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[More State Bars Challenge Avvo](#)

Virginia, New Jersey Are Latest State Bars to Challenge Avvo, Other Online Legal Services

Recently, the Virginia State Bar Council voted on a draft ethics opinion that says attorney participation in some matching services is a violation of the state's Rules of Professional Conduct. The draft opinion doesn't mention any company by name, Gabrielle Orum Hernandez notes at [law.com](#), but it does describe a program that closely matches Avvo's business model. Meanwhile, trustees of the New Jersey State Bar Association voted at the October board meeting to seek amicus status in support of a joint opinion by state Supreme Court regulatory committees that New Jersey lawyers may not participate in certain activities via online legal service companies. [New Jersey Law Journal](#) has more details.

Indiana University, ABA to Launch Online Pipeline Effort

Next spring, a class of 50 undergraduate students will begin developing their critical thinking, reading comprehension, and test-taking skills—and learning about careers in law?—through an online pilot program at Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law. A joint effort by IU McKinney and the ABA Office of Diversity and Inclusion, with a grant from the ABA, Pathway to the Law is a three-year pilot project intended to get underrepresented students interested in going to law school. [The Indiana Lawyer](#) explains how the program will combine online resources and a personal approach, and what might happen next if the pilot is successful.

ABA Innovation Fellow Launches Project that Uses E-Discovery to Spot Wrongful Conviction Trends

Last week, the ABA Center for Innovation and software developer Relativity announced the start of phase one of DFENDR, a project that will analyze case data to determine whether bias or other such factors could have contributed to wrongful convictions. DFENDR, which stands for Distributed Forensic Expert Network Delegating Review, is headed by Bryan Wilson, a fellow with the ABA Center for Innovation. An initial focus will be on hair analysis and arson investigation, two common forensic techniques that can produce invalid or improper evidence; DFENDR will look for links between those flawed results and cognitive biases, writes Debra Cassens Weiss at [ABA Journal](#). What are the project's three goals, and how can technology help the legal community fight injustice?

Initiative from Florida Bar Foundation, Others, Uses Artificial Intelligence to Connect People with Legal Help

How can you help someone with their legal problems if they can't accurately identify those problems?—especially if you don't have a legal background yourself? That's an issue faced by social service organizations, whose clients often have a complex knot of concerns, some of which could be addressed by legal assistance. An initiative called the Escambia Project, co-sponsored by the Florida Bar Foundation, Legal Services of North Florida, and social services nonprofit Pathways for Change, has found that integrated systems can help people identify their legal issues and obtain assistance with them. How did this project develop a "smart" intake tool, and what other big projects will follow? [Legal Tech News](#) offers more

insight on the ongoing effort to connect people with legal help more efficiently and accurately through technology.



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