

**STEPHENSON
HARWOOD**

International Women's Day 2023

To recognise and celebrate women and girls who are championing the advancement of transformative technology and digital education, the United Nations theme for International Women's Day (IWD) 2023 is #DigitALL.

To mark International Women's Day 2023, we asked a group of inspiring women at our firm - who focus on technology and innovation - what excites them about their roles, what inspires them and why this year's theme resonates.

You can read their full interviews below.

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#DigitALL



Bobbie Bickerton

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Bobbie is an associate in our commercial, technology and data protection team with a focus on the life sciences and biotech industry. Bobbie has worked closely with a number of the department's strategic clients and has also been instrumental in leading large scale data protection projects. Bobbie advises on a variety of contracts and issues including product distribution agreements, clinical and commercial manufacturing and supply agreements, and research and development agreements. She has also been on secondment at three life sciences companies. Bobbie is listed as a key lawyer in Legal 500 for Data Protection, Privacy and Cybersecurity.

What attracted you to specialise in a tech related area of law/innovation?

I wanted to feel that what I was working on and involved in was relevant to the direction that the world around us is moving in. So much about the way we live has moved online or is virtual in some form, and technology influences everything now. This means that tech is a constantly growing and evolving area of law which is fascinating to me.

What most excites you about the tech industry at the moment?

How quickly legislation is changing to keep up with the developments in technology. We are seeing new laws coming in across the board (for example on AI, data protection and digital services) which try to tackle the task of regulating the behaviour of the big tech giants (while not stifling innovation) and also protect individuals and their data. I am particularly interested in following the developments in the health tech space as we see pharma companies and healthcare providers utilising more and more tech and data with the aim of improving patient experience and care.

What advice would you give to someone interested in becoming a tech-focused lawyer in the future?

You might not think you know much about technology, but realistically we are using tech in all areas of our lives now from communication, social media and dating apps to online banking. The same is true of our clients, so all clients rely on tech to some extent in their business model.

This means there is scope to get involved in tech in any industry. I think we are moving towards a place where most lawyers will be technology specialists in some form or another in the future.

Why does the DigitALL theme for IWD2023 resonate with you?

As with other areas that have traditionally had a large male influence, I think the technology section can really benefit from bringing more women into the sector. Not only will this drive creativity and the potential for outside-the-box thinking, it will allow women to influence the way the technology sector moves in the future and ensure that women's needs are accounted for.

How can we inspire more young women to be involved in the technology sector more generally?

I think role models and mentors are really important and the more successful women in technology that we see making waves in the industry, the more accessible it will become as a sector to young women.



Katie Hewson

Partner and head of the data protection practice

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Katie is a data protection specialist who leads the firm's data protection practice and holds a Certified Information Privacy Professional Europe (CIPP/E) accreditation from the International Association of Privacy Professionals. Katie has extensive experience leading international GDPR compliance projects and also advises on data protection contracts, transparency issues, international personal data transfers, data sharing, cyber security and personal data breaches advising clients across a variety of sectors. She also advises on direct marketing, ad tech, social media and cookies issues under the e-privacy regime. Katie has also acted for clients facing ICO enforcement action on potential data protection and freedom of information law breaches, winning successful outcomes for her clients in relation to subject access requests, breach reporting and FOIA requests. She has helped clients with the data protection impacts of Brexit and coronavirus and has also advised on the complex legal issues in facial recognition, AI and profiling.

In December 2022, Katie won the Privacy Leader of the Year at PICCASO Privacy Award. This is an award that recognises individuals who are making an outstanding contribution to the fast-growing data privacy sector, from professionals ensuring their companies meet complex legal demands, to academics and engineers demonstrating privacy thought leadership and implementing innovative data protection strategies, [you can read the press release here](#).

What attracted you to specialise in a tech related area of law/innovation?

I work in data protection, which is all about using personal data responsibly. I have seen at first hand how data can be misused in an attempt to manipulate or control people unfairly. I will not have that. I love working with my clients to instead use data to drive innovation and empower individuals.

What most excites you about the tech industry at the moment?

