



# Legal Hackers: Building an Open Culture for Law

Jameson Dempsey

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## A vision for the future of law



Imagine an **open legal stack**

1. Open legal data powering
2. Free and open-source legal technology enabling
3. A global community of lawyers, legal engineers, startups, and students
4. To meaningfully advance
  - o Access to justice
  - o Judicial efficiency
  - o Better informed policy outcomes

What would we need to build this future? How might we adopt the tools and methods of the technology community to improve access to justice around the world? I believe we need an **open culture for law**.

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## What is Legal Hackers?



**A global grassroots community**

*seeking to foster*

**creative problem-solving**

*at the intersection of*

**law & tech**

(“legal hacking”)

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## Legal Hackers began in 2012 in Brooklyn, NY

Sean  
@sean\_comerford

Following

Sign up to attend "BLIP Legal Hackathon" on April 15. Will be a groundbreaking event. [legalhackathon-estw.eventbrite.com](http://legalhackathon-estw.eventbrite.com) via @eventbrite #hacktheact #fb

TECH (447,000) 8:48 AM ET Updated Apr 10, 2019

### Legal Hackathon Challenges Lawyers To Think Like Hackers

By Marissa Bodner

Don't just follow the law. Hack it.

That was Jonathan Adin's challenge to an auditorium of law students, lawyers and entrepreneurs at the first ever Legal Hackathon, a day-long event held Sunday at Brooklyn Law School to help lawyers, traditionally the guardians of rules, think more like hackers, the mischief makers and problem solvers of the tech world.



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## Legal Hackers Chapter Map as of December 2018



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## The largest legal innovation movement in the world



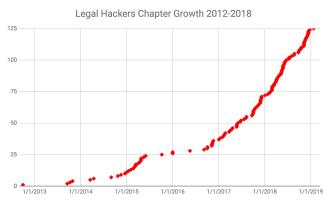
Formed in 2012

150 chapters

6 continents

10,000s of members

430+ organizers



Legal Hackers is local-first with global reach

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## What is the Legal Hackers Ethos?

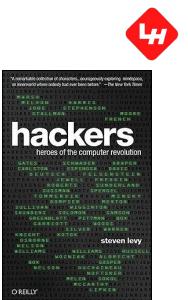
We are an **"open culture"** movement just like:

- Open-source is to software
- Wikimedia is to knowledge
- Khan Academy is to education

We are guided by the **Hacker Ethic** of:

- Accessibility
- Openness
- Sharing
- Play

We are **local-first, chapter-based, and volunteer led.**



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## How do we preserve the Legal Hackers ethos?

### **Legal Hackers is NOT:**

*A commercial enterprise*

*A trade association*

*A political advocacy group*

*A "black hat" or "white hat" hacking group*

**We are volunteer, neutral, and open to all**



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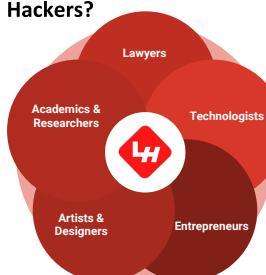
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## Who are Legal Hackers?

Legal Hackers is an  
open community  
that includes...



...and anyone else  
interested in the  
intersection of law  
and technology!



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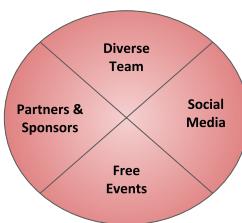
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## How are Legal Hackers Chapters structured?



Legal Hackers chapters have the following general characteristics:

- A team of **volunteer organizers** with diverse professional and personal backgrounds
- Local **partners and sponsors** to help support the chapter's activities (with no exclusive sponsors or content control)
- An active **social media** presence to share events, activities, and projects between and outside the community
- Regular **free, public events** for the community



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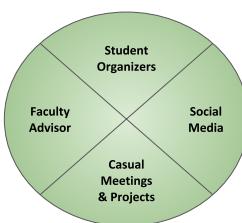
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## New in 2018: Legal Hackers Student Groups



Legal Hackers Student Groups are university student clubs with the following general characteristics:

- Has a **diverse team** of 2+ co-equal volunteer Student Organizers (replaced annually)
- Has a **faculty advisor** to advise and support continuity from year to year
- An active **social media** presence to share events, activities, and projects
- **Free membership** open to current undergraduate and graduate students
- Casual, regular **meetings** during the academic year to work on projects and initiatives



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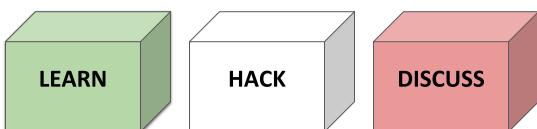
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## What does Legal Hackers Do?



Legal Hackers chapters host **free, public events** and **online fora** of passionate individuals from **law, tech, and design** to **explore issues and develop solutions**.



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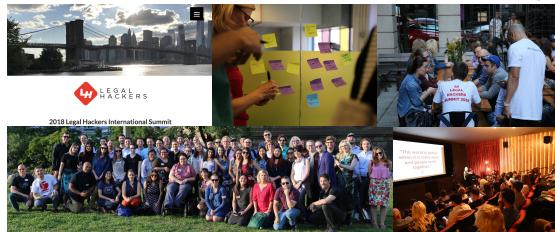
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## Legal Hackers Local Chapter Events



## Fourth Annual Legal Hackers International Summit



Keynotes: Katherine Maher, Colleen Chien, Justin Brannan

Workshops: Teaching Coding for Lawyers, Legal Design, A2J, Blockchain Law & Policy

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## Legal Hackers Regional and Global Events



- Computational Law & Blockchain
- "Decentralized conference"
- LEARN, HACK, DISCUSS,
- 47 self-organized nodes around the world
- Follow-on events throughout Asia
- Featured in first issue of *Stanford Journal of Blockchain Law and Policy*

- First regional Legal Hackers Summit
- Hosted in Odessa, Ukraine
- Organized by Kyiv Legal Hackers
- Closed Day for organizers and an Open Day for the wider community
- Participants from around Europe and Central Asia

## Legal Hackers Regional and Global Events (cont.)



- LegalTechFestMX
- Monterrey, Mexico
- Legal Hackers organizers from around Mexico and the Americas
- Presentations on legal innovation and emerging technologies
- Workshops on design thinking



- APAC Legal Hackers Summit
- Hosted in Singapore
- Organized by SG Legal Hackers
- Closed Day for organizers and an Open Day for the wider community
- Participants from around Asia

## Legal Hackers Regional and Global Events (cont.)



Date: October 25, 2018

Venue:

MIT Media Lab

Cambridge MA 02139

Register:

LegalHackathon.org

OPEN HOUSE

ENDOX

Exposure and diversity creation

Participation

Training

Partners:

MIT Media Lab

Cambridge MA 02139

Register:

LegalHackathon.org

## What's next?

We believe that by developing an **open culture for law**, Legal Hackers will:

- Train a new generation of tech-enabled lawyers
- Break down silos in the legal industry
- Build tools to increase access to justice
- Serve as a neutral forum for policy discussions
- Facilitate rapid dissemination of legal innovation

But we need **your help** to get there.

Will you **join us**?



## How you can get involved

- Join your local chapter
  - Attend events
  - Volunteer to help
  - Bring your friends
- Start a chapter or student group
  - Visit [www.legalhackers.org/apply](http://www.legalhackers.org/apply)
  - Complete a request form
- Join the conversation
  - #legalhack
  - Share why you think an open culture for law is important
- Build something and share it



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We are Legal Hackers



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