Chair's Report for presentation at the BCS Law Specialist Group AGM, 07 October 2020

[1] What are the top three successes of the group this year?

#1 Overcoming COVID-19 lockdown and maintaining not just the planned 6 events but double that number, with a greater variety of international speakers (remote delivery enables a wider speaker pool);

#2 Increasing attendance at group events by marketing beyond the BCS membership on social media (estimated 25% of non-BCS members attracted throughout 2019-2020 across the globe)

#3 Discussion days and study groups covering items of immediate "breaking news" interest.

[Additional analysis]:

This year's success is due to 2 key factors.

1) Having to switch *modus operandi* for C-19 meant that new people had to handle old procedures differently and new thinking was unleashed: less time deciding on sandwiches and more time debating legal substance of topics. As a downside, this online interaction generated a much larger amount of emails and a new platform for communicating among committee members will be greatly beneficial. The use of BaseCamp had mixed results;

2) We had a change of delegating style. A full delegation by Chair to other committee members this year in contrast to previous years encouraged other committee members to take the initiative on any number of issues.This change liberated a lot of energy in the committee and as a result, committee members were more vocal and active across the full range of the Chair's remit: from suggesting topics and speakers to introducing other projects and commenting on. Channelling this liberated energy into smooth running procedures has not yet taken place and will hopefully be the next leg of the journey.

3) We noted that forgoing recording, abiding by Chatham House Rule(s), preferring internal debate among members without invited speakers encouraged livelier participation and searingly honest debate

[2] What are the top three things your group plans to do next year?

1) Build on what worked well and namely:

i) continue producing events online;

ii) mix a programme of formal speaker talks and lectures with less formally structured discussion meetings for the members on items of current legal interest as they arise;

iii) increase our reach beyond the existing BCS membership by widening our marketing beyond our mailing list and by widening our range of topics;

2) Consult more widely the Law SG group beyond the Law SG committee as to whether it wishes to make representations to the BCS policy team positions within our area.

A snap poll prior to the AGM sent to the wider Law SG membership suggested that this is an area to be probed further, beyond the outgoing committee's own preferences.

BCS Law SG has traditionally steered away from policy work on forthcoming regulation and has limited its activities to disseminating briefings on what legal changes had already occurred.

The outgoing Chair noted a division within the BaseCamp "Community Forum" among those members who wish BCS to have greater input and influence on law-making before it reaches enactment stage and those members who wish BCS to refrain from entering the policy arena. This same division appears to be reproduced among BCS Law SG members.

Such schism makes it particularly hard to respond to BCS President calls and BCS policy teams calls for a "BCS Law SG" policy position on specific issues.

3) Getting committee members' publications & knowledge repository published in the Law SG website in preparation for a whole-of-BCS directory of experts to be published

The lack of communication and coordination between BCS HQ content team and expertise and content originating from the SGs and, more widely, from the membership base is unlikely to change overnight. We welcome the content team recent efforts in reaching out to individual experts on SG.

[3] What are the three significant impediments to the group's work?

1) BCS HQ communication platforms available to us require greater attention.

There is no way at present to market event information to non-BCS delegates who attended a past event, thereby negating all our efforts to reach beyond the BCS membership: we continue to have direct access only to current BCS members. It is hard to increase our membership numbers this way as events are our coal face, so to speak.

2) We find it hard to recruit strong ICT & Law professionals with the time to serve actively on the Committee; we do not have immediate and appealing benefits or professional rewards to offer for hard work by respected experts in the committee. The uncertainty surrounding the rules on co-opting non BCS members makes it hard to offer project-based, time-limited collaboration opportunities on a try-before-you-buy mode to experts who are non BCS members. Asking experts to share expertise not otherwise available within the group, time **and** pay a BCS membership fee on top of it is a significant hurdle.

3) We are asked to be inclusive in our committee members but we do not have support or additional resources to provide adjustments for volunteers with a disability of any kind. This means: i) extra (unrecognised) work absorbed by the other committee members; ii) severe disruption to ordinary working processes; iii) volunteers with a disability unable to play a full part in committee life

[4] Any facts and figures you think are worth sharing

1 public talk on IT law: 2nd year Computer Science undergraduate students at City, The University of London, by Chair

1 policy paper published: Schrems 2 and data flows, published by the BCS policy team in collaboration with the Chair

1 guest talk to BCS event on AI and Ethics organised by the BCS Ethics SG,

12 Law SG events in total: 9 talks (2 face 2 face and 7 online) + 3 online study groups

over 15 Law SG guest speakers in total

Total delegates booked: in excess of 735 at 30th September 2020

Total delegates attended: back-office figures not always provided, but in excess of 330 from known figures and estimated 350+

BCS members v non-members bookings: extrapolating from known figures approximately a third of bookings have been by non-BCS members

Nine talks with guest speakers:

27th September 2019: Why data flows are the real challenge of no-deal Brexit
22nd January 2020: The gotchas to look out for with incident response and cyber insurance

23rd March 2020: Data localisation: privacy laws' worst IT blunder?

9th April 2020: Contact tracing for Covid-19

14th May 2020: If you are not helping get out of the way: legal hurdles in health data sharing for Covid-19 vaccine research

7th July 2020: What is expert witnessing?

5th August 2020: Accessing talent form the neurodiverse workforce

17th August 2020: Diversity in the Professions

1st September 2020: Why and how should drones be regulated?

10th September 2020: Everyday Cybersecurity and the International Law of War

Three Chatham Hous(e) Rules discussions and study groups (no recording or recording not accessible to the public):

30th April 2020: EU guidelines on Health Data in the Context of Covid-19: mission impossible?

17th July 2020: The morning after the Schrems II decision

27th August 2020: Government by algorithm. A-levels, self-driving cars and beyond: A BCS Town Hall meeting

[5] Anything else you feel needs to be communicated

We would like BCS to be more vocal in communicating the Importance of legal issues for IT practitioners. Poor membership numbers generally for the BCS for past 60 years are alarming: the BCS purports to be the 'Chartered Body for UK IT', but its membership represents barely 5% of the IT industry, and we fear that the oncoming recession will see numbers drop even more making BCS practically and materially irrelevant to our colleagues in IT.

[6] Awards and recognition for the committee:

n/a