Anand: Kimball, thanks so much for joining us on The Modern Lawyer podcast. It's an honor to have you on.

Kimball: Hey, thank you very much. Thanks for having me.

Anand: Kimball, a lot of our guests know you as the leader, the president of SixFifty. We're going to get into what SixFifty is. I mean, it's a technology subsidiary of the famous Silicon Valley firm Wilson Sonsini. And we're going to get into the all of the work that SixFifty does and that you do with SixFifty. But you have a very interesting backstory, a very interesting resume with respect to legal technology and your work since you graduated from U Chicago School of Law. I want to get into that. I want to get into the work that you've done. Can you give us a brief introduction to Kimball Parker? What have you done? And what are the ideas that you've had in legal technology since you graduated from law school not long ago?

Kimball: I graduated from the University of Chicago. My first job out of law school was working for litigation firm Quinn Emanuel. I really did some very complex, complicated, very demanding litigation for several years. And while at Quinn, I had a really interesting experience. One of my friends went through around at Y Combinator. He formed a really interesting company that could splice videos. Anyway, he made it out of Y Combinator, he was about to raise money, and his former company sued him for breach of fiduciary duty.

He actually had me over for dinner to tell me all about it because I was the only lawyer that he knew. It was really, really interesting. He was completely panicked, he had no idea what to do. I had just tried a breach of fiduciary duty case - a big case of [owning? 00:04:21] a big pharmaceutical company. And so it was interesting hearing him talk about that. He really was completely lost. This is one of the smartest people I've ever known in my life. He couldn't figure out breach of fiduciary duty, which is like a four-part test. It's one of the easiest tests in the law.

I think that experience really opened my eyes to how inaccessible the law is to people. Ever since then, I've just been fascinated with this issue of the complexity of the law. I think I've tried to address that issue in different ways throughout my career since then. Yeah. I sorry, go ahead.

Anand: Two questions on that. So can you explain to our listeners, first of all, what is Y Combinator? You said YC. Give us a primer on that. The second point I'll make is that we recently had on a guest from a company that I'm sure you're familiar with named Atrium, and he mentioned that a lot of startups, and in fact, his co-founders earlier at startups were involuntary power users of law firms. It sounds like the person that you were talking to who ran this video splicing company was one of those people. What is Y Combinator, and was that your friends experience as you he became embroiled in this litigation that he a very likely did not invite?

Kimball: Y Combinator, if I understand it right, it's the most prestigious or one of the most prestigious incubators of startups in the world. In fact, I think Casetext started at Y Combinator if I'm not mistaken there. You apply this very low acceptance rate, and then and then basically, you go into this incubator that's here in the Bay Area, and they help you develop your idea and link you with investors.

This friend's technology was so cool. Basically, it would automatically sync and cut video for you, and then link it into music that was in your computer. It was the coolest technology ever. He tried to explain it to me, I didn't understand anything that you say. That's kind of him.

I think he was definitely an involuntary power user of the law. I mean, he was sued so he had to respond. He ended up using his CO/COUNSEL, which ironically wasn't succeeding, which is where I am now. I think it's an interesting issue where I think a lot of the access to justice conversation is about like, oh, gosh, people who don't have money, they have no shot. I kind of understood that. Like, very low sophisticated parties, maybe who, for example, may not have graduated from high school, or maybe don't speak fluent English, that those parties should, sure, I always understood that they would have a hard time with the law. I think it just was eye-opening to see a very, very capable first percentile of intelligence I would consider, a person that I know, who struggled with it. Thinking about that, I guess I just could not believe that.

He had tried to go into Stanford and research from the books, and he could not figure out this area of law that really was so, so easy. I really thought about that experience ever since. I think the first thing that he did to try to think about that idea and to see if I could make a dent in it was to create this crowdsourcing software called CO/COUNSEL.

The idea behind that was like, "Hey, maybe we can crowdsource areas of law like fiduciary duty, and maybe add some visualization tools to it, and make it accessible to people so that my friend at least, somebody can be able to grab those concepts." That was an interesting project. It didn't really go anywhere.

Anand: Was your goal in founding CO/COUNSEL and making a run at that, was the objective to in a way make an end run around lawyers for certain problems? Law is I think intentionally overcomplicated. I might ruffle some feathers, but I think it is. I think it's intentionally overcomplicated. It's a guild profession. And it's very much a profession that's based on protecting the people who learn the trade and learn the skill and learn the language and keeping everyone else out. Because in a lot of ways, that is the business model. So was your kind of approach to this to say, "Hey, let's make it so that a very, very smart, but not legally trained person can access legal services and access legal knowledge in an easy way?" Was that the approach?

