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Radical Collaboration: An Emerging Platform for Economic Success in Law

By Larry Bridgesmith

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Larry Bridgesmith

Radical Collaboration: An Emerging Platform for Economic Success in Law

By Larry Bridgesmith, CEO/Founder Legal Alignment, Adjunct Professor of Law Coordinator Program on Law & Innovation

The impact of technology tools and applications is very apparent in our lives. Siri finds us the closest Starbucks. Alexa plays our favorite mood music, turns off the lights at the same time and waters the lawn as well if you wish. Google advises us about the time to leave for our next appointment and the best route to take to get there on time.

These and many more “on demand” functions have found their way into our daily routines without any request on our part. We did not ask Apple to create a virtual assistant. She showed up one day on our iPhone. Amazon anticipates our reading, listening and grocery needs, and provides suggestions for on demand delivery later that same day.

How did we get to this place of economic instant gratification when owning a car becomes more expensive than having Uber deliver you to your destinations? Or when did residential property owners learn to generate \$100,000 or more in annual income sharing their properties with short term guests through Airbnb? In the prior legal economy, success came from building a great team to execute on a great idea and vigorously guard the secrets that led to financial gain. Today, Tesla makes its cutting edge technology available to all who wish to build on its success and enhance their own opportunities. Collaboration, rather than competition alone, is a driving force to capital growth today.

What changed? Technology and the pace with which its growth now takes place moved us from a linear economic age to an exponential age. New strategies and working methodologies are required to succeed in an exponential age. Competition must take on new forms as collaboration becomes equally critical to success. Disruption is occurring to traditional business models because the rules of the game changed.

A. The Second Machine Age

An analysis by MIT academics Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee in *The Second Machine Age* provides a useful analogy to understand our current economic era. In their well documented analysis, the authors compare the first two hundred years following the steam engine's disruptive impact on commerce to a linear advance in human progress. From the late 18th Century until 2006, the advance of economic success can be plotted in a predictably straight line manner.

However, the pace of computing power and the growth of digital information began a gradual steep slope pattern that has quickly become unpredictable. Gordon Moore, a co-founder of Intel, observed that computing power and speed doubles about every 18 months. Moores' Law has held fast from its inception in 1964 into the current age of technology advance and computing power.

Numerous seemingly unrelated events occurred in 2006 which cumulatively signaled a shift from linear to exponential change. *The Second Machine Age*, pp 46 - 158. Accordingly, Brynjolfsson and McAfee suggest that 2006 was the point at which the First half of the Machine Age pivoted to the Second half.

As a result, we are moving from an era of scarcity and the competitive business models it produced to an era of abundance and a corresponding collaborative business model. Note all the business examples in the opening paragraphs of this article. From Airbnb to Uber to Tesla and the others, a shared technology platform has enabled businesses (many of them in competition with each other) to enjoy vast economic opportunities through a shared portal to their market. Abundance from Collaboration: the key to the kingdom of an exponential age.

B. What is exponential?

Ray Kurzweil, co-founder of Google, tells the fable of a peasant who introduced the game of Chess to the emperor. The emperor was deeply impressed with the game's ability to teach strategic thinking to his court and military leaders. He insisted the peasant be rewarded with anything he desired.

Reluctantly, the peasant asked if he could be given one grain of rice on day one representing the first square on the Chess board and double the amount each day until the 64th day representing the last square on the board. The emperor said, "That is nothing," and gladly granted the peasant's simple request.

All was well until day 32 when the pile of rice to which the peasant was entitled equaled the annual product of the emperor's kingdom.

Rather than proceed to day 64 when the pile of rice would exceed the height of Mount Everest, either the king lost his kingdom or the peasant lost his head. We all can imagine how that turned out.

In addition to exponential growth in computing power, an equally astounding increase in digital information feeds the Artificial Intelligence engine which powers the technology explosion. Currently, the amount of digital information doubles every two years. Just a few years ago, the digital information generated in a day equalled the total amount of analog information (records, accounts, letters, books, magazines and scholarly journals) from the beginning of time.

By 2020, IBM Global Cognitive Legal suggests that each day will generate double the digital information created the day before!

Exponential is unimaginable. It exceeds human knowledge and experience.

C. Examples of Collaborative Abundance

Peter Diamandis, another promoter of the impact of technology on the creation of abundance, recently recounted the amazing abun-

dance our global community enjoys due to the advances of technology. Despite a public belief in a doom and gloom perspective on the world's condition, strong indicators of health, economic growth, environmental protection, affordable energy, accessible food, and longevity of human life are irrefutable. All of this is made possible through a growing collaborative effort on the part of businesses, education, technology and government. Much more needs to be done, and the momentum is remarkable.

Perhaps the greatest indicator of collaborative abundance can be found in the development of Quantum Computing. Traditional computing consists of high speed analytics through which machines process analytically by selecting either a 0 or a 1 electronic gateway in sequential fashion. The physical limits of traditional computing are being reached due to the two dimensional and linear character of binary logic.

