DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL COMPETENCES IN 21ST CENTURY LEGAL EDUCATION IN SZEGED

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ABSTRACT:*The goal of my paper is to describe the efforts of the Department of Statistics and Demography of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Szeged to ensure that the courses it offers ensure the development of students' digital competence. Beginning with the academic year 2017, teaching started on the basis of a new set of training outcome requirements. As part of this, two of the Department's first-year courses have been transformed. The former traditional lecture framework has been replaced by a complex theoretical and practical training system, where students learn the course material in small group sessions using computers and software. In this process, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the development of digital materials and enabled the development of teaching through online platforms. A major experience is that most of our first-year students have difficulties adapting to the new digital materials, as they have not used them before. On the other hand, the practice-oriented, problem-solving teaching method using computers in the classroom has been positively received by our students. In our upper-year facultative course, students learn more easily with the new material and the online teaching can develop further skills.*

KEYWORDS: *Legal Education; Development of Digital Competences; Legal Informatics; University of Szeged, Experiences.*
JEL Code: *K0*

„The future will be like the school of today"
Albert Szent-Györgyi

1. INTRODUCTION

Albert Szent-Györgyi is often quoted, and his thoughts today confront educators at all levels of education with numerous questions. Technology has evolved at such a dynamic speed that virtually everyone, including the legal profession and legal education, has had to adapt. In addition to the many benefits of the intelligent use of new technologies, new challenges and questions have also emerged. It is at this point that legal education is of

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particular importance, as it is practically essential that the future generation of lawyers has the highest possible level of digital skills and competences. The application of technology in the legal profession does not only cover the understanding of the use of different tools, software or databases, but also the legal aspects of each technology. Students also need to be prepared in the field of digitalization, which means not only mastering the current knowledge in practice, but also the challenges of various solutions. In addition to providing a thorough knowledge of the law and a high level of mastery of new technologies, legal education should also encourage students to be creative in their legal use of emerging new technologies. In fact, this is not an easy task, not to mention the fact that it is highly infrastructure-intensive, which is a costly factor, but despite the obstacles, educators have a responsibility to prepare the future generation as effectively as possible for the technological challenges they will face. (Princz, 2018)

In this paper, I will briefly review the expectations and new developments that the labour market has formulated for the future generation of lawyers, and then I will give a comprehensive overview of the efforts that I and my colleagues are making to improve the digital skills of our law students at the University of Szeged, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences (*hereinafter: Faculty*), at the Department of Statistics and Demography Department (*hereinafter: Department*).

2. LITERATURE BACKGROUND

In 2014, R. Amani Smathers introduced the concept of the T-shaped lawyer. The point of this is that by the 21st century, the practice of law has reached a level where it goes beyond deep legal knowledge (de Perio Wittman-Brown, 2023; Smathers, 2014). By the 21st century, the skills required for the legal profession have become T-shaped, i.e. deep legal expertise is still necessary, but at the same time, today's lawyer must be able to work with other disciplines such as technology, business, or data security. (Smathers, 2014) In terms of the technological skills required, De Perio Wittman and Brown wrote that this does not mean that a lawyer should become, for example, a coder or a bitcoin master, but that future lawyers need to understand how these industries are aligned with their client's interests. (de Perio Wittman-Brown, 2023) In her article, Smathers also pointed out that legal education typically teaches knowledge that will eventually lead to a I-Shaped Lawyer. While he referred to the system of law clinics[1] in US universities that help develop skills such as advocacy, communication, drafting, these are more related to legal knowledge than to other disciplines. On the other hand, the author points out that, until the publication of her article, a few law schools had tried to respond to the changed requirements by offering courses for students that aimed at developing the skills needed for a T-shaped lawyer, such as Georgetown University Law Center, Vermont Law School and MSU (Michigan State University). At MSU, for example, students learn personal

[1] More details about the Legal Clinic Program see:
Kálmán, R. (2020). A jogklinika módszertan múltja, különös tekintettel az Egyesült Államokra. *Közjogi Szemle*, 13(4), pp.47–53.
Kálmán, R. (2021). Clinical Legal Education in V4 Countries. *Central and Eastern European Legal Studies*, (1), pp.87–98.
Kálmán, R. (2023). Legal Clinic as an Exotic Phenomenon in Hungary. *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education*, 27(3), pp.230–252. doi: https://doi.org/10.19164/ijcle.v27i3.1048.

branding building or online marketing by putting their theoretical knowledge into practice. In addition to this, students are also introduced to statistical analysis and machine learning techniques in the Quantitative Methods and Legal Analytics course (Smathers, 2014).

In the United States, the American Bar Association's House of Delegates adopted an amendment to Rule 1.1 on lawyers, which declared that lawyers must be technologically competent (Ambrogi, 2013), which stated that lawyers must keep abreast of changes in law and practice "*including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology.*"[2] This change was adopted by the majority of national Bars and Chambers in 2018 and built into their own ethical system, the obligation of technological competence. (Ah Loy, 2018) Through an examination of the governing ethical rules, Ruan deals with the issue of the fact that the ethical rules governing labor lawyers collectively require them to *„combine to require due diligence for attorneys to become familiar with the technology relied upon by their clients in hiring, including its effects and outcomes related to protected categories of workers. Even though this technology too often lacks transparency, attorneys cannot blindly rely on algorithmic decision making without becoming familiar with its effects and consulting with experts."* (Ruan, 2021, pp.317-318) On the other hand, three other areas, such as online advertisement platforms, applicant screening tools, and psychometric assessments, which may raise professional challenges and questions for employment lawyers. The importance of these areas is due to the increasing power of technology in recruitment and selection (Ruan, 2021)

