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Book Review

*The Future of the Professions:
How Technology Will Transform
the Work of Human Experts,*
by Richard and Daniel Susskind

Review by Hailey Hayes



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***THE FUTURE OF THE PROFESSIONS:
HOW TECHNOLOGY WILL TRANSFORM
THE WORK OF HUMAN EXPERTS***

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I COUNT YOUR DAYS, PROFESSIONALS!

Dramatic transformations of the professions because of technology are ongoing and inevitable: that is the overall thesis of *The Future of the Professions: How Technology Will Transform the Work of Human Experts*.¹ Written by father–son duo Richard and Daniel Susskind, the book was initially published in 2015, and an updated edition was released in 2022 with a new preface. Throughout *The Future of the Professions*, readers are guided through the history and development of the professions and technology. They are asked to consider why we have the professions and whether current professional organizational structures are still the most effective means of organizing knowledge and information.² Many professions are examined, with the authors introducing their work with the following statements:

* JD Candidate 2025, Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, Lakehead University. With thanks to the anonymous peer reviewer for their insightful feedback and suggestions, Brianna Smith for proofreading the first draft, and Professor Tenille E. Brown for her thorough edits, suggestions, and support.

¹ Daniel Susskind & Richard Susskind, *The Future of the Professions: How Technology Will Transform the Work of Human Experts*, 2nd ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022) [*The Future of the Professions*].

² *Ibid* at 4.

This book is about the professions and the systems and people that will replace them. Our focus is on doctors, lawyers, teachers, accountants, tax advisers, management consultants, architects, journalists, and the clergy (amongst others), on the organizations in which they work, and the institutions that govern their conduct.³

In this 514-page book, the authors consider how technology has already started to change the traditional structure of the professions and build a case suggesting that the changes in technology will continue to be so radical that there are very few professions, if any, that will remain untransformed.⁴ So much so that the authors predict many current jobs will no longer require humans because machines will be able to perform certain tasks far better.⁵ The authors provide a comprehensive overview of the main theories regarding the role of professions in society and the impact technology has had and will continue to have on traditional structures. Explaining why they are focusing on the professions themselves to make these predictions, the authors outline how a series of trends can categorize the shift from the professions to technology:

The end of the professional era is characterized by four trends: the move from bespoke service; the bypassing of traditional gatekeepers; a shift from a reactive to a proactive approach to professional work; and the more-for-less challenge.⁶

The book spans seven chapters and is structured into three main parts: change, theory, and implications. In the first section, the authors explore the origin, development, changes, and overall structure and purpose of the professions in society. The second section highlights and examines various sources of theory to substantiate their claims and predictions for the future of the professions. The third section lists and responds to anticipated anxieties and objections to the claims made by the authors. It also examines what a post-professional society might look like. It acknowledges areas where further work is needed by the professionals themselves and raises questions that will need to be answered soon as a collective society.

The authors republished their work only five years after its initial publication to reflect on recent developments in technology and the professions.⁷ In the preface, Susskind and Susskind acknowledge that the majority of their previous work published in 2015 remains accurate and consistent despite the unpredictable occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that their predictions from the first book have thus far proven to be accurate.⁸ The preface is lengthy but informative, situating the earlier claims of the first book amidst the ongoing changes in society.

Many professions, including the legal sector, have already started to see transformation in the way their work is carried out and in the tools that are becoming available for use. Recent

^{3.} *Ibid* at 1.

^{4.} *Ibid* at 3.

^{5.} *Ibid* at 147.

^{6.} *Ibid* at 130.

^{7.} *Ibid* at xxvi.

^{8.} *Ibid*.

changes in Ontario laws and regulations⁹ concerning the use of technology demonstrate the relevance of the predictions made by the authors in *The Future of the Professions*. This book would be ideal for those looking for an overview of the changes in technology that are impacting the professions to begin considering the future of the professions. Readers should consider that there are gaps, some left intentionally, concerning questions about access to and control of these technologies, but also about the environmental and human rights concerns associated with such dramatic technological transformations. While relevant to legal professionals, readers should note that it is not an entirely legal-focused book. Instead, it provides an excellent foundation and overview of emerging and long-standing issues for those considering the future of the legal profession in an increasingly technology-based world.

