identification, academic marks, monetary transactions, and detailed behavioral diagnostics produced by LMS algorithms are dealt with by educational systems, which makes them sensitive and personal data (Yamin et al., 2021; Surbhi, 2023).

In the Indian regulatory context, these concerns are compounded by a significant governance gap. The University Grants Commission Plagiarism Prevention Regulations, 2018, which remain the primary instrument governing academic integrity in Indian higher education, were formulated before the emergence of large language models capable of generating academically coherent text, and accordingly contain no provisions specific to AI-generated content.⁸ A 2023 UGC circular directed all Higher Educational Institutions to remain vigilant about AI-generated content in academic submissions, but no formal detection methodology or enforcement mechanism was specified, leaving law schools without a consistent national framework for managing AI misuse in assessment contexts.

⁸ Research Square, 'Mapping Artificial Intelligence Adoption, Perceptions, and Governance in Indian Higher Education: A Scoping Review' (Research Square, 2026) <<https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-10639862/v1>> accessed 1 September 2026; University Grants Commission, 'University Grants Commission (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2018' (Government of India, 2018).

This dependence makes for an extremely fragile situation: Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities: Law schools and universities are known for being frequent victims of malicious cyberattacks, data breaches and ransomware schemes. One incident can result in the leakage of highly sensitive information, as well as intellectual property (IP) (Chourasia et al., 2023).

Private tech companies are the ones that have outsourced their digital requirements to numerous institutions and pose surveillance risks. Hence, ethical debates about data ownership and business monetization of data (Berendt et al., 2020 ; Surbhi, 2023) come into play. The integration in the statutory national framework such as Academic Integrity Regulations of the University Grants Commission (UGC, 2018) of these operational mechanisms can systematically decrease the risks of data fabrication, falsification and plagiarism in law schools. This wide-ranging sweep is part and parcel of making sure that technology serves to confirm and elevate true human scholarship, rather than to minimize or marginalize it. The development of Human-Centric and Hybrid Pedagogical Model Technology should be able to augment learning, rather than replace it. The best models of legal training will be crafted with intentionality to be flexible to online learning and will foster the unquantifiable power that comes from on-the-spot, customised learning and discussion. Law schools are encouraged to use the ICT tools which can be made available asynchronously for running basic activities of the school including the lessons of basic legal knowledge, running of simple diagnostic tests, initial searches on documents, etc. This targeted delegated digital way frees up valuable synch class time for valuable human interaction: complex case discussions, ethical analysis, collaborative problem solving, and intensive mock trial practice. Moreover, legal mentors should be very involved with the ECR in their ethical duties with respect to the ECR's role as an author and in the current ethos of research (ALLEA, 2023; Shamoo & Resnik, 2022).

In fact, if the human aspect is the major part of the legal education, then it is possible to utilize the application of technology to assist in the development of skills for the profession while maintaining the ethics of legal knowledge.

Advantages and Disadvantages

The legal education benefits and drawbacks of ICT are presented. In the digitalization of the legal curriculum, there is also a downside. Technology is a tool that has never been given to us that provides such great opportunities for modernizing instruction, but with the same time opportunities presents such great vulnerabilities of the structure and pedagogy. In order to gain

a balanced appraisal of this paradigm shift, it is necessary to consider the unique advantages as well as the disadvantages of this paradigm.

Advantages

The benefits of Digital Integration Traditional, paper-based approaches to legal education have a number of transformative advantages that cannot be replicated in the context of legal education through the use of ICT:

ICT breaking geographical and temporal limitations, that is, “Democratisation of Access and Unprecedented Flexibility.” Law schools can use e-learning models and Learning Management Systems (LMS) to reach individuals who are working or studying outside of the classroom and those who are in remote locations. This flexibility provides students with opportunities to engage with course content asynchronously, which means that they can learn at their own speed and revisit more difficult lectures as needed (Cella, 2011).

In the Indian context, the National Education Policy 2020 has provided formal policy recognition to this democratising potential, explicitly advocating blended learning models and directing institutions to leverage the SWAYAM platform (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) to widen access to quality higher education.⁹ Legal education has directly benefited from this initiative, with institutions such as National Law University Delhi offering free credit-bearing courses on Indian intellectual property law through SWAYAM, enabling students across geographical and financial boundaries to access specialised legal instruction at no cost.¹⁰

Improved Experiential Learning through Simulation: Advanced software can help universities go beyond the classroom when it comes to theoretical reading, by creating actual “legal” environments. Students can then engage in simulated high-pressure environments that involve training them to practise drafting pleadings and to orally argue positions on complex cases

⁹ Ministry of Education, 'National Education Policy 2020' (Government of India, 2020)

<https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf> accessed 1 September 2026.