Kimball: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, it was. I think the idea was like, "Look, I have, for example, fiduciary duty. I've already looked into that area. I actually could probably map that in like half an hour, and share that piece of knowledge." The idea was, like, hey, let's try to get lawyers from all across the nation to share this research that they've already done. And it would benefit lawyers. They wouldn't have to retread these areas that people have researched over and over and over again. And let's share some of this knowledge and then we can make it easier for people to access.

I think what I what I actually find the most valuable thing that I got from that is that those trying to make legal principles accessible I don't think is actually that valuable. Because that's not really where the rubber hits the road. Let's take my friend. Even if he had known what those four factors were, he still would have had to create a massive amount of paperwork. Where papers are generated, where documents are made, that's where the rubber hits the road for access to justice issues.

Someone actually told me that as I was shoving CO/COUNSEL around. Actually this guy at Chicago, Kent. I really started thinking about that, and it really is true. I mean, you can teach people principles all you want all day long. It's only going to get them like 5% of the way there. If you create a document for them, it's going to get them pretty far, if not all the way there on that specific piece. And so I think that insight is what then got me into this other stuff that I've been doing, which has been kind of more document focused.

But I think the big theme really is like law is way too inaccessible. If you look at the numbers, it's horrifying. In Utah, for example, which is where I'm from and where I live now, only one out of seven cases involve a side with a lawyer versus another side with a lawyer. That's only one out of seven. Which means that six out of seven of those cases either have a lawyer versus a non-lawyer or a non-lawyer versus a non-lawyer. But if you look at the rules and you look at all the cases, it's so clear that this system is set up for lawyer versus lawyer. I mean, one other system in the world is set up for one-seventh of the use cases.

Anand: I love that. I love that perspective. I mean, one of the things that we talk about on this podcast from time to time is how...I mean, we everyone could agree, as you mentioned that there is a major access to justice gap among some of the poorest and the least educated, least privileged folks in this country. A lot of people who need the legal services the most, everyone can agree that they deserve legal services. And a lot of American pro bono kind of focuses on them. I think it's also agreed upon that we don't do enough, and we need to really, really ramp up pro bono. But there's consensus across the board that those are folks that need legal services.

I think what's missed, and I think what you're getting at with the example of your friend who is an educated guy is a fairly privileged person who has a Stanford degree and is really smart, is the fact that a huge amount of even the middle class, upper middle class in this country still can't access the legal system.

So all the way from some of the most desperate folks in the United States, all the way up to some people who make fairly decent money and have fairly high stakes, high-value problems either can't afford a lawyer or simply can't interact with the system sufficiently to secure a lawyer. I'm fascinated by what you just said in that statistic. Where are we going next with that and what are you working on to solve that particular problem?

I mean, we've had on other guests who've said one solution is to make products that can represent clients. Another one is make a chatbot or some sort of automated system that could assist clients. Another one yet is to make up the system of representation to change it rather, so that attorneys can make money off of representing middle-class families who have been damaged to the tune of $5,000 to $10,000. They can make money in the middle-class family, will have representation. How are you approaching this? And in what way are you attempting to attack this kind of common problem?

Kimball: I think there are two ways that I've thought about the issue. The first is you could think, "Let's change the rules. I mean, these rules are way too complicated. They're developed for lawyers in a system where the majority of people don't have lawyers, which makes no sense. So let's change those rules." I've gone down that path. That is fraught with difficulty. The bureaucracy in these courts is incredible, and their distaste for innovative solutions is unbelievable.

I think there are some states who are making headway. Utah actually is one of them who's trying to rethink the laws. Honestly, I think that the rules are so messed up that it would take a complete overhaul. I think that the rules need to be thought up again from scratch because, again, these laws and these rules have been developed by lawyers for decades.

One reason why these rules reflect that one-seventh of the use case, again, is because lawyers make these rules. There aren't non-lawyers on the Rules Committee making rules. And so with zero representation in these rules for people who can't afford attorneys, of course, they're going to sway heavily towards parties who don't have attorneys. That's one way is maybe you can go and change the rules to make it a simplified process for people. I think that's very, very difficult and needs to be done 50 different times because every state has its own system of rules.

