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**‘Future, law, education and technology: WoW, have we forgotten something?’**

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It may be hard to imagine a place where copyright owners, internet intermediaries, technology providers and users live together in peaceful coexistence without arguments. This would be an era in which individuals have the right to control their online dignity, reputation, integrity, memory and secrets after their death; a time when publishing and sharing open research data is an integral part of investigating as a driver for faster and wider innovation; a date when privacy design automation helps to bridge the knowledge gap between the technical and legal domains; a point at which artificial intelligence takes on an authorial role in the creation of copyrighted works; a stage where increased private sector participation enhances botnet detection and prevention while at the same time ensuring greater legitimacy, transparency and accountability; and a day when international agreements remove digital and physical barriers to cross-border trade and investment between states.

No, this is not a discussion regarding the eye-catching Black Mirror TV series by Charlie Brooker but something much better as it is a warm welcome to the special BILETA edition of the *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology*. In 2016, the 31st annual British and Irish Law, Education and Technology Association conference took place at the University of Hertfordshire’s School of Law, Criminology and Political Science, UK. To those who are not familiar with BILETA, in April 1986 this now close-knit association was born with the aim of promoting the use of information technology in legal education. BILETA is an open forum for intellectual debate on the relationships between the pace of technological change, legislation and the legal education that is accessible to a wide audience of academics, researchers, practitioners and students. The conference took as its title: ‘Future, law, education and technology: WoW, have we forgotten something?’, a theme which attracted 120 speakers and participants interested in developments to the concept that users have the right to request that personal information be removed from the internet, i.e. the ‘right to be forgotten’, and the School’s extracurricular activity ‘War of Words – WoW’. The two-day conference, which was organized by Edina Harbinja and this author, was extremely successful, resulting in an interesting and intellectually challenging event, which was also very enjoyable. In addition to famous motivational speakers, such as Professor Eric Goldman of Santa Clara University, Professor Lilian Edwards of University of Strathclyde and Professor Dan Katz of Chicago-Kent College of Law, there were other stimulating talks and debates, including the Panel on Surveillance and the Investigatory Powers Bill, a Google supported workshop on the right to be forgotten, a Google PhD workshop, and an open forum on Research Excellence Framework, IT law and legal education. As is common practice, the participation of ‘new blood’ academics was encouraged to make this BILETA conference not just one more conference but one that was on the next level in an exciting and endless game.

Some of the key questions raised during this conference included: Do we need better, less or even no legislation to govern cyberspace? Is legal regulation the only feasible way to govern the digital environment? Is market-led internet governance, along with subsequent enforcement action, acceptable? Can legislation, governance and politics keep up with the rapidly changing pace of technology?

Rather than coming to what may appear to be simple, seemingly obvious conclusions about these matters, it is hoped that this special edition, which comprises mostly PhD papers, will help to uncover ways to implement the best alternative to finding answers to these technological problems.

The opening paper examines the important but often ignored concept of secondary liability for copyright infringement. Comparing the Nigerian position with that of the UK and Australia, Faturoti argues that the current approach to tackling indirect infringement under the Nigerian Copyright Act 2004 is too broad, thereby imposing liability on unsuspecting third parties. He concludes that unless liability for authorisation of copyright infringement is changed in Nigeria, the continued failure to address this issue in the country may have a negative impact not only on future growth of online intermediaries, information communications technologies and the copyright industry but also on Nigeria’s overall economic development.

Moving on from the copyright context, Harbinja then discusses the doctrinal and theoretical grounds for recognising post-mortem privacy in law and policy. The author argues for recognition of at least some degree of post-mortem privacy and the right of an individual to dispose of/control their personal data post-mortem, akin to their disposition of property offline. The paper uses examples from recent technological and legal developments, which certainly recognise post-mortem privacy implicitly. In discussing this difficult and grey area, she takes the view that autonomy interests are fundamental, and also that a framework for recognition of post-mortem privacy, which assists in the transmission of digital assets on death, is not only important but also vital.