The theory of multi-dimensional logic in machines (working similar to that of the human brain) is known as Quantum Computing. Theory has become reality in the form of functional examples of computation across dimensions and in real time. The limitations of exponential growth based on binary computing are being exploded by early stage Quantum Computing in operation today.

IBM scientist Dr. Talia Gershon explains the characteristics of Quantum Computing and introduces us to IBM Q in a stimulating short video. The abundance factor in IBM Q's introduction, as with Tesla's technology, is that it is open source and free to use for all who wish to

develop additional Quantum Computing applications. To see and hear IBM Q in operation check out its video.

D. Why should Competitors Collaborate?

A sobering example of business profiting from competitive scarcity is the absence of technological interoperability in health care. It has been known for many years that health care data (belonging to patients) is held hostage by the technology silos that have collected it. The inability of health care providers to access information “owned” by 70 to 100 different technology applications used by an average medical center leads to medical error costing over 1000 lives each day in the U.S.

Access to this treasure trove of essential live saving patient specific information would save

the American health care system unimaginable billions of dollars each year. Nashville’s Center for Medical Interoperability exists to solve this long standing dilemma. Collaboration between traditionally competitive technology silos could create an abundance of resources and beneficial medical outcomes which would revolutionize the health care systems of the world as well as make it much more affordable. Must our healthcare system remain antiquated? Absolutely not!

Technology platforms shared by competitors allows them all to succeed more effectively. Uber drivers compete; Airbnb renters compete; Amazon sellers compete. However, the availability of a tech platform that allows them to reach a much larger audience gives them a much bigger market. A rising tide raises all boats.



Existing tools permit two way exchange of data in real time between technology applications. Current API integration capabilities can achieve the unthinkable: access to complete health care data found in all a patient's technology silos held by each of the patient's medical care providers and diagnostic records. Further, for any truly proprietary and confidential data, Blockchain applications can create data transfers with the highest degree of security, transparency and trust without compromising confidentiality.

The only requirement is an agreement between competitors to do so.

Even more traditional business models allow for collaborative, strategic partnerships. Jonathan Tisch, Loew's Hotels and Hospitality CEO, wrote *The Power of We* demonstrating how partnerships in 360 degrees benefit all business. Hotels can join forces with other local hotels to promote a city event and the hospitality industry to everyone's benefit.

Health systems could engage in collaborative relationships to share data. The only requirement is an agreement between competitors to do so.

In the legal industry, Legal Alignment has developed DASH, built on open source technology, that hosts real-time data exchange between several Artificial Intelligence legal tech innovators (such as ROSS Intelligence, Kim Technologies, Intraspection, Clause) and other disruptive legal applications. This interoperability then allows lawyers to serve clients with transparency in a better, faster and less costly manner. Competitors collaborating to create

an abundance of accessible and affordable legal resources is not theoretical, its time has arrived. DASH launched at LegalWeek in New York City on January 29, and will provide a minimum viable product to participants at the Britain Legal Technology Forum in London on March 13.

A highly competitive industry driven by scarcity can be disrupted through collaboration.

Conclusion

The explosion of information and the exponential capacity of computer power to process, analyze and make strategic diagnosis and recommendations for change has launched an exponential age of human progress. Collaboration across the silos of disciplinary expertise, technology applications and competing business interests can transform a world of competitive scarcity into one of collaborative abundance.

About the Author

Larry Bridgesmith J.D., is CEO of [LegalAlignment LLC](#) and a practicing lawyer in Nashville, Tennessee. He is listed as one of America's Best Lawyers, among the Leading Lawyers for American Businesses and SuperLawyer. He is a member of the International Academy of Mediators and a member of the Dispute Resolution Section Council of the American Bar Association. Larry has practiced in the fields of labor, employment and dispute resolution for over 30 years and served in management roles for boutique and mid-sized law firms throughout his career.

