

TECHNOLOGY AND LEGAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: MARITAL BLISS OR BLOW?

Abayomi Anthony Alayoku* and Faith Modupe Akinola**

Abstract

Technology has positively affected everything in the global space. It is arguably developed and applicable in the education sector which includes the legal education subsector. However, one can still posit that the application of technology in legal education in Nigeria appears not well established as many law teachers who are used to paper work research seem to believe so much in it. The paper interrogates the nexus between technology and legal education. The paper found that technology is been deployed in legal education in Nigeria but the application is still very slow especially in Public Universities due to some challenges. The paper further finds that, that there are lots of prospects which technology can expose legal education if properly applied. The paper concludes that there is need for an urgent and paradigm shift to application of technology in legal education in order to prepare the law students and lawyers for global market.

* LL.M, Doctoral Candidate at School of Law,, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Nigeria. Barrister at Law, Akhasic Solicitors, Plot 28, New Ikirun Road, Pepsi Cola Area, Osogbo, Nigeria. Email: abayomialayoku@yahoo.com

** B.Ed (Hons), Masters' Candidate, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Adeleke University, Ede, Nigeria. Assistant Chief Librarian, Tekena Tamuno Library, Redeemer's University, Ede, Nigeria. Email: faithakinola28@gmail.com

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1.0 Introduction

It is no gainsaying that technology has greatly influenced the global community. In the same vein, technological determinism is the belief that technology is the principal initiator of the society's transformation¹. The proponent of technological determinism argued that the society is influenced and shaped by technological development. It has to adjust and adapt to new technologies and innovation.² With the advent and introduction of technology the mode of law practice, teaching and advocating has been transformed. Technology has an impact on every aspect of the legal profession, including government, legal practice, and legal education. The government has made technology a crucial component of fostering efficiency, expanding access to justice, and streamlining the needs for monitoring, reporting, communicating, and processing inside courts, federal agencies, and other executive bodies. Legal businesses have rapidly discovered that integrating technically-based services into their operations and satisfying the demands of their tech-savvy clientele gives them a competitive edge.³ Learning has been made easy through so many social media via the use of different technologies. One should not be ignorant of how possible to conduct full classes online without even physically present in class. The introduction of Zoom, Google meet, Microsoft team and others means of communication online has simplified the mode of teaching and educating throughout the world. It is not surprised

1 Hauer Thomas "Education, Technological Determinism And New Media"
INTED 2017 Proceedings, 2017 doi 10.21125/inted.2017.2401

2 Ibid

3 Jeanne Eicks, 'Educating Superior Legal Professionals: Successful Modern Curricula Join Law and Technology'
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2465977 accessed on 20 November 2023

to know that while in Nigeria one can be attending classes in other countries in as much there is presence of internet facilities in that country without physically present there

The emergence of Covid 19 in early 2020 has shown to the whole word that the human activities can be carried out mainly online with the use of technology, there may not be need for physical appearance in the class rooms, and sometimes even in the Court. In the recent time, the judgment delivered by the Election Tribunal in Kano State was via Zoom, most judges in Nigeria delivered judgment on zoom in early 2021 before the full resumption of human activities after the closed down occasioned by Covid 19. Without mincing words, technology has come to make legal education in Nigeria easy, however one cannot fully wish away some of the challenges that are associated with it.

This first part of this paper shall discuss the definition of terms and the second part shall discuss the historical analysis of legal education and its fusion with the legal profession. In the same vein, the third part will discuss practical application of technology to legal education in Nigeria while the fourth shall examine practical application of technology to legal education in selected jurisdictions. The fifth part shall discuss challenges of applying technology to legal education in Nigeria and sixth shall discuss prospects of technology to legal education in Nigeria and the last part of the paper shall assess the summary of findings and proffer the way forward.

2.0. Definition of Terms

It is apposite to put this paper in proper context. In doing this, certain terms which are capable of dual interpretation should be defined within the context of usage in this paper.

