

A KM Lawyer's Journey Through Canadian Legal Practice & Tech



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Agenda

-  **The Canadian Legal Landscape: Courts & the Barrister/Solicitor Role**
-  **Navigating the Civil, Criminal & Business Realities**
-  **Tools of the Trade: Research, Latin & Legal Lingo**
-  **Librarian POV: Lawyer Expectations for Resources**
-  **The Tech Frontier: Innovation & AI's Impact**
-  **Q&A**

You in here with a skull full of mush; you leave thinking like a lawyer!





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Supreme Court of Canada (Final appeals, national importance)

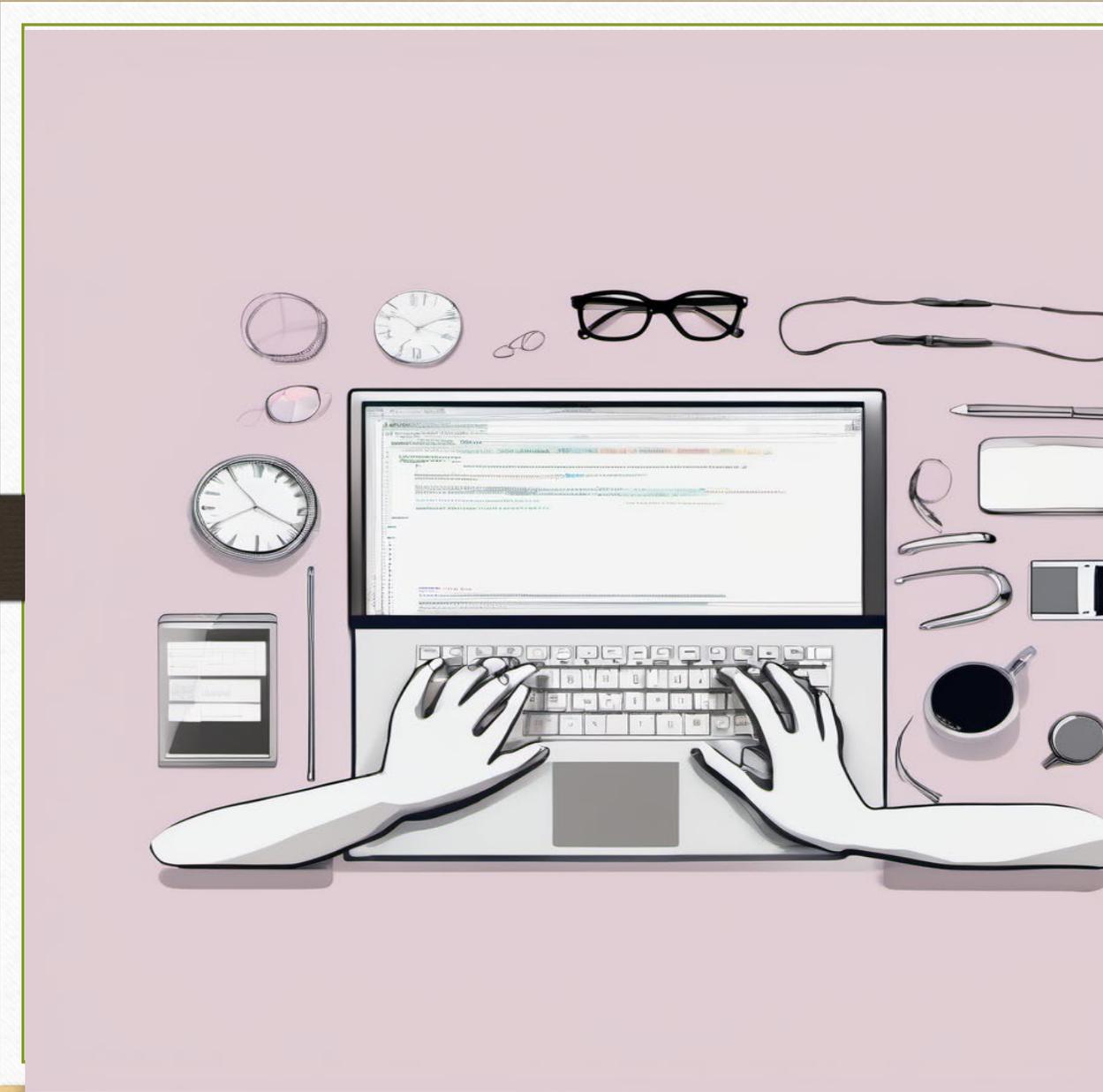
Provincial/Territorial Courts of Appeal (Appeals from Superior Courts) & Federal Court of Appeal (Appeals from Federal Court/Tax Court)