Liz Ritter, in her work published in 2021, declares that *"a successful solicitor is one that truly understands, the needs of their clients, can work with them to find innovative and effective solutions to problems and communicate those solutions clearly"* (Ritter, 2021, p.70.) The author also points out that those who want to become lawyers must have the basic skills of collaborative working, creativity and adaptability, reflection, and digital competence. Ritter adds that the work of the so-called O-Shaped Lawyer group has highlighted the need for these skills among law firm clients (Ritter, 2021). It is worth mentioning the O-Shaped Lawyer concept developed by Dan Kayne, which rethinks the skills that define the mindset and attitude of a 21st century lawyer.[3] The O-Shaped Lawyer possesses the 5 O's of openness, originality, opportunity, ownership and optimism that will create the next generation of lawyers. Those who possess these qualities and skills combine technical competence with more humanity and emotional competence (Kayne, 2020)

Jones et al, in exploring the concept of digital lawyering in relation to Kayne's system, explain that although 5O does not directly refer to digital lawyering, the components carry the skills that are expected of a digital lawyer[4] practitioner. The author's work can be

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[2] Rule 1.1. Competence – Comment, Client-Lawyer Relationship, Maintaining Competence. Available at: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/publications/model_rules_of_professional_conduct/rule_1_1_competence/comment_on_rule_1_1/ [Accessed 13 Aug. 2023].

[3] O Shaped official website, Dan Kayne: O Shaped story, Available at: https://oshaped.com/the-o-shaped-story [Accessed: 12.Aug 2023.]

[4] Jones at al, in their work, state that there is no single well-defined conceptual definition of digital lawyering, and then go into the concept itself at long length. (Jones at al., 2021) It is therefore worth highlighting the work of Kardos, where the author, citing the work of Ethan Katsh, argues that *"the term digital lawyer is essentially understood to mean a lawyer who not only uses digital tools but also understands how they work, a competent application of information technology."* With regard to the content of the concept of *"competent application*",

highlighted in terms of openness, which they describe as being able to support the way in which certain problems can be solved digitally, by making wider use of digital technology in new and innovative ways of thinking and doing. (Jones et al., 2021) De Perio Wittman and Brown, on the other hand, stated that *"the original and opportunistic nature of the O-shaped lawyer encourages holistic problem solving, fosters innovation, and highlights technology competency"* (de Perio Wittman - Brown 2023, p.17.)

The push for digitalization in the labour market is regularly predicted by two series of landmark studies. On the one hand, studies published by the World Economic Forum (*hereafter WEF*) in 2016[5], 2018[6], 2020 and 2023 have provided a forward-looking forecast of future jobs, essentially all of them capturing the growing role of technology in significantly transforming the labour market, while mapping the future jobs and skills that future workers are expected to need. (World Economic Forum, 2020) In their assessment of the main findings of the 2020 survey, the authors highlighted early on in their work that the pandemic situation has significantly accelerated the transformation of the labour market. The WEF survey is based on data from 15 industrial sectors and 25 developed and developing countries. Among the main findings, the authors highlight that cloud technology, big data and e-commerce remain a priority for some business leaders, while there is a significant increase in demand and interest in new technologies such as encryption, non-humanoid robots and artificial intelligence. The pandemic situation has also led to an increased demand for automation (World Economic Forum, 2020).

On the other hand, it identified the top 10 skills for 2025, with *technology use, monitoring, and control* and *technology design and programming* the top 10 skills of *use and development technology* (Infographics, 2020). The main findings of the latest 2023 edition include the unchanged presence of technology adaptation, which will continue to be the main driver of business transformation over the next 5 years. This will typically involve Big Data, cloud-based technology and AI (World Economic Forum, 2023) As in previous practice, this research also looked at the skills needed for the jobs of the future. The three most important skills in 2023 are analytical thinking, creative thinking and flexibility, with technology literacy coming in sixth place, while the WEF's 2023 forecast shows AI and Big Data alongside Technology Literacy as the top 10 skills of fastest growing importance between 2023 and 2027 (World Economic Forum, 2023; Infographics, 2023).

Wolters Kluwer is publishing a series of studies on the technological influences and trends shaping the work of lawyers. First published in 2019, *The Future Ready Lawyer*, *The Global Future of Law*, surveys lawyers working in law firms, corporate offices and businesses in the United States and Europe on how technology and other factors are impacting the profession and how the organizations surveyed are preparing for these changes. (Wolters Kluwer, 2019) The research quoted in the run-up to the pandemic was intended to reflect the transformational process that technology is bringing to the legal

Kardos formulates it as the perception of causality and the awareness surrounding the professional application of IT. (Kardos, 2019)

[5] World Economic Forum: *The Future of Jobs, Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution,* [online] Available at: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs.pdf [Accessed: 10.08.2022]