- 2.1 Technology:** Technology includes electronic or digital products and systems considered as a group.⁴ Technology therefore covers the electronic and digital products that give us access to information.⁵ Technology is also the application of conceptual knowledge for achieving practical goals, especially in a reproducible way.⁶ The word *technology* can also mean the products resulting from such efforts including both tangible tools such as utensils or machines, and intangible ones such as software⁷
- 2.2 Legal Education:** Legal education is the preparation for the practice of law.⁸ It is the process which equips the future lawyer, judge administrator, counsellor and legal scientists to know how legislative, executive, judicial organs of the government are designed and how they operate.⁹ However, for legal education to be

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- 4 Webopædia,
'Technology' <<http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/T/technology.html>> accessed on 20 November 2023
- 5 Ifeoluwa A. Olubiyi, Ayobami J. Olaniyan, & Ngozi Odiaka 'The Role of Technology in the Advancement of Legal Education and Practice in Nigeria *Conference Paper* 2015
- 6 Skolnikoff, Eugene B. *The Elusive Transformation: Science, Technology, and the Evolution of International Politics* (2013, Princeton University Press). p. 13.
- 7 Salomon, Jean-Jacque "What is technology? The issue of its origins and definitions" (1984) *History and Technology*. 1 (2): 113–156.
doi:10.1080/07341518408581618. ISSN 0734-151, Mitcham, C 'Thinking Through Technology: The Path Between Engineering and Philosophy'. (1994) University of Chicago Press. ISBN 978-0226531984.
- 8 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/legal-education> accessed 20 November, 2023
- 9 M.R. Burra and V. N. Madasu, 'Importance of Internet Facility in Support of Legal Education and Legal Research' http://www.abhinavjournal.com/images/Arts_&_Education/May13/4.pdf accessed on 20 November 2023

effective, it must focus on learning laws, learning how to apply those laws and learning how to process transactions and legal claims on behalf of clients.¹⁰ The National Universities Commission has opined that the law programme is designed to ensure that the graduate of Law will have good general knowledge of law, including a clear understanding of the place and importance of law in society.¹¹ It is therefore necessary that the student of law should also have a broad general knowledge and exposure to other disciplines and use of technologies in the process of acquiring legal education¹²

2.3 Information and Communication Technology: ICT refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. It is similar to Information Technology (IT), but focuses primarily on communication technologies. This includes the Internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums.¹³

3.0 Brief Historical Analysis of the Legal Profession and Legal Education in Nigeria

The best theory to explain the legal practice and legal education is practicing theory. The practicing theory originated from the United States

10 Sunday Akinolu Fagbemi 'The Role of ICT in the Advancement of Legal Education in Nigeria' (2017) Issues in Curriculum and Language Education Vol 1 (University of Ibadan Library.
NUC's. 2022. Core Curriculum minimum academic standards for undergraduate Programmes in Nigerian universities (CCMAS). p 17

13 Techterms, 'Technology' <http://techterms.com/definition/ict> accessed on 21 November 2023

of America, which was one of the colonies of United Kingdom that shared the same similarities with other colonies of United Kingdom. The Practicing Theory provided an explanation of the evolution of legal education, the birth of formal education, the official acknowledgment of law teaching, the traditional model of legal practice, and the eventual demise of big law.¹⁴ Traditional model traced the history of the very foundation of legal practice when it opined that as of the mid-nineteenth century, law practice was a trade entered by apprenticing with a lawyer.¹⁵ This system ensured that clients' needs would determine how lawyers were educated.¹⁶ The practice of law in the mid-nineteenth century paved way for the introduction and birth of formal education where the need to go through formal education is essential before one can be licensed to practice law. In United State of America for instance, the establishment of a structured method for studying law was the first move in the advancement of legal schooling in the US. The earliest law schools in the US offered a kind of codified apprenticeship. The elite of the fledgling Republic received their education at the Litchfield Law School in Litchfield, Connecticut, from 1784 to 1833..¹⁷ Other law schools were established during the Litchfield period following the formalized apprenticeship model at Harvard (1817), Yale (1826), absorbing a private New Haven law school), the University of Virginia (1826), and several other universities.¹⁸

13 Larry E. Ribstein, 'Practicing Theory: Legal Education for the Twenty-First Century' (2011) 96 *Iowa L Rev* 1649

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid

15 Albertj. Harno, Legal Education In The United States: A Report Prepared For The Survey of the Legal Profession 28-32 (1953).