The other way is you just take the system as it is, as terrible and horrible as all those rules are, and then to try to develop solutions around it. There's some really interesting things going on in this space. Paladin is a really interesting company. They help aggregate pro bono and help firms work on pro bono more efficiently. I'll take [inaudible 00:18:00] down.

For example, I looked at Utah. Every lawyer in Utah would have to more than double their output for free, and that wouldn't even cover the amount of cases that run through the system without a lawyer. I mean, these pro bono efforts from law firms it's like a drop in the ocean. I think people maybe underestimate how big this problem is. For example, in Utah, there were 70,000 debt collection cases in some years. That's just debt collection. That's just one area of law, 99% of those people who are sued do not hire an attorney. So that's 70,000.

There are only 8000 lawyers in Utah. So what? Like each lawyer is going to take 10 extra cases just to cover that one area of law? It's like you can't even get close. And that's assuming every single lawyer does that. I mean, there has to be major exponential efficiency gains here to cover it.

I think the way that I thought about it is through automation. I'm the director of LawX, which is a legal Design Lab at BYU. And we looked at this debt collection issue. I mean, 70,000 cases where people don't have an attorney in Utah for declaration? That's insane.

Anand: To add to that, I mean, these are likely folks who a lot of them are probably in fairly desperate situations, right?

Kimball: Correct.

Anand: As I say, oftentimes the people who need a lawyer the most cannot get them for whatever reason. And this seems to be a perfect example of that.

Kimball: Yeah. So those people, those are very unsophisticated parties. They've only had bad experiences with law. And so, how do you help them? We basically developed like TurboTax for answering debt collection complaints. Basically, if you don't answer a complaint, a debt collection lawsuit within 21 days, you automatically lose. And some years up to 80% of people who are sued for debt in Utah just lose. They don't even try to answer because it's so incredibly complicated.

So we developed like Turbo Tax for a debt collection answer to help people at least get past that first step. So we released it. We have more uses in a month than we expected in the entire year. And it's continued to have heavy use. I think that was kind of our first foray into like, "Oh, geez, we thought documents were important - helping people create legal documents." And that was our first proof of concept with a very low, sophisticated group of people. It was incredibly rewarding. But I think more things like that need to happen.

Anand: That's excellent. That's excellent. I'm viewing your background so far, post-law school is kind of in two big buckets at this point. You practiced law, you became sophisticated as to how the law is practiced at one of the premier litigation firms in the world, Quinn Emanuel, and then you moved on to CO/COUNSEL. At some point, you decided that this CO/COUNSEL idea wasn't the kind of silver bullet solution. At what point did you move on to SixFifty? And what did you do in between CO/COUNSEL and SixFifty?

Kimball: After CO/COUNSEL, I moved back to Utah. I lived in the Bay Area. My wife and I had a baby. We're both from Utah, so we moved back. I worked for a midsize firm called Parsons Behle & Latimer. But when I moved back, the dean of BYU Law School contacted me and said, "Hey, we're thinking about starting a legal Design Lab. He had used CO/COUNSEL. One of the big uses of CO/COUNSEL actually ended up being professors, and they would map out an area of law with their class. So we had a whole bunch of professors who did that. One of them was Gordon Smith at BYU. So when he started-

Anand: Two things that you raised, I want you to kind of flesh out a bit. We've referred to CO/COUNSEL a couple of times, and you mentioned that it's a crowdsourced legal research tool. Can you talk about exactly what kind of content was in it, how it worked? Despite the fact that didn't end up going anywhere, I know it as a tool that was really interesting, really cool. And as you just mentioned, it had some super fans, namely, some possible professors. What was it, and how did you build it or how was it built?

Kimball: Basically, the platform allowed users to map out visually areas of law. And so you can kind of see how the logic would branch like, "Okay, this, this area of law has four factors, and then this one factor has to sub-factors." They were easy explanations for... well, we tried to make them as easy as possible for people to understand. But then users could go on and they could add whatever they wanted. They could branch out, the logic, add explanations at cases, etc., etc.

I think initially, we kind of hoped like, "Okay, hopefully, lawyers will use this." No lawyers used it. Basically, one lawyer ever used that tool. But a whole bunch of law school professors used it. I think because I guess the way we pitched it to them was like, "Okay, this is a way that you can add a visual element to your learning. And then all that learning that's done you kind of share with the greater community and it does [inaudible 00:24:42] can do."