Provincial/Territorial Superior Courts (Serious criminal/civil cases, inherent jurisdiction)

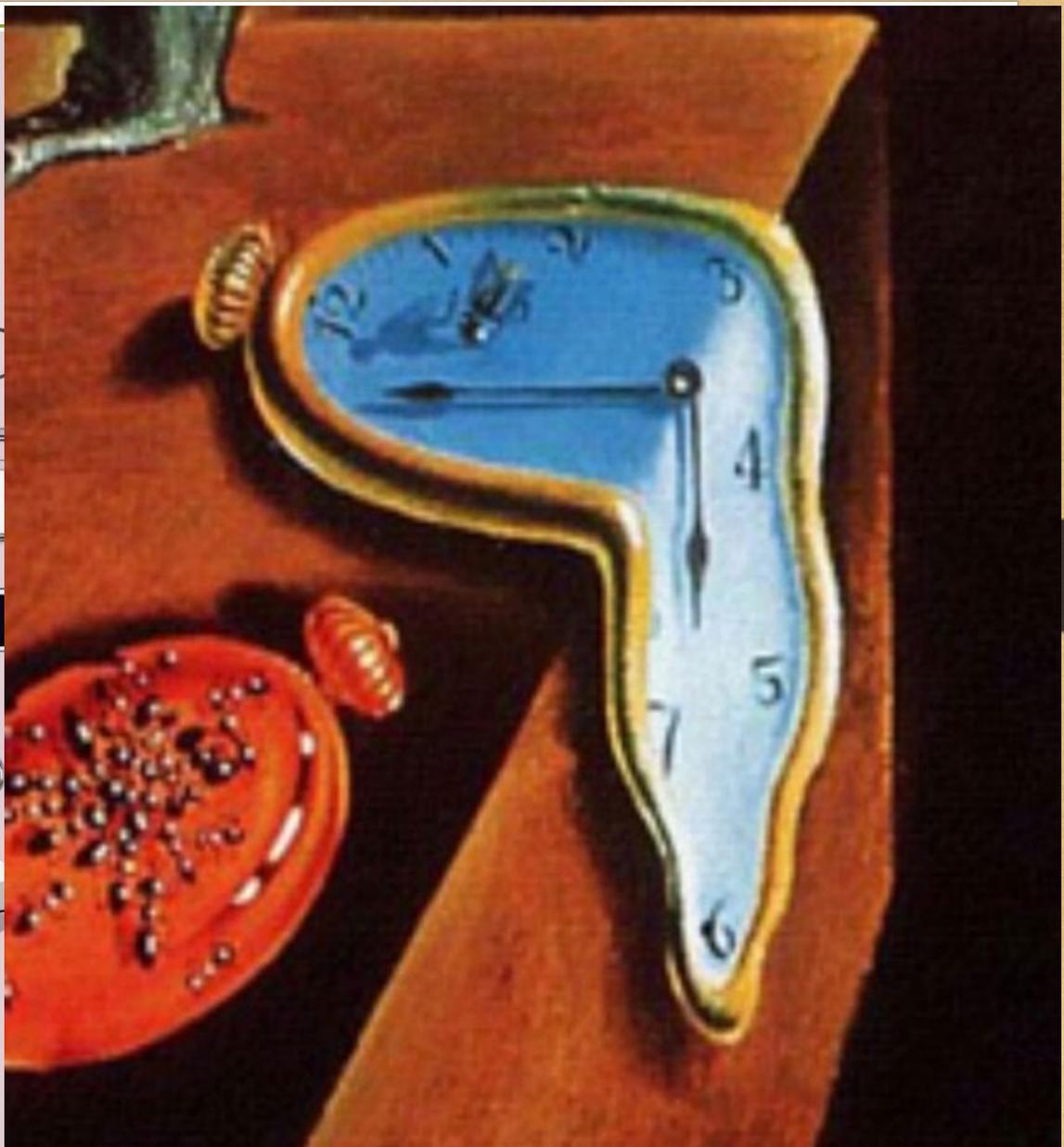
Provincial/Territorial Courts (Less serious criminal, family, small claims)

Federal Court & Tax Court of Canada (Specific federal matters: immigration, tax, intellectual property)

Feature	Civil Cases	Criminal Cases
Goal	Resolve disputes (often money)	Punish wrongdoing, deter crime
Parties	Plaintiff vs. Defendant	Crown (State) vs. Accused
Burden	Plaintiff proves case	Crown proves guilt
Standard	Balance of Probabilities	Beyond a Reasonable Doubt
Outcome	Judgment (Damages, Orders)	Verdict (Guilty/Not Guilty), Sentence



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Stare Decisis: The Power of Precedent

- Latin phrase: "To stand by things decided."
- Meaning: Courts are bound by the legal principles established in previous decisions (precedents) by higher courts within the same jurisdiction.
- Why it matters: Ensures consistency, predictability, and fairness in law.
- Lawyer's task: Find relevant precedents to support their arguments.

Essential Skill: "Noting-Up" a Case

- **Definition: The process of checking the subsequent history and judicial treatment of a specific case.**

Decoding Legal Lingo

- **Force Majeure:**

Meaning: "Superior force." Unexpected external events (natural disasters, wars, pandemics) that prevent a party from fulfilling contractual obligations



The Librarian's Perspective

What Lawyers Expect from Law Library Resources

- **Comprehensive & Current Access:** Reliable databases (case law, statutes), key texts, journals. Up-to-date materials are non-negotiable.
- **Efficiency:** Quick access, intuitive platforms, ability to find relevant information fast. Time is money.
- **Expert Research Support:** Assistance with complex queries, locating obscure resources, training on new tools.
- **Proactive Awareness:** Curated alerts on new case law or legislative changes in specific practice areas.
- **Integration (Increasingly):** Seamless access within their workflow (e.g., links from practice management software).

Technology Transforming Legal Work: Technology and AI Assisted Research

- **E-Discovery platforms managing vast amounts of electronic evidence.**
- **Online legal research databases (Westlaw etc.).**
- **Practice Management Software (billing, file management).**
- **Virtual Court Appearances & Online Dispute Resolution (ODR).**
- **Document Automation & Assembly tools.**



Tools & Resources

- **Enhanced Legal Research:** Semantic search (understanding intent, not just keywords), identifying relevant clauses across thousands of documents.
- **Document Review & Analysis:** Faster review of large datasets in due diligence or litigation.
- **Contract Analysis:** Identifying key clauses, risks, and inconsistencies.
- **Predictive Analytics:** Forecasting case outcomes (still developing).
- **Generative AI:** Assisting with initial drafts, summarizing complex texts (requires careful oversight!).

Strategic Advantages and ROI

- **Lawyers: Shift towards higher-level analysis, strategy, client interaction as routine tasks are automated. Need for tech literacy. Critical evaluation of AI outputs is essential.**
- **Librarians: Evolving role - trainers on new tech/AI tools, curators of information (validating AI suggestions?), experts in advanced search strategies and prompting across platforms, champions of information literacy and critical evaluation.**



Bringing It All Together

- *Lawyers blend Canadian Barrister & Solicitor roles, requiring diverse skills.*
- *Court structure dictates precedent (stare decisis), driving research needs.*
- *Noting-up cases is a fundamental, critical research step.*
- *Lawyers rely on libraries/librarians for efficient access, currency, and expert support.*
- *Technology, especially AI, is rapidly reshaping workflows, demanding adaptation from lawyers and librarians alike.*
- *The Librarian's role remains vital – evolving into tech trainers, expert searchers, and critical evaluators in the digital age.*