16 Quoting Letter from Joseph Story, Assoc. Justice of the Supreme Court of the U.S., to Tristram Kennedy, Principal of the Dublin Law Inst. (May 15, 1844), in *Intelligence and Miscellany: Law Studies*, g L. Rep. 140, 142 (1846))

In Nigeria, a formal education for intending lawyers was introduced via the Supreme Court Ordinance of 1876 which provides thus: ‘The Chief justice shall have power to approve, admit and enroll to practice as barristers and solicitors in the court such persons as shall have been admitted as solicitor in any of the courts of London, Dublin and Edinburgh’¹⁹. Following the establishment of a formal program for aspiring attorneys, law teaching at the various institutions was given official status. The practicing hypothesis originated in the United States, where in its early years there was a rising acknowledgment of the value of attorneys and the law, and as such there was a need to set requirements for becoming a lawyer. Seventeen jurisdictions established minimal standards for judicial practice admission between 1767 and 1829.²⁰ One of the arguments raised in the debates by American Bar Association is whether or not the prerequisites for admission of people to study law should include other masses outside the context of fine people that the Langdellian’s case method introduced before the advent of formal education.²¹ It was determined that imposing stringent

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- ¹⁹ NBA Business Law World, ‘History of Nigerian Legal Profession
- ¹⁸ Jayanth K. Krishnan, Outsourcing and the Globalizing Legal Profession, 48 WM. & MARY L. REV. 2 189 (2007); Milton C. Regan, Jr. & Palmer T. Heenan, Supply Chains and Porous Boundaries: The Disaggregation of Legal Services, 78 FORDHAM L. REV. 2137 (2010); David A. Steiger, The Rise of Global Legal Sourcing: How Vendors and Clients Are Changing Legal Business Models, BUS. L. TODAY, Nov./Dec. 200g, at 39
- ¹⁹ Michael J. Bommarito II et al., Distance Measures for Dynamic Citation Networks, 389 PHYSICA A 4201 (2010) (discussing construction and use of dynamic citation networks to show the development of precedent in common-law systems, focusing on U.S. Supreme Court decisions); Fred S. McChesney, Tortious Interference with Contract Versus "Efficient" Breach: Theory and Empirical Evidence, 28J. LEGAL STUD. 131 (1999) (presenting regression analysis of tortious- interference cases to show which factors actually influence case results). The recent mastery of the television quiz show Jeopardy! by an IBM

educational requirements for bar admission would "discourage legal education across the nation, diminish legal knowledge globally, and deny access to American courts and legal aid to a large number of persons in our cities, many of whom are of foreign descent."²² The American Bar Association established formal requirements in 1921 for those wishing to practice law in the United States. These requirements included completing at least two years of college education and a total of three years of continuous study, or the equivalent part-time, at a law school with a sufficient library and full-time faculty.²³ However, in Nigeria, the period of study is 4 years for direct entry candidates, 5 years for the regular admissions.²⁴ It is to be noted also there is a compulsory law school curriculum that every law graduate in Nigeria must go through before they can be certified a full-fledged lawyer.²⁵ The practicing theory moved further from mere official recognition of law teaching to evolution of legal education, the lawyers that were trained in America under the Langdellian's case study were only professional at studying the decision of the judges, and examining the ratios behind every decision and then thereafter apply it to the similar cases at hand, most of these lawyers lack the capability to conduct client interviews, the fulcrum of evolution of legal education is to

computer demonstrated the potential for such applications in professional fields. See Spencer E. Ante, Computer Thumps Jeopardy' Minds; IBM To Unveil Pact To Develop Commercial Applications in Health-CareSector, WALL STREET J. (February 17, 2000), http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704171004576148974172060658.html?mod=ITP-marketplace_1.2001] 166g

20 John Marshall, 'Proceedings of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, 44 ANN. REP. A.B.A. 656, 668 (1921),

