From Digital Remains to Sustainable AI: Law, Technology, and the Twin Transitions in the BILETA 2024 Special Edition

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This special edition of the *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology* showcases insightful scholarship arising from the 39th Annual BILETA Conference 2024, impeccably well organised by Associate Professor Edoardo Celeste. The conference was held at Dublin City University, Ireland, from 17th to 19th April 2024. In keeping with BILETA's enduring tradition, this conference served as a vital forum for academics, researchers, practitioners, postgraduate students, and all those engaged with the dynamic interplay of law, technology, and legal education. Participants from across the globe convened to partake in critical and timely discussions shaping the future of these interconnected fields. The 2024 conference marked a welcome return to the island of Ireland, hosted within the historic St Patrick's Campus of Dublin City University in Dublin. While embracing a fully hybrid format, the vibrant in-person interactions in Dublin undoubtedly enriched the intellectual exchange.

The central theme of the 2024 conference, "Digital and Green: Twin Transitions?," resonated with profound global significance. Against the backdrop of escalating climate concerns, exemplified by record-breaking temperatures such as those experienced in July 2023, the role of digital technology in achieving environmental sustainability has come under increasing scrutiny. While digitalisation offers promising avenues for enhanced measurement, prediction, and resource management, its own environmental footprint, from the energy demands of data centres to the waste generated by rapid technological advancement and the ecological costs of resource extraction, cannot be ignored.

This special edition directly engages with the complex and multifaceted relationship inherent in the conference theme. It probes whether the digital and green transformations are indeed "twin transitions," mutually supportive pathways toward a sustainable future, or if inherent tensions and trade-offs exist between these seemingly aligned objectives. The contributions within this volume critically examine the potential of digitalisation to genuinely advance environmental sustainability without simultaneously exacerbating ecological challenges. They address pressing questions such as the necessity of systematic digital degrowth in the face of the climate crisis and analyse the diverse responses of supranational institutions, national governments, and local authorities to these intertwined issues.

This special volume commences with Reader Edina Harbinja, Dr Tal Morse, and Professor Lilian Edwards' paper, 'Digital Remains and Post-Mortem Privacy in the UK: What Do Users Want?' Their research tackles the burgeoning challenges surrounding posthumous privacy and the management of digital assets in our increasingly digital world. Through a UK-wide study of 1,766 adults, the authors illuminate a significant user desire for control over their digital remains, contrasting this with a low level of awareness and utilization of existing tools—a discrepancy they term the 'posthumous privacy paradox' and 'the inverted posthumous privacy paradox.' Based on their empirical findings and existing scholarship, Harbinja, Morse, and Edwards propose crucial law reforms in data protection, the formal recognition of online tools for managing digital legacies, and broader UK and EU-wide legal

reform in relevant areas. This volume further explores these critical dimensions of our digital afterlife.

Following this, Dr Atilla Kasap's paper, 'Philosophical Grounds for Regulating the Lawful Operation of Autonomous Vehicles,' presents a compelling argument for a philosophy-driven ethical regulation of autonomous vehicles (AVs). Kasap underscores the urgent need for legal intervention to minimize potential harm and discrimination embedded within the machine learning algorithms that govern AVs. Drawing upon consequentialist and utilitarian ethical frameworks, this interdisciplinary work offers valuable insights to inform law and policy aimed at ensuring the safe and ethical advancement of this rapidly developing and socially significant industry. This volume contributes important context for both the AV industry and policymakers navigating these complex ethical considerations.

Continuing our exploration of emerging legal challenges, Assistant Professor María Lubomira Kubica's paper, 'Freedom of Expression, Tort Law and Liability of Internet Content Providers: A Transversal Study,' examines the evolving concept of enterprise liability. Kubica traces its innovative introduction in the Principles of European Tort Law (PETL, Art. 4:202) and the ongoing complexities of its implementation within national legal systems, despite earlier recognition in European case law. The paper emphasizes the EU's crucial role in solidifying enterprise liability, a necessity heightened by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the intricacies of online platform liability for user-generated illicit content. Analyzing the limitations of traditional tort law in this cross-border context, Kubica discusses the adaptive approaches of European Courts through the lens of liability for the acts of others and the delicate balancing of fundamental rights. Ultimately, the paper proposes a general clause of enterprise liability as a promising avenue to address the current shortcomings. This volume delves deeper into these pivotal intersections.

Next, Assistant Professor Thomas Le Goff's paper, 'Environmental Law's Principles Applied to Artificial Intelligence: a Path Towards Regulation,' addresses the often-overlooked environmental implications of the rapid expansion of AI technologies, particularly machine learning. Le Goff critically evaluates the environmental sustainability provisions of the European Artificial Act as currently insufficient. To address this critical gap, the paper proposes the application of core principles from Environmental Law—precaution, public participation, environmental accountability, and access to justice—to construct a robust theoretical foundation for the environmental regulation of AI. This framework advocates for a precautionary approach, the implementation of systematic environmental impact assessments for AI technologies, the fostering of a "sustainability by design" culture within the AI sector, and the establishment of mandatory transparency obligations for AI providers. This volume contributes to charting a vital regulatory course for mitigating AI's environmental footprint.

Finally, Assistant Professor Stuart Weinstein's important work entitled 'An Evaluation of the Utility of ISO 31022:2020 [Risk management — Guidelines for the management of legal risk] for Use by Micro-Entities', addresses the intricate and often burdensome challenges faced by micro-entities in navigating legal risk management under the International Organization for Standardization framework. To alleviate the legal and operational penalties associated with legal risk, Weinstein introduces a practical tool tailored for micro-entities: the Online Legal Risk Advisory Service (OLRAS). This user-friendly application aims to enhance insight and accessibility in managing legal risks for these smaller organizations.

The diverse contributions within this volume collectively offer timely and insightful analyses of pressing issues at the intersection of law, technology, and society. We trust that these perspectives will stimulate further discussion and contribute meaningfully.