



Susan Barty, Immediate Past-President  
International Technology Law Association (ITechLaw)

## Interview with Susan Barty

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ITechLaw has been serving the technology law community worldwide for half a century. Since the establishment of the organisation in 1971, membership has grown globally to represent more than 60 countries over six continents.

With such an exponential growth, it was always a priority to ensure that the leadership was representative of its international and diverse membership. Susan Barty, Immediate Past-President, shares with us why diversity has always remained at the forefront when recruiting leaders and how that helps achieve the organisation's vision.

**MCI: What prompted ITechLaw to encourage diversity in its leadership?**

**Susan Barty:** Diversity is important to ITechLaw because most of our members work across borders. Due to the nature of their work, our members interact with people in all countries, but the depth of experience or expertise in specific areas of technology law can differ from one country to another. Members are keen to learn from each other's experience, which is one of the main benefits of joining the organisation. One great strength of ITechLaw is our global reach, and without embracing diversity we would not be able to address this.

**MCI: What is the organisation's objective?**

**S.B.:** To create an organisation representative of our world and be responsive to how technology is changing the law, the legal profession and our individual lives.

**MCI: What membership segments did you prioritise?**

**S.B.:** Age, gender and geographical location were our top three priorities. Getting women and young lawyers on board is a priority for us, and for me personally. We also have an active women's networking group. With 15 different countries represented on our board, we want proudly to represent our global community.

**MCI: What is your biggest challenge?**

**S.B.:** We have a number of challenges we are working on, but regardless of issues of age or gender, one of our biggest challenge is to find members in new or emerging technology regions. In some countries, lawyers tend to be more generalist and only a small proportion specialises in technology law. Our challenge is to identify them, engage them as members, and then create a path for development into a leadership position.

**MCI: How does ITechlaw's leadership look like today?**

**S.B.:** The US-headquartered ITechLaw has 13 active committees. Overall the committee leadership is 30 per cent female, which is more than the organisation's membership. We are not satisfied with this position, but we are making progress – and would encourage more women to put themselves forward for leadership roles. The association also ensures that leaders (four per committee) are all from different countries. This is something we feel strongly that we need to encourage.

**MCI: One recommendation?**

**S.B.:** Different is better and ensuring good diversity is an important and ongoing process. Embrace diversity, put processes in place and stay committed. It can only strengthen the organisation.

## Insider's view

**MCI: How are you supporting ITechLaw in their diversity efforts?**

**Emily Reineke:** We have put processes in place to ensure diversity is fairly represented within the leadership. For the annual board nomination process, the staff provides an analysis of the board compared to membership, which is put before the nominating committee. It also provides different scenarios for what the board would look like if membership were to skew in different directions. After considering this analysis the nominating committee make their recommendations to the board, which tries to reflect the organisation's membership or shift it towards growth.

**MCI: Why is diversity important?**

**E.R.:** A diverse board is able to make decisions more effectively and has a better understanding of the organisation's membership. Diversity leads to healthier debates, more sensible decisions, and is more adaptable to the ever-changing environment. It addresses the concerns of all membership segments and it is more sensitive to a wider variety of groups.

**MCI: What differentiates ITechLaw from other organisations**

**E.R.:** Our inherent disposition towards cultural awareness and diversity creates a culture not seen everywhere. By being



**Emily Reineke, CAE**  
Managing Director, ITechLaw Association  
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proactive about diversity, rather than reactive, all leaders are committed to creating a global community.

**MCI: What do members get out of it?**

**E.R.:** Members join for the global networking experience and to be part of the elite IT legal community. Without a focus on diversity, I could see our organisation cease to exist.