Legal Specification Protocol Project Update

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Project Challenge and Goal

- Legal automation is impeded by the lack of a widely, shared adequately expressive set of standards for representing, processing, and sharing legal computation
  - Really "move the needle" making law more affordable and accessible through **primary machine execution**
- The goal is to help accelerate the development and adoption of such a set of standards: A Legal Specification Protocol
  - Work on the elements
  - Work on adoption

Why Does it Matter So Much?

- Specific projects in isolation worthy, but unlock limited potential (Been there: www.digitalllc.org)
- Needs to communicate and work with many users to scale and spread true **computational law**
  - Telecom standards example
  - Already in law in old fashioned ways: e.g. Blue Book reference standard (information protocol for slow AI)
  - Bush v. Gore, 531 U.S. 98 (2000) = https://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/00-949.ZPC.html
- Need to have creation tools easy to use to create executable legal structures
  - Drag and drop programming for law?

A Big Project

- Suited to philanthropic/academic leadership
  - Not likely to occur through private business alone
    - The AOL/Internet problem
- The elements themselves conceptually achievable
  - Time, effort and resources
- Adoption a significant challenge
- Existing Attempts: E.g. Legal XML, Rule ML, Solidity
  - Helpful and a bit in the way

Plan Steps

- Articulate vision and goals
- Research and share work to date
- Go big/go small
  - Big(ish) for definition, dissemination
  - Small(ish) for development of increasing granularity
- Involve many sectors, actors, allies, sponsors
- Pick digestible use cases and technology targets, while remembering the need to keep the system open to a wide set of uses
- Develop applications of increasing power
- Get necessary funding
- Iterate

Additional Considerations

- Protocol vision
  - Keep it open source
  - Keep it simple and expressive
  - Keep public good projects in the mix
  - Google "Legal Specification Protocol" to find
- Involve students, underrepresented populations and backgrounds

Progress with LTL Support

- Established a core Working Group
  - Includes Stanford's CodeX, US Treasury Office of Financial Research, other hosts and supporters
  - Includes a number of academics, government, industry individuals
  - Particular thanks to Susan Salkind, Harry Surden, Meng Wong, Mark Flood, Rebecca Purdom, Roland Vogl, Jeannette Eicks, Mary Dewey, Benjamin Grosof
  - Student participants (VLS so far)

Stanford Gathering

- First "Go Big" Iteration
  - Gathering of approximately 60 in person, 30 online at Stanford Law School, September 8-9
  - Very wide representation, including US and EU Govt.
    - Several from our group here as well – Many thanks
  - Computable Contract Focus
  - Many thanks to the Kauffman Foundation for additional support
- Shared "Where we are" "Where we hope to go"
  - Meng Wong survey of progress to date
  - Harry Surden vision on stack elements
  - Moderated open discussion on shaping project

Four Areas of Focus – Working Groups and their Conclusions

- Vision and Approach
  - Open source, inclusive, contract focus OK
- Use Cases
  - Telecoms, Finance, Startups
- Technological Elements and Approaches
  - Within the "stack" – particular attention to information/communication; secondarily to user interface
- Governance
  - Keep loose for now
- https://conferences.law.stanford.edu/compkworking201709/

Next Steps

- Project continues
  - Stanford's CodeX Center continuing to support
  - Planning group continuing to meet
- "Go Small"
  - Technology working group focus on two aspects, with particular attention to actual needs of legal work:
    - Information standard
    - User interface
    - Logic happening elsewhere: see, e.g., Solidity, Legalese
  - Legal expressivity challenge: The information and processing categories needed for legal determination
    - E.g. Oversimplified "IRAC" approach to structure analytics

Information Standard Working Model

- 1. A statement of the event/data type
  - Can reference dictionary/taxonomy/etc.
  - Reference can be to a natural language description, but need not be
- 2. Value information about the event/data type
  - Can be yes/no, a measurement, a conclusion, a location, etc.
  - Can also include value related data, such as confidence level
- 3. Provenance/Source
  - Can be a particular sensor, a blockchain record, a court determination, the product of a particular prior computation, etc.
- 4. Time/Date stamp
  - State in universal time
  - Relate back to provenance (could be a sub-field of 3)
  - Distinguish event time and report time

Information Standard Cont.

- 5. Matter I.D.
  - Particular contract, court case, application, legal citation, etc.
- 6. Specification of the event in other systems (aimed at creating interoperability making it legacy friendly and a bridge between existing and new platforms)
  - A designation of the other system(s)
  - The designation, value, etc. coding within that system
- 7. Other
  - Open fields for things not currently imagined – subject matter extensibility
- 8. Security element (hash, certificate, etc.)

Next Steps Cont.

- "Go Big"
  - Stanford will host next convening, in conjunction with their annual Future Law Conference
    - April 5/6, 2018
    - Aim for reports back from Go Small efforts
  - Possible further events at MIT, NYC, Singapore, London/Europe
  - Publication goals
- Outreach/Involvement
  - Use Stanford convening once again
- Fundraising
  - Promising, not in hand yet
  - Additional focus for intervening months

LTL Role and Potential

- Support to date critical: Thanks LTL and Kauffman
  - Conceptualization, even collaboration , **Not** the biggest problem for progress
  - Time and resources are the limiting factors
- Hope for feedback and involvement
  - Coordination with other projects
  - Invite use cases from LTL (particularly if linked to time and resources)
- Useable standards for promulgation with 24 months current goal