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In this Issue: Paolo Montuori, civil law attorney with over twenty years of experience and a specialization in labour law, reflects on how digitalization is reshaping the legal profession, presenting both opportunities and new challenges; Giuseppe Marinaccio, Illustrator and Graphic Designer with over 15 years of industry experience and a portfolio of collaborations with local institutions, including UNITUS (for which he designed the DiFree logo and paginated much of its dissemination material), reflects on the evolving role of freelance Graphic Designers and 2D Animators in today's digital economy.

The last six months of the year have been filled with key events. Panteion University organized both a Multiplier Event and a Learning, Teaching and Training Activity in Athens last June, focused on freelance employment, practical career tips, and the creation of virtual career hubs. Both events brought together local and international participants and provided professionally enriching opportunities, especially for attending educators.

During the summer months, university partners also focused on recording and translating into national languages the video courses for the Mentorship Program (PR3), aimed at creating an 'incubator program' to support aspiring freelancers. October was used for online coordination meetings to finalize the project. December proved to be a particularly busy and productive month for the DiFree Consortium, with the organization of the 4th Multiplier Event (ME) and the final Transnational Partner Meeting (TPM), both hosted by the Accounting and Business School at the Polytechnic Institute of Porto.

The Portuguese ME, titled 'Becoming a Freelancer', held in Porto last December, featured a roundtable with expert freelancers, interactive sessions, and visits to specialized training labs for translators, accountants, and managers. Key insights were shared on the challenges and opportunities of freelancing in today's digital economy.

Following the ME, DiFree partners convened for the final TPM, where project coordinators and attending partners reviewed project milestones, discussed the completion of the Mentorship Program, improvements to the Greek Virtual Hub, quality assurance requirements, and content for the final manual. The meeting concluded with clear action points, reaffirming the project's commitment to equipping higher education students and graduates for careers as digital freelancers.

A.R.

The Online Legal Freelancer: Practicing Law in the Digital Age

Paolo MONTUORI

The rise of remote work, accelerated by advancements in technology and the Covid-19 pandemic, has opened new doors for lawyers who wish to offer their expertise outside traditional law firms and courtrooms[1]. Platforms such as UpCounsel[2], Lexoo[3] as well as other specialized networks, now enable lawyers to work with international startups, SMEs, and entrepreneurs seeking legal services tailored to the digital economy, while offering client consultations remotely.

What does it mean to be an online legal freelancer? Freelance legal professionals deliver a range of services, often specializing in areas that lend themselves to remote work. An online legal freelancer may be a professional who integrates technology into their practice to deliver legal services remotely (digital lawyer) and/or an attorney who focuses on legal issues arising from digital technologies and the internet (a lawyer specialized in Digital Law). Common activities include drafting contracts and legal documents, providing consultancy services via video conferencing tools, and assisting clients with legal compliance in areas such as data protection, intellectual property, corporate law, cybersecurity regulations, and intellectual property rights in the digital space[4].

The shift to online hearings and digital case management has pushed many legal professionals to develop technical skills and to offer negotiation and dispute resolution support online. Tools such as Polisweb and PEC have become indispensable for file management and official communications, demanding constant updates in technical proficiency and the ability to solve issues that were once handled by judicial offices[5]. Additionally, the use of chatboxes and OpenAI is becoming increasingly common[6].

Online freelance legal work is not without challenges. Mastery of legal research and writing is paramount, along with soft skills such as effective cross-cultural communication, adaptability, and client relationship management. Familiarity with digital tools like DocuSign, secure cloud storage, and collaborative platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams or Zoom) is also essential. Equally important is the need to comply with various jurisdictional regulations, as lawyers are typically restricted to advising clients within specific legal systems. Ensuring data protection and confidentiality in digital environments is another critical factor. Online lawyers must use secure communication platforms and file-sharing tools to protect client information and build trust remotely.

New burdens have emerged for (online) lawyers, including the need for continuous training and increase in technical, administrative and organizational tasks. These developments will very likely require a review of professional fees, legal education and regulations[7]. Nevertheless, as Antonio Scardino observes[8], digitalization should be viewed as an opportunity to redefine and enhance the role of the lawyer in modern society, while preserving the quality and dignity of the profession.

[1] See on this: LawBite, C. R. (2021, May 27). The Future of Law: Rise of the Digital lawyer. Law.com International. https://www.law.com/international-edition/2021/05/27/the-future-of-law-rise-of-the-digital-lawyer/?slreturn=20250323-40443

[2] UpCounsel is an online marketplace for legal services created to enable users, primarily entrepreneurs and businesses, to find and hire attorneys. Cfr. https://www.upcounsel.com/about

[3] Lexoo is a legal technology company founded by Daniel van Binsbergen and Chris O'Sullivan as a UK-based platform, recently acquired by the alternative legal service provider Kalesius. For insights into its impact on traditional legal services, see: Newton, R. (2015, June 16). Lexoo: a digital marketplace for legal services. Financial Times. https://www.ft.com/content/7e307b02-093e-11e5-b643-00144feabdc0

