



COPENHAGEN LEGAL TECH LAB — PODCAST

EPISODE 03 – EMBRACING INNOVATION IN THE LEGAL INDUSTRY

In this episode, Nick Hawtin, Legal Tech expert, and Andrea Lindblom, Administrative Chief at Helsingborg District Court, discuss how to further embrace innovation, especially in the public sector, and continue bringing legal industry closer to the people.

00:00:00 Intro music

00:00:03,640

Nick Hawtin

Hello and welcome back to the Copenhagen Legal Lab - Podcast, where we address innovation and the law from three angles: people, technology, and business.

We're here today at the Law, Innovation and Vulnerability Conference at the Faculty of Law, at the University of Copenhagen.

And we're taking this subject that people, technology, and business. We're adding a layer to those with looking at law firms, the public sector, general counsels and academics.

And I'm really excited to be joined by Andrea, who I'll let introduce yourself in here in just a second, because she represents the public sector.

And there's some exciting things. There's amazing potential there. And there are some exciting things happening there despite what people might think.

But Andrea, you can introduce yourself.

00:00:58,670

Andrea Lindblom

Sure. Thank you for having me.

I'm Andrea Lindblom. I work for the District court in Helsingborg. I've been there for 10 years.

And, uh, why am I here today? Well, I'm really interested in legal tech and the future of the legal industry. I am a big legal design enthusiast, and I have met you Nick on some of these conferences during the last years, and I'm looking forward to this short conversation with you.

00:01:36,250

Nick Hawtin

For once. For once a short conversation. We had lots of long conversations. I remember a particular case and sit down on a couch at a conference in Stockholm and, it was good. It was

intense. And one of the things I like about talking with you is this. How we always talk about how to get it done? AI and robots and Blockchain and yada yada and is how do we get people to do the basics, The small stuff, and culture? Yeah. I mean, this is Law, Innovation and Vulnerability and we focus a lot on the people here.

00:02:07,659

Andrea Lindblom

Yeah. Absolutely. And there are quite a few conferences that are about the tech and the AI and the law. What's going on? And that's really interesting and super important. But it all has to start with us the people.

I'm more interested in moving people mindsets than talking about tech. That's for me, working in a court that seems very far away right now, where when I don't even know if we're on the way to AI in the courts, because it's just so far away.

00:02:51,719

Nick Hawtin

But let's focus on bright, shiny things. What makes a difference here and now? And if people knew how to use Word properly, that would make a difference. It's still technology.

00:03:07,539

Andrea Lindblom

And so even if things are moving really slowly, we all our employees, they want smart ways of working. They need and they want us to be open minded. As an employer, they want to be happy at work. They want their work life balance. They want to be able to have a career, even if you're not a lawyer.

So, I see quite a few needs where we need to shift mindsets in the in the workplace is where lawyers work, and non-lawyers don't like that term very much. But all the people working in legal organisations, there's much to be done that can be done, that has nothing to do with AI or tech tools. But that concerns more the mindsets and how we work together.

00:04:06,129

Nick Hawtin

And as we always agree that these things are much harder than buying a license for another tool is one thing to buy the license. It's another thing to get people to use it, and they are two completely different things

00:04:21,980

Andrea Lindblom

Absolutely. Where I work, I can't even buy the tools because that's not for me to decide. What I hear from many people is that we talk about these tools, but we also have to make sure...I mean who is even thinking about the questions? What tools do we need in the public sector? Are we asking? Are we asking the citizens of the users how would you like the system to work? How do we make it easier and accessible and less frightening to, for example, to come to court or be engaged in a in a civil proceeding at a court? How can we look at the user's experience and work with that? Instead of letting technology guide us ahead, but then, not really deciding. How we want to go there?

00:05:23,860

Nick Hawtin

It's a task and purpose that we mentioned. We often talk legal design when we end up on a couch at a conference in, Stockholm, the task and purpose. Why are we doing this? What is the outcome we want to achieve? Was one of the great parts about the opening talk today by Saule Omarova was: what we are here to do? And why we're doing it. And then how can come later But what and why.

00:05:44,370

Andrea Lindblom

And she said: now it's time to ask the big questions. And I really agree with her on that. It's time we stop and not just rush on, but ask ourselves, where do we want to go and how should we do it? Those are the questions that need to be discussed.

00:06:06,149

Nick Hawtin

So, you are at a courthouse working with lawyers, working with all the other people that helped make the law happen. And then you've all been working from home when we've had a pandemic. And there has been an awful lot of lawyers that have been out of their office for the first time ever in their careers. What changes have you been working on? What changes have you seen?

00:06:40,870

Andrea Lindblom

Well, we have been working more from home, but, I mean, we haven't held the trials from home. Some of the prosecutors have been at trials from their Skype accounts at home. So very much hybrid.

I think the general opinion is that it has worked OK, but should we settle with OK?

And the technology that has been used has definitely not been developed for these kinds of formats of meetings.

So, I think there is an urgent need to create tools that fit, for example, a trial better.

You can't just take ZOOM and put it on any sort of trial at a court and think it works and we can't even use ZOOM. So, ZOOM would actually be quite nice for us. But we had a very small videoconferencing format. That's absolutely not ideal.