[6] *Word Economic Forum: The Future of Jobs Report 2018.* [online] Available at: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2018.pdf [Accessed: 10.08.2022]

profession, stating that *"legal professionals are increasingly turning to accessible and impactful technologies that help them achieve better outcomes and offer higher value through data-driven analytics and insights and higher efficiency and productivity."* (Wolters Kluwer, 2019, p.1.) One of the main results of the 2019 survey is that respondents agree that technology is becoming more widely used in the legal profession, while more than half of respondents believe that AI, Big Data and predictive analytics will have an impact on the Market. In relation to the latter result, it is also worth noting that less than 34% of respondents thought they understood these Technologies (Wolters Kluwer, 2019). In 2020, Wolters continued its research, and it is useful to note that respondents said that the trends that most influence organizations include the increasing importance of legal technology (76%) and the processing of increasingly large and complex information (72%) (Wolters Kluwer, 2020). The relevance of technology is also supported by the results of a separate analysis of the most important law firm evaluation factor at the departments and law firms. *The ability to use technology to improve productivity/efficiency and collaboration/work process* were considered by law departments to be the most important criteria along with specialization (23%-23%), while for law firms the same criterion was the fourth most important factor (19%) on which they were evaluated (Wolters Kluwer, 2020) In relation to trends, the 2021 survey showed minor changes, with the increasing importance of legal informatics and the processing of increasingly complex information rising to 77-77 percent and remaining the leading trend in the legal profession. On the other hand, the impact of the pandemic has already been reflected in this survey, for example by the fact that the survey found increased pressure on legal departments to handle a larger workload with smaller budgets. For example, the biggest challenges cited by legal departments included automating routine tasks and leveraging technology to improve workflow (Wolters Kluwer, 2021) The main results of the survey, published in 2022, show that 63% of respondents planned to invest more in software solutions to support their work, while 36% of respondents said they were well prepared for the most significant changes expected. In terms of leading trends, the growing importance of legal technologies (79%) and the increased volume and complexity of information (79%) continued to be reinforced. On the other hand, it is interesting to mention that respondents to the 2022 survey believe that technological solutions such as AI, machine learning or blockchain technology will have an impact on the legal profession, while their own understanding of these technologies, based on their own ratings, is on average only one third of respondents (Wolters Kluwer, 2022)

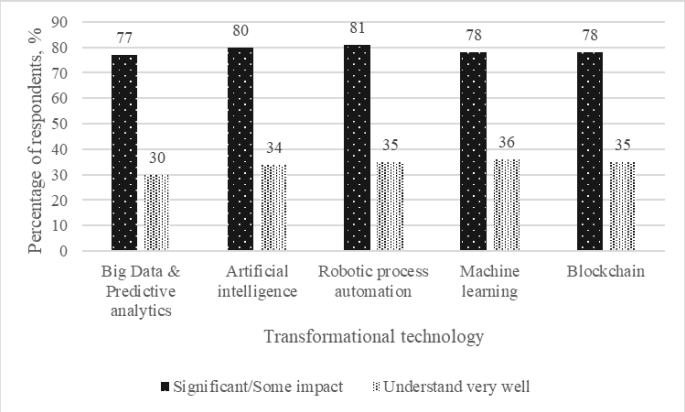

Figure 1
Impact and understanding of Transformational Technologies in 2022 in Wolters Kluwer survey
(**Source:** Wolters Kluwer, 2022, p.19.; Wolters Kluwer, 2022 own editing)

3. EU BACKGROUND AND AMBITIONS

At the beginning of the 2000s, a process started at EU level which led to the creation of the so-called DigComp framework, which is recognized today. This included a recommendation, adopted in 2006[7] and updated in 2018[8], which, among other things, declared and defined the so-called key competences for lifelong learning. As part of this process, the DigComp study was published in 2013, which defined the components of digital competence in a systematic and detailed way. The framework has been updated several times in the evolution of technology. At the time of writing this DigComp 2.2 study, Képes pointed out that, on the one hand, the existing framework has not been changed, but on the other hand, a fifth dimension, with use cases has been added to the existing 4 dimensions (competency domains - competency title and descriptor - proficiency levels - practical examples). Moreover, more than 250 new examples of knowledge, skills and attitudes that can help in the use of new technologies (including AI-based systems) are added (Képes, 2022; European Commission, Joint Research Centre & Vuorikari & Kluzer & Punie, 2022)

[7] European Parliament and of the Council. Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. [online] *Official Journal of the European Union* L394, 30. December 2006, pp.10-18. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32006H0962 [Accessed 03. September 2023].

[8] Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning (Text with EEA relevance.). [online] *Official Journal of the European Union* C189, 04. June 2018. pp.1-13. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01) [Accessed at: 03. September 2023].

4. HUNGARIAN BACKGROUND

With regard to the digital competences expected by the Hungarian labour market, it is important to mention the work of Tamás Híves published in 2006 (Híves, 2006), in which the author examined the labour market questions of the young graduates. The research was based on job advertisements published in the press (Figyelő, Heti Világgazdaság, Oktatási Közlöny, Egészségügyi Közlöny, Jogi Közlöny) and on the Internet (which accounted for 3% of the sources), 954 of them in total. In addition, it also examined the IT competences expected by the labour market. His work, with 81 advertisements, also included the legal profession. In this field, the author found that in the legal professions (lawyers, paralegals, legal advisors and the public administration field are related), 86.4 percent of the jobs in the mid-2000s did not include IT skills. And the remaining range of advertisements named two groups: in 12.3 percent, "basic level" requirements, while in 1.2 percent, "high level" requirements were specified by legal employers (Híves, 2006)

The author concluded from the expectations on IT skills that, during this period, law was one of the fields (together with education and health) with the least expectations on IT skills (Híves, 2006) and, according to the data published by the author, they were also typically general IT expectations. It is interesting to note that Nagy, in his 2003 work, identified five digital legal content services (CD Jogász, CompLex CD Jogtár, Jogkódex Plusz, Magyar Törvénytár, Törvénytár) that were available to the legal profession at the time (dr. Nagy, 2003), not to mention that several of them had been present on the market since the 1990s, but that the research did not identify any such expectations. In view of the actuality of the theme, I would like to mention that today, among this group, the Jogkódex database published by ORAC Publishing, the OptiJUS database published by Wolters Kluwer Hungary Kft. and the Jogtár database, which is celebrating its 30th birthday at the time of writing this article, the new generation of which, the "Új Jogtár" (New Jogtár) provides digital legal content services in Hungary.