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[4] Capone, F. (2023, July 13). Avvocato digitale: cosa fa e quali sono i vantaggi della consulenza legale. Ecommerce Legale. https://ecommercelegale.it/aprire-un-ecommerce/avvocato-digitale-cosa-fa-e-quali-sono-i-vantaggi-della-consulenza-legale/

[5] Scardino, A. (2024, October 24). Gli avvocati nell'era digitale, tra evoluzione e precarietà. Altalex. https://www.altalex.com/documents/news/2024/10/24/avvocato-era-digitale-tra-evoluzione-precarieta

[6] Ponti, C. (2023, June 26). L'IA bussa alle porte degli studi legali: i vantaggi per l'avvocato 4.0. Agenda Digitale. https://www.agendadigitale.eu/documenti/giustizia-digitale/lia-bussa-alle-porte-degli-studi-legali-i-vantaggi-per-lavvocato-4-0/

[7] Possible pathways that the legal profession might follow to adapt to the on-going digitalization of the legal market are discussed in Schäfke-Zell, W., & Asmussen, I. H. (2019). The legal profession in the age of digitalization. Utrecht Law Review, 15 (1): 65–79. DOI: https://doi.org/10.36633/ulr.454.

[8] Scardino, A. (2024), op. cit.

The Online Legal Freelancer: Practicing Law in the Digital Age

Giuseppe MARINACCIO

The proliferation of digital platforms and the increase in multimedia content consumption has created a thriving market for freelance Graphic Designers and 2D Animators. As with other freelance roles, they have embraced remote work[9]. They manage projects using digital platforms, present storyboards or design drafts through virtual meetings, and deliver final products via cloud-based services.

Today, more than in the past these creative professionals play a pivotal role in shaping brand identities, advertising campaigns, educational materials, and entertainment products across a wide range of sectors. Indeed, several industries in different fields (High tech, E-commerce and Retail, Entertainment and Gaming, Education and E-learning, Healthcare and wellbeing) rely on graphic designers to create engaging and functional visuals, marketing material, infographics, animation and digital content.

What does working as a freelance Graphic Designer or 2D Animator involve today? Freelance Graphic Designers and 2D Animators are self-employed creatives who collaborate with clients on a project basis. They design and produce visual content for print, web, video, and interactive media. More specifically, Graphic Designers typically focus on creating visual assets such as logos, brochures, social media visuals, and website layouts. They should master the blending of typography, color theory, and composition to deliver visually compelling messages. 2D Animators specialize in creating movement-based visuals, such as animated explainer videos, character animations, and storyboards for films, games, or educational content. Both roles often intersect, especially in fields like advertising, where designers may need animation skills to produce motion graphics. Both professions require proficiency in using Design and Animation Software such Adobe Creative Suite and Adobe After Effects and Collaboration Tools such as Trello, Slack, Zoom, and cloud-based project management platforms.

As with other solo-employment jobs, the freelance work model offers flexibility and variety, allowing designers and animators to work with startups, agencies, corporations, and independent projects globally. However, this model comes with challenges including fluctuating workloads, balancing creative vision with client demands, project managing and budgeting, and risk of being replaced by IA generated content.

As a matter of fact, simple and repetitive design tasks (e.g., social media templates, basic logo design) are increasingly being automated by AI-powered tools like Canva's AI features, Figma's AI plugins, and generative AI platforms like Runway ML[10]. Stock libraries with AI-generated assets are starting to compete with human illustrators and animators for quick, low-budget projects, which

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might encourage clients with smaller budgets to opt for AI-generated visuals[11]. Nonetheless, complex projects requiring storytelling, brand strategy, and emotional engagement still demand human insight, especially for projects that involve nuanced cultural or audience-specific messaging. Moreover, human graphic designers and 2D animators offer something AI cannot —understanding a client's evolving brand, adapting visual tone, and delivering creative problem-solving. And if AI takes over too much of their work, they can reinvent themselves — as many are already doing — by becoming AI-savvy creatives, AI art directors, or AI-augmented designers who supervise and blend machine-generated content with human refinement.

[9] Platforms like Upwork have reported that graphic design is among the most in-demand creative skills, with demand increasing by 25% year-over-year. Cfr. Boston Institute of Analytics. (2024, December 12). Unveiling the latest job trends in graphic design: Insights and analysis. Boston Institute of Analytics. https://bostoninstituteofanalytics.org/blog/unveiling-job-trends-in-graphic-design-navigating-the-evolving-landscape/?utm_source=chatgpt.com. See also: Uddin, S. (2025, March 11). How Big is the Graphic Design Industry in Today's Market? Uptec Academy. https://uptecacademy.com/how-big-is-the-graphic-design-industry-in-todays-market/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

[10] Natalia. (2024, December 17). The AI revolution in design: how machine learning transforms creative workflows. blog.icons8.com. https://blog.icons8.com/articles/ai-revolution-in-design/

[11] VisualMind. (2025, February 23). The rise of AI-Generated images and its impact on stock photography. Visualmind.ai Blog. https://blog.visualmind.cc/2025/02/23/ai-images-stock-photography/