23 Ibid (n 16)

24 Okechukwu Oko, 'Legal Education and Training in Nigeria' (1994) 6 Afr J Int'l & Comp L 271

25 S. 2, Legal Education (Consolidation, etc) Act, Cap L10, LFN 2004

train the lawyers who will not only read the cases or the decision of the court but that will also be versatile in clients interview and advice, policy and decision making. Oliver Wendell Holmes in observing the characteristics of a future lawyer opined that "*the black-letterman may be the man of the present, but the man of the future is the man of statistics and the master of economics.*"²⁶ Majority of the lawyers who were trained in the mid nineteenth century mainly worked as legal realistic; however, the evolution of legal education and the scholars of 21st century have shifted from legal realism to social realism where lawyers will also involve in policy making and advice of clients. It was opined that "if legal education in the contemporary world is adequately to serve the needs of a free and productive commonwealth, it must be conscious, efficient, and systematic training for policy-making. The proper function of our law schools is, in short, to contribute to the training of policy-makers for the ever more complete achievement of the democratic values that constitute the professed ends of American polity."²⁷

The death of big law is the very last theory in the practicing theory and it reflects on the actual practicing of law after the law school. The death of big law simply envisages a situation where senior lawyers and partners in the firms especially in the big law firms separate a certain money to pay junior associates and by doing that bind them to the law firms and not to the client.²⁸ The lawyer's duty is to the clients and not to the firm; however the payment of stipends by the firm makes the junior counsel or lawyer to

²⁶ Oliver WENDELL HOLMES, *The Path of the Law*, in *Collected Legal Papers* 167, 187 (1920).

²⁴ Harold D. Lasswell & Myres S. McDougal, *Legal Education and Public Policy: Professional Training in the Public Interest*, 52 YALE L.J. 203, 206 (1943).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

sell their rights to partner of the firms thereby being loyal to the firms even more than their personal clients.²⁹ Since it depends on businesses developing and maintaining substantial capital apart from the capital of individual employees, the "Big Law" model is intrinsically unstable. Due to this wealth, law firms are able to charge a significant premium for the services of lawyers, even young associates.³⁰ The partners in the firms have to raise the money by, amongst other things, supervising, advising, and vetting subordinate employees. The issue is that businesses lack an efficient means of maintaining this capital.³¹ Attorneys' first and foremost professional duties are to those they represent, not to their companies. Noncompetition agreements breach professional ethics rules, therefore firms could legally bind attorneys to the firm.³²

However, it should be highlighted that there is a chance that the legal services market could become unstable due to increased market competition, such as the increasing number of extremely knowledgeable in-house lawyers. Businesses no longer need to rely on well-known Big Law companies; instead, they can select from a variety of legal information services, including boutiques law firms and sole proprietorships. practitioners to outsourcing firms and new technologies.³³ In the same vein, clients are now turning to nonlawyer consultants such accountant,

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Larry E. Ribstein, Ethical Rules, Agency Costs, and Law Firm Structure, 84 VA L. REV.1707 (1998)

³¹ Ibid

²⁶ MODEL RULES OF PROF'L CONDUCT R. 5.6 (2009). For an analysis of the problems of enforcing effective noncompetition agreements in law firms,

²⁷ THOMAS D. MORGAN, THE VANISHING AMERICAN LAWYER 113 (2010) (noting that 25% of lawyers are employed in single-client situations, of which 40% are inside corporate counsel)

economic and business consultants³⁴ and also some countries where the legal work is highly expensive now outsourcing the works to other low income wage countries via the usage of technology, although this industry currently focuses on the commodity end of legal work, such as discovery and contract review, the outsourcing industry is dynamic and could grow significantly depending on future technologies for monitoring outsourcers.³⁵ Lastly some areas of law practice that have long been the staple of sole proprietors, such as wills and real-estate transactions, could become retail or online services offered by firms like Legal Zoom or chain retailers like Wal-Mart.³⁶

4.0 Practical Application of Technology to Legal Education In Nigeria

Prior to this time majority in the legal profession including the lawyers, law teachers and even the law students depend mainly on paper work, such as hardcopy books, journals, legislation, and law reports in doing their research. However, the advent of Information and Communication Technology has turned things around in the legal profession and legal

29 TaninaRostain, The Emergence of "Law Consultants," 75 FORDHAM L. REV.1397 (2006) (describing the rise of legal-consulting services)