The specific expectations in job advertisements for lawyers were analyzed in the work of Vivien Kardos, published in 2020, which was based on 20 in-depth interviews conducted between March and September 2020 and analyzed more than 100 job advertisements, examining the requirements for young lawyers. In the job advertisements examined, professional skills and knowledge of foreign languages were of particular importance, but the author also pointed out that the role of soft skills (e.g. team spirit, precision, good problem-solving skills, flexibility, ability to work under pressure, etc.) was also a significant factor in the advertisements he examined. In the context of digital competences, Kardos mentions that a legal database, or a high level of Microsoft Office knowledge, or knowledge of electronic procedures are also mentioned. With regard to the last two areas of knowledge, the author points out that they are a basic requirement on the part of employers, and in relation to the latter, he notes that they typically include word processing and spreadsheet skills. In the case of IT skills, Kardos also mentions presentation skills, the importance of which was highlighted during the interviews. In addition to this, the author also points out that the higher level of IT and legal informatics skills is an advantage in terms of the expectations of new entrants - but what this might mean in practice is not explained - and openness to new technological solutions (Kardos, 2021).

Directly prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, between 26 August 2019 and 10 October 2019, the Department conducted research on the digital competences and expectations of practicing lawyers. The survey was based on the DigComp framework, with the framework itself defining and describing general IT competences, and was accordingly adapted to the field of legal informatics. The data was collected online, anonymously, by the Department sending the survey questionnaire in electronic form to all regionally competent Hungarian Bar Associations, and on the other hand, Wolters Kluwer Hungary Ltd. supported the research by among other things, making it available to as many lawyers as possible through its own platforms and events. The questionnaire was eventually completed by 250 people. In the course of the referenced research, we asked our respondents what they expected from a recent law graduate. The question did not specify that the expectations could only relate to digital competences; respondents could write anything they considered important. Of the 250 respondents, 85 left the question empty, of the remaining 165 respondents, 90 respondents identified at least one IT or legal informatics requirement of some level - 108 in total - and 75 respondents did not identify any such requirement. Based on the content of the responses received, the two main groups could be classified into three levels per group, according to whether they were defined as basic, intermediate or high-level general IT or legal informatic (*Figure 2*.). However, based on the responses received, a slight overlap between the responses could be observed, with 18 out of 90 respondents identifying both general and legal informatics trends.

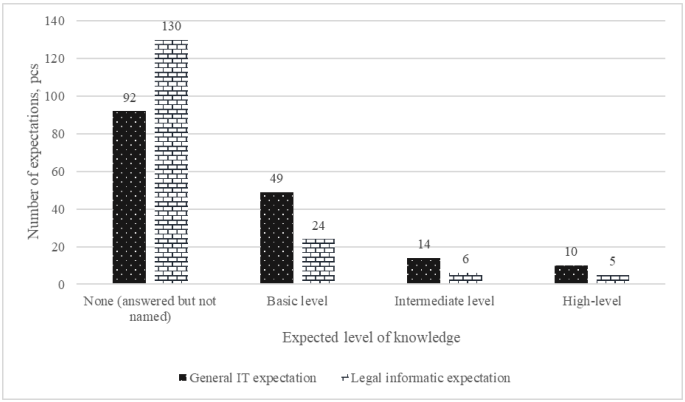

Figure 2.
The number of general and legal informatics competences required by Hungarian lawyers for young lawyers in 2019, pcs
(**Source**: based on research data, own editing)

The general IT competences expected included those descriptions - 49 in total - that defined general expectations about IT, digital or computers, and did not include any additional substantive information. (e.g. "*IT knowledge*", "*computer literacy*", "*user-level computer literacy*", or "*IT skills*") At the intermediate level, a total of 14 responses could be classified as having some specific task (e.g. "*word processing*", "*searching for information on the Internet*", but also related to typing), but also cases where respondents

only specified, for example, programs related to the tasks mentioned (e.g. *Word, Excel, PowerPoint*), but did not go into the depth of knowledge required. The total of 10 answers were classified as general, high-level IT expectations, either because the respondents specifically highlighted the level (e.g. "*high-level word processing skills*", "*high-level IT skills*" and their variants, although in none of the cases did the respondent define what exactly this level meant), or because they specified an expectation such as the ECDL exam (although it was not specified which module of the exam). Among the responses classified as high-level IT expectations, it is worth noting that there was only one response where the respondent (also) specified knowledge of reliable phone-based communication applications.

In the area of legal informatics competences, a total of 24 responses expressed some general, but legal-related, expectation for improvement. Responses such as "*knowledge of databases*", "*management of legal databases"*, "*use of electronic administrative processes*" or "*knowledge of electronic procedures*" were classified in this group. Responses such as "*use of a law library*", or "Takarnet", or "*knowledge of the ÁNYK*", or "*knowledge of Lotus*" were found in a total of nine responses and were classified as medium level legal informatics competency expectations. High-level legal informatics competency expectations were either some new technology such as *"use of clouds"* or *"electronic signature"* or something higher such as "*IT-legal informatics security solutions*". In this context, it is worth noting that there was only one response in this category where the respondent stated that the candidate should have "*the knowledge needed to use artificial intelligence in a targeted and effective way*".