II OVERVIEW OF MAIN THEMES

In their attempt to explain the anticipated trajectory of the professions and the eventual departure from the current way of ordering and using information, the authors are careful not to cause immediate panic or concern after making the claim that, eventually, technology will be replacing the professions as we know them.¹⁰ The authors do this in two ways. First, they draw attention to the profession's shortcomings, such as problems with access and affordability.¹¹ Second, they reassure readers that this change will not occur tomorrow.¹² The authors write:

We cannot emphasize strongly enough that we are not predicting that the professions will disappear over the next few years. We are looking decades ahead in this chapter, and anticipating an incremental transformation and not an overnight revolution.¹³

Susskind and Susskind are urging readers to understand that substantial changes are occurring across the professions while simultaneously trying to quell any panic, anger, or outright denial that might occur after reading their predictions.

Central to the authors' understanding of the professions is the grand bargain theory.¹⁴ The grand bargain theory is the idea that the professions are engaged in an ongoing agreement that grants them exclusivity over their particular service(s) in exchange for a whole host of conditions, such as ensuring they remain up-to-date on relevant related knowledge, act reputably, and so on.¹⁵ To answer why we have the professions, the authors examine how the professions have held a monopoly over their respective services and industries. The question the authors seem most keen to answer is whether there is a better way to organize ourselves

⁹ Amy Salyzyn & Florian Martin-Bariteau, "Legal Ethics in a Digital Context," Canadian Bar Association (2021) online (pdf): <<https://www.cba.org/getattachment/Sections/Ethics-and-Professional-Responsibility-Committee/Resources/Resources/Legal-Ethics-in-a-Digital-Context/LegalEthicsInaDigitalContext.pdf>>.

¹⁰ *Ibid* at 130.

¹¹ Susskind & Susskind, *supra* note 1 at 48.

¹² *Ibid* at 390.

¹³ *Ibid* at 390–391.

¹⁴ *Ibid* at 29.

¹⁵ *Ibid* at 29.

and our information than via the traditional professional setup that requires “exclusivity”¹⁶ or whether the grand bargain structure should be replaced altogether.¹⁷ Before the answer is given, the readers are reminded that the current organizational structure of the professions is far from perfect, resulting in significant barriers for those who otherwise would be accessing the services of professionals.¹⁸

The grand bargain is revisited several times throughout the book, each time to demonstrate how society now organizes and processes information differently than in the past. Piecing together the current state of the professions, the authors highlight that, by design, many professions are resistant to change because of their position as “gatekeepers” of information.¹⁹ The authors go so far as to write that “[w]e have built glorious citadels of human expertise to which very few are allowed admittance.”²⁰

A technology-based society is raised as a solution to these problems, where advancements in technology allow the needs of individuals and communities that are currently being addressed by the professions to be instead addressed by technology, no longer requiring the involvement of the professionals as gatekeepers.²¹ The transition period from the script age to the age of print is referenced within the book, with the authors making the connection that we are in the midst of what should be considered the next transitional period, from the age of print to the age of technology.²² The authors have the following to say:

Professionals play such a central role in our lives that we can barely imagine different ways of tackling the problems they sort out for us. But the professions are not immutable. They are an artefact that we have built to meet a particular set of needs in a print-based industrial society. As we progress into a technology-based Internet society, however, we claim that the professions in their current form will no longer be the best answer to those needs.²³

The term “increasingly capable machines”²⁴ is used extensively throughout the book, which has the desired effect of ensuring that readers are aware that the changes in technology they are referring to are not small or few and far between. According to the authors, the rate of change and development in technological advancements has been quite dramatic and drives home the need for having these conversations regarding the future of human professions now that there is an alternative option to the grand bargain setup.²⁵ In this technology-based society, the authors predict it is also likely to be a “post-professional” society.²⁶

^{16.} *Ibid* at 21.

^{17.} *Ibid* at 30.

^{18.} *Ibid* at 43–44.

^{19.} *Ibid* at 38–39.

^{20.} *Ibid* at 43–44.

^{21.} *Ibid* at 131.

^{22.} *Ibid* at 198.

^{23.} *Ibid* at 4.

^{24.} *Ibid* at 206.

^{25.} *Ibid* at 39.

