

ctrl ALT del 2019 Introduction

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I. Setting the Scene – 2019

In early February, over 100 participants gathered in Scottsdale, Arizona for the 2019 ctrl ALT del conference of the Association of Legal Technologists. Though fewer in attendance than the 2018 conference, those present engaged and sustained many vigorous conversations about the technology of law – yesterday, today and tomorrow. Participants represented practicing lawyers, information technology and knowledge management staff of law firms and corporate legal departments, trade associations and the vendor community. Together in and out of the formal sessions, there were few visible distinctions of rank or role –designed to promote the communication and sharing that are a core purpose of ALT.

Perhaps measured by engagement and excitement, the keynote presentations – informed and current, and the ALT-talk sessions – lively and thought provoking – were eclipsed by the three design-thinking sessions. With guidance and challenges from Andy Peterson of [Design Build Legal](#), over a few hours of team work in all corners of the meeting room, ideas sprouted quickly, and participants gained a sense of turning brainstorming to action.

The goal of these white papers is to capture key insights, data, and concepts in the keynotes and talk-back sessions, and to capture the process and sample the results of the design-thinking sessions. Publications on most of these topics appear nearly daily, so inevitably, these reports are a snapshot in time.

II. Keynotes and ALT-Talk

Zach Abramovitz, CEO of [ReplyAll](#), led off the keynotes with *New Opportunities for Legal or Executing Like Killer Whales*.¹ Zach showed scenes of novel predation tactics mastered by orcas as an inspiration for new business tactics and strategies for law practice.

The ALT-Talk group shared their experience with the challenges to law practice posed by Alternative Legal Service Providers. Michael Kraft, leading the group, illustrated his point with a cartoon quoting an aging managing partner saying, “Let’s not change our slow decline into obsolescence.”

Shawna Hoffman, Global Co-Leader of the IBM Cognitive Legal Practice, opened the afternoon session leading the audience to greet *The Future is Here - The Convergence of AI, Blockchain & Quantum Computing with the Law*. Autonomous vehicles may not be the latest news, but Boeing showed the [test flight of an autonomous flying car in January 2019](#).² By one roadmap, flying cars will [arrive in 2023](#).

¹ Zach acknowledged his inspiration for the title from to the episode endings of Rocky and Bullwinkle, whose motto could have been, “No pun too bad(enov) for Boris.”



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² Will the decades of predictions of “Flying Cars Very Soon” may be eclipsed soon? Illustrations of earlier attempts can be found here. <https://www.popularmechanics.com/cars/g357/flying-cars-in-history-picture-gallery/?slide=10>.

The ALT-Talk group sought to balance the excitement about developments in artificial intelligence and blockchain with practical realities, including limitations on what can be done today and the ways work and the workplace must change to gain the leverage these tools may offer.

The morning of Day 2 brought Dennis Garcia, Assistant General Counsel at Microsoft, to the podium for *Security and Privacy*. Pervasive connections, global attacks by bad actors ranging from individuals to nation-states, and a rapidly evolving legal environment of legislation, regulation, and litigation are all challenges to be addressed in the security strategy, tactics and tools of law practices.

The ALT-talk response highlighted the role of law practice leadership for responsibility and funding to address security issues, with an ongoing need to increase security awareness.

David Cambria, Global Director of Operations of Baker McKenzie, completed the keynote addresses with *Tech Adoption and Change Management*. He emphasized the importance of investment in people, far beyond the investment in technology. “For every \$1 we spend on technology acquisition, we should be spending up to \$10 on personnel, process redesign, and training.” Illustrations drawn from scenes from *The Godfather* made David’s message visceral.

III. The Design Thinking Experience

The 2018 ctrl ALT del conference introduced ALT members to design thinking. The 2019 conference put design thinking to work. Introduced at the opening dinner, three workshop sessions became an all-hands-in experience. The hypotheticals posed by Andy Peterson evoked real world responses, concepts and plans sketched for execution.

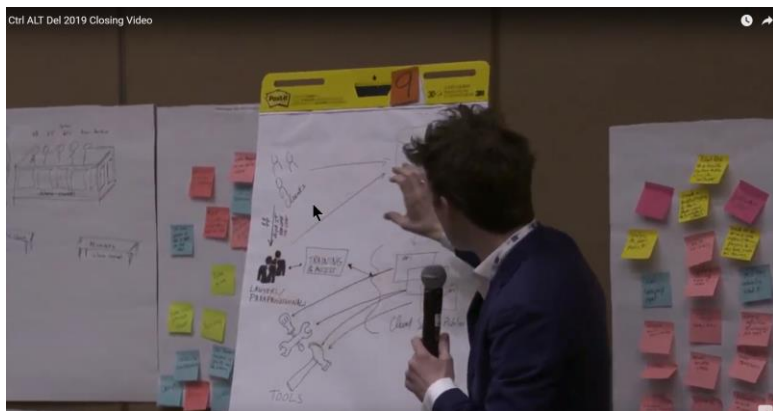


Figure 1 - Design Thinking in Action

Through three sessions, each lasting nearly two hours, nearly everyone at ALT had a hand in developing and articulating analysis and prototype solutions to the issues Andy raised.

IV. Take Aways

The 2019 edition of the ALT conference demonstrated clearly and thoroughly that the whole can well exceed the sum of its parts. Presentations can concentrate information on new developments and give voice to new perspectives. The concentrated joint effort during the Design Thinking sessions modeled how a range of experience, knowledge and responsibilities can well exceed the work of any individual and may outperform teams of individuals.