Between 9 and 11 April 2023, I examined the job advertisements for lawyers and trainee lawyers on Hungarian online job websites (Profession: https://www.profession.hu/ Jobline: https://jobline.hu/ Arsboni: https://karrier.arsboni.hu/allashirdetesek/ Legal Forum: https://www.jogiforum.hu/allas/ Careerjet: https://www.careerjet.hu/ and Public Employment: https://kozszolgallas.ksz.gov.hu/ to find out what IT and legal informatics expectations each advertiser has of its future employee. In total, 144 advertisements were examined, of which 53 were for trainee lawyers and 91 for practicing lawyers. It is worth pointing out that the expectations and benefits of both groups of advertisements were treated in a uniform and aggregated way (Table 1).

Websites tested	**Number of ads, pcs**	**Expectation of General IT, pcs**	**Expectation of Legal informatics, pcs**
Arsboni	37	19	13
Careerjet	5	3	0
Jobline	2	0	0
Jogifórum	5	3	0
Közszolgállás	0	0	0
Profession	4	2	1
Total	**53**	**27**	**14**

Table 1.
Number of appearances of general and legal informatics requirements for lawyer candidates in Hungarian lawyer job advertisements between 9-11 April 2023.
(**Source**: based on research data, own editing)

The digital expectations of trainee lawyers show a higher tendency to include a general expectation than a legal informatics expectation, while there were 10 ads that included both. The general IT expectations included responses that either mentioned some general-purpose software such as MS Office, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, or responses of this type that referred to the user level (e.g., user level MS Office/Word or high-level Word usage etc.), but also *responses such as user* or *high-level computer skills* and similar answers, the content of which was not defined by the advertiser. Legal informatics expectations for trainee lawyers included or specifically mentioned software such as *Jogtár*, *Jogkódex*, ÁNYK, *e-signature*, but also *e-per* knowledge, *cégkapu*, *Cégeditor*, registers or FMH procedures. Similar to the general IT expectations described in the present research, qualifiers such as "*high*" or "*user*" level were also used in this case, but in this case, it was not specified what exactly the advertiser meant by these definitions.

I also examined the job descriptions in the advertisements. This showed that in 15 cases no legal informatics expectation was mentioned at all, while the terms of reference attached to the advertisements did include the need for it. An example of this is the advertisements where the job description appears in connection with company procedures, which presupposes knowledge of a database such as the e-business register or the e-reporting interface, which is used in the curricular education, for example in the Legal Informatics course in Szeged, which will be described later, But the same is the case for the research of legislation as a named field of activity and its different versions, but the same the situation is also in the case of legal research as a designated task and its various versions, where, in addition to a thorough knowledge of the Új Jogtár, Jogkódex, or OptiJUS, database, EU databases such as EUR-Lex or even various international databases may appear.

The advance of technology in the legal profession has started to demand new skills and knowledge from the lawyers of tomorrow. In the last few years, this expectation has reached the point where, in addition to the requirements of the classical legal profession, it has also demanded new skills from future professionals in other disciplines, to which education must respond. Smather's work shows that there are universities in the United States, for example, which have introduced such courses for their students, which could serve as a model for the future. The European Union, recognizing the importance of technology, was quick to declare digital literacy as a key competence, but what the concept itself means in practice has only been developed later through the DigComp framework. In Hungary, the legal profession is also pushing digital skills more and more strongly towards their future colleagues. The joint research of the Department and Wolters Kluwer, as well as the 2023 research results, primarily formulated general IT expectations, but the presence of specific legal informatics expectations can be observed to a small extent directly and to a significant extent indirectly. In the light of all this, and reflecting on the requirements of the present day, I will now attempt to present a comprehensive overview of the efforts that the Department has made and is making to equip our students with the basic technological skills that are an indispensable part of their everyday work as lawyers.

AMBITIONS IN SZEGED

In the Hungarian higher education system, the 18/2016.(VIII.5.) Decree of EMMI, a New System of Training Outcome Requirements (*hereinafter referred to as the "TOR")* was adopted, which provided an opportunity to include in the undergraduate legal training

programs more units of courses that would enable us to develop the IT and legal informatics competences of our students in a more intensive and practice-oriented manner than in the past. (Princz, 2019) In the legal education, starting from the academic year 2017, the acquisition of knowledge related to legal information technology and database management is placed among the general intellectual's skills that lay the foundation for social science literacy.[9] As regards digital skills, the new TOR require that the future generation of lawyers should be able to communicate in foreign languages and using the latest IT tools, be familiar with information technology issues and be able to use online database systems.[10]

The Department has also modified two of its courses as a result of the changes in the TOR. In the autumn semester, for first-year students, the former *Statistics* in the New System course, *Legal Data Collection and Processing*, was restructured into the Law course. A further change is the introduction of a training model whereby, during the first three sessions, students are given a consolidated lecture to introduce them to the theoretical foundations necessary for the two-hour weekly practical classes, which start in the fourth week and run for 10 weeks. In these practical sessions, in contrast to the previous practice, student's statistical (critical) thinking is developed through the acquisition of basic statistical knowledge in a computer environment, typically using Microsoft Excel and national and international data sources and databases available on the Internet (for example: KSH - Hungarian Central Statistical Office or Gapminder), which can be used effectively in their practical activities as students and lawyers. For example, by the end of the semester, students will have developed a good understanding of the use of computer tools and will be able to apply them immediately, for example in an analytical task, to statistical problem-solving methods for scientific and research work. But they will also learn and understand the Excel formulas, functions, visualization tools and PIVOT, the basics of statistics, which can also be used in a thesis or scientific work. As a consequence, they are also able to apply these methods and techniques in a complex way.[11] The end-of-semester exam is a practice-oriented final examination, during which students can achieve a practical grade by completing a final examination consisting of a theoretical and a practical block. This involves solving complex problems in a computer-based environment based on the units of the course material covered and mastered during the semester. To support their preparation, our students will be provided with additional complex practice sets during the semester that will help them to master the course material at a deeper level and support their preparation for a successful examination.