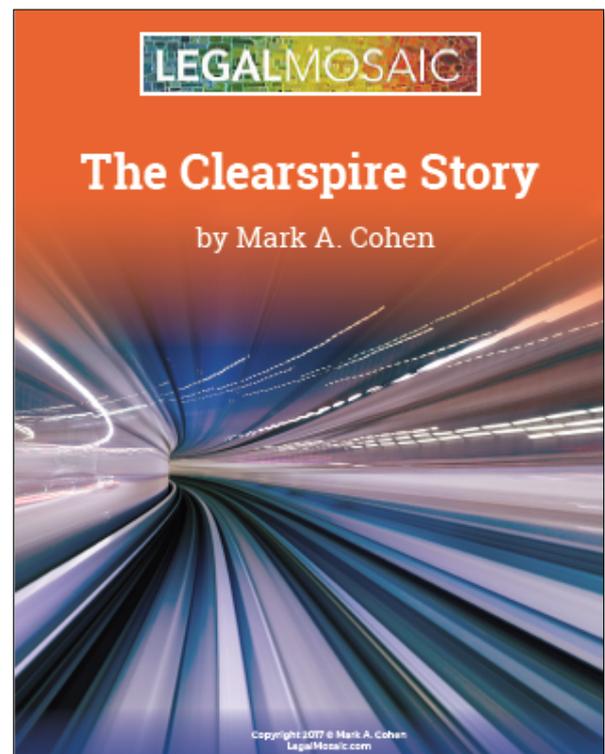
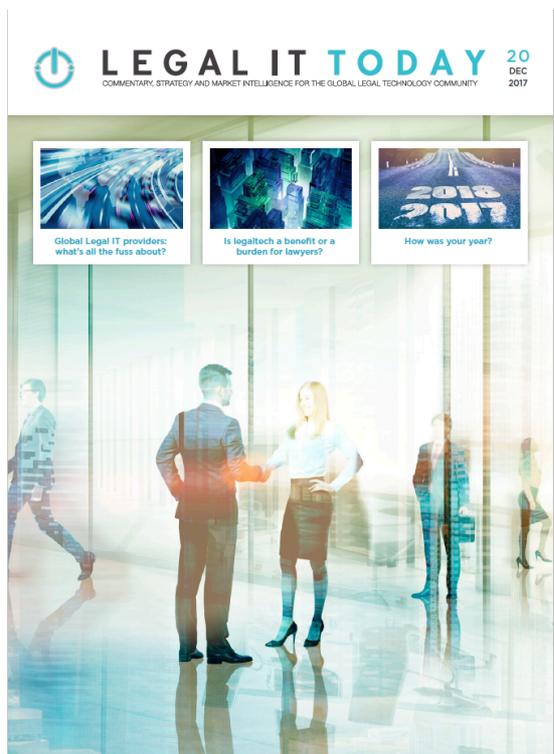
He founded Lipscomb University's Institute for Conflict Management and served as its inaugural Executive Director. He holds a Six Sigma Green Belt certificate.

Larry is an adjunct professor in legal project management, conflict management and mediation at [Vanderbilt University School of Law](#), Belmont University Massey Graduate School of Business, The Nashville School of Law and the Albany Medical School Alden March Institute for Biomedical Ethics. He coordinates the Program on Law and Innovation at Vanderbilt School of Law.

In 2013, Larry was awarded the Grayfred Gray Award for Public Service in Mediation by the Coalition for Mediation Awareness in Tennessee.

In 2017 The Tennessee Bar Association awarded Larry its President's Award for support to the bar in legal technology implementations and the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services awarded its Justice Janice Holder Award for service to the legal services community. His practice in facilitation and training in organizational change management has taken him across the country and around the world.

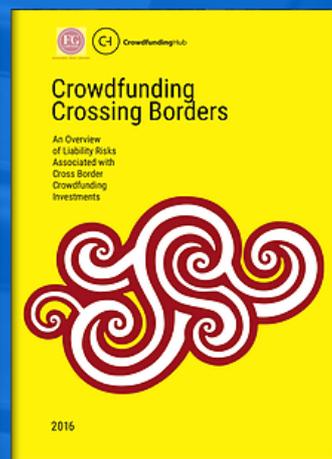
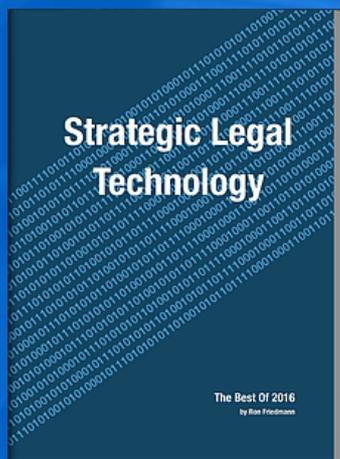
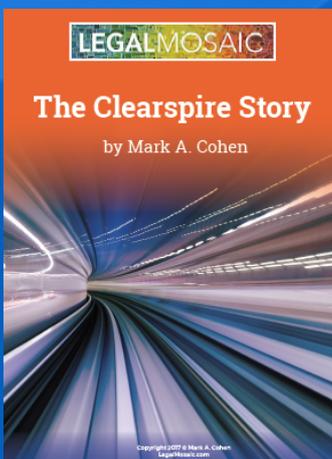
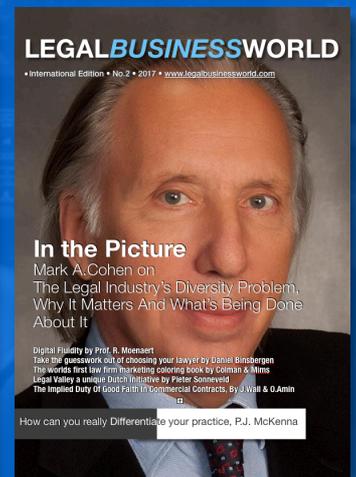
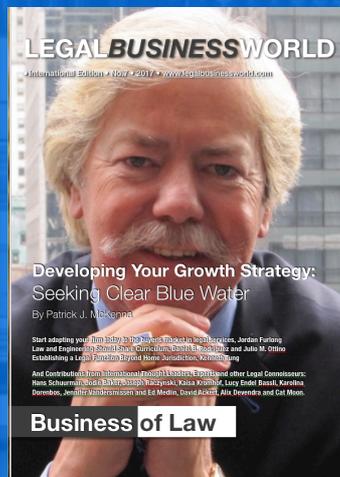
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