I am excited by the brilliant leaders harnessing the potential of tech as a force for equality and inclusion. For example, I have been really inspired by the global non-profit Chayn, which is run by a brilliant woman called Hera Hussain. Chayn combats technology-facilitated abuse and gender-based violence by creating online services for marginalised women and survivors: <https://www.chayn.co/>.

What advice would you give to someone interested in becoming a tech-focused lawyer/innovation specialist in the future?

Tech and data law changes very fast. That puts those starting out in a great position, as you're often most comfortable at the cutting edge.

Get nerdy, get into the weeds and try to understand how the tech actually works. Build up networks of friends who can help you figure out the tricky stuff.

Why does the DigitALL theme for IWD2023 resonate with you?

My hero Baroness Helena Kennedy KC says "the law needs good women". Well, that is certainly true for tech law. It is depressingly common for women to feel shouted down, threatened and shut out in online spaces. Unfortunately, this won't change in a meaningful way without women using their experiences and voices to advocate for the necessary legal changes and to speak up for each other.

How can we inspire more young women to be involved in the technology sector more generally?

We must demonstrate how inclusive, supportive and genuinely fun the data and tech community can be. Celebrating the incredible female role models we have in the tech sector who are making the world a little better by being entirely and unapologetically themselves is a very good start.



Ira Koutsourelis

Innovation analyst

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Ira works in the innovation team as an innovation analyst. As part of her role, she works closely with the Head of Innovation, Paul Orchard, on researching and assessing the so-called 'New Law' services. Her legal studies together with her experience at a legal tech startup enable her to collaborate with fee-earners to identify new use cases for leveraging our existing technology, as well as increase its' adoption. She also manages the reporting system for the team's projects and their benefits to the business.

What attracted you to specialise in innovation?

Having studied law at university and as a Gen Zer, immersing myself in Innovation came naturally. I wanted to be at the forefront of the legal tech industry's developments combining my interest in law and technology.

What most excites you about the tech industry at the moment?

The fact that we are at the peak of the fourth industrial revolution, so it will probably have to be AI – who would have thought that you would be able to have a conversation with a machine? It will be interesting to see how AI developers and regulators address legal risks and ethical considerations.

What advice would you give to someone interested in becoming a tech-focused lawyer in the future?

Not to restrict their way of thinking in any way. You don't have to know how every different piece of technology works as long as you have an interest in understanding it and can learn quickly. Having said that, as it's an ever-evolving industry, it definitely helps to stay up to date with the latest developments.

Why does the DigitALL theme for IWD2023 resonate with you?

I like to think about the world of technology as a 5th type of civic engagement – we cannot afford to not know about it in this day and age. DigitALL aims to increase the awareness around that and specifically amongst women; some of us have been privileged enough to have had a clear path but that's not always the case and it must change.

How can we inspire more young women to be involved in the technology sector more generally?

Some people know the ins and outs of how to develop tech products and solutions and others are experts in their implementation; the opportunities are limitless especially as we move into the future. Don't let the tech industry intimidate you and pursue what you are passionate about!



Katherine Liu

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Katherine Liu is a partner of the regulatory team in Stephenson Harwood, with a focus on the financial services sector. She has over 12 years of experience in advising clients on a wide range of issues in the financial services industry, including compliance with financial services laws and regulations, employment and personal data laws. In recent years, she has worked with a number of fintech startups and established financial institutions in establishing their online businesses. Her first fintech-related experience started when she assisted a e-wallet company in obtaining a stored value facility licence, and has since moved on to advise a number of financial institutions on the development of their websites and mobile apps to facilitate online investment trading or online lending. She is currently working with a virtual bank on its standard client documentation and another virtual asset trading platform on the licensing issues.

What attracted you to specialise in a tech related area of law/innovation?

Fintech combines the worlds of financial services and technology, and it's been a challenging yet rewarding journey to play a part in it. You need to keep yourself up-to-date on Fintech developments and grasp new concepts all the time, but it is rewarding when you can solve an issue for a client and contribute to the growth of the Fintech industry. It gives me a great sense of satisfaction.