^{26.} *Ibid* at 129.

An effort is made to illustrate to readers that the standard by which we judge the performance and capabilities of these technologies is severely limited by our use of human-centric language.²⁷ This means that the emphasis on emotions and processes that we infer happen during any given interaction inhibits our ability to comprehend the potential of these technologies to carry out the same tasks or future tasks that we hadn't even considered.²⁸ Susskind and Susskind acknowledge the tendency of professionals to want to reform rather than transform. It is worth excerpting extensively on this point. As the authors explain in section 1.8:

Not only are the professions themselves a human construct . . . but so too is the organization of the knowledge that they dispense—knowledge is generally structured and presented in libraries, in textbooks, and on websites, for research and learning purposes rather than for dissemination to end users. We have built these resources and systems to support, and so to sustain the professions. And before the Internet, for example, it was hard to conceive how we might have done otherwise. These constructs are so embedded in the way we think about the world that when we contemplate change and improvement, we tend to explore better execution of the methods and approaches that we already have in place. Although our professions are failing in significant ways, they are not incentivized to work differently.²⁹

What the short-term future will look like for professionals entering into fields that we will eventually cede to technology is another area considered in the book. The authors emphasize the need for “flexibility”³⁰ and anticipate that the environment professionals will be entering is going to require quite different skills than they have ordinarily possessed.³¹ On this topic, the authors write:

More generally, there is a catch-all capability that tomorrow's professionals will need to embrace—that of being *flexible*. There will be very few jobs for life, much less security, and very little predictability. There will be an emphasis instead on being able to learn, develop, and adapt rapidly as new roles and tasks arise.³²

The authors also note that it is unfair to judge these technologies by a higher standard than we do our current systems and not account for changes and improvements in the technologies over time.³³ Susskind and Susskind write that the impacts of technology can, more or less, fit into the categories of automation or innovation.³⁴ Defining the differences between the two, they explain it as follows: “Whereas automation is the use of technology to support this traditional model, innovation enables ways of making practical expertise available that simply

²⁷ *Ibid* at 370–372.

²⁸ *Ibid* at 370–371.

²⁹ *Ibid* at 57.

³⁰ *Ibid* at 142.

³¹ *Ibid*.

³² *Ibid*.

³³ *Ibid* at 58–59.

³⁴ *Ibid* at 136.

were not possible (or even imaginable) without the systems in question.”³⁵ This distinction is important because how people understand technology often informs their concerns and questions about the future use and implementation of said technologies, and the results of automation compared to innovation are different.

In responding to potential arguments in favour of retaining the exclusivity component of the professions, the authors write the following:

But *surely*, despite what we say, there will always be some tasks that will remain forever the inescapable preserve of professionals. This is a common response to those who predict technological unemployment for professionals. And it is often supported by the view that professional jobs contain tasks that are “not susceptible” to computerization, because they are “non-routine” and so always have to be undertaken by people. But this again is to make the unwarranted assumption that non-routine tasks will never be performed by machines.³⁶

The above passage felt significant to me as a reader who has a general tendency toward skepticism. It was tempting to make an immediate list of all the areas within the legal system and outside of it that, as of right now, don’t appear to be structured in a way that would allow for the tasks involved to be successfully performed by a machine. Susskind and Susskind predicted this response, and they urge readers to cast these tendencies aside because the answer just might be that it is not possible *yet*.³⁷

III CRITIQUES: THE I.T. FACTOR

Throughout the book, the authors attempt to answer what they anticipate to be the most prominent anxieties about their claims. As a reader, concerns of mine that were not addressed had to do with the role that professionals will play in facilitating this transition to a technology-based society, especially as it relates to creating and maintaining specific environmental standards.

The key predictions the authors make, including that technology will revolutionize the current professional fields as we know them and that professionals will no longer hold the same role, if any, in the future of a technology-based society, are already proving to be true. One example of this in law can be seen in how the Law Society of Ontario (LSO) website provides legal professionals with a list of mandatory requirements regarding the use of technology and a list of additional recommendations.³⁸ These requirements include being knowledgeable about technology that is relevant to one’s areas of practice, possessing the ability to use technology for electronic registration during real estate transactions, and several

^{35.} *Ibid* at 140.