The paper by Koščík and Myška delves into the rules on authorship and joint authorship of databases, as well as the ownership and joint ownership of database makers’ sui generis rights under the EU Database Directive 96/9/EC. It argues that the Database Directive fails to provide much guidance when it comes to defining author or joint authors and owner or joint owners, thus leaving a lot of leeway to Member States to interpret this issue. Given that these concepts often present us with difficult problems, the authors suggest that in order to solve the legal uncertainty raised by the current black-letter law, a possible solution could be found in contractual arrangements of jointly-owned rights.

Coming back to the privacy arena, the next paper, which won the newly-introduced and prestigious BILETA Google PhD Award, investigates the use of a process visualisation technique known as the Petri net to accomplish the objectives of privacy by design. The paper, originally authored and presented at the 2016 BILETA conference by Diver and subsequently revised by Schafer, aims to contribute in a practical way to the growing literature on algorithmic accountability. Its novelty lies in its use of a 1960s visual modelling technique to bridge the conceptual domains of law and computer science in order to facilitate and strengthen the aims of privacy by design, as mandated by the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Engaging with a world that is becoming increasingly more autonomous, Niebla-Zatarain’s paper suggests that in recent times the human role has been eclipsed by more efficient technology devices. He seeks to prove his point by illustrating the new role that automated technology has as a creator of new copyrighted material. The author argues that this situation presents new challenges that traditional copyright-based approaches cannot solve successfully. He concludes that in order to solve this complex problem, an interdisciplinary approach based on legal informatics is needed to address the role of artificial intelligence as a creator of copyrighted content and allow technical devices to operate in a legally compliant manner.

Silva, in the sixth paper, examines how regulation could be used to facilitate private sector intervention against robot networks. The author explores often forgotten but fundamental questions such as, can industry improve our response to botnet attacks? If so, how should this private sector participation be regulated? To address these challenges, the paper discusses the potential role industry might play to mitigate botnets, the obstacles to be tackled by regulators and the starting points for the regulation of this area. In particular, building upon the pioneering efforts in The Netherlands, United States, Germany and Finland, she suggests a hard law and two soft law mechanisms as a starting point for regulating industry intervention.

Finally, Naim in the last paper argues that there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding international intellectual property law as a result of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a series of trade negotiations being undertaken secretly between the US and the EU. The author analyses the potential ramifications of the TTIP and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) on developing Islamic states as well as investor-to-state dispute settlements. She argues for the need to develop an integrated approach to intellectual property rights in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as an innovative way to use key features of the Islamic finance industry to propose an intellectual property equivalent.

Taken together, this special issue of the *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology* is published at a very important time, some would argue at a turning point in history. There is clearly an upsurge of interest in the relationship between the current and future role of information technology and political-legal engagements with regulation-induced innovation, not least because 2016 was the year when, among other things, the Syrian crisis worsened, Britain voted to exit the EU after the historic ‘Brexit’ referendum and Donald Trump was elected the 45th president of the United States of America. Worryingly, in all three cases, it was widely reported that the common feature was that, with a view to driving internet traffic and maximizing its impact, the Western media did not hesitate for a moment to try to ‘feed’ us with misleading stories, hoaxes, misinformation, propaganda, and even manipulated hashtags and images. It is interesting to note that a lesser-known feature of the Facebook-type Deep Packet Inspection-based content recognition and filtering technology allows not only the filtering but also the modification of information before being published. Arguably, this is a logical continuation of totalitarian censorship practices, yet it is significantly more powerful and effective than even the over-blocking of legitimate content (Wagner et al. 2009, 9-10). However, regardless of what form such fabricated news stories take in the future, it is likely that there will always be individuals committed to making a stand for safety and freedom, not just to protect us against these emerging threats and challenges but also to protect the planet and the web. In the meantime, given that the pace of technological advancement is changing the way we see the world – or maybe it should be said is creating a New World Order – as many claim, it is perhaps no surprise that Charlie Brooker’s Black Mirror predictions about the future are becoming creepily accurate and incredibly true.

I take this opportunity to thank all the speakers and participants at the conference; their involvement in the stimulating talks and debates made a priceless contribution to this issue. Special thanks also go to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments, as well as the conference sponsors, Google and Oxford University Press.

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