The digital development of our first-year students in the Department will continue in the spring semester in the Legal Informatics course. In this case, the changes were on a larger scale than in the previous practice, as the training used to focus mainly on theoretical

[9] 18/2016 (VIII. 5.) EMMI Decree amending Decree No 8/2013 (I. 30.) of the Ministry of Higher Education on the training and outcome requirements for higher education vocational education and training, bachelor's and master's programmes, common requirements for teacher preparation and training and outcome requirements for certain teacher specialisations

[10] 18/2016 (VIII. 5.) EMMI Decree amending Decree No 8/2013 (I. 30.) of the Ministry of Higher Education on the training and outcome requirements for higher education vocational education and training, bachelor's and master's programmes, common requirements for teacher preparation and training and outcome requirements for certain teacher specialisations

[11] Training and outcome requirement at the University of Szeged Faculty of Law

problems in the field through two-hour lectures during the semester, which ended with a written exam. This development completes a previous effort of the Department, which had a twofold aim: on the one hand, to ensure that all IT-oriented training programs run by the Department could provide students with knowledge that would support their future employment chances by giving them competitive skills. On the other hand, we have achieved to introduce our students to the world of IT developments that define the profession, further developing their existing digital skills (Princz, 2018).

Beginning in September 2017, the Legal Informatics course, like the Legal Data Collection and Processing course, will start with lectures in the first three weeks, and small group sessions in a computer environment will start in the fourth week. The aim of the theoretical lectures of the course is to introduce students to the innovations, challenges and trends that are shaping the field of legal informatics in the 21st century, in addition to covering the main issues, basic concepts and principles of data protection and providing a comprehensive overview of the historical milestones in the development of legal informatics. The aim of the lectures is partly to develop an understanding of the common field of information technology and law, and partly to provide students with the theoretical background necessary for the practical lessons that will follow. From the fourth week onwards, for 10 weeks, we will also provide our students with complex exercises, also two hours a week, to help them to become well-educated in the use of basic databases, legal software and developments, which will contribute to the development of their digital skills, both during their future studies and during their future professional practice. (Princz, 2019)

In line with the requirements of the TOR we place a strong focus on the use of various legal databases and expert systems, with particular attention paid to the learning of efficient search methods. In order to meet this challenge, and because the ability to retrieve relevant legal information as quickly as possible is an integral part of legal work (both during and after university), we are trying to build a base of exercises and examples to support our student's digital skills in this area. In addition, since legal work involves drafting and editing documents, the course also includes a deeper understanding of Microsoft Word and the basics of PDF file management. But the course also covers the legal profession's presence on social networking sites, blogs and websites, which can generate a great deal of interest and interactivity among the students attending the course every year, and the possibility of using certain applications in a legal context.

The Legal Informatics course should take into account the fact that in the first year of the course, students are more likely to be dominated by historical subjects, and the detailed legal knowledge required to use a database or expert system will only be learned in the upper years. For this reason, we pay particular attention to teaching this kind of knowledge in a way that will help our students not only to use these systems competently, but also to be able to choose the right database for their problem at the end of the semester. Examples of registers of legal persons in our country include the register of companies and civil organizations. [12] In the former case, the e-company register and e-report, and in the latter case, the register of civil organizations is the subject of the course. Since our students in

[12] It is also interesting to note that the new legislation on the unified registration and registration procedure of legal persons has already been adopted and promulgated, and will enter into force on 1 January 2026, as a result of which Hungary, like several other EU countries, will also treat civil society organisations and companies in a common system. – Final justification of Act XCII of 2021 on the registration of legal persons and the registration procedure

their first year do not yet have the knowledge and experience that would be related to either a civil organization, or a company, we often experienced, in several cases during the semester, that our students mixed up the interfaces. In order to avoid this and other situations of this kind, we have tried to support student's learning through several repetitions in class during the semester and through a complex test at the end of the semester, summarizing the semester's material. (Princz, 2019) The end of the course with the award of a practical exam at the end of the semester, using a complex assessment method. This involves an essay or a complex theoretical test related to the theoretical units of the course, while for the practical parts, students have to solve a complex series of problems via computer, based on the units studied during the semester.

At this point, it is useful to mention the facultative course jointly run by the Faculty and Wolters Kluwer Hungary Kft., also within the framework of the Department. The training program entitled Theory and Practice of Legal Databases builds on the knowledge and skills acquired in the Legal Informatics course. The aim of this training program is to provide students with a deeper and broader understanding of the functioning of EU, international and national legal databases. In addition to this, we will also focus on additional databases that can further develop their knowledge of domestic and international literature research. The knowledge to be developed will include, in this case, a deeper understanding of the range of search options, the relationship systems between documents and the mark-up systems associated with each interface, and their interpretation and application. No major changes have been made to this course, as the program has been designed from the beginning in a practice-oriented way, with joint team- and independent work, which is also regularly updated.