Gosh, I think at one point we had like 15 classes going all across the world. We had a class in Reading, England that I visited, there was a professor in Columbia who wanted to map stuff, and tons of professors all over the United States.

Anand: Is the site currently up? If our listeners wanted to go and click around on CO/COUNSEL, is it up in any iteration?

Kimball: It is. I've tried to take it down numerous times, actually, because I'm still paying for server fees. But we still have some people still use it. There's actually several professors that add stuff almost every day. I really have no idea whether I'm supposed to do this thing. I tried to give it away numerous times. But people keep using it. So if you want, you can browse some areas online, you can create an account and build your own map of the law you want.

Anand: Got it. Got it. That sounds great. The second thing I want to raise is, and this is something that you brought up, you said that the dean at BYU Law gives you a phone call and clearly he and his colleagues there at BYU Law were users of CO/COUNSEL, and he invited you to lead a quote Legal Design Lab. Now, I have an idea of what the legal Design Lab means, but I don't have a firm idea of what Legal Design Lab means. What is the Legal Design Lab and what are the goals and objectives of the Legal Design Lab?

Kimball: Let me tell you the advantage of calling something a legal design lab because basically those words mean nothing. And so you can make it legal design lab, whatever you want. When we thought, "Okay, let's make a Legal Design Lab" what we thought was, "Okay... I looked around in the field of legal design labs, and it's, I mean, it's a very robust field. There's lots of schools have legal design labs, they're doing really interesting things.

When we looked at it, we thought, "Okay, one way that we could really improve this space," we thought, "was by actually releasing a product." So a lot of the design labs kind of talked about stuff, they created a lot of visuals, which actually was really helpful, and really interesting. And so we kind of thought, "You know what? We're going to release something. We're going to pick an area of the law where we think people get screwed, and we're going to try to make that area of the law more fair. And we're going to try to do it in one term. So we're going to release a product in one term with a group of students." We called that LawX. That was the name of our Legal Design Lab.

Anand: I love that. That's amazing work. I think time boxing it to a semester is powerful. I think likely you learn this from your experience with CO/COUNSEL. But you can make a big difference in as short as a semester. I mean, before you go into the actual work that your group at BYU Law did, why don't you think this has caught on more at more law schools? Imagine the impact. If even one 10th of the law schools in America came to the table with similar kind of legal design labs guided by the mission of pumping out a product every semester that can actually help people in need?

Kimball: I think it's catching on. I think it's catching on. Our first product was debt collection, which I have talked about. The next year, which is this year, the University of Arizona Design Lab reached out and so we're collaborating on a tool that actually working on least with SixFifty in like a month and a half, which is a tool to help people who are being evicted. That's a similar profile of people as those who are being sued for a debt. A lot of them are low income, low sophistication, a lot of them don't maybe speak very good English, and who just get hosed by the legal system completely dominated by more sophisticated parties. And so we're releasing a tool to help them for this semester.

I think the University of Arizona with a really great professor, Stacey Butler, who's completely underappreciated, actually, I think she's fantastic, and nobody knows a lot about her, so her class and my class tackle that together. Next year, we're going to do something else. We're thinking about maybe helping with the expungement. You know, people who things on their record for when they were 18, and they went shrieking with their friends, but now they can't get a job or who are charged with the crime and then found not guilty, but that charges still on their record-

Anand: Kimball, I love this. And just two shout outs here. I love the idea of you scaling pro bono through products or platforms. You already mentioned Paladin. We've had on Felicity Conrad on this podcast. She was a guest, I think, season one. And we've also had a fellow name, and hopefully, I'm pronouncing his name right,

Matthew Stubenberg with MD Expungement. I love both of these organizations because, in the case of Felicity's organization, Paladin, she is create creating platforms that allow firm to better find pro bono cases.

The pro bono work is done still kind of hand to hand and person to person, but it's a scalable platform where she could cast a wide net across all law firms in the US. Of course, with Stubenberg platform - and again, apologies if I'm mispronouncing his name, who also was a guest on this podcast - is a product that actually kind of, I think does the same with expungement in Maryland as your group did with debt collection in Utah.

But I love the idea of pro bono that doesn't just take students and have them help out certain minority group or certain underprivileged group in a certain area. Because you might be able to help - what? 20 people at a time, 30 people at a time if you have all day. But the work that you're doing, and the work that BYU Law and University of Arizona and other groups are doing, can literally help out 10s of thousands of people. That is the promise of a productizing.