^{36.} *Ibid* at 393.

^{37.} *Ibid* at 207.

^{38.} Law Society of Ontario, “Practice Management Guideline: Technology” (last modified 31 July 2020), online: <<http://lso.ca/lawyers/practice-supports-and-resources/practice-management-guidelines/technology#5-13-obsolence-6>>.

others.³⁹ The recommendations, to name a couple, include being aware of potential security risks and considering the use of electronic research methods.⁴⁰ I predict that in the near future many of these recommendations will also become requirements. In producing this resource and setting down mandatory requirements, the LSO is most likely envisioning an increase in the available tools, products, and services for use by legal professionals, as the authors predicted.

Susskind and Susskind acknowledge that it is not possible to know for certain what the future of technology will be like because of the scope and scale of technological development and innovation and the fact that some of the revolutionary technologies have yet to be invented.⁴¹ They also note that it would be unfair to hold the emerging systems and technologies to a higher standard than our current ones when levelling criticism or expressing concerns about the shift from the traditional structure of the professions to a technology-based structure.⁴²

The disclaimers throughout the text from the authors in anticipation of responses and criticisms make acknowledging areas that appear to be missing from this book difficult. It isn't fair to expect the authors to be able to cover every subset of each profession mentioned or to know for certain what the future will look like. The authors do not purport to write a guidebook for the professions to transition from the traditional structure to a technology-based one. Instead, they share their observations and predictions about what this transition might entail and what the result of this transition might look like.

That being said, the authors do take it upon themselves to offer predictions and hypothesize as to what the future of technology and the professions will look like, so it is interesting to note which areas of this transition, mainly relating to potential risks and problems with access to and control of the technologies themselves as opposed to access to and control of the professions, are excluded.⁴³ Perhaps the authors were attempting to avoid applying a dystopian lens to their work, focusing instead on the aspects of technological change that they regard to be most specific to the professions' day-to-day practices. But when this book was published, the changes in technology were already being considered from a lens of security, privacy, control, and access, especially as it relates to the use of data, and the authors do acknowledge as much.⁴⁴

Looking at access, security, privacy, and control, the Cambridge Analytica scandal is one example that raised concerns about digital surveillance and the implications that increasingly present technology in nearly every aspect of daily life will have, particularly as it relates to potential future use as a tool for social control and influence.⁴⁵ On this point, the authors of a paper entitled "Technology, Autonomy, and Manipulation" write: "Growing reliance on digital tools in all parts of our lives—tools that constantly record, aggregate, and analyse

^{39.} *Ibid.*

^{40.} *Ibid.*

^{41.} Susskind & Susskind, *supra* note 1 at 207.

^{42.} *Ibid* at 359–360.

^{43.} *Ibid* at 308.

^{44.} *Ibid.*

^{45.} Daniel Susser, Beate Roessler & Helen Nissenbaum, "Technology, Autonomy, and Manipulation," online: (2019) 8:2 Internet Pol'y Rev at 2, DOI <10.14763/2019.2.1410>.

information about us—means we are revealing more and more about our individual and shared vulnerabilities.”⁴⁶

A smaller-scale Canadian-specific example of invasive technology practices can be seen in the finding that Home Depot of Canada Inc had been sharing client data from e-receipts to Meta for advertising purposes without receiving proper informed client consent.⁴⁷ If emerging technology will one day replace the role of many professionals, there is a stark need for regulation, oversight, and transparency when it comes to how information gathered by these technologies is collected, used, stored, or shared. Further to the access and control considerations, questions go beyond who can access what information or which technologies, to which types of data will be informing the technology enabling the shift from the profession-based society to the technology-based one, which includes understanding the *context* surrounding the production of any data.⁴⁸

Concerns about security, control, and access to these emerging technologies are directly related to the day-to-day practices of professionals.⁴⁹ These concerns are particularly present for lawyers, as risks will arise both as part of the future litigation matters lawyers take on and the fact that lawyers will be faced with increasing regulations that will inform the expectations and codes that govern them. Answers to these questions and concerns are essential to informing the type of transition that takes place in between the largely profession-based society and the largely technology-based one. In the updated preface, Susskind and Susskind acknowledge their intention to exclude these issues and write, “[i]n future editions, this would be one of the most obvious gaps to fill.”⁵⁰

IV LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

There are aspects of technology and the profession that are not satisfactorily addressed in *The Future of the Professions*. However, the points I raise here are less a critique of the book and more comments made from my perspective as a junior member of the legal profession in Ontario. These are (1) inattention to the physical impact of technology on our environments, (2) the human rights implications that exist when sourcing essential materials for these technologies, and (3) a desire to consider the application of the book’s thesis in the Ontario context.

