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The MIT Computational Law Development Goals

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MIT Computational Law Report

The MIT Computational Law Development Goals

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Abstract

The MIT Computational Law Development Goals are an initiative of the MIT Computational Law Report and were developed and refined based on feedback we received over the last few months. We hope that they serve both as an impetus for sustainable innovation and as a catalyst for further discussion. As computational law matures, some of these goals may need to be recast in a different light from time to time.

The MIT Computational Law Development Goals

Human-Centered Law

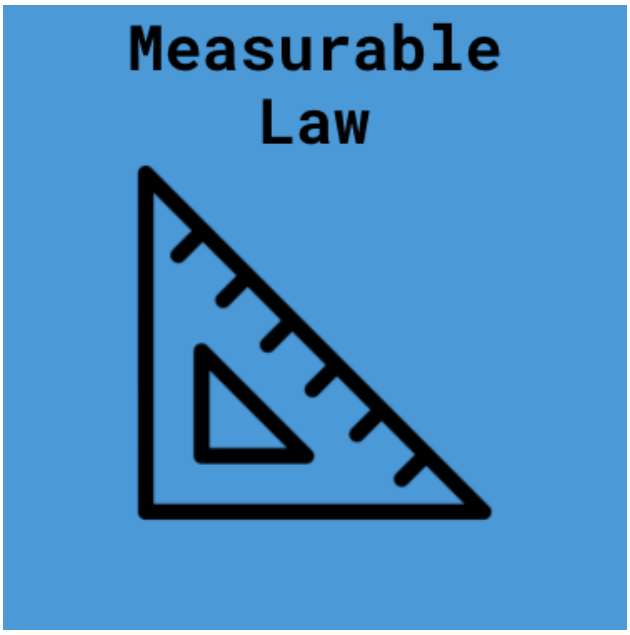
Promote computational law as a means to empower individuals and improve access to justice and legal outcomes



Throughout history, from the Code of Hammurabi up until today, the purpose of law has been to serve people and reduce conflicts. As law becomes more sophisticated, it is important to never lose sight of this core purpose. If law is to be optimized through the use of technology, it must be optimized to meet the needs of individuals and society.

Measurable Law

Develop more transparent and reliable legal practices by specifying goals and measurement criteria, evaluating results, and adapting in light of new considerations.



If we hope to create, test and iterate legal designs, we must first ask, “what qualifies as success and how do we know that it has been achieved?” Computational legal systems need to provide opportunities for transparent evaluation while also recognizing key qualitative dimensions of success - or failure - that quantitative metrics may miss.

Law as Data

Transform law and legal processes from static to dynamic by expressing legal processes as data.



Effective computational legal systems are built on algorithms that relate high-quality data, patterns and outcomes. We need to reconceive of legal information generally as data and examine how to systematically capture, move and process it, while guarding against potentially malicious data use.

Universal Interoperability

Foster simplified, streamlined, and efficient legal functions by developing open interoperable standards and modular components for the practice of law.



While laws are bounded by jurisdictional limits, computational law may transcend them and serve to bridge gaps and differences of a conceptual, institutional, procedural, structural, and substantive nature, both within individual legal systems and between them. Allowing different legal entities to communicate and collaborate more effectively not only contributes to their efficiency but also makes legal outcomes more predictable, processes more transparent, and ultimately contributes to justice. This requires a sufficiently practical model of what is to be deemed just, including notions of individual, social, retributive, restorative, and distributive justice, that can be expressed computationally.

Industry & Civic Partnerships

Strengthen the means of implementation of computational law by building partnerships with a diverse group of interdisciplinary stakeholders.



The success of computational law will rely on people of different backgrounds and purposes coming together to design novel, modern, and improved legal systems reliant on contemporary and foreseeable technologies and dynamics, but also on the pace of predictable innovation. Fostering such partnerships, educating the legal profession, and bridging gaps between disciplines is a requirement for enabling legal innovation that is unlikely to rely on conventional socio-academic and political dialog that moves at glacial speed.