As you could probably tell by my level of excitement, I mean, this is something I think that can truly change representation for indigent clients. I think it's doing the Lord's work. I don't think that's overstating it. So how do we get more of that out there? How do we get more pro bono organizations and law schools and coders circled around this mission?

Kimball: Well, I think there need to be some good proofs of concept. Let me tell you what one thing we're going to do SixFifty. Let me back up. I've worked a law firm; I know exactly how pro bono works. Basically, from what I can tell, people do...Let me go back to my firm in Utah. We helped with debt collection cases. And it was like, people will do the same thing every time without automating it, without any kind of process to make it more efficient. And it's like, Geez Louise, instead of doing that 20 times from scratch, why don't you do at one time, and automate it so that 10,000 people can use it just like you're saying?

And so at Wilson, we're going to pick areas of law where Wilson has an expertise. Let's say, asylum. Wilson Sonsini does a lot of asylum help. And we're going to take it and we're going to automate as much of the asylum process as we can. Then we're going to give that away. So anyone who wants to use that asylum tool so that they can process cases 50 times faster will be able to use that software.

I think people need to do it and kind of see that it works and see the impact of it. Because I got a taste of it through BYU. That debt collection software has helped over 1000 people in little Utah, which is an incredible number. It's just so rewarding. I mean, you do something like that, you think, "Gosh, I want to do that all day. That's all I want to do."

Anand: I love it. I love it. We're now at SixFifty, and this is one of your current roles. Talk about SixFifty. I mean, what is it as a business entity or a corporate entity? What is its relationship to Wilson Sonsini? Is it meant to be a pure pro bono organization? I mean, talk us through what its goals are, how it's organized, all of these things.

Kimball: Let me tell you why I was really interested in this position. There are some areas of law, actually a lot of areas where Wilson is arguably the best - the best law firm in the world. For example, they incorporated Google and brought them public. They incorporated Twitter and brought them public. There were two IPOs in Utah last year, they brought both of those companies public. They are the best technology law firm in the world.

So the thought that you could take that knowledge base, which is arguably the best in the world, and then automate it, so that not just Google can use something like that so that a little company in South Carolina could benefit from that expertise is so thrilling. It's the same issue. It really is the same issue that I've been thinking about for the past four or five years, which is how do you distill the best expertise in an area and make it available to not just the absolute most wealthy? I mean, how do you distill an area and make it available again to a company that's in Georgia?

That's what we're doing. SixFifty is fully owned by the firm, but it's a different entity. We're going to take areas of law where Wilson is the best, and we're going to automate those areas so that anybody can use them. Our first project is in relation to the new California privacy law. California passed a recent law - any company that makes over 25 million in revenue and does business in California has to comply. And this is very complex.

Anand: Kimball this is the California corollary of GDPR, right?

Kimball: Exactly. Exactly. Some estimates from people who we trust have kind of said, "Well, average price to comply going through a firm like Wilson Sonsini are going to be hundreds of thousands of dollars, maybe over $250,000." You think about that, you're like, "Goodness sakes, how is a company that makes 25 million in revenue going to pay $250,000, or $100,000 to comply with a law of they just learned about five days ago. I mean, a lot of companies are going to be in a really bad shape. And the penalties for this law are severe - company ending in some circumstances.

So what we're doing, and I think it fits in with this mission is we've taken the privacy group, that the head of the privacy group held arguably the top post in the US government for privacy for eight years. Another person was a top privacy advisor in the White House during the Obama administration. I mean, these are some of the best privacy minds in the nation, and we're going to automate their knowledge so that anybody can use it, and at a price point that they can afford.

Anand: You know, 10 years ago, maybe 15, the appropriate question would have been, for me to, in a shock way, say, "But Kimball, why would they want to give away for free what they're currently getting paid for? I think nowadays, a lot of our listeners and a lot of other sophisticated people out there get what's happening here. That more and more clients expect to get the basic stuff for free. And the money that Wilson Sonsini, as the worldwide specialists in this particular area, the money they will get are with the complexities and the wrinkles in the operation. Is that a good distillation of business concepts underpinning SixFifty?

