# Barristers show enthusiasm for technology but face structural and cultural barriers



A recent research report commissioned by the Bar Standards Board (BSB) has provided an in-depth look at the current state of technology adoption among barristers, highlighting both enthusiasm for innovation and significant structural and cultural barriers within the profession. The report, entitled Technology and Innovation at the Bar and produced by Spinnaker, reveals a profession characterised by curiosity and commitment to new technology, yet hindered by systemic challenges that threaten to leave it behind in the wider legal technology landscape.

The research outlines that many barristers demonstrate agility in adopting technologies such as video conferencing, digital bundles, and cloud storage, with most now working digitally and often paperlessly for a majority of their practice. However, the pace and extent of innovation vary significantly across different areas of law. For example, sectors such as commercial arbitration, intellectual property, and patent law exhibit pockets of technological advancement, whereas family law and publicly funded legal work lag considerably behind in innovation.

One of the key findings of the report centres on the profession's fragmented and self-employed structure, which complicates the aggregation of funds necessary to invest in new technologies. This issue is keenly felt in Chambers reliant on legal aid where tight budgets leave little room for speculative IT investment. The report highlights that the profession’s decentralised nature makes it difficult to foster strategic IT development, with Chambers tending to focus investments primarily on maintaining cybersecurity, migrating to cloud services, and enhancing basic digital infrastructure.

Cultural factors within Chambers also play a significant role in hindering broader adoption of standardised technology solutions. The report notes that “everyone has their own way of working,” even for core tasks such as brief management, which creates obstacles for process standardisation and the implementation of uniform workflows. Most barristers reportedly prefer to use familiar and proven methods, showing caution towards technology that might disrupt their established work practices.

Despite these challenges, the benefits of technology are widely acknowledged among barristers. The report identifies improvements realised through digital tools in areas such as efficiency, client transparency, data security, environmental impact, and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Barristers also recognise the potential for automation to improve administrative activities, including time recording, billing, and evidence review.

Regarding emerging technologies, the report notes a cautious yet optimistic attitude toward generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Lexis+ AI, and Vincent AI. These tools are increasingly seen as facilitators for drafting documents, legal research, and transcription services, although concerns about cybersecurity and confidentiality remain prominent.

The report highlights that regulatory barriers to tech adoption among barristers are limited, suggesting that the main impediments are more cultural and financial than legal. A significant insight from the report is that external pressure for digital transformation is uneven or lacking; courts, solicitors, and clients do not consistently demand technology integration, meaning barristers largely innovate voluntarily rather than in response to market demands or regulatory requirements.

To address these issues, the report concludes with recommendations for enhanced infrastructure and the introduction of structured legal technology training at all career stages. It calls for collaborative efforts between vendors, law firms, and the Bar to foster innovation and leverage mutual opportunities.

The full Technology and Innovation at the Bar report, which includes detailed case studies and examples of technologies used by barristers, is available through the Bar Standards Board.

The Legal IT Insider is reporting on this development.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/resources/resource-library/the-bar-standards-board-publishes-technology-and-innovation-at-the-bar-research.html> - Corroborates the publication of the Technology and Innovation at the Bar report by the Bar Standards Board, highlighting opportunities and barriers to technology adoption.
2. <https://legaltechnology.com/2025/04/28/bar-standards-board-report-the-challenges-and-opportunities-of-tech-adoption/> - Provides details on the report's findings, including cultural and structural barriers to innovation and the varied adoption of technology across different legal sectors.
3. <https://www.legalfutures.co.uk/latest-news/bsb-barristers-need-to-embrace-tech-to-improve-client-service> - Supports the argument that embracing technology is crucial for barristers to enhance client service and remain competitive, despite structural impediments.
4. <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/static/60af9137-6248-4757-b5dfe114cf3ca5a6/Business-Plan-2025-2026.pdf> - Highlights the Bar Standards Board's efforts to support barristers in managing risks as they adopt new technologies, aligning with the report’s recommendations.
5. <https://www.noahwire.com> - While not directly related to the report, it is mentioned as a source covering this development, though it does not provide additional details.
6. <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/news-publications/research-and-statistics/bsb-research-reports.html> - Lists various research reports by the Bar Standards Board, though not specifically this one, it reflects the organization's commitment to research and supporting the barrister profession.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMitwFBVV95cUxQQ0R0dnZBdkgwTUlUaHFnMFV1dE1LWnhsNGQ1aHpjMl9rc2ZWeXB2ZDl3SmdpeHlHc3RvbTY0bkhQUUdneTRDeFR1aGZXTkIwRGhtMGNGcHFWRXY5X19GcVplWUhuV2ZkbkVBSEt6QzhkQlVobHRnd3lCNE8xLWppVF9rRjRMUHNIT19BYlJJcDBtY2hFTW5BTUNKdEdoTHZydWRsd0FaUXNGR1V2TV9UNkV6enp6MWc?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data