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THE PROFESSION
9:45am-10:45am

Professional Competency in the Current Climate: Rules & Ethics
Part 1: Technological Competency: data and algorithm driven services, cyber risk and AI

Lawyers continue to adapt their ways of working to obtain the benefits of technological innovations and address new risks of dealing with digital data, breaches of client confidentiality, cyber threats and email-enabled fraud.

Lawyers increasingly rely upon legal tech applications, including e-discovery and document assembly tools, AI-based research and decision aids, online file sharing and storage, electronic deal rooms, e-signing, e-settlement and e-lodgement. Electronic communications are now standard business practice, but this has created new opportunities for fraudsters and hackers and increased risk for practitioners managing funds held in trust.

New capabilities bring unfamiliar risks and require new competencies to identify, mitigate and manage those risks, and some areas of legal work now involve a combination of legal and technological knowledge.

What are the core technological competencies that lawyers need to address existing and emerging technological risks? How do legal, professional and fiduciary duties and professional conduct regulation address requirements for these competencies and errors and data breaches that arise in the digital age?

In this session, our panel will use practical examples from everyday practice to illustrate how to identify and address these risks and develop and maintain business processes and technological competencies compatible with lawyers' professional obligations.

About Peter Leonard

Principal of Data Synergies, Peter Leonard, has advised technology, data and communications businesses across Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia for over thirty years. Peter is a part-time Professor of Practice (across the Schools of Management and Governance, and Information Systems & Technology Management) at UNSW Sydney Business School.

Peter serves on a number of corporate boards, including as chair of Dynamic Crowd Measurement and a director of Iridium Satellite Australia. In March 2021, Peter was appointed to the newly constituted NSW Government Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee, tasked "to guide and provide strategic oversight for the use of AI in government".

In December 2020, Peter was appointed as one of only two business sector members of the NSW statutory Information and Privacy Advisory Committee, tasked "to provide the government with information, advice, assistance and training to deliver world-leading information and privacy management practices".

Peter also serves on a number of advisory boards, including for the Australian Human Rights Commission's Technology and Rights Project and the UNSW Institute for Cyber Security.

He was a founding partner of Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers and led its technology and data practice over the firm's growth from four to over 80 partners. Following his retirement as a G+T partner in 2017, he continues to assist G+T as a consultant.

Peter co-chairs the Australian Computer Society's Artificial Intelligence and Ethics Technical Committee, the IoT (Internet of Things) Alliance Australia's Data work stream, and the Law Society of NSW Privacy and Data Committee.