A. Technology and Our Environs

First, there is a lack of attention throughout the book on the potential implications of this move to a technology-based society on the environment and human health. This may seem like an odd critique, since the authors make it clear that they are considering the professions

⁴⁶ *Ibid* at 8.

⁴⁷ Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, “Home Depot Failed to Obtain Customer Consent before Sharing Personal Data with Meta” (26 January 2023), online: <https://www.priv.gc.ca/en/opc-news/news-and-announcements/2023/nr-c_230126>.

⁴⁸ Catherine D’Ignazio & Lauren F Klein, *Data Feminism* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2020) at 153.

⁴⁹ Susskind & Susskind, *supra* note 1 at 308.

⁵⁰ *Ibid* at liv.

specifically and not the surrounding environments. However, they do discuss the recipients of professional work, revisit barriers to accessing professional work, and in their conclusion acknowledge that many of the questions raised throughout the book apply not only to the professions but to society as a whole.⁵¹ I feel as though the environment should have been included here.

Of course, many of the innovative future technologies mentioned in the book may aid in responding to the increasing environmental concerns across the globe. Still, as professions navigate and facilitate these changes, questions should always be raised about the impact of said changes on the environment, if any. Surely, the constant development of new technologies will render older technologies ineffective, but there is no consideration within *The Future of the Professions* for what the role of the professions will be in dealing with this. It may be necessary for the professions themselves to tackle this question. Similarly, the environmental impact of constantly storing large amounts of data, ensuring backups, and processing all this data are not addressed but should be on the minds of every professional as they participate in the transition to a technology-based society.⁵²

There are many areas where law and climate change intersect, and in recent years increasing attention has been given to the role of lawyers concerning climate change and environmental movements.⁵³ One area in particular features voices calling for lawyers to revisit what is meant by “the rule of law” to determine whether climate change and environmental considerations should be viewed as falling under a lawyer’s obligations.⁵⁴ But these considerations have not yet manifested in Canada; two proposed resolutions, one in 2021 and one in 2022, both of which address the ramifications of climate change and call for acknowledgement by the legal profession, have been unsuccessful.⁵⁵

This particular critique is not on the central argument of the book but instead is a practical concern about the physical use and proliferation of technologies. Considering the rates of both automation and innovation, none of the book’s key predictions about the impact of technologies on the professions should be entirely shocking to readers. Any conversations surrounding technology should include a substantial discussion about the future access and control dilemma beyond the current status of professionals as gatekeepers. Additionally, future technology conversations should require consideration of the impact, both beneficial and harmful, on the natural environment and human health, although the two are not mutually exclusive.

^{51.} *Ibid* at 394.

^{52.} Preeta Ghoshal, “The Environmental Impact of Digitalisation: What’s Your Take on Sustainable Technology?” (21 April 2023), online (blog): *Preeta Ghoshal* <<https://www.fdmgroup.com/blog/environmental-impact-of-digitalisation>>.

^{53.} Steven Vaughan, “Climate Change and the Rule of Law(yers): What Thinner and Thicker Accounts Might Require of Those in Practice” (8 August 2022), online (pdf): <<https://ssrn.com/abstract=4184919>>.

^{54.} *Ibid* at 9.

^{55.} Aleem Bharmal, “Lawyers and Climate Change,” BarTalk (April 2023), online: <<https://www.cbabc.org/BarTalk/Articles/2023/April/Columns/Lawyers-and-Climate-Change-April-2023>>.