¹⁰ SpicyIP, 'SWAYAM Free Online Course on Intellectual Property by NLU Delhi' (SpicyIP, 23 January 2024)

<<https://spicyip.com/2024/01/swayam-free-online-course-on-intellectual-property-by-nlu-delhi-january-08-april-30-register-by-february-29.html>> accessed 1 September 2026.

through the use of virtual mock courts, digital dispute resolution platforms and use of interactive case-mapping software (Maharg & Muntjewerff, 2005).

The days of having to scour hundreds of physical case reporters manually for information are behind us. The vast quantity of jurisprudence students are able to synthesize in seconds is possible thanks to digital databases such as Westlaw, LexisNexis and SCC Online which are built on natural language processing and hyperlinked citation networks. This task turns a cognitive process from information seeking to critical thinking.

Important Modern Legal Application: Electronic discovery, cloud based case management and e-filing play an important role in the modern legal profession (Fornasier, 2021). Leveraging these technologies is a way that law schools make sure their graduates are technologically literate, and ready to operate in the digital world of today's law firm and courtroom.

Disadvantages

Yet, despite these appealing advantages, the current over-digital teaching methods can be very risky for the legal education sector, and could negatively affect the quality of legal education: The most apparent is the sociological disadvantage of the technology, or the "Digital Divide" and the "Educational Inequity". In emerging economies and rural areas, students are often restricted in their access to high-speed Internet, high-quality software licenses and high-quality individual hardware (Surbhi, 2023).

Too much digitisation of law education can be an agent of exclusion, and not one of inclusion, for vulnerable groups and not one of equalia, (Reddim, 2026). By its very nature, the Legal Profession is human centered. A great deal of reading body language is involved in the classical Socratic method, and spontaneous face-to-face debate and real-time persuasion are closely allied with the Socratic method. These are spontaneous interactions and in a virtual environment, they are highly limited. Very technically educated students will leave the distance education programme without the empathy, emotional intelligence and interpersonal negotiation skills necessary to be effective legal advocates (Fornasier, 2021).

How AI and automated writing tools are new avenues for academic cheating? These can generate seemingly valid legal analysis and can also give an overview over a long piece of legislation, making plagiarism difficult to detect and creating serious problems for academic integrity (COPE, 2023). Complex legal texts and texts must be read with deep, extended concentration: Cognitive Fatigue and De-intellectualization. A digital platform can have a brief

attention span aspect and have gamified interactions, making for shallow engagement with the course content. Furthermore, a poor student–lecturer dialogue can occur when the student is passive in a recorded lecture, compared to a dynamic dialogue in a face-to-face, Socratic lecture (Maharg & Muntjewerff, 2005).

Conclusion

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Legal Education is a change in the socio-structural system of the production, dissemination and use of Legal Knowledge. If used properly, ICT based teaching aids can overcome geographical barriers, make access to vast legal resources accessible to more people and, when geared towards realistic scenarios, enable students to experience interactive, work-like situations in the legal profession. However, the transition to the digital is accompanied by great institutional and systemic obstacles, as this analysis makes clear. If left unchecked, problems such as inequitable access to the law school infrastructure, institutional complacency, security risks regarding privacy of legal data, and the emergence of AI plagiarism pose the risk of impairing the quality and equality of legal education. These issues are too complex to be resolved by any one-alone and necessitate a coordinated effort among students, researchers, professors, university administrations, along with efforts from national regulatory authorities and others in the legal community. However, neither can the law schools be complacent on their own about the digital age nor can they rely on isolated, anachronistic traditions to keep them on track. Rather they have to actively foster a culture of education which is founded on transparency, technical skills, and ethical responsibility. Legal education can feel confident in using technology when it invests in modern, digital infrastructure, has clear guidelines for the use of technology, safeguards data privacy, and maintains a place for human mentorship in the classroom. In this equitable manner, the trust of the public in legal scholarship will be maintained, scientific advancement and law development will be promoted and the role of law as a fair and stable basis of society will be upheld.

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