What most excites you about the tech industry at the moment?

In recent years, I've seen more and more collaborations between different companies in their digitalization journeys, whether they are in the same industry or even from different industries. I've been involved in a number of these collaborative projects, and it's really interesting to see how innovative the ideas can be, and how businesses can work together and benefit from the collaboration. Different businesses can share resources and ideas, add value to each other, and enable each other to provide better services to their clients. It is a win-win situation.

What advice would you give to someone interested in becoming a tech-focused lawyer in the future?

You need what I would call a 'modern' mindset – generally speaking, gone are the days of charging by the hour, so you need to be innovative and find new ways to be efficient.

There are various emerging technologies designed to streamline certain mechanical duties of a lawyer – such as generating simple templates and using project management tools. You need to be observant and keep an eye out for market developments and generally be commercially aware and keep up with how market trends are evolving. I cannot overstate the importance of being 'in tune' with a client's business when you have a conversation with them.

Being a 'fintech lawyer' means not only delivering outstanding legal services to clients, but also keeping up with the trends and demands brought about by financial technology. The moment you stop improving yourself, you are at risk of falling behind your peers.

Why does the DigitALL theme for IWD2023 resonate with you?

Although the technology sector has been booming, research shows that there are still invisible barriers and glass ceilings which discourage women from joining the sector. The gender bias may be less significant in the legal industry for the tech sector, but more work needs to be done in terms of the technical workforce.

How can we inspire more young women to be involved in the technology sector more generally?

Building stronger support networks and demystifying "women in tech".



Alice St George

Senior innovation manager

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Alice works in the innovation team as a senior innovation manager who collaborates with the firm's lawyers and clients to assess where innovative solutions, including a suite of core technologies, can be leveraged to achieve business objectives and to drive efficiencies. In her role, she combines her previous experience as a commercial lawyer and her time working in the digital transformation arena to support the delivery of exceptional legal services centred on value, productivity and transparency.

What attracted you to specialise in innovation?

As a lawyer who has worked in a technology company and now as an innovation advisor in a law firm, I clearly find fascination in the constantly-changing intersection between law and technology, and the associated challenges. There is real satisfaction in solving pressing and tangible problems, whilst also keeping an eye open for emerging ones. Something new always lies ahead!

What most excites you about the tech industry at the moment?

By virtue of its dynamic nature, there is always something new evolving in the tech industry. At the moment in particular, as technology solutions are becoming more accessible, a wider group of people are beginning to think "I wonder how this can help me". It's exciting to be in the legal arena at a time when this mindset shift is happening and as there is more acceptance to leverage technology to support the work that lawyers do.

What advice would you give to someone interested in becoming a tech-focused lawyer in the future?

Technology itself is becoming more diverse every day and to succeed in the industry does not necessitate you knowing about all available solutions or the intricacies of how they work. What you need is a desire to immerse yourself in new ways of thinking and problem-solving – and an inquisitive disposition. As with any other specialists, as you progress in your career, finding a particular area of interest or passion can be invaluable in channelling your focus and your development but you do not need to have one to get started.

Why does the DigitALL theme for IWD2023 resonate with you?

The DigitALL theme is all-encompassing, mirroring the omnipresence of technology in the world we live in. At its heart, it recognises what it means to be excluded from that world by virtue of not being given a voice or not being properly considered. It is about women being treated as equal in all areas of technology – ranging from safe access to technology and technology-driven services, exposure to technology-related education, and inclusion in the design and development of technology solutions. This really resonates with me as it is about much more than women working in the technology sector and, thereby, shifts the responsibility for awareness and resolution to society more broadly.

How can we inspire more young women to be involved in the technology sector more generally?

Inspiration can come from a range of different sources – including education, exposure, encouragement, equality, and empowerment – and I am not sure that there is one dominant way to inspire more young women to be involved in the technology sector. However, the shared objective should be that young women see the technology sector as an environment they can succeed in and where they will be valued, and it is incumbent on educators, role-models, communities, companies and broader society to support this message and challenge the existing barriers to entry, whether real or perceived.