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## LEGAL TECHNOLOGY HUBS



Singapore  
Academy of Law

# Worldwide growth in legal tech innovation

While America is widely regarded as the home of pioneering legal technology, innovative law firms, practitioners and startups are proliferating around the world

### OLIVER PICKUP

#### SINGAPORE

**T**he forward-thinking island city-state, off the coast of southern Malaysia, boasts an impressive legal technology culture. The state-appointed Singapore Academy of Law (SAL) launched its LawNet database as long ago as 1990, Singapore's Supreme Court went paperless in 2014 and last year SAL launched its Legal Technology Vision roadmap.

“Singapore has become a leader in cutting-edge legal tech in the past year, particularly since the SAL launched its Future Law Innovation programme in an effort to position the country as a trailblazer in the industry,” says Zoe Morris, chief operating officer at Frank Recruitment Group, which opened its Singapore office in 2010.

“Earlier this year, Singapore's government took a huge step towards positioning the nation as the Asian hub for legal tech when it launched the LegalTech accelerator, with an aim to coach startups, and nurture emerging business models and services in the habitually traditionalist legal industry.

“Though its domestic legal sector is relatively small, a move to shoulder the tech aspects of the industry isn't such a puzzle for a country that's been called Asia's Silicon Valley.”

**“Earlier this year, Singapore's government took a huge step towards positioning the nation as the Asian hub for legal tech**

Indeed, strong government commitment to innovation has enabled Singapore to thrive as a legal tech hub; a recent World Economic Forum report suggests the city-state offers one of the best pro-business environments in the world. But it is the collaborative attitude that makes it flourish, according to Emily Foges, chief executive of Luminace, an artificial intelligence (AI) legal platform, whose clients include three of the big four Singaporean law firms.

“The close links between the academic and business communities sets Singapore apart,” says Ms Foges, who in October was one of a select group of business leaders to join the Department for International Trade's technology trade mission to Singapore.

“Businesses are quite literally building bridges with local universities to ensure a strong connection is nurtured from the outset. By physically reducing the distance between academia and industry, Singapore is successfully speeding up research and development insights into practical applications in business.”

Ms Foges points out that Singapore's four official languages act as a driver for innovation. “Language-agnostic tech holds huge potential to boost efficiency,” she says. “For example, AI now allows lawyers to rapidly review large volumes of documents and digital material, in multiple languages and dialects, meaning huge time and cost-savings.”

It's clear that legal tech innovation is abundant in Singapore. For instance, Maxwell Chambers' arbitration centre utilises Opus 2 litigation technologies. Also, chatbots on LawGuideSingapore's Facebook page provide users with legal advice.