L'INTELLIGENCE ARTIFICIELLE AU SERVICE DE LA JUSTICE

Des algorithmes qui résolvent des conflits avant qu'ils n'aboutissent en cour ou qui prédisent l'issue d'un procès ? L'intelligence artificielle s'immisce dans le monde juridique, et le Laboratoire de cyberjustice de l'Université de Montréal et de l'Université McGill vient d'annoncer un vaste programme de recherche de six ans et de 6,8 millions de dollars pour en savoir plus sur la question. Les travaux, qui impliqueront 45 chercheurs, « vont permettre de mieux comprendre les enjeux sociojuridiques et éthiques liés à l'intégration de l'intelligence artificielle dans le système de justice », selon le communiqué de presse publié pour annoncer le projet.
— Philippe Mercure, *La Presse*

The Laboratory's mission transcends national boundaries and its innovations, advances, and the determination of its team position it on the world stage; it works closely with international organizations, government departments at national and international levels, professional bodies, NGOs, partners and research centers on all continents, as well as the private sector. Altogether, the Laboratory consists of 36 full-time researchers, 70 research students, 20 universities and research centers, and 9 partners.

One example of the Laboratory's global reach is its project with the World Bank that aims to improve access to justice in Latin American countries. The objective of this project is to examine and implement potential solutions with the end goal of creating an effective network, using technology to improve individuals' ability to access their respective justice systems. Essentially, the Laboratory uses advances in research and technology developed in Montreal to improve access to justice not only in Canada, but globally as well.

Bachar describes the Laboratory as being a space for reflection and creation where justice processes are modeled and redesigned to better meet the needs of individuals. The team analyzes the impact of technology on justice and develops practical systems adapted to the realities of judicial systems. In other words, the Laboratory is a place of convergence where different actors come together to discuss and challenge proposals, to experiment with solutions, to propose strategies, and to work collaboratively.

The Laboratory's creation was based on several premises, the primary one being that technological advancements have become increasingly prevalent while the use of computers and networking is not yet fully integrated into the judiciary. Two prime examples are the persistent attachment to paper and the physical presence of all stakeholders at trials. The justice system is also hampered by costs and delays caused by lengthy court proceedings. Fortunately, the rapid arrival and adoption of smartphones and tablets during the end of the last decade helped ease many players in the legal world into the idea of using technology.

When I asked Bachar about barriers to innovation that he has experienced, I was inspired by his response. He explained that he prefers to look at what others may call barriers as being no more than challenges. "Laboratory challenges abound," he explains. "A very concrete example I can give is that… today, most users expect to use tools that are similar to the gadgets used in their daily lives." He went on to explain that it is very difficult to conduct ergonomic and behavioural research on the techno-legal and socio-legal impacts of a user interface when gadgets change so rapidly. The Laboratory must be proactive enough to follow the changing trends in technology as they happen.

I find the Lab's Online Dispute Resolution ("ODR")initiative, PARLe ⬀, to be particularly compelling. This initiative differs from other ODR platforms because it is open source; PARLe is openly available for use, integration, and improvement, to all organizations either already involved in, or hoping to become involved in, online mediation. This type of platform has significant benefits for its users, such as cost savings and convenience. However, there are also important drawbacks, such as the fact that, at the moment, these types of platforms only apply to a limited range of disputes and may be inaccessible to certain individuals. Bachar explains that the Laboratory aims to build an online mediation tool that is tailored to the needs of the judiciary, the litigant, and the legislator. However, he concedes that an online mediation platform should not be viewed as a solution to the challenges of the justice system in itself. Rather, online mediation is a tool that contributes to the creation of a solution.

Bachar illustrates this distinction by analogizing it to the invention of the printing press: "The printing press contributed to the advancement of knowledge because writing became a powerful tool for knowledge transfer. However, writing would lose its power in the context of an illiterate society. Similarly, the success of a platform for online mediation depends on the ability of the broader environment to adopt and use this tool."

In conclusion, leading organizations such as the Cyberjustice Laboratory introduce effective innovations that allow the broader community to address some of the shortcomings of judicial systems and to improve access to justice. To learn more about the Cyberjustice Laboratory and its exciting initiatives, click here. ⬀

This piece originally appeared on the Winkler Institute for Dispute Resolution Justice Innovation Blog. ⬀