

Law School's Missed Lessons: Teaching Yourself Legal Tech

Law360

06.18.2025

Mark, a first-year litigation associate, receives the following assignment in an email:

Can you handle the first draft of our motion to compel in this federal case? You can pull the briefing from the client's previous state court case and the last federal motion to compel I filed as examples.

The assignment continues:

Make sure the motion complies with the court's local rules. If you know how, go ahead and look at the e-discovery database for this case so you can update the numbers in the sample motions on the burden of complying with this discovery request. Let me know if you have questions. — Juliet

Mark stares at the screen. He excelled in his legal research and writing class. But he has no idea where to find old state court briefs, how to use the firm's document management systems or where to find the court's local rules.

Mark hesitates to bring his questions directly to the partner, feeling they might display a lack of technical competence. And he knows he will not be able to impress Juliet because he cannot begin to imagine how he would use the e-discovery platform to help establish a discovery burden.

Attorneys who join the workforce with these valuable skills have an upper hand.

Lawyers are often surprised how few programs new graduates are familiar with, and they're thrilled when junior team members suggest new technologies to efficiently serve clients in ways the senior lawyer had not considered. Most law schools have significant ground to make up in instilling this technical fluency and an innovative mindset in their students.

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