In addition to this, we will also cover the build of the platform and the parts of the database in detail. As the training is run by Hungary's largest digital legal content provider and the first Hungarian legal tech company, the focus is on gaining a deeper understanding of the Új Jogtár and the possibilities it offers for Hungarian legal databases. In this context, for example, our students are very enthusiastic about the so-called "*Jogtár Navigator*" function, which guides the user through a regulatory issue in a clear and understandable way via a flowchart system and the related legal provisions. This can also be used as a tutorial for our students, as it makes it much easier to master a particular area, for example in the field of labour law or civil law. In addition to all this, it is worth mentioning that, as part of this cooperation, the so-called *Complist Service*[13], which has been running for about two years under the auspices of Wolters, will be introduced for the first time in Hungary in the academic year 2023/2024 as part of the undergraduate degree program, enabling our students to get to know the latest software support for legal compliance. The course is taught in small group sessions and, due to the practical nature of the course, special attention is given to repetitive exercises in a variety of formats between lessons. It is also useful to point out that students are regularly given additional practical problems related to the previous unit of study, which allow them to prepare and master the material at home. The examination for this course is oral, in which students have to solve a complex set of problems covering the whole semester's unit of study independently during the examination and present the solution to the examiner. In the case of a successful

[13] For more details about Complist see: Official Website of Wolters Kluwer Hungary Ltd: https://www.wolterskluwer.com/hu-hu/solutions/complist [Accessed 23 Aug. 2023].

examination, the student will receive, in addition to a mark, a certificate of knowledge acquired and mastered, issued jointly by Wolters and the Faculty, which can be attached to any subsequent internship or job application.

5. COVID-19 AND DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged the education system. On the one hand, this process has accelerated the development of digital materials, which for all three courses mentioned above has meant the creation of video materials and related exercises that can support student's learning at home. In practice, this meant that, with the help of this new learning material, students could go through and assimilate the knowledge presented in the video step by step, at home and independently. The videos were created using Camtasia software and are a minimum of 4 minutes and a maximum of 30 minutes in length. On the other hand, the epidemic situation has brought to the fore the use of different platforms for conference calls, which in our case meant the use of GoToMeeting and then BBB. In order to support our student's work and preparation, we recorded the class materials, which were later published for our students (this was eventually prohibited by the University for privacy reasons). The lessons were managed as a group, focusing on one or two dates, during which we reviewed the new unit of study together through the published task list. This new way of teaching has brought a new kind of attitude and knowledge to the teachers and students alike. In online classes, we tried to maintain student activity within the limits of what technology could offer, but we also faced the difficulty of not seeing the student reactions that were natural in the classroom and that could be useful in a classroom session. And in compiling the digital material we created, we tried to leave relatively little static space in the lesson material, i.e. we tried to make full use of the possibilities provided by Camtasia, which meant using some feature to focus on the information, whether it was explanatory or supporting. The point is that we have tried to use visual stimuli and methods that help to maintain attention. On the student side, our experience is very broad. We have observed that our first-year students find it more difficult to work through the digital material independently at home, mainly because they have not been introduced to this type of teaching tool before. And although for all courses, we tell you at the beginning of the semester how we propose to work on them, and if there are any questions, students should let us know immediately, the effectiveness of this is still low.

And although for all courses, we tell you at the beginning of the semester how we propose to work on them, and if there are any questions, students should let us know immediately, the effectiveness of this is still low. For the facultative course, similar experiences can be observed with a few differences. Video materials, as I mentioned before, were produced in this case too, class assignments were published in advance, and the lesson materials were recorded in this case too. The gap was reflected in the way the lessons were conducted. It should be taken into account that this is a course planned for a smaller number of students, where the main focus is on achieving a higher degree of student activity. Although the online environment allowed for a different kind of personal involvement, adding a new kind of experience to the course, the students were fully partners in this. The processing of the pre-assigned set of tasks in class was distributed among the students, which they had to solve in a bow-like way by means of screen sharing. One of the advantages of this was that the students could see their partner's solution - not

possible in a classroom setting - and we could correct it together, if necessary, which was very useful based on student feedback. On the other hand, in this way, they were no longer "just" explaining what they thought the solution was, but they also had to pay attention to the "how", i.e. how they shared information, how they presented what they were talking about, and how they listened to the content. In other words, the course also helped them to develop their online presentation skills. And here I would like to note that several of my student's later feedback that it was a great help and preparation for them later, for example during an online competition or other major event where they had contributed in a similar way.

Online education has also brought a new way of teaching and new skills to the fore. During the faculty course, the online exam proved to be an absolutely ideal assessment option, with practically no changes compared to the classroom assessment. The students were given a complex set of problems and, after working on them independently, presented their solutions. The situation was slightly different in the case of Legal Informatics and Legal Data Collection and Processing courses, where a specific time frame was announced in advance for students to solve and upload the set of problems published at the beginning of the exam.

6. EXPERIENCES

First of all, it is important to point out that, by working with computers and different programs, we are working with all the courses described earlier. This is an important aspect for two reasons: on the one hand, we try to implement rapidly changing technological developments in the training programs as soon as possible, and this also requires continuous development of the teaching skills. On the other hand, we have to take into account the changing attitudes and digital literacy of students. This is a crucial factor, especially in the case of Legal Data Collection and Processing and Legal Informatics courses, as our students have different basic legal informatics skills, which is a decisive factor in the training. However, I would note here that the change in student's digital literacy - IT and Legal Informatics - has been measured continuously since the change in 2017.[14] For this reason, we pay more attention to classroom experiences and feedback every semester, as well as to the results of our surveys. Courses are monitored and evaluated every six months, and the lessons learned are integrated into the training programs for the following year.

The Covid-19 outbreak has resulted in some backsliding in this process. In our experience, students, especially those who had received online education in high school, found it difficult to adapt to home study and independent work, which made online education and accountability more difficult. Although several students indicated that they preferred face-to-face instruction, no such difficulties were reported for the facultative course. One striking experience with the Theory and Practice of Legal Databases course was the speed of the training. In this case, it was observed that the same unit of material that could previously be delivered in the classroom in the time available required much more time to be taught online.

[14] The survey was stopped during the pandemic and resumed in 2023. The results are expected to be published in the Hungarian Journal Infocommunication and Law in December 2023.