30 S. Geis, Business Outsourcing and the Agency Cost Problem, 82 NOTRE DAME L. REV. 955, 997-1002 (2007) (discussing how outsourcing is increasing with the reduction in monitoring costs). For another general theoretical perspective on outsourcing, see Margaret M. Blair & Erin O'Hara, Outsourcing Modularity and the Theory of the Firm (Vanderbilt Univ. Law Sch., Law & Econ., Working Paper No. 09-19, 2009), available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1443357>

education. Caroline identified some of the application of ICT in legal education³⁷ as follows:

i. Electronic Books

E-books are digital versions of printed books. The Internet has a huge collection of e-books useful to both law students and teachers. Many authors have taken advantage of this technology to make their published works available in electronic formats in order to make them more available to readers worldwide. Legal education is heavily reliant on books, some of which are rare but very valuable to students and teachers. E-books accessibility through the Internet make these valuable books available for study and research purposes. In addition, e-books consist of hyperlinks, search facilities, and multi-media capabilities. E-books compilers also compile the source files into an easy one to distribute live format like HTML, PDF, and RTF files.³⁸

ii. E-journals

An e-journal is a periodical publication which is published in electronic format, usually on the internet. Similar to e-books, e-journals can be accessed via internet. Students and teachers can access specific articles on these journals for research or assignment purposes.³⁹ The advantage of e-

31 Caroline Mbafan Ekpendu, 'Embracing ICT as an Effective Tool in Legal Education and Administration of Justice in Nigeria' (2021) 3 *IJOCLLEP* 32

32 A. Singh, Role of Information and Communication Technologies in Transforming Legal Education, *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 973

33 Most Universities subscribed to many E-journal, and their site where students can now access an online Articles or papers that can assist them in doing their assignment.

journals is that they can be accessed online from anywhere without physically going to the library or possessing hard copies of the journals⁴⁰

iii. Online Academic forums

ICT tools like the internet, social media amongst others, bring people together. Online academic forums or groups bring law students and teachers from the immediate locality and all over the world to discuss topics and share ideas on issues that are beneficial. Students can use these forums to better understand their topics and teachers have the opportunity of further explaining concepts to students outside of the classroom. Online academic forums exclusive to law teachers brings law teachers from other jurisdictions together to exchange ideas and new methods.⁴¹

Online Publications

Many individuals and academic bodies now utilize ICT tools to publish copies of their journals, research articles and even books. The universality of the Internet makes e-publishing very desirable and lucrative. Besides the advantage of reaching a broader audience, individuals and institutions can make profit off their works by making their publications accessible after payment of a fee or membership registrations/subscriptions.

iv. Electronic library

Electronic library, E-library for short, can also be referred to as virtual library, digital library, community network, library without walls or library

⁴⁰ Ibid (n 33)

³⁵ Most lecture materials are now being distributed via Whatssap group of the class, both at an undergraduate level, law school and even post graduate

of the future.⁴²Electronic library is a library with computerized information storage and retrieval systems connected to computers and most times the Internet.⁴³There is usually little or no physical presence of books, periodicals, reading space or support staff in the case of electronic libraries.

v. Open and Distance Education

Commonwealth of learning defines open and long distance learning as a way of providing learning opportunities that is characterized by the separation of teacher and learner in time or place or both in time and place; learning that is certified in some way by an institution or agency; the use of variety of media including print and electronic; two way communications that allow learners and tutors to interact; the possibility of occasional face to face meetings and a specialized division of labour in the production and delivery of courses.⁴⁴With advancements in technology, especially ICT, open and distance education is made more efficient, flexible, enjoyable, and less tedious by facilitating access to experts, resource persons, researchers, professionals, mentors, business leaders and peers all over the world.

vi. Teaching

Teaching is fundamentally a tedious process that involves planning, implementation, evaluation and revision. Use of ICT in the teaching process not only simplifies the process but makes it more enjoyable. There are numerous applications of ICT in the teaching process. ICT is applied in

