

SmartLaw Pte Ltd to make legal services accessible to anyone

It leverages AI, and data science to assist lawyers and clients.



Dr Anton Ravindran talks about his experience in the start-up ecosystem and SmartLaw's offerings in the legal sector

SmartLaw Pte Ltd Founder CEO **Dr Anton Ravindran's** entrepreneurial ventures started nearly two decades ago. "After working for some of the leading global MNCs in the tech world, I took the plunge to pursue my passion/interests," he said.

Since then, he has been part of the start-up ecosystem in the region. "My first start-up where I spent the most part of my early years for nearly a decade and won several awards included Entrepreneur of the Year, Enterprise 50 Awards etc. I also sit on the board of other start-ups particularly involving AI while mentoring others," he added.

Dr Anton notes that the legal profession is a laggard with respect to leveraging technology particularly from AI and machine learning (ML) and there is some inherent inertia to change and AI is not yet ubiquitous. Hence, plenty of opportunities to make legal services efficient by leveraging AI and go beyond mere automation.

"However, there are a few leading legal tech firms in the US, Canada, and UK who have gained some traction but they have yet to become unicorns like our road hailing companies which are less complex applications from a technology and domain perspective," he added.

In Singapore, government has

undertaken initiatives to support and nurture local legaltech firms. Dr Anton believes that more can be done from an execution standpoint as his own personal attempts to explore the FLIP program was a challenging experience and there were delays.

"However, response from IMDA has been encouraging and supportive. "Though the government has initiated several programs and is actively promoting entrepreneurship in the legaltech sphere, execution is obviously in the hands of the people tasked with the effort who may not be fully attuned with the government's vision, which is why more ground up activities may be needed", he said.

Advances in legaltech will certainly "democratize" law as technology will lend reach to legal expertise for rich and poor alike. More money will no longer necessarily mean access to better lawyers and better justice. Less than 50% of people in the world have access to legal systems. According to studies, more than half the world's population don't even have title deeds to their properties.

This has corresponding effects as they similarly cannot even leverage from

their properties to explore betterment of their lives, whether to start a business or otherwise. This in turn, obviously has a huge economic impact.

SmartLaw's two key offerings are : a) Predictor which leverages data science and legal domain expertise to build smart solutions that assist lawyers and clients to predict sentencing outcomes of complex litigious matters in an unprecedented few minutes. b) e-Discovery which uses NLP (Natural Language Processing) for lawyers to extract past precedents and verdicts which are relevant to their cases in split seconds.

In addition, it provides ancillary services for visitors/clients to the site by leveraging from several online services, which in the past may have required a visit to a law firm.

AI paving the way

Dr Anton believes that the future is here and now, and it lies in AI. The first generation of technology for the legal profession provided functions such as word processing, accounting systems, and email. This progressed to where clients and lawyers could do filing online, document management systems and as a result of the pandemic, even quickly moved to online court hearings.

However, Dr Anton notes that there is no intelligence involved and these are largely automating their operations. The future will be where lawyers, judges and machines work side by side in analyzing complex legal issues, drafting documents, predicting sentencing outcomes, etc.

"Technology will lead to manifold improvements in terms of efficiency for the legal profession in the areas of better analysis, predictions, and eDiscovery amongst others and emerging specialties such as legal engineering will become mainstream," he added.

SmartLaw said it will continue to invent and introduce new LegalTech solutions by leveraging AI and ML for other areas of law in Singapore and in other jurisdictions in the coming months.

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