Kimball: Actually, no. This is not a lead gen play here. This is not thinking we're going to offer this for free, and then people are going to come into the firm and use the firm. Totally not. I think the idea behind this is like only a small percentage, maybe let's say 5% or 10% of the market can even use Wilson Sonsini. And so there's that 90% of the market that would love to have Wilson Sonsini expertise but can't pay the full price. This is a play for that 90 %.

I think what we're saying is, "Listen, don't try to go with this alone and do it by yourself, it's probably going to cost you more and it's going to be very risky. And listen, don't use a small firm who doesn't know what they're doing."

Anand: This is massively expanding the pie. I think that's a very good articulation of it.

Kimball: It's like any company now will be able to tap into Wilson Sonsini world-leading expertise for less than it would cost at small law firm. I think we're trying to make Wilson Sonsini his expertise and put it in a price point that anyone can afford - any company.

Anand: And so this represents me two different products, if you will, that Wilson Sonsini is putting out on the market. I mean, you've got your top end product and that is the actual time and experience of Wilson Sonsini attorneys in real time dedicated to the one thing that Google and Twitter and others can afford. And then you've got your other product line, again, if you will, product line, that is your mass market product line that anyone can afford. I mean, is that a better way of looking at it?

Kimball: That's it. That's it. We think we've priced it so that basically any company we can talk to, and we can help them comply for a very reasonable cost. A cost, again, that is going to be like a 10th, maybe, even more, smaller of a fraction that would cost to get in another way. But by lowering that price point, you're not sacrificing quality, we think. We think you're still going to get...I mean, we know. I mean all of our templates, we built this tool in conjunction with the Wilson Sonsini privacy group. I mean, people who use our tool are going to get Wilson Sonsini quality product and at a price that they can afford.

Anand: Right, at a price that they can afford. I like that. Now, as president, the leader of SixFifty, do you view this as a product startup within Wilson Sonsini or a product startup that is aided by Wilson Sonsini? I mean, are you and is SixFifty graded on the proper the revenue you could generate from the product? How do you know in 10 years, if SixFifty has knocked the ball out of the park or is just doing kind of okay?

Kimball: We're going to be judged on revenue. This is a startup that's funded by the firm. It's fully funded by the firm. But it's a startup. I mean, we're going to have to make money. Again, this really is not a business development play. Again, this is a play to attack that 90% of the market would love to use top tier legal services but can't afford it. And along the way, when we're creating this automation software, we're also going to attack pro bono issues for free. But our real judge of success from the firm's point of view is going to be revenue and profits.

We're running like a startup would. We have small teams, and everybody's doing everything, you know, sort of the old, it's like Casetext is running or was running a few years ago before you guys expanded, and now you guys have so many people here now, which is fun. But yeah, we're going to be judged just like any other startup.

Anand: Who do you view as a competitor to SixFifty? Or are there currently no competitors to SixFifty?

Kimball: Well, I think there are competitors in the different areas that we attack. For example, take this California privacy law. Again, companies have to comply by January 1, 2020. They have a few choices. They can go to a law firm. So law firms are our competitors, we think we have a great value proposition against them. We think that we're going to be a lot cheaper, a lot more efficient, and a lot more convenient, have just a better experience, overall, we think in basically every way. They also can use a vendor. There's some technology vendors who to try to attack this issue, but they don't have the backing and the expertise of a law firm who are the top experts in the field. And so we think we have a great value proposition there as well.

Now, when we move into different areas of law, we're going to have different competitors. It's going to depend which areas we choose to attack. But we really think that we have a very compelling value proposition no matter what area we go into. Again, these companies are going to get Wilson Sonsini top quality things for less faster and just a better experience.

Anand: If I'm playing devil's advocate here, I'd say that's fair and well that you get Wilson Sonsini brand on it. But ultimately, if you're using a product and there's no attorney directly involved, and everything goes sideways, if I have an attorney, even a low rent kind of local attorney who might not be doing a great job, that attorney still has a malpractice insurance plan of a policy. And I could go after that malpractice policy in case that they totally screw up. What do they do if they follow guidance by a Wilson Sonsini kind of product like a product kit on how to comply with this California privacy law, and they just do everything wrong? I mean is that a big fear of clients? And is that a big reason why clients don't like using the product at times and want to go directly to the very expensive at times attorney?

Anand: Yeah. A couple of things on that. The first is that we're not going to offer any legal advice. We're not a law firm. So we can't really offer legal advice like law firm could. We do have privacy professionals who can help people navigate the software and help them think about issues that are raised be our automation software to help people comply.