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- 36 Madhumay, Gaurav, R. Ravi, Evolution of Digital Libraries, Problems and Prospects. IJLTEMAS[2013] 2(3), 9-21
- 37 J. O. Oforidile, N. A. Agbanu, G. N. Nwankwo (2019). The Use of E-library Resources as a Correlate of User Satisfaction in University Libraries in Anambara State, Nigeria. International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews. 9 (1) 103-112
- 38 www.col.org accessed 22 "10 November, 2023

research for valuable teaching materials, the actual dissemination of knowledge to students in the class rooms and finally in the evaluation or assessment phase of the students. ICT makes the gathering of materials easier than it was pre the ICT era.⁴⁵

vii. **Research**

The legal research is simplified via the use of technology; the introduction of LawPavillion by Grace InfoTech Ltd (GIT) has made research for cases and authority easier and faster. LawPavillion is developed to be suitable for the needs of the lawyers especially in Nigeria, law teachers and students.⁴⁶

5.0. Application of Technology to Legal Education in Selected Jurisdictions

Under this sub-heading the application of technology to legal education in four countries which include United State of America, Canada, Australia and United Kingdom shall be discussed. However, these countries share similarities in their application of technology to legal education having developed what is known as Computer Assisted Legal Research (CALR) and Computer Assisted Legal Instructions (CALI) and they have advanced to the use of Artificial Intelligence. The very first foundation for the introduction of computer assisting in legal education and research surfaced in the 1960s in America but the full application of computer to legal education received greater strength in the 1980s⁴⁷ with the introduction of some gadgets such computer, telephones, scanner and fax machines.

39 It has been observed that any lecture delivered via Zoom can be recorded, and this provide opportunity for students to listen to the lecture over and over again.

⁴⁰ <lawpavilion.com> accessed 9 November 2023

41 Michael A.Geist, 'Where Can You Go Today?: The Computerization of Legal Education From Workbooks to the Web' (1997) Vol 1, *Harvard Journal of Law and Technology* 141, 143. See generally Paul F.Teich, 'How Effective

However, majority of the law firms and law faculties also embraced the usage of internet in the year 1993.⁴⁸

Computer Assisted Legal Research was first introduced by Harty, Director at the University of Pittsburgh Law Center. Harty used punching machines to code all Pennsylvania public health laws and transferred same to a computer tape wherein users could search statutes by keywords which system was first demonstrated at the American Bar Association's Meeting 1960.⁴⁹ Thereafter the attempt of Harty, to create what is known as Ohio Bar Automated Research (OBAR)⁵⁰ which was aim at creating a non-indexed, full-text, on-line, interactive, computer-assisted legal research service' which still serves as the crux of Lexis and Westlaw till date.⁵¹ The expansion of and investment in the CALR project, it was subsequently turned into a subsidiary named Mead Data Central and renamed Lexis in 1972.⁵² Westlaw which originally comprised of head notes when it went online in 1975 became a full-text database a year later.⁵³

42 Geist (n.41) . The first web browser was created by Marc Andreessen called NCSA Mosaic at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Andreessen later co-founded Netscape Communication

43 Bernard J. Hibbitts, 'Last Writes? Re-assessing the Law Review in the Age of Cyberspace' (1996) 71 NYUL REv. 615, 656. Prof Harty later included public health laws from all the 50 states of the United States and began conducting searches on behalf of other lawyers.

44 Ibid (n 42)

51 Ibid (n 42)

46 William G. Harrington, 'A Brief History of Computer-Assisted Legal Research' (1985) 37 L. LmR. J. 543, 550-552.

53 Ibid

It must however be noted that, both CALR and CAI are not limited in their application to United States alone as countries like United Kingdom, Australia and Canada have also developed their own CALR and CAI and it is similar in application with that of United States. In United Kingdom for instance, British and Irish Law schools established the British and Irish Legal Educational Technology Association (BILETA).⁵⁴ It must be noted finally that distribution electronic casebooks have also improved legal practice and education in these countries.⁵⁵ The new approach to legal education and legal practice in most of these advance countries is the application of Artificial Intelligence to solve legal issues. In the legal field, recent advances in AI provide ideas for building predictive models that can be used to reveal the patterns that drive court decisions.⁵⁶ It can be helpful for lawyers and judges as a tool to quickly identify cases and extract patterns that lead to specific choices.⁵⁷ Some countries, such as China and the United States, have used AI in their justice systems.⁵⁸ It is done by seeing AI's potential to improve procedural and administrative efficiency, help

