

We are open and creating tomorrow's legal

A close-up look at the Liquid Legal Institute e.V.

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Why LLI?

Why did we feel that founding the LLI — a non-profit organization — would constitute a meaningful contribution in light of the massive changes in our industry?

We believe in a community driven by the power of collaboration — a community that explores innovative methodologies like legal design thinking and agile development, and a circle that embraces both digitalization and the implementation of standards as opportunities.

We believe an opportunity has opened in our ecosystem to change how we do things, to push the boundaries of what we can achieve for our clients and, ultimately, to rethink our purpose in society.

Together, we want to develop best practices and guidelines for digital transformation by means of a collaborative, cross-stakeholder approach. The recommendations we develop will then be available to all,



Liquid legal institute: an open and interdisciplinary platform for promoting a new way of thinking in the legal sector.

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Getting organized

What a difference a year makes! The LLI has only been registered as an association since June 14, 2018. We started as a group of seven founders, all leaders in various areas of the legal ecosystem, including legal, design thinking, and informatics. And most importantly: Innovation drives us all!

To pursue our mission, we ultimately chose the German *eingetragener Verein (e.V.)* as a proven setup and established a very slim and agile, but solidly functioning, administration, headed by Kai Jacob and Dierk Schindler (management board) and Astrid Kohlmeier (managing director). We would like to thank our partners who provide pro bono support, especially Allen and Overy for supporting the corporate setup and Warth Klein Grand Thornton (WKGT) for their tax services.

Of course, alongside our articles of association, we also adopted a code of ethics, all of which are published on our website: <https://liquid-legal-institute.com/governance/>. Our supervisory board is also part of our governance structure, which is generously chaired by Jens Wagner and supported by the deputy chair, Roger Strathausen.

Finally, we are in the midst of setting up our advisory council. Why yet another group? Part of our mission is to actively promote a holistic view of issues within our industry, which can only be achieved by inviting every voice to the table. However, we understand that for certain important stakeholders (public sector entities and universities, for example), formal membership in an association can be a challenge. The advisory council is intended to ensure these stakeholders' representation, while simultaneously enabling us to invite internationally renowned thought leaders to influence and support our agenda.

Inviting and attracting members

Even though it was just this year that we opened our gates for members to join, we are happy to report that we already have members from eight countries and continue to grow. We are grateful to all our members for their support in spreading the word about LLI and for continuing to inspire new members to join. First and foremost, we owe a special thanks to our co-founder, Dr. Thomas Wegerich, who has given us a platform at his conferences several times to present about LLI and our projects.

While we want to grow our membership to increase the influence of our community and the power to drive both projects and innovation, we recognize that successful projects and concrete results are the outcomes that really matter to us and our community. These outcomes are the factor that will ultimately make the LLI a success.

Researching a Common Legal Platform

Our first project is connected to our vision for a Common Legal Platform (CLP). We are guided by the fundamental conviction that this platform should be accessible to all stakeholders in the legal ecosystem. A CLP serves as common ground for collaborative development, sharing and developing standards and knowledge, and intuitively combining various kinds of specialized services.

One of our key principles as an association is to apply design thinking methodology in our projects. Thus, we are not immediately driving toward “the solution” — rather, we are first striving to understand the general, holistic requirements for a platform of this kind. When it comes to joint development, the willingness to collaborate and share among different market participants is as crucial as broadly accepted open source guidelines!

To gain a comprehensive understanding of this subject, we obtained support from the Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI) in Potsdam. Two student teams conducted wide-ranging research and interviews on collaboration in the legal ecosystem, ultimately gathering exciting insights. An especially important discovery revealed that traditional legal service providers find it difficult to share knowledge and work toward a common solution. In contrast, for new market participants such as legal tech start-ups, interdisciplinary cooperation and collaboration is a *modus operandi*. The reason: Without this cooperation, many new developments would not be possible.

On the basis of these initial findings, we now invite our members to join the project and consider how we can proceed together.