Secondly, in the case of first-year courses, we find that the majority of our students do not yet see how the knowledge of certain tools and methods will influence their future work, either in their later years or in their future careers as lawyers. This is mainly due to the fact that few students have a realistic picture of what the everyday work of a 21st century lawyer looks like, and how much of a role technology and knowledge play in this. It is worth pointing out here that we have also received feedback from our students in their later years of higher education on the usefulness of the knowledge we have tried to impart, both in their later training and in their professional practice. All this raises the question of whether the teaching of these subjects in the first year is well placed, and whether it might not be appropriate to move them to a later year. The argument in favor of teaching in the first year is typically that it allows them to acquire at the beginning of their learning program the knowledge that will be largely acquired in the second year and the rest in the upper years.

The argument in favor of a second or third year is typically that the student has had their first experience of a university career and can relate what they have learned to something that would allow them to be more focused and therefore perform better. There are many arguments for and against, but one factor must be taken into account. Virtually all the research on the skills and competences required by the future labour market stresses the need for digitalization and related skills and competences. In the field of IT and legal informatics skills, the need to equip students as early as possible with the skills they need to develop their skills in their future careers is therefore a key concern. In the context of the experience, we have observed so far in the classroom with regard to the wide range of legal informatics skills that our students acquire at the start of their studies, it is certainly justified to start such training as soon as possible.

At this point, it is useful to mention that first-year students who are sufficiently open to our first-year courses have positively evaluated several elements of the reformed training system. As an example of the student feedback on the semesterly lecturers, it can be mentioned that several students identified the practical sessions as a positive aspect, which typically referred to the way of teaching through questions, and the fact that more practical, legally oriented examples were mentioned in connection with these courses. Another aspect of teaching through questions is that the solution process involves working and thinking together with the students. Several students mentioned as a positive aspect that, depending on the nature of the problem, problems that were introduced during the solution process were solved either jointly or individually, which helped the reviewers. Although not a large number, there were some students who mentioned the usefulness of the video material in helping them to learn. However, feedback on the content of the courses themselves is typically received from our students when they are in their senior year, and is typically mentioned in our informal, one-to-one discussions.

In the case of the facultative course, as I mentioned, the situation is different because it is the student's personal choice whether or not to apply for this course. Although there is no oversubscription for this course, several students have already reported during the training program that they can already apply the knowledge they have learned during the course.

7. CONCLUSION

And the experience of the past decades shows that the speed of technological development is constantly speeding up, and we need to adapt. In the legal profession, the available tools and software solutions can make legal work more efficient and faster, on the one hand, and on the other hand, they raise many new issues in the areas of data protection, data security, privacy, labour law, etc. In my personal opinion, technological developments are also bringing the issue of the renewal of the legal profession itself increasingly to the fore, with the focus primarily on preventive legal advice and the taking of preventive legal measures that provide reasonable protection. This, however, requires complex, multidisciplinary technological skills, to which legal training can respond most effectively. Proposals and directions have already been published, and our Department wished to reflect this process, specifically in the area of basic technological skills, in the changes to the training outcome requirements for 2017.

However, transferring skills that can be applied immediately using technological tools is only the first step. As my colleagues and I concluded in an earlier study on the competence of students, the knowledge can only be effectively integrated into the knowledge system of our students at a higher level if the knowledge acquired is not only taught in a single course, but also requires the application and, where necessary, further development of this knowledge in higher level subjects. This can be done in a teaching context or through complex, creative projects, etc. The point is to ensure that our students experience the need for the knowledge during their studies. However, this requires further development efforts in the teaching methodology and requires further development of the IT and legal informatics competences of the trainers. In addition to mastering the subject matter, my colleagues and I are working to "*further strengthen in our students the need for self-development, the ability to adapt to change and the importance of keeping their knowledge up to date*." (Kovács-Kardos-Princz, 2020, p.37.) On the other hand, the efforts made so far have also highlighted that the primary goal of the departmental educational development in law education (also) is not only to implement the subject matter, but also to transform and develop the student's way of thinking and attitude. Kovács's opinion that, in addition to traditional elements, the knowledge of the modern age should be integrated into the process of education, in this case, the training of lawyers, is more topical than ever, and our Department is trying to develop its educational system along these lines (Dr. Kovács, 2008). But in order for this ambition to result in more practical and applicable knowledge, the necessary time and attitude of teachers and students is essential. (Kovacs et al., 2021)

And the learning of this kind of knowledge as soon as possible is becoming, to put it a bit too strongly, a crucial aspect of the legal profession. New technological solutions such as to AI or ChatGPT are already opening up new dimensions and questions for legal profession and the key question will be how the profession can respond to them in a significant way, which is not possible without knowledge of the principles of the technology in question. ChatGPT, for example, already highlights the very wide range of possibilities it offers, not to mention the fact that a study has already been published on its use in legal training, although there are still some gaps in the way it works in Hungarian (legal) terms, for example. However, it is a fact that the current university position in Szeged prohibits the use of the program in theses, while its role in teaching is still being

developed. When the technology in question reaches the stage where the answers it provides are of the trusted category, its application with knowledgeable use will be able to provide a new support solution for both training and the profession. And this is just one of the technologies available among those already in existence and among those currently known. This is why 21st century legal education will have a huge responsibility to decide in which direction and at what pace it will be able to develop. One thing is certain: this can only happen if there is continuous training of trainers in technology, if there is a comprehensive training system with a comprehensive, interlocking training curriculum that includes courses on the application of technology and on the principles of how each technology works. And of course, there is the technological infrastructure to support it.

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