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- ⁵⁴ Thomas Allen & William Robinson, 'The Future of Computer Assisted Learning in Law' (1987) 3 J.L. & INFO SCI. 274, 277
- ⁵⁰ Richexd A. Matasar & Rosemary Shiels, 'Electronic Law Students: Repercussions on Legal Education' (1995) 29 VAL.U.L. REV. 909, 922
- ⁵¹ Precia Jacey, Siti Yuniarti, Artificial Intelligence: Implementation in Legal Services (Comparative Study on China, United States and Indonesia, Proceedings of the 3rd Asia Pacific International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management, Johor Bahru, Malaysia, September 13-15, 2022
- ⁵² Aletras Nikolaos et.al., Predicting judicial decisions of the European Court of Human Rights: A Natural Language Processing perspective, Peer J Computer Science 2: e93, pp. 1, 2016.
- ⁵³ Contini Francesco, Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of Humans, Law and Technology Interactions in Judicial Proceedings, Law, Technology and Humans Vol. 2(1), pp. 13, 2020

decision-making, and produce consistent predictions.⁵⁹ AI is the new phase of legal education and legal practice which Nigerian lawyers and schools must graciously welcome.

6.0 Challenges in the Application of Technology to Legal Education in Nigeria

The problems hindering the growth of applicability of technology to legal education in Nigeria include:

i. Epileptic Electricity Supply

There is no doubt that technology mainly thrives on constant supply of electricity this is because the internet and even the computer that would be used for teaching or research need to be power by electricity.⁶⁰ It is not news that electricity is not stable in Nigeria and as a result of this implementing ICT use in Law Faculties, and the Judiciary maybe problematic and not as efficient as initially hoped.

ii. Unwillingness to Learn, Unlearn and Re-learn

It should not be a surprise that most of the lecturers in almost all of our Universities still operate in an analog manner. Most of them do not even know anything about computer, and it sadden the heart to know that they are not even ready to unlearn analog mode and embrace digital mode of teaching by learning computer. I think it is high time that NUC will make computer literate a requirement for lecturing job. One may not need to blame the students especially the one in public universities for not embracing technology, majority of them are not exposed to computer while

54 Reiling A. Dory, Courts and Artificial Intelligence, International Journal for Court Administration 8 Vol.11 (2), pp 3, 2020

they are in school and this is because the poor funding of Law Faculties by the Government makes it difficult to implement ICT use.⁶¹

iii. Low – Level Computer Literacy

Computer literacy is still essentially at its rudimentary stage. It is also urban-oriented, very elitist and highly restricted in scope. Some of the challenges peculiar to Nigerian researchers in terms of electronic research include access to computers. Even though more Nigerians have access to or own computers than ever before, there are still legal researchers who do not have access to them⁶²

iv. Students' Lack of Basic Skills and Facilities

Apart from those students who were fortunate to receive their primary and secondary education in private schools in the cities where basic computer skills were taught, most of the students admitted into institutions of higher learning do not possess the basic skills on how to use the computer or the internet. Worse still, they may not have access to computer or the internet facilities, bearing in mind the cost of acquiring them.⁶³

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- 55 JE Owoeye, 'Information Communication Technology (ICT) Use as a Predictor of Lawyers' Productivity' (Library Philosophy and Practice, Paper 662) <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/662> accessed 9 of November, 2023
- 56 Bello, F and TS Shanyula. "Legal Research Insight for the 21st Century", being paper presented at 43th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association of Law Teachers (NALT) held on 17 - 20 May, 2010 at Kogi State University, Anyigba, Kogi State 380-409.
- 57 Amupitan, J. and A. Adewale, L. William and S. Kigbu. "ICT in 21st Century Legal Education", being paper presented at 43th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association of Law Teachers (NALT) held on 17 - 20 May, 2010 at Kogi State University, Anyigba, Kogi State 315-350.
- 58 Amupitan, Adewole Longpoe & Kigbu ICT in 21st Century Legal Education", being paper presented at 43th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association of

v. **Dynamism of Geometric Technological Innovation**

The periodic innovation in the technological world is arguably growing at an alarming rate. The technological world has grown in leaps and bounds and before learners catch up with one innovation, another is birthed. This applies to gadgets, teaching aids and other teleconferencing materials to mention but a few. The advent of the jet age is affecting policy formulation in terms of technological application to legal education and fiscal policies because the equipment the policy makers may seek to deploy might have gone obsolete as the users are trying to master its application. The evolution and arrival of artificial intelligence has further complicated technological tools deployed for legal research among others.