But a lot of these companies I think could also use a lawyer on top of this software. So even if you use the software, and then you take the outputs from that software and then run it by a law firm, it's still going to be significantly cheaper, because you're not going to pay for all of that groundwork. You're not going to pay $1,000 an hour, $600 an hour for that groundwork. It's going to be a flat price.

And then if you want to have somebody else look over it, that's great. And actually, you can have Wilson look over it. And we've created a seamless experience into Wilson's experiment if that's what people want.

Anand: I think that could be the future of how legal work is completed. I mean, imagine a system where you're a middle-class family, and this middle-class family were hiring a lawyer before, it might be a $25,000 endeavor, doing a lot of the legwork based on a product, whether it's whatever product Wilson Sonsini puts out, or even something like Legal Zoom, or some sort of product like that, and really doing a lot of the work that you can do, kind of narrowing down the project, and then coming to an attorney with a very discrete piece [inaudible 00:48:42] for them to do can maybe take that $25,000 project and narrow it into $5,000 project, which is now all of a sudden affordable for the middle class family, and doable by the attorney at a profit? I mean, is that where this is all going?

Kimball: Yeah. Yeah. For example, I talked with a lawyer who wasn't in Wilson Sonsini but a lawyer in another firm to do the startup work. He was saying, "I have my associates do all this kind of groundwork. And then I look at the docs for one hour. And this experience, very seasoned, well-respected startup work. But he only needed an hour with those docs. So what did he just cut out that other crap, and you just had him look at it for an hour?

That's one way that we hope this goes. Like, let's only use humans where humans are needed. Let's not use humans for something that a machine can do. Don't have a law firm charge you $700 an hour to format a document. Put someone's name in this place and put their address and another place. A machine can do that. A machine could templatize and plug that information in. You shouldn't pay those kinds of rates for that. But that's oftentimes what you're paying for.

What a business should pay for is that hour expertise and the underlying expertise that fuels the entire enterprise. That's, I think, where we can come in through the CCPA, we will do all that legwork. And I think for a lot of companies, I think that they'll be fine with that, and don't necessarily need to need to see an attorney afterwards. We're very confident in what we're providing.

Although if they do want to see an attorney, which is completely understandable, we will link them with one. We would love that. That that attorney is not going to do all of that underlying problem. It's all there for them. What would take 10 hundreds of hours of associate time getting everything right, we can do for a flat, reasonable fee. And then sure. Then if you want the guy or top privacy woman in the field to look at it, that's great. But they only need to look at it for a very short amount of time and you're going to save a lot of money.

Anand: Have you gotten any blowback as the head of products coming out of Wilson Sonsini or with the Wilson Sonsini name? I mean, without naming names at Wilson Sonsini, have you heard any grumblings from Wilson Sonsini affiliated people essentially saying, "Really is that the right move for Wilson Sonsini? We're a wildly successful firm with a storied legacy in Silicon Valley. Are you sure we don't want to just keep writing the success in providing legal services at a fairly high dollar amount? Why stick our necks out and create SixFifty? Maybe just leave that to someone else and keep enjoying the success in the legal services and hourly billing that we've been enjoying for decades."

Kimball: I think Wilson Sonsini really is uniquely situated to do something like this. First of all, Wilson advises the most innovative, disruptive companies in the world. So this is a firm that is very familiar with taking chances and really trying to attack and rethink in an industry.

Let so let me tell you, we've had zero blowbacks. Zero. We have only gotten full-hearted support for this effort within the firm. In fact, I've been amazed at it. Again, I think Wilson is really a big firm, a very kind of client-centric. We're going to try to make the experience as good as possible for the client type of firm. And so I think that this really fits in perfectly with them.

I mean, we're doing things that they've thought about. I think one reason why they're so open to this idea and why they approached us to do it is because they had been thinking about doing something like this before. They've kind of seen our work in other areas, and thought, "Okay, this is maybe the team and they can make it happen." Long story short, absolutely no blowback at all there. I think people are very, very excited.

Anand: How about from associates. I mean, are any associates sweating the fact that - and I think I know the answer to this having been an associate at a larger firm - are any associates kind of looking at you far in your brow and saying, "Hey, is this the guy who's going to be taking my job?"

