



WELCOME TO 2025: Join the line or have your lunch eaten

It is time to re-imagine what we have done for 200 years. We must overcome “deep-rooted” cultural resistance as often spoken about by Jordan Furlong. COVID has kicked us out of bed. Embrace innovation. For a start, learn and understand Generative Artificial Intelligence. Figure out how to make ChatGPT work safely for you. Our successful lawyer skills must evolve.

The LSO through its Access to Innovation Program has promoted a number of initiatives said to be for the public benefit. But they all come with a cost. This LSO initiative directly favours and establishes online competition. Check out a few of the sites. This all reads like the LSO is outsourcing legal work but is a reflection of the directions we must go as a profession. We must maintain a value-added proposition for clients. Stay relevant.

- Philer, an automated real estate closing platform assists homebuyers in the process of a real estate closing and connecting/communicating with a licensed Ontario real estate lawyer to provide the required legal services. <https://philer.ai/>
- Deeded, aims to simplify closing real estate transactions. Users upload and track required documents, but must work with a Deeded lawyer for all necessary legal services, track transaction’s progress, and digitally sign documents, all for a price. <https://www.deeded.ca/>
- SkyLaunch, a self-guided online tool for Ontario incorporations. Offering a fixed-fee incorporation package and an annual update through an online portal. Who needs lawyer advice any way. SkyLaunch was developed by the lawyers at SkyLaw. <https://www.skylaunch.ca/>
- Ilovelaw, offers bilingual, lawyer-created legal products and resources claiming to make legal services more accessible and affordable. The platform provides a range of customizable legal documents in estate planning, family law and employment law, accompanied by various tools to help the user complete the legal document, including user guides, checklists and glossaries. <https://ilovelaw.ca/>

- Plaid Fertility Law, is a web application developed by an Ontario lawyer that enables users to generate, share and collaborate on agreements for third-party reproduction, including surrogacy and ova, sperm and embryo donation. Easy stuff, no?

It is time to turn the page to be more efficient technologically and perhaps improve our work life balance.

If you want to develop ideas to market through A2I contact Mr. Art Wilson at awilson@lso.ca. Otherwise, figure out where your practice will be in 5-10 years. Our technological skills must supplement our traditional skills, including critical thinking and collaboration.

DON'T FORGET

Lawyers and paralegals declaring as sole practitioners for the first time must complete the [Foundations of Sole Practice course](#), delivered by the Law Society.

To learn more about the course requirement read the [Sole Practice Requirement page](#) on LSO.ca and visit the [CPD store](#) to register for the course.

By March 31st

Use your LSO Connects account to:

- pay your annual fee
- file your annual report
- record your CPD Hours

Certified Specialists must pay the Annual Fee through LSO Connects. [Follow this link for step-by-step instructions regarding how to pay fees through LSO Connects.](#)

For any problems with LSO Connects, reach out to LicenseSupport@lso.ca.

LAWYER MANDATORY CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Effective January 1st each of us MUST have a client contingency plan. It will enhance the reputation of the profession and ensure clients are not left in a lurch when any of us pass away or become incapable of carrying out a retainer. Rather than leaving the mess to an ill-equipped family member, we must now authorize another licensed lawyer to administer the practice if we are not able to. We will be obliged to report our plan in the 2025 annual reports filed by March 2026 and should expect audits to inquire into our planning. For a succession planning resource, help and background read <https://lso.ca/lawyers/practice-supports-and-resources/topics/opening,-operating-or-closing-a-practice/contingency-planning-for-lawyers>

CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK

In support of a re-imagined and better future, a task force has recommended significant changes for a new governance model. It includes changes to the size and composition of Convocation and election process to be implemented in time for the 2027 Bencher election. It also proposed a sea change in the process for filling elected bencher vacancies to be effective in 2025. Many have opposed the proposal as the changes are claimed to dilute regional representation, prevent Benchers from

effectively passing on knowledge to successors, and reduce the regulator's democratic process. In reducing the overall number of Benchers the proportion of elected lawyers is reduced and the proportion of appointed benchers is increased. The appointment process needs clarification, as it appears that a yet to be identified select group will have that power, likely with a Convocation rubber stamp. As well, the number of elected Toronto lawyer benchers will drop from 20 to 4, but Toronto practitioners make up approximately 50 percent of all Ontario lawyers. It is said that the changes will eliminate self-regulation within the bar. But consider whether these changes are essential for our profession to maintain the privilege of self governance and respect of the public and government. The proposed changes are not perfect, but they take us a long way from the old, ineffective days of governance. Although the time for input has passed you are encouraged to read the task force [full report](#). A high-level summary is available at LSO.ca/effective-governance. Stay tuned for the Benchers spring fight as the changes are debated.

LAW SOCIETY CEO

Local media have reported that in response to questions raised regarding the remuneration of the CEO and the process by which it was determined last June, the Law Society engaged Dennis O'Connor, former Associate Chief Justice of Ontario to conduct an independent review of the matter. He will report shortly and we await the outcome once reviewed by Benchers and a course of action determined.

MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Don't forget that it is there to help us on a completely confidential basis. For more information or assistance contact:

1-855-403-8922

TTY: 1-866-433-3305

Collect: 514-875-0720

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Larry Banack
Banack Resolutions, Inc.
Bay Adelaide Centre
333 Bay Street, Suite 900
Toronto, ON M5H 2R2
email: larry@banackresolutions.com
Phone: (416) 477-6880

Banack Resolutions, Inc. | Bay Adelaide Centre 333 Bay Street | Toronto, ON M5H 2R2 CA

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