7.0 Prospects of Technology to Legal Education in Nigeria

One cannot absolutely conclude that there has not been advancement in the mode of teaching in our schools, especially the Universities. Some Universities at least few of the Private Universities are now technology inclined. What the government has failed to do in the public Universities, the Private Universities are now doing it. We are very much aware that some private Universities subscribed to online journal and even an online e-book; there are so many private universities that have law pavilion in their various libraries. So many private universities that are into post graduate program, delivers their lecture via zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft team and sometimes video conferencing. Some of the private universities have digital library which all the students can now access.

Law Teachers (NALT) held on 17th-20th May, 2010 at Kogi State University, Anyigba, Kogi State 315-350.

On the part of the private universities there is an improvement and greater prospect for the applicability of technology to legal education, however the main concern are public universities and even our law schools across the country. Though we cannot conclude, but we do not think that even till now majority of our law schools are equipped with computer or even subscribed to online journals, e-books or even Law Pavilion, there is no doubt that the individual lecturer or teacher can have them, but can the students access it? By now the multiple questions examination in law school should be a computer-based test. It should however be noted that, it was since 1999, that the Nigerian Policy on the adoption of ICT was initiated when the civilian government came into power⁶⁴ and by 2003 University of Jos through the support of Carnegie Corporation of the US established the necessary infrastructures needed for ICT education in Nigeria. It is then not a surprised that virtually all law faculties in Nigeria have adopted e-learning in one form or the other.⁶⁵ Though we are not in position to contravene the position stated above that almost all the Public Universities in Nigeria are inclined with e-learning, but we have of the opinion that application of technology to legal education goes beyond e-learning alone, it entails wholesome adoption of technology to every aspect of legal education, though situation in public universities has improved, but it is our belief that Nigeria government can still better equip public universities with more computer and ICT gadget that will skyrocket adoption of technology to legal education in Nigeria.

59 Heathcoth, P.M. "A Level I.C.T" (2nd Ed.2000) 44 Jeanne Eicks., *Educating Superior Legal Professionals: Successful Modern Curricula Join Law and Technology*".

60 Sunday Akinolu Fagbemi, 'The Role of ICT In The Advancement of Legal Education in Nigeria' in *Issues in curriculum and language Education* Edited by Folajogun V. Falaye & Joseph A. Adegbile (Ibadan University Press, 20170

8.0. Summary of Findings and Way Forward

Below are our findings and suggested way forward

- i. Majority of the law teachers especially the old ones and some students are not computer literate yet, therefore we humbly urge the NUC to find a way of enshrining computer education to the curriculums of law faculties in the university, the course can be Computer Law (CompuLaw)
- ii. We found out that despite the fact government had introduced the adoption of ICT in education since 1999, yet most of the Universities especially faculty of laws are not equipped yet with adequate computer, we then call on our government to equip our universities with more computer
- iii. Internet networking is essential for connection and research online, most of our universities and law are lacking in this respect, we then call on our government to fund universities and faculty of law adequately to enable them have access to internet
- iv. Computer and internet will not work without light, we then urge the government to improve on the electricity project of the universities and the law school.
- v. The old professors should be trained on how to operate some applications like zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft teams and other online application and how they can apply them in teaching of the students

9.0 Conclusion

This paper discussed the Technology and Legal Education in Nigeria. Various sub-topics were discussed, and from our discussion we found out that Nigeria as a country is just gradually embracing application of technology in legal education while comparing to countries like USA, UK, Canada and Australia that had introduced technology in their legal education as far back as 1960. What must be said is that Nigeria as a country is now on the right path in the application of technology to legal education, it is our hope and conclusion that this enthusiasm will not dwindle overtime and also believe that the government will support this new wave in all our universities by providing necessary infrastructural, it is also our conclusion that and hope that very soon the multiple question examination that is been done across the law school in Nigeria will be carried out via Computer Based Test so as to encourage students to be more technology inclined.