B. Emerging Technologies and Human Rights Implications

Second, there are varied concerns about the sourcing of materials that are necessary for many current technologies, as well as the implications of improper use of technology as “tools of harassment and tools of surveillance.”⁵⁶ The actual sourcing of materials essential to the production of various types of technology has been linked to extreme human rights violations, such as the use of child labour in mines to harvest cobalt for lithium batteries.⁵⁷ In response to these concerns, some scholars suggest revamping international and human rights standards so that they hold large corporations that are knowingly contributing to exploitation to a higher standard of accountability.⁵⁸

The potential for discriminatory practices using data that has been obtained from various everyday technologies is another area sure to require further consideration by Canadian courts and legislators. The above-mentioned findings by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada as a result of the investigation into Home Depot of Canada Inc⁵⁹ provides a window into the ways that data collected about users, with or without their consent, can be used if not for proper consumer protections being put into place. Further to this, any protections implemented would necessarily need to be those that are agreed upon and established by Canadian legislation, and that becomes worrisome when considering controversial issues such as reproductive rights. For example, apps that monitor and track a person’s menstrual cycle can pose a risk in places where various forms of contraception are prohibited.⁶⁰ The way we carry out many commonplace activities, from dating to using a calendar, has shifted dramatically over the last few decades because of accessible, user-friendly technology. These are smaller examples of the changes set to continue at a much larger scale as technology becomes further integrated into everyday life. Some scholars also point out the ways that access becomes particularly important when looking at the ways that technology might be used to further centralize knowledge and power without the proper checks and balances in place.⁶¹

C. Recent Changes Regarding the Law and Regulations of Technology in Ontario

Finally, I want to turn to how the legal profession in Canada, particularly Ontario, fits into the authors’ thesis and observations. Writing about anticipating and understanding the future of the professions, Susskind and Susskind note:

⁵⁶ Molly K Land & Jay D Aronson, “Human Rights and Technology: New Challenges for Justice and Accountability,” (2020) *Ann Rev L & Soc Sci* 223 at 226 online: <doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-060220-081955>.

⁵⁷ D’Ignazio & Klein, *supra* note 48 at 183–184.

⁵⁸ Amogh Dimri, “Child Labor and the Human Rights Violations Embedded in Producing Technology,” online: (18 January 2022) *Colum Undergraduate L Rev*, online: <<https://culawreview.org/journal/child-labor-and-the-human-rights-violations-embedded-in-producing-technology>>.

⁵⁹ Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, *supra* note 47.

⁶⁰ Laura McQuillan, “Americans Are Being Urged to Delete Period Tracking Apps. Should Canadians Do the Same?” *CBC News* (5 July 2022), online: <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/period-tracker-apps-data-privacy-1.6510029>>.

⁶¹ Land & Aronson, *supra* note 56 at 234, 236.

For those who are trying to understand possible future directions for their own profession, we suggest that one promising line of inquiry is to identify those trends that already apply and to anticipate that most if not all of the remainder will take hold, sooner or later.⁶²

The implementation of technology in the legal profession has been ongoing and steadfast over the last several years. Partly accelerated by necessity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the legal system has embraced the use of technologies often already developed but not heavily integrated or widely used by the entire profession, such as video conferencing software. In July 2023, it was announced by the Ontario government that \$166 million was being invested to facilitate the delivery of select legal services online, with Thomson Reuters at the helm.⁶³ This means that, in what many regard to now be a post-COVID world, the use of technology within various areas of the legal profession is here to stay and, in keeping with the predictions of Susskind and Susskind, is only going to expand in reach.⁶⁴

In 2021, the Ontario Superior Court heard the case of *Worsoff v MTCC*⁶⁵ regarding attendance requirements for examinations for discovery. More specifically, the court was asked to decide whether virtual attendance was an appropriate method of attendance for oral examinations for discovery.⁶⁶ In making the decision, the court in *Worsoff* acknowledged the inaccessibility of the justice system and cited the potential to address some aspect of this inaccessibility by allowing remote access to continue when the circumstances are appropriate.⁶⁷

The guidelines provided by the Canadian Bar Association in “Legal Ethics in a Digital Context”⁶⁸ are a valuable resource for lawyers looking to understand both the benefits and the risks of using emerging technologies as part of the legal profession. The introduction to these guidelines categorizes the current state of legal practice as being “necessarily digital.”⁶⁹ The commentary within the guidelines also considers those who are at risk of being left behind.⁷⁰ One such group are those for whom the introduction of technology might present a further barrier to accessing legal services because of their economic situation or other personal circumstances, like the lack of Internet services.⁷¹ Extra consideration for those most likely to be left behind in an increasingly digital age is critical, as is examining ways that potential new barriers can be broken down. “Legal Ethics in a Digital Context” considers many of the intricate pieces that are essential to the use of technology and includes an overview of the expectations and responsibilities of lawyers engaging in their work while accessing digital tools and services.⁷²

⁶² Susskind & Susskind, *supra* note 1 at 125.