00:07:56,620

Nick Hawtin

As a practitioner. How are you capturing these lessons learned?

00:08:11,439

Andrea Lindblom

We're trying to push for the push for change, where we think it's possible, where it's even worth the while.

00:08:21,910

Nick Hawtin

How do you figure that out? Is that just a couple of tech enthusiasts or the people that believe in this over coffee?

00:08:27,740

Andrea Lindblom

You listen to what people say. It is probably the most important thing.

You listen to what the judges say: is the technology working for them in their courtrooms? No, it's not. It's not working very well. It's actually quite frustrating. And I mean, they're like all of us. They are used to using technology in their daily life. And why shouldn't the courts technology be better than it is today?

00:08:53,509

Nick Hawtin

You, personally as an enthusiast, gathering this feedback, do you have a method?

00:08:58,750

Andrea Lindblom

I think we all are gathering that; we are discussing these issues where I work. I would love it if there would be more panels, and I mean everyone I talked to in the court system thinks that we should be addressing these issues much more.

But technology and innovation and digitalization is still not it's not considered to be top management issues, in my opinion.

And that has to happen very soon because we are not pioneers. We are lagging behind, so we need to do things differently, and we need to focus much more on where we're going and where we want to go.

00:09:52,700

Nick Hawtin

Let's say you had a magic wand. You know? Where would you go first? You know, the Ministry of Justice or the if you had the ear of the right people, where would you go? What would you start with?

00:10:08,639

Andrea Lindblom

I think I would start with these really broad discussions involving prosecutors, but also lawyers defending criminals. I mean, it's really important. It's not just one sector's interest that should steer where we're heading.

Everyone has the right to a fair trial. How do we how to ensure that the trials are still fair when we enter a more digital world?

Because what happened during Covid. was just that the prosecutors suddenly were sitting at home, using Skype. So, they were not in the courtroom anymore, in many Swedish courts. And what happens then: do you still have a balance between the prosecutor side and the? Many would say: no, you don't. The balance is affected.

00:11:09,340

Nick Hawtin

There are an awful lot of opinions about this. Both sides and even in the middle.

One of the initiatives in this industry, that we're both big fans of, is oneNDA.org.

For those who haven't had a look at it. Based in the U.K. and the amazing thing for me is that their focus wasn't creating an NDA and then trying to convince people of it.

It was gathering at a very large, very broad coalition of everybody that had a stake in the issue to bring them together to get them on board with the coalition of the willing, as people who were interested in creating a common non-disclosure agreement. And then also have been a way of building this consensus figure out what NDA should consist of and then what it should look at.

Do you see something? This process. I thought that approach looked really exciting.

00:12:13,990

Andrea Lindblom

Co-creation is great. I would love it if there would be more conferences and more forums, where we would have a serious qualitative discussion on the future of the of the courts.

And I mean, you have you have one person, Richard Susskind, who is the expert on the future of the courts.

But, I mean, we need experts in and people who are interested and passionately interested and engaged in the future of the courts. In all countries. You need not just one person.

It's way too important to just leave it to no one, to deal with that issue. We should be on it, discussing all the time: the legal faculties and the judges and everyone.

00:13:07,730

Nick Hawtin

When the law is too important to be left to lawyers. Because it affects all of us.

This consensus approach, and it's a big conversation. It's easy for people outside Scandinavia or the Nordics to roll their eyes at our approach to consensus. But there's an awful lot of work that goes into having this big conversation.

So, this conversation right now, at your courthouse in you know, in southern Sweden. Just in case anybody was wondering where Helsingborg is. It used to belong to Denmark. But we won't go into that because it's been 350 years.

But, this conversation, is right now happening. Is it in meetings on a regular basis?

00:13:56,059

Andrea Lindblom

No, it's not. I would love it if it was, but it isn't.

But there are, I mean, if you ask people who are happy in the profession, would you like to discuss the future of your profession? Would you like to discuss the future of the courts? I think very few people would say: no, I'm not interested.

Therefore, I also consider this to be sort of a leadership problem, that this is not a top management issue. Top management worries about other things. But not this.

00:14:38,220

Nick Hawtin

So, more places for us to talk about this, bringing in all the players. There may be an opening in talent-management, talent-acquisition, talent-retention. This is a big deal. The top law firms are paying top dollar to keep, attract and retain,

00:14:54,850

Andrea Lindblom

And we can't, in the public sector, pay top dollar. But we definitely want top talent.

You can't have bad talent working at the court. You need excellent lawyers. Excellent paperwork.

00:15:10,909

Nick Hawtin

We all need that. Yeah, for sure.

Well, listen, we could go on at length, as we have done many times before, but we will show a little bit of discipline here.

Andrea Lindblom, but this has been a pleasure to have you here.

My name is Nick Hawtin.

Thank you for listening to the Copenhagen Legal Tech Lab - Podcast

00:15:31,769 - outro

This is Copenhagen Legal Tech Lab podcast at the Faculty of Law, University of Copenhagen.

Brought to you by the Dreyers Foundation.

And don't forget to subscribe and follow us on social media and your favourite podcast platform.