

Harnessing legaltech to develop the courts of the future



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Authority

On the 7th and 8th of November 2018, the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Courts will host the **'Dubai Conference on Court Excellence and Innovation: Today & Tomorrow'**, in collaboration with the International Consortium for Courts Excellence (ICCE). This conference, apart from being many firsts, promises to pave the way for court excellence steadily into the exhilarating realm of a data-driven future.

Conferences on court excellence are not new to either Dubai or the world. However, the conference hosted this year by the DIFC Courts is unprecedented in that it shall not only address the concerns surrounding court excellence today, but also the challenges courts will face tomorrow. In Beijing, Shanghai and Jiangsu, AI robots can evaluate possible litigation outcomes for a party before the case is filed and in UAE, artificial intelligence will soon be used to police the Emirates. These cases indicate what we often think of as 'future issues' are already here and demand to be contended with.

On that note, there are two core questions around which this conference will revolve: First, going into a fast-paced future of technological revolutions, what novel types of disputes will courts around the world receive – and how do courts need to prepare to handle those disputes – be it by adapting their procedures, training their judges, or changing their technology? The second question is on the advancements that courts could benefit from, by adopting technologies such as AI, robotics and Blockchain.

DIFC Courts, being many firsts in its own right (the first common law courts in a civil law region and the first court in the MENA region to introduce technology such as e-bundling and service of notice via electronic communication, including social media), is undoubtedly a front-runner in many aspects relating to the use of technology. These advancements enhanced the efficient and effective administration of justice at DIFC Courts. As a dynamic young judiciary with a focus on excellence and technology, DIFC Courts is in a unique position to host an international conference that addresses the integration of technologies into the excellent administration of courts. The two-day conference in Dubai will focus on topical and critical areas of concern such as:

- Challenges and best practices in judicial leadership and governance;
- Improving access to justice, court strategies and collaboration;
- Pursuing court excellence in tandem with technological advancements;
- Courts' management of Blockchain and smart contracts;
- AI adjudication of cases;
- The future of cybersecurity;
- The future of cyberlaw, electronic evidence etc.; and
- Big data: right to privacy vs. transparency.

Apart from the above, there can be no better location than Dubai, UAE, to host this conference. The geo-

strategic location of Dubai makes it highly convenient for attendees from three continents to reach their destination within less than 6 hours. This event will attract about 400 attendees, including esteemed members of the judiciary, members of court registries, leading academic professionals, legal practitioners, advisors, futurists, and tech experts, from all over the world. Such a globally diverse participation will be the perfect platform for discussions on innovative solutions to court excellence, further providing remarkable networking opportunities, not to be missed.

Being a city with a truly progressive government that is focused on smart governance and adoption of technology, Dubai boldly embraces paradigm shifts. While Dubai is known for its world firsts in the construction sphere, with excellent infrastructure such as the Burj Al Arab, the Burj Khalifa, and the Palm Jumeirah, UAE is now trailblazing into the technological sphere.

In 2017, UAE appointed a Minister of Artificial Intelligence, in acknowledgement of the reality that data-driven technologies are changing the world we live in, rapidly. With the recently launched UAE Artificial Intelligence Strategy, introduced by HH Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and the Ruler of Dubai, the world will certainly bear witness to a slew of firsts. The strategy is the first long-term plan of its kind in the world, created by a government that has systematically and successfully implemented its ambitious goals for development over the last decades.

Located in a civil jurisdiction, Dubai made an admirably daring move a decade ago when setting up the DIFC free zone with common law structures and governance. Dubai has a '20/20' vision of its big picture, i.e. progress, provision of excellent services and an exceptionally high quality of life for its residents. Dubai, in fact, is the very face of lessons in adaptability and agility, leading impressive development. As such, Dubai is most apt to host a conference on the excellence of court services and the importance of courts' adaptability to the future.

How could courts govern through data-driven strategies? Tomorrow's judiciary and the administrators of justice undeniably require innovative approaches to strategise and empower their decision-making in a digital world. They also need to cultivate a willingness to adapt and remain agile throughout, in order to provide access to justice to all, dispense effective resolution of disputes and, by using technology, to serve the needs of mobile societies. These are all concerns that need to be considered very seriously, and Dubai is perfectly-positioned to champion them.