⁶³ Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, “Ontario Investing in Digital Justice Platform” (18 July 2023), online: <<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1003292/ontario-investing-in-digital-justice-platform>>.

⁶⁴ Susskind & Susskind, *supra* note 1 at 294.

⁶⁵ *Worsoff v MTCC* 1168, 2021 ONSC 6493.

⁶⁶ *Ibid* at para 6.

⁶⁷ *Ibid* at paras 24–25.

⁶⁸ Salyzyn & Martin-Bariteau, *supra* note 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid* at 5.

⁷⁰ *Ibid* at 13.

⁷¹ *Ibid*.

⁷² *Ibid* at 9.

Expectations regarding the use of technology are also now found under the competency requirements for lawyers in section 3.1-2 of the *Rules of Professional Conduct* as set out by the Law Society of Ontario.⁷³ Lawyers who aim to meet the expected level of competence will now be required to understand and use relevant technology.⁷⁴ They also need to “understand the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology, recognizing the lawyer’s duty to protect confidential information set out in section 3.3.”⁷⁵

These changes in the administration and regulation of the law within the Canadian legal system reflect some elements of Susskind and Susskind’s work throughout *The Future of the Professions* and confirm the predictions made by the authors that the responses of professions to emerging technologies will need to be ongoing. Reflecting on recent developments in the law caused by technology, the authors draw readers’ attention to the prevalence of online legal communities, virtual courts, and technology that can be used for legal research and document assembly services, to name a few.⁷⁶

V CONCLUSION

This book was a long but informative read. While some chapters were geared toward the more theory-inclined reader and others toward those interested in the economic approach, there were also several chapters aimed at casual readers interested in the transformative influence of technology. Susskind and Susskind also tried to give guideposts to readers as to where to skip should they not be interested in reading a given section.

Those working as teachers, architects, doctors, lawyers, accountants, tax advisers, management consultants, journalists, members of the clergy, and all related roles within these professions will benefit from reading the thorough account of how we have collectively organized information via the professions and will appreciate the work that Susskind and Susskind have done to provide such an overview. For those readers who are members of the legal community, this book touches on some legal-specific areas that have been transformed by technology, but it is not the book’s core focus. As highlighted above, the legal profession has already started to see changes and transformation as a result of technology.

These changes drive home the need for conversations about the future of technology to happen now. The authors write, “Before too long, we will need to revisit our ideas about full-time employment, the purpose of work, and the balance between work and leisure.”⁷⁷ They also call for public debate to discuss the question raised throughout the book about where to draw the line and how to respond to questions about certain moral issues that arise during these discussions.⁷⁸ One such issue that is raised has to do with who will have ownership of the

⁷³ Law Society of Ontario, *Rules of Professional Conduct* (2022), online: <<https://lso.ca/about-lso/legislation-rules/rules-of-professional-conduct>>, ch 3.1-2.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, rule 3.1-2 [4A].

⁷⁵ *Ibid*.

⁷⁶ Susskind & Susskind, *supra* note 1 at 85–88.

⁷⁷ Susskind & Susskind, *supra* note 1 at 394.

⁷⁸ *Ibid* at 407.

knowledge and expertise.⁷⁹ Another is the question of whether there are certain areas where it would be morally questionable or inappropriate to use technology.⁸⁰

Those skeptical about the anticipated transformation of the professions and the overall shift to a technology-based society would benefit from reading this text. As would those interested in understanding the various theories underpinning the role that professions have played in society historically as knowledge keepers and how technology is likely to render what was once a necessarily exclusive structure ineffective in favour of emerging alternatives. I would recommend this book and look forward to observing how the Canadian legal profession continues to respond to the constantly developing area of technology.

^{79.} *Ibid* at 406.

^{80.} *Ibid* at 406.