The second Liquid Legal book: “Designing Tomorrow’s Legal: The Common Legal Platform”

The world is changing quickly in these transformative times. In the LLI network, we constantly see new insights, exciting developments and great projects. It’s time to collect and share for the benefit of all!



The call for manuscripts went out in January 2019, and the feedback has been incredible. Within a few weeks, we got commitments, working titles and abstracts from almost 30 authors across the industry, once again representing more than 10 countries. We are aiming to have the texts in for editing by the end of June. We can't wait to share them, so our ambitious goal is to publish the book before the end of 2019.

A digitalization guide

It's likely that all of us have witnessed the "crash" of a digitalization project. Why do so many digitalization projects fail? And why are some successful? Too often, fundamental success factors are overlooked or neglected — perhaps because lawyers running these types of projects are in new territory. Learning from each other's breadth of experience and leveraging best practices will benefit us all.

This project — initiated by BusyLamp, KPMG and others, and led by our co-founder Bernhard Walth — aims to create a pragmatic guide explaining how to approach, set up and run digitalization projects in the legal industry.

The hands-on guide will cover topics ranging from interdisciplinarity within

project teams to budget, identification of requirements, and beyond. The project has taken shape quickly. Several teams have been working full steam, and we presented our preliminary results on April 11 in Munich at the Legal Market Conference. We are currently in the process of finalizing the guide's publication to make it accessible to all our members, as well as the wider public.

Legal transformation in education

As a result of our contact with the members of our broad LLI network and our discussions with professors in various countries, we know digital transformation puts law schools and therefore deans, professors and students in a very challenging position.

Law schools must fulfill today's mandate and give priority to the curriculum that is currently certified so that law students can pass their exams. At the same time, they must find ways to embrace the disruption that digital transformation brings to the legal ecosystem, including new ethical questions, new regulatory challenges, the demand for new skills, and even entirely new roles and positions. Law schools must rise to the challenge and adapt graduates' skillsets to suit the dramatically and rapidly changing job mar-

ket, as well as to ensure the long-term success of the law schools themselves.

The LLI is currently kick-starting a working group to explore how we can work together to contribute to the integration of legal tech and digital transformation in legal curriculum at colleges and universities. Initially, we aim to do two things: (1) create a shortlist of the most relevant topics that ought to augment law school curricula today, and (2) explore the feasibility of an online curriculum of short courses provided by experts and practitioners that could serve as a basis for law schools as they flesh out comprehensive programs.

Creating standards: A standard for SPAs

Another one of the LLI's pursuits is the creation of standards where they make sense — be it for the sake of simplification, to enable digitalization or to help us all work faster and be more focused on the areas where lawyers truly provide added value.

One of our new members, Deloitte, interested us in the idea of creating a standard for share purchase agreements for mid-cap transactions. These standard SPAs would allow all stakeholders in such an M&A transaction to complete the

process faster, based on a market standard and at a lower overall cost. Instead of arguing about the "best" SPA template, the team could focus on the specifics of the transaction.

A team of experts, including but not limited to in-house legal departments, law firms, banks, designers and universities, aims to create a widely accepted standard SPA for mid-cap/non-capital-market transactions. A standard SPA template of this kind would not only cover the basic terms and conditions, but also provide guidance regarding all aspects of the M&A transaction, founded on a fair and balanced allocation of risks and responsibilities. This is not about enforcing a standard — it is about eliminating complexity and variation where there is no added value.

Cooperations

Collaboration between associations and groups means entering into cooperations. These can be very pragmatic and project-based, or they can be more general and support a common cause. Our cooperation with HPI was born as we were working on our first project. We joined forces with ML Tech, a student association in Munich, on the basis of our joint belief that legal education →

needs to evolve. Collaborating with the AnwaltSpiegel, the leading online publication in the German-speaking legal ecosystem, has given us multiple platforms to publicize our mission and projects. We are in many more ongoing conversations about co-operation in addition to these, including with universities and associations across Europe.

We are open! We hope our work in year one and the seeds we planted serve as a preliminary demonstration of what we can do together. Thank you for joining, collaborating and jointly creating tomorrow's legal! <-



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