Kimball: No, no, no. There's always going to be a place for Wilson Sonsini. Even if the whole world was automated, Wilson Sonsini is going to be there. Because, again, Wilson does the top tier best 99th percentile work. I think if I were an associate at a smaller firm, I think I'd be sweating or if I were a partner at a smaller firm, I think that I would be sweating, because I just can't understand how they could compare with our value proposition, to be honest.

Again, I can't really see why somebody would go to a small firm or a medium-sized firm for something like the California law anymore. Once we have this product really means people are going to be able to get Wilson Sonsini quality things. I think this play really endangers and is potentially disruptive for a medium sized smaller firms. I think that's the market we're going for. We're going to try to steal there. We're not going to try to steal the clients that are already with the firm. They're kind of, you know, ingrained in there and are doing probably too complicated of things.

Anand: Sure. No, that makes sense. So you mentioned that right now your focus is the CCPA product. What's coming next. Are you going to go down the line of the products that you could create that will have the biggest impact across the startup world coast to coast? I mean, how do you choose the products that you're going to be building next, and what's coming down the pike?

Kimball: We're releasing the CCPA product in the coming months. So that'll be our first one. It'll be publicly available in end of May. Then we're going to release a free product that we developed with BYU for people who are being invaded. That's kind of just pro bono access to justice targeted.

After that, we're looking into some other areas. We have a bunch of ideas, but we haven't settled on our next let's make money product. But we have some really good leads. And we'll probably come out with that in the fall or early next year.

Anand: So what do you view as the future of automation in legal? It's an intentionally broad question. But I mean, we've talked about some of the foundations and underpinnings. We have a world where law schools can mobilize their classes, to release tools that will have a general appeal and be able to help a lot of the least privileged folks in society. We have big law firms that are creating tools to expand the pie and claim more of it.

There's other subsidiaries, of course. One of them is GravityStack associated with Reed Smith, who's Managing Director of Brian Bratcher has been on our path podcast. There's groups like Atrium that I referred to before that are attempting to unify product teams in law firms to create products that folks could use across the board. I mean, what's coming up next? I mean, in 10 years, what will be the interaction between a legal services provider and a client?

Kimball: I think it'll be a mix of machine and human. That's where I think that this is going. We touched on this before. I think that the real potential there is getting the efficiency and time savings and accuracy of a machine with the benefit of human judgment. I think SixFifty is going that way. Atrium maybe is going that way too. I think that's really where the future of the law is marrying those two things.

I think one interesting thing about automation, the tools that are out there that people can use to automate things already are excellent. Any firm, any lawyer could go on and automate whatever they want basically with what's out there. I think people maybe don't realize that. So I think people are starting to realize it more. I think that they'll realize it more and more and more. And again, that it will be this mix of machine and human.

Anand: My analogy for that that I use sometimes is this analogy of what's referred to as Centaur chess team’s kind of a maximally geeky analogy. But the analogy is roughly that an AI is moving so fast, now, I hope this metaphor still holds, because I think it's a beautiful and elegant metaphor - but at some point in the progression of AI chess-playing robots versus pure human teams, what they started doing, and of course, the AI team started beating human teams 10 out of 10 times, what they started doing is putting a pure AI teams vs AI assisted human teams. And they found that the results of the AI-assisted human teams was just far, far better, then pure AI teams. Which leads me to believe that maybe there's still some place for humans in this whole landscape. Kimball, can you give me some validation towards that conclusion?

Kimball: I think that's right. I think that that's right. I'm not really worried that machines are going to replace humans. I think it's going to change what humans do. Again, they're going to do less of this groundwork and more judgment. I mean, that's what humans are good at. They're good at judgment. That's what machines have a very difficult time doing. I think there's always going to be a place for judgment in the law. What there's not going to be a place for is document formatting. That should not be done by humans. I think in the coming year that will increasingly not be done by humans. But yeah, I think it's this kind of machine, human mix - machine enabled

Anand: Kimball, I can't think of a better place to end this episode of the podcast than with that comment. It's just extremely well-articulated. It really distills a lot of, I think, the trends that we are starting to see and maybe the next 10 to 20 years of what we're going to see. And I think it's the perfect way to wrap up an episode of The Modern Lawyer, which is focused on rapid change in the legal industry.

Kimball, I've completely enjoyed our conversation. As you could probably tell, I could talk about this for another few hours but I know, you've got places to go, Kimball. Again, thank you for joining us on The Modern Lawyer podcast. I've really enjoyed our discussion.

Kimball: Thank you very much.