Prelude to the Second Edition

This second edition of *Working Smarter with Knowledge Tools* is being finalized in mid-2020, about ten years after the first. Much has changed in the world of law and legal tech, but most of the circumstances and opportunities originally outlined remain quite the same. The current pandemic has provided an unexpected innovation accelerant, so perhaps the next decade will bring more dramatic developments.[1]

In the meantime, I offer this updated version of my text. The emphasis remains on ideas rather than specific products and vendors.

One fun diversion—the mystery of who actually wrote the works of Shakespeare, which serves as an example of a complex factual question that technology can help address, may finally be close to being solved. See the epilogue to Chapter 16.

To recapitulate my key themes: Almost every practitioner can work smarter, and software helps make that possible. Deciding how much and what kind comes down to a couple balancing acts: Do the anticipated benefits exceed the anticipated costs? Which tools and approaches give you the best balance of the things you most care about?

Carefully assess how much value you would get, and be honest about how much upfront and ongoing effort and money you're really prepared to spend. Recognize the tradeoff of time spent in choosing a solution and the risk of possibly having

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1. See https://medium.com/@MarcLauritsen01/automating-legal-work-in-a -turbulent-time-75aaecb924a8.

bought something you regret or having invested effort in something you need to change.

If you detect opportunities to improve your work with knowledge tools, do yourself a favor and pursue them! Get familiar with the options and relevant considerations. But avoid being paralyzed by the range of alternatives. In many cases it makes sense just to pick one, get started, and be prepared to pivot if it doesn't work out well. You'll likely need to do that anyway as the technologies and your needs change.