

# Neil Brown



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Current employer: Vodafone Group Services Ltd

If you are looking for "a lawyer," I'm probably not the person for you.

Whilst I am a solicitor, and enjoy my practice, I do not want to be defined as "a lawyer" - I am fascinated by the application and impact of technology to society, and to people's lives. I thrive on applying my skills - legal, technical, interpersonal and others - to solve problems, and to advance communications and knowledge sharing.

I pick up new technologies easily, and always have one eye to the future - both in terms of technology, and law. Some lawyers may be a hindrance to progress, but I hate to say "no", instead looking for creative legal or technical solutions to allow me to say "yes - and here's how." However, at times, laws and rules are simply out of step with the needs of society, and need to be changed, whether through industry engagement, proposing new standards, or legislative overhaul.

I have particular expertise in Internet and communications regulation and policy, and in a range of issues at the overlap of law, technology and society. I take a grounded and yet innovative, practical approach, and am regularly asked to write and speak on cutting-edge issues, often drawing on my ongoing academic research.

## Employment:

Employer: **Vodafone Group Services Ltd**

*Dec 08 – current* Solicitor, Group Legal: Privacy, Security and Content Standards

Advisory lawyer, responsible for law and legal strategy for "technology, Internet and society", and areas of security, including:

**Communications regulation:** advice on legal and regulatory issues relating to new communications services. In particular, advising on centralisation of network elements on a pan-European and wider basis, and on developing international communications networks and platforms, in an environment of inherently national regulation

**Law enforcement assistance:** development of policy on legal engagement with law enforcement agencies, and advice relating to legal obligations in an international context, with particular emphasis on lawful and unlawful surveillance. Experience in managing high profile security issues

**Intermediary liability:** proactive policy development related to increasing burdens on online intermediaries through engagement at national and supra-national level; responsible for global notice and takedown policy/process, implemented in Vodafone 360

**“Anti-piracy” strategy:** led lobbying of both Houses of Parliament and governmental entities on Digital Economy Act 2010, and ongoing specialist advisor to local market legal teams within Europe and beyond; responsible for Vodafone’s global anti-piracy principles, forming basis of engagement with third party content providers, and advice to procurement teams

**Copyright:** ongoing development and positioning of Vodafone’s copyright strategy, focussing on the need for a rebalanced copyright law; engaging with industry groups and other key stakeholders to discuss positioning; advising business and product units on product / service design / development

**Open source / Free / community licensing:** responsible for open / community licensing and compliance for product / service acquisition, development and distribution

**Content standards:** guiding corporate positioning in respect of acceptable content, and issues relating to centralised online service provision in a company with distributed operating model. Experience in adult content regulation

Specialist *ad hoc* advice to other lawyers within Vodafone’s international legal community on legal issues requiring particular technical knowledge / understanding (e.g. virtual worlds, software development and licensing, API / service provisioning, reverse engineering, bootloader unlocking)

*Sept 07 – Dec 08* Solicitor, Group Legal: Technology & New Media

Similar to above (role change due to internal restructuring), but also including:

**Content procurement:** music, games and films

**Competition terms:** internal and external competitions

*Sept 05 – Sept 07* Trainee solicitor, Group Legal

## **Education:**

*Sept 10 – Sept 12* LLM: Internet and Telecommunications Law: University of Southampton (distance learning; studied outside work) First year: 80%

*Sept 04 – June 05* Legal Practice Course: College of Law, Guildford Merit

*Sept 01 – May 04* Bachelor of Laws: University of Southampton 2.1

Dissertation: 1<sup>st</sup>: Liability of UMTS cellular network providers for content of communications

## **Selected external presentations and writings:**

*European Academy of ICT Law / Co-Reach* Guest lecture: “Obligations of network security and confidentiality of communications in the EU telecommunications framework,” August 2011

*Society for Computers and Law* Lecture: “The Public Domain.” Inaugural lecture for the Society for Computers and Law’s Thames Valley group, December 2010

*Society for Computers and Law* Article: "iPad – harbinger of the public domain?," *Society and Computers and Law*, August 2010

*FSFE* White paper: "Software interprocess communications and GNU GPL", FSFE Fellowship wiki, July 2010 (co-authored)

*FSFE* Presentation and article: "Licence text inclusion and online code distribution under GNU GPL 2.0 and 3.0; Free software in application stores and intermediary liability," FSFE conference and *International Free and Open Source Software Law Review*, June 2010

*eCommerce Law and Policy* Presentation: "Application Program Interfaces", with a particular focus on the copyright issues arising from API usage, 2008

### **Relevant skills:**

Languages German (good), French (basic)

C++ (basic), HTML/CSS, JavaScript / jQuery, MySQL, PHP, shell scripting

Technology Good working technical knowledge across a wide range of computer science / technology fields, including cellular and IP networks, web systems and services, software development methodology and practice, encryption, and \*nix

Hobbies Cooking, juggling (can juggle three machetes blindfolded), reading, travelling, skiing

### **Feedback:**

"very responsive, expert, and easy to deal with..."

*Client feedback on Neil's advice*

"Very good. The best pro bono lawyer we have worked with so far. The matter was resolved very quickly..."

*Feedback on pro bono support given to an education charity*

"In the relationship with Neil Brown we had not only a first rate legal support but an individual whose comments and enthusiasm for our project really gave us inspiration."

*A client's view of Neil's pro bono support for Human Rights TV*

"an inspirational speaker" - "a BRILLIANT talk" - "a natural and gifted presenter"

*Some of the feedback on Neil's presentations*