**Legal Ops + Business Content Consumption Survey**

*Insights*

**Introduction**

1. **Purpose**

The legal industry is undergoing a fundamental transformation. Law firms and legal departments are turning to people, process, and technology to deliver more impact and added value through their delivery of legal services.

Microsoft conducted this survey to identify key content types and delivery channels, and gain insight into who is listening to and participating in thought leadership around this industry transformation.

Microsoft also hoped this survey would inform others in our legal community about the resources available to our legal community focused on innovating the practice of law.

1. **Methodology**

The survey remained open for approximately one month’s time. During that time, it was distributed via word of mouth and social media. Primary distribution platforms included LinkedIn and Twitter. Others include personal blogs and newsletters of those listed in the survey.

232 responses were collected.

1. **Disclosures**

To broaden the reach of the survey, several influencers were asked to circulate it among their networks.

In particular, that list includes: Bob Ambrogi, Ron Friedmann, Casey Flaherty, Technolawyer, and Richard Tromans.

**Who’s engaging?**

A significant number of our survey takers identified themselves as being outside the “traditional” law practice and legal operations roles listed in the survey. Nonetheless, plenty of members from both in-house and law-firm side gave us their insights. Our most common participants were further along in their careers.

Other common roles not originally listed were:

* Consultant
* Knowledge Management Professional
* CEO
* CIO
* Marketing Professional
* Law and Reference Librarian
* Legal Academic
* Pricing Officer
* IT Professional

With respect to organization size, nearly 40% of survey takers worked in an environment with only 1-10 legal professionals. Organizations with 1000+ legal professionals were also well represented. Overall, the collected data on organization size shows us that the organizations most interested in legal business and innovation hail from either end of the spectrum, with those in the middle not as engaged.

**What do they like?**

As a whole, our survey takers prefer to stay up to date on the latest and greatest in legal business and operations by reading. Content Aggregators and Portals were the most popular source, followed closely by newsletters, then blogs.

Only 48 of our 232 survey takers indicated that they enjoyed getting their insights through audio-centric methods like podcasts. Nonetheless, Associates that took our survey were audiophiles, with a slight preference for podcasts and the like. At the other end of the spectrum, Counsel and Partner level attorneys find more utility in having information delivered straight to their inbox via newsletters.

It is worth noting that 6% of survey takers indicated that they preferred another content format, but the data showed no meaningful trends. Rather, takers pointed to specific sources of information.

**Time spent learning.**

As noted in the previous section, audio content delivery methods were not extremely popular amongst our survey takers. That is corroborated by the fact that over 60% of participants said they spend 0-1 hours per week listening to legal operations and business content. As noted above, however, associates have a particular affinity for listening to their content – over two-thirds of them are consuming 1 or more hours per week of content. Compare that with the overall results that just 37% of survey takers are listening for one or more hours per week.

With respect to time spent *reading* about legal operations and business, a much smaller fraction of survey participants indicated they spend less than one hour per week doing so – just 13.85%. According to over 55% of our survey takers, the sweet spot seems to be between 1 and 3 hours per week. After that things begin tapering off, with a surprising surge of nearly 14% of participants indicating they consume five or more hours of content per week.

**Insights**

1. **Podcasts**

The most popular podcast amongst listeners was *Lawyerist*, hosted by Sam Glover and Aaron Street. This was true for nearly every professional role, though Associates and Business Managers were more partial to Evolve Law and Bloomberg Law podcasts, respectively. *Lawyerist* was a favorite among organizations sized between 1 – 50 legal professionals, then again for organizations with 250 – 500.

There was considerable diversity in podcast preference amongst organizations with just 1 – 10 legal professionals. While *Lawyerist* took the most votes, the rest were split among 21 other listed podcasts. Larger environments with 500+ legal professionals had less division in their preference, splitting their attention over just 14 of our identified channels.

Other notable podcasts not originally listed in the survey - but pointed out by the survey takers - include *Building New Law* and *Law of Startups*.

1. **Blogs**

*3 Geeks and a Law Blog* took the top spot for favorite blog amongst our survey takers, with *Artificial Lawyer* and *LawGeex* rounding out the top 3.

Nearly 18% of survey takers indicated that they did not frequent any particular blog. Interestingly, 37% of those identifying as originating from corporate legal departments said they did not frequent blogs.

Those with more traditional law firm roles (Associates, Counsel, Partner), seemed to prefer other sources not originally listed in our survey. This is true especially for law firms on the smaller side with 1 – 50 legal professionals.

Other notable blogs capturing the participants’ attention were *Dewey B. Strategic*, *MadClientist*, and *Right Brain Law*.

1. **Portals / Content Aggregators**

With no shortage of popular portals and content aggregators on the market, it’s no surprise that the results were significantly split. *Above the Law* edged out *Law360* by a slight margin, with the *ABA Journal* and *Technolawyer* following in line.

Associates seek out their insights through *Twitter* and other social media platforms, while Partner level attorneys preferred *Technolawyer* over other aggregators.

Larger organizations with 250+ legal professionals seem to have an affinity for more traditional sources of information like *Law360*, and smaller ones look to sources like *Legaltech News* and *Technolawyer* for more technology-focused reads.

Other notable Portals / Content aggregators were both *ACC* and *CLOC* legal operations groups websites, *ILTA*, and *Medium*.

1. **Newsletters**

Over 30% of participants said they subscribed to a *Law 360* newsletter. *Technolawyer* newsletters were a close second, with nearly one quarter of our survey takers indicating they were subscribers.

40 of the 61 Partner level attorneys that took our survey said they subscribed to *Technolawyer*, but legal operations participants were cooler, at just 3 of 29 takers subscribing. Overall, the data show that smaller organizations are more likely to subscribe to free resources, and larger entities are paying for access to more subject-matter specific content.

**Takeaways**

One key takeaway is the fact that the data certainly show a generational difference. Content aggregators / portals and newspapers took the top spot amongst our survey takers. A closer look at who participated can tell you why. While “other” was technically a highest self-identified professional role, the results of this category were scattered across many different types of roles. With the next largest percentage of participants identifying as “Partner,” it makes sense that diverse sources of information like aggregators, alongside those that are automatically pushed to your inbox, take precedent for more senior level professionals.

Ultimately, audio delivery methods were not that popular amongst our survey takers. However, a deeper dive shows that the Associate-level crowd prefers podcasts over all other content formats. That is something to keep in mind as the next generation of legal professionals begin stepping into management.

Organization type and size also seem to play a key role in determining engagement with certain sources of information. Larger, more traditional organizations are seeking content with the larger, more established sources like *Law360*. This is the likely result of existing firm-wide subscriptions. On the other hand, smaller organizations with less budget are looking for more “open-source” options.

Most of the findings of this survey are, in hindsight, not awfully surprising. Nonetheless, the data should be useful in helping creators and publishers identify their audience more specifically to deliver their message.