

Blog Post

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Having picked an elective in Intellectual Property (IP) Law in Business at the University of Edinburgh, Jen and I were truly eager to attend the qLegal events taking place in London on the 14th and 15th of March. We had been discussing in our class the impact of IP rights on businesses, looking at a variety of different business sectors. We were really keen to learn more about how the students taking part in qLegal help small businesses with IP issues.

After an eventful tube journey and a 30 minute walk, we arrived at Queen Mary University on Monday morning. My navigation was rusty and I was still coming to grips with the London Tube lines. But it was great to see so many friendly faces when we arrived! During the icebreaker we met students from Queen Mary, University of Oslo, Nottingham Trent and Belfast.

The first seminar of the day was the Data and Technology Assessment Seminar. Students from Queen Mary University discussed the importance of data protection and outlined the major changes being brought by the new regime, which is expected to come into force in 2017. The seminar was very interesting and the topic was evidently important for start-ups. Some start-ups would have never dealt with issues of data protection and this topic can be entirely alien to them. The discussion on how businesses can prepare for the General Data Protection Regulation was really insightful. The advice was clear and concise and easily understandable, which is exactly what start-ups look for. The students explained how qLegal works: start-ups receive help and support through advice sessions, workshops, legal updates and externships. Jen and I thought this could be something that the University of Edinburgh could potentially incorporate into their programme in the future.

After lunch, we attended the Royal Courts of Justice for a mini-moot court case on an IP dispute. It was exciting to take part in and watch how a real IP litigation could play out. It was also interesting to see the practical problems IP rights can cause in court! After the moot competition, we attended the Law Society of England and Wales for a discussion on pro bono legal work.

To round off a busy day we all met up at Bill's in Holborn for dinner. It was nice to interact with all our new friends in a social setting. Jen even managed to practice her Spanish with some Columbian students! Hopefully we will be able to stay in touch with our new friends and maybe even see them in the workplace in the future.

On Tuesday morning we headed off to the Digital Catapult Centre for a tour and student workshops. The Digital Catapult Centre itself is an interesting place. It helps develop breakthroughs for data sharing. Their aim is to generate growth in their specific areas of data sharing. It seemed like a great place to work: the workspace is open, innovative and colourful! We also found the student presentations excellent.

Students from Oslo talked about how the YouTube Content ID framework can help protect copyright and discussed some of the challenges that Content ID creates. We also learned a bit about IP rights in Oman and the challenges faced there. These topics were both new to us and were really engaging.

Finally after lunch, it was time to say goodbye and make our way back to Edinburgh. We had a great two-day trip in London and learnt a great deal about how qLegal provide their clients with advice on IP, how their clinic is run and about the students who take part in it. We are hopeful that the University of Edinburgh can develop a legal clinic for start-ups in the near future. Our class was keen to hear about our trip and was interested in how such a clinic might work in Edinburgh. We were also grateful for the opportunity to meet students from other universities and hear about their experiences studying IP.

Thank